

From Service to Skilled Careers: Veterans and Registered Apprenticeships

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Narrator: Welcome to the National Veterans' Training Institute podcast series, where we discuss pressing issues affecting today's veterans.

Rebecca

Welcome to today's NVTI podcast, From Service to Skilled Careers: Veterans and Registered Apprenticeships. My name is Rebecca and I'll be your host. We're delighted to have with us today a wonderful group of apprenticeship experts. Let's begin with some introductions. Please share where you are from and a little bit about your role and your work. Hughes, can you get us started?

Hughes McLean

Yes, my name is Hughes McLean. I work with the DOL Office of Apprenticeship and I serve as the Military Veteran Liaison for the office. So, a little bit about my role is just making sure that veterans have proper support and awareness of various pathways to Registered Apprenticeship. And then on the employer sponsor side, making sure they understand the value of military veterans and understand the value of Registered Apprenticeship. So that's kind of what I do, essentially.

Dr. Ricky Godbolt

My name is Ricky Godbolt. I'm a Program Analyst in the Division of Standards and Quality in the National Office of Apprenticeship. I'm also the Office of Apprenticeship Program Manager for the largest Registered Apprenticeship program in the United States, which is the United Services Military Apprenticeship Program. I'm a retired U.S. Army Warrant Officer. I'm the past president of the Fort George G. Meade Chapter, the Military Officers Association of America. I'm the past president of Aberdeen-Edgewood Gold Chapter, United States Army Warrant Officers Association, and I am a member of 11 other veterans organizations. I now turn it over to Ms. Abigail Allen.

Abigail Allen

Thank you, Ricky. Yes, I'm Abigail Allen, a Program Specialist here with the US Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship. I'm based in San Diego, California, and I serve as the industry liaison for agriculture, telecommunications, and the tech. field, as well as the state director to the Pacific, including American Samoa, CNMI, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Palau. And I also assist with Registered Apprenticeship here in Southern California and a little bit in Northern California as needed. So, Joe?

Joseph Olivere

Thanks, Abi. My name is Joe Olivere. I'm the Chief of Apprenticeship for the state of Delaware in the Delaware Department of Labor. In that role, I serve as the state director or the state apprenticeship agency lead in approving and monitoring all of our local program registrations and our compliance with the federal, the US DOL Office of Apprenticeship. I also create policy around our regulations of apprenticeship in the state, as well as work with the other states and the US DOL to keep maintenance in the national apprenticeship system and compliant with 2929.

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Rebecca

Thanks, everyone. So, we're so glad you joined us today and are here to share your knowledge and recommendations about Registered Apprenticeships and why they can be a really good choice for veterans. First, can you give us a brief explanation of what Registered Apprenticeships are and how they work?

Hughes McLean

Okay, yes. So Registered Apprenticeships are training programs, right? It's an onboarding model to bring a person into an occupation, into their career. So that Registered Apprenticeship program serves as a pathway for a veteran into a career. And if they want to get into a particular career, if that veteran's already decided on, let's say, an industry or occupation, then it's highly likely that a Registered Apprenticeship program can get them to that occupation and to that career. Ricky?

Dr. Ricky Godbolt

Thank you, Hughes. Registered Apprenticeship programs provide a structured learning similar to the military. Also like the military, Registered Apprenticeship programs have a designated mentor, and they offer advancement based on your knowledge, your skills, and abilities. Finally, like the military, being in a Registered Apprenticeship program, you become part of a team, and you become part of an alumni of skilled professionals. Joe?

Joseph Olivere

Thanks, Ricky. So Registered Apprenticeship programs I like to think of them as a very structured and foundational way of training. Though Registered Apprenticeships haven't been around quite as long, apprenticeships themselves are the oldest workforce development program in the existence of mankind. It's really a hands-on idea supported by theoretical classroom training in a high school occupation, or especially an occupation that requires, at least has a high demand. It's an auto ramp that's accessible by anyone at any age from any background. It's something that it doesn't require you to have a preconceived notion of how to do the work. In a true Registered Apprenticeship you're shown from the beginning of your entry into the trade into however long you may work in it, a mastery that is built upon people that have done and worked in the trade before you through that mentorship. Abi?

Abigail Allen

Thanks, Joe. So Registered Apprenticeship is one of many workforce training solutions out there. There's internships, a lot of these certificated occupations require a certain amount of workforce experience before taking exams, colleges offer, you know, work experience classes. But really what makes apprenticeship different is even though its industry driven, our focus is the safety and work experience of the apprentice. That's what we're here for. We are the voice of the apprentice in the industry, and in this case, it's veterans. Thank you.

Rebecca

Generally speaking, what are the benefits of apprenticeships for participants? We know there are many employer and workforce benefits as well. Can you walk us through some of those benefits, Ricky?

Dr. Ricky Godbolt

Yes, you develop skills that last a lifetime. What you learn and the skills you gain cannot be taken away. You gain skills from a person who has been designated as your mentor. Your

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mentor has shown profound wisdom as a result of experience, and Registered Apprenticeship, like the military, you are never alone. And you have a partner along your journey to success and prosperity. Finally, you have a portable credential that is recognized in all 50 U.S. states and territories. Abi?

Abigail Allen

Thank you. Yeah. Unlike those other training options, Registered Apprenticeship brings all stakeholders together in a clear and transparent way. Educators, employers, and if applicable, unions. Most importantly, the worker, the apprentice, they're all on the same page. Everybody knows what's expected of them, what their deliverables are, what they're getting in return, and there is a clear timeline set for that. Hughes?

Hughes McLean

Yeah, I agree with that, Abi. That's kind of the same point that I raised when you talk about what's the benefits to those participants. And that is essentially having those clear and conspicuous achievement benchmarks. So they don't have to wonder, what do I have to do to get to the next level? What do I have to do to get my pay raise? It's kind of laid out for them already with that training outline. From your perspective, Joe, what would you say are some of those benefits to the participants?

Joseph Olivere

Well, I mean, you're right, Hughes, that's exactly the concept here is that there's a blueprint for their career progression, those benchmarks that they know from the beginning that they're going to go through and how that's going to progress. It's a structured training model, and those skills are passed on from industry workers to these apprentices on this progression that lets them know kind of where their wages are going to be in a year or two and where their competencies and where their milestones should be and what they should hit and what they should be able to achieve. So that gives them not just a clear outlook on what they're doing, but also confidence, hopefully, in that they're not, you know, being left behind with their progress on making this a valuable career for them monetarily.

Rebecca

Clearly, Registered Apprenticeships can be extremely beneficial for everyone involved. Why would you recommend Registered Apprenticeships to veterans? In other words, what makes veterans in particular strong candidates for apprenticeships opportunities, and why are apprenticeships valuable career pathways for veterans who might be transitioning into civilian careers? Hughes?

Hughes McLean

Well, starting with that first question, why would I recommend Registered Apprenticeships to veterans? It's because of that, you know, that the possibility of getting their monthly housing allowance, right? Like that's kind of the initial carrot that you can dangle in front of the veteran. That's an additional 1500, 2000, in some cases, over \$3,000 per month on top of their regular paycheck. And then in regards to like what makes them strong candidates for apprenticeship specifically, I think the structure has a lot to do with it. Again, kind of how the program outline is laid out. I think that falls right in line with what that veteran is already used to, you know, coming out of the military and having that structured outline there as well with those kind of clear benchmarks. So those are the kind of first things that come to me when I think about, you know, veterans and Registered Apprenticeship. What would you say, Ricky?

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Dr. Ricky Godbolt

I agree with everything you said, Hughes. Also, I would like to caveat and piggyback off what you just said. Veterans are strong candidates for Registered Apprenticeship programs because veterans are dedicated and veterans are loyal. Veterans have taken an oath and that oath is not just words, but it's a code to live by. Because of this oath, a veteran will go above and beyond the call of duty. Pride for veterans is not only a noun, it's a source of deep satisfaction and self-respect. The Registered Apprenticeship program sponsor has an investment in the Registered Apprenticeship program and has expectations. Veterans will meet and exceed those expectations because just like military training, the work process schedule has goals that ought to be achieved. The structured learning environment is familiar to the military veteran. And the veteran will recognize the elements of team building within the Registered Apprenticeship system. Finally, veterans can use their education benefits of Registered Apprenticeship program training and can use their DD Form 2586, which is the Verification of Experience and Training, also known as VMET, to request credit for previous experience. Abi?

Abigail Allen

Those are all great points, so I don't really have too much more to add on that. Transitioning back into the civilian workforce, it can be overwhelming, especially if you enlisted at a very young age. So Registered Apprenticeship, you know, like the gentlemen said before me, that just helps mitigate that by clearly identifying occupations that they align with O*NETs and the wage is all really laid out for you. There's no guessing what the next year to five years of your life are going to bring. Joe?

Joseph Oliver

There's a lot of really good data and good things out there, and we've got a group here that can really put it into perspective. So to try not to reiterate a lot of what was said, but to maybe just cement down those top, you know, two or three things. Yeah, we talk about the structured nature of apprenticeships all the time. It's that road map. It's that blueprint. It's, you know, you walking out into a new area you haven't been in a while and somebody saying, hey, you know, I can give you some extra directions. And that's what the apprenticeship offers over something, you know, different than maybe just going out and looking for work in occupations that don't have that. I think the key, though, is that a lot of the experience gained during the enlisted time is transferable. I mean, Ricky really hit on the way of that being formalized into, you know, request for credit for previous experience. But more so than anything, it's about just having transferable skills in a, in a setting for these occupations, you know, based off of the career or the job you had in the military. And I think it's really something that maybe is easier to line up than just say, you know, going through the regular idea of, you know, I don't know what I may like or not like. There's a lot of tools out there. I know we'll get into them at some point, but you can really crosswalk that military time into occupations that are out there.

Rebecca

Thanks everyone for sharing this important information. It's, it's really clear that veterans are great fits for apprenticeships. But how can a veteran find a Registered Apprenticeship program? Do you have any suggestions or advice for helping a veteran find the right apprenticeship for them?

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Hughes McLean

I would say first thing that they want to remind themselves of is that they have options, right? And that veteran status can kind of connect them in multiple ways to an apprenticeship. You generally want to start with whatever occupation or industry you want to go into, but you have that online option, you know, through [apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov) and other sites as well. But you do have the in-person option, dealing with that state apprenticeship agency, whether it's by call or going in to speak with them. The state veteran services as well, folks that are funded to help veterans find employment. And some veterans may already be there doing like disability stuff or something like that. So utilize the veteran resources that you already have, and they can help you in terms of identifying apprenticeships as well. And then you have the state workforce agency also, where they have DVOPs and LVERs kind of dedicated again to helping veterans. So the main thing I would say is remembering that they have options, you know, and there's multiple paths to take, but the options of it all is really what I want to highlight. What would you say, Ricky?

Dr. Ricky Godbolt

What I would say is veterans can use online search engines such as [apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov) and other online search engines by using the words apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship. Also, the use of DOL of Vets is an excellent resource of veterans seeking careers in Registered Apprenticeship program. Finally, veterans can use the buddy systems. What I did when I was a prime power production specialist, each one of us, when we left the military, we actually set up a network where we would reach out and say, I have a job here. There's an opening here. And so by using that buddy system, veterans can receive information about other veteran programs and for Registered Apprenticeship programs. Joe?

Joseph Oliver

Thanks, Ricky. The Office of Apprenticeship with the US DOL does give a lot of tools through [apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov). You're going to hear that, you know, from a lot of us. But I think it's important that you can search the national database, look for opportunities, careers, apprenticeship sponsors anywhere in the country. But a lot of times one thing that's, you know, maybe especially somebody coming out of military service who's used to dealing things with things federally, an overlooked asset, you know, talk about buddy system, you know, let the let our American Job Centers or our local state agencies be your buddy. A lot of times a phone call to the state apprenticeship agency or the American Job Center in Delaware, my office would take this directly or, you know, one of our partnering DVOPs or employees in our job centers would basically give you kind of like tailored guidance and let you know what's available in our state, what programs and resources we may have, initiatives that we're running through at the state level. And then sometimes that's a better way to start because like at the end of the day, you know, your local reps are going to know a little bit more about the area you're in than a website where you may be searching for some of this stuff online. But I think that the key is just, you know, remembering that our state agencies and our state local employees are able to kind of give you some extra guidance and where you would want to look or what occupations might be in demand at the time.

Abigail Allen

Thanks, Joe. So I would say just really do some self-reflection. Do your homework. You are very valuable right now and kind of work, work backwards. Think about where you want to be. You know, you just completed this one journey and now you're somewhere where you might not have even envisioned. So now think forward 4 to 8 to 10 years. Think about where you want to

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be and kind of work backwards to where you are now and see what kind of jobs can help you on that path. Your apprenticeship doesn't need to be the next step. It doesn't need to be the end step, but there's probably apprenticeship somewhere in the path that can help you get to where you want to be. There's so many resources out there, but kind of know where you want to be because you really do have a lot of value. So don't start from scratch and don't take the first thing that's thrown at you.

Rebecca

Thanks, Abi. Let's talk a little bit about skills. How can our listeners help a veteran identify their transferable skills and match them with a Registered Apprenticeship that might help them grow those skills. Ricky?

Dr. Ricky Godbolt

The best document to help veterans is the DD Form 2586, the Verification of Military Experience and Training. For every job I was hired for, I used the VMET. After using the VMET to create my resume, here is a lesson that I will tell everybody who's listening to this podcast. Make sure that you notify the veteran because some veterans are not aware of the VMET. But if you listen to this podcast, please remember this. Mention to the veteran about the DD Form 2586 of Verification of Military Experience and Training. What I did is when I used my VMET to create my resume, I took it to a hiring manager. And this is a lesson I learned, and this is where I will actually promote TAP. TAP would teach you have a cover letter, have a resume, always have it present. This is one mistake I made and I never made it again. I did not have mine at the time. But the second time I went back to the hiring manager, I showed them my resume. This hiring manager did not say anything. She walked over to the telephone and I'm thinking, "Whoa, did I make a mistake?" And I listened to her conversation and she said, "You should see this guy's resume." The next week I was interviewed for the job and the following week I was hired. On another job I was at, one of the workers in another department looked at my resume and told his coworkers, this guy should be in charge. So using the VMET, I was never turned down for a job I applied for in the civilian world. So for everyone, listen, I will say it again. Please notify the veteran or let the veteran be aware of the DD Form 2586 Verification Military Experience and Training. And if you're a veteran listening to this podcast, please go and download your DD Form 2586 Verification Military Experience and Training. The name of the document gives you everything you need to know. It's a verification of your military experience and training. And it is the best document that you can use to create a resume and translate language into a resume that will guarantee almost a job. If you go in with the right attitude, if you use your skills that you've learned in the military, and make sure that you learn everything you can about the job. Those of us coming out of the military, yes, we're used to the military, we're used to military jargon, but learn about the civilian organization that you want to get a job in. You learn about the civilian language. And as Joe mentioned earlier, there is a crosswalk that you can use, O*NET, to crosswalk your skills into terms that are more civilian oriented. Abi?

Abigail Allen

That's great, Ricky. I know that my colleagues here have much more to offer than I do on this, not being a veteran myself. So the online tools, I just love hearing about them. So, Joe?

Joseph Oliver

Thanks, Abi. I mean, we're kind of in that same boat. My experience is going to be much different not having served, but I think with helping veterans, one thing I've realized, and, you know, Ricky, thanks for bringing it up, the military crosswalk feature on O*NET is a really good

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way to open perspective. You can find your MOS or your ASFC or you know your career code for your time in the service and kind of search a bunch of different O*NET codes that align with it. Those O*NET codes are based on standard occupational codes and will tell you sometimes maybe 10 or 15 different occupational careers or things that you could occupational, you know, directions that you could look at and sometimes open your eyes to some things that you didn't think were out there or maybe didn't know about. So that's what I like to really emphasize a lot with people is, hey, this is a simple way to just start. Like if you really just wanna get some ideas of what kind of careers are out there that might align with the work that you've already done and tying it back to what Ricky said, tying it back to that verified experience and training that you had in the military, stuff that will relate when it comes time for that hiring decision. Somebody who is going to know more about it though, and somebody I think that is going to add a lot more context like Ricky did, is Hughes. So Hughes, why don't you tell us what you got over there?

Hughes McLean

I feel like you all covered everything though. I mean, essentially what we're talking about is, like Abi said, don't start from scratch. You know, inventory those skills that you already have. Ricky's story about the VMET, I think that's the perfect anecdote to kind of highlight the value of the skills that veterans already have, but they don't understand how to really document it, right? And that VMET is that document that can help you do that. So those two things we kind of just covered, inventory your skills, and then use those tools at your disposal, like the crosswalk, like the VMET, to kind of see those civilian opportunities that are already available to you without doing anything else, that veteran coming out of service already has marketable skills. So yeah, I think you guys did a great job of highlighting those things.

Rebecca

Thanks, everyone. That was some really excellent information and resources for veterans who are looking to transfer their skills. You've given us a lot of information about apprenticeships, but I think it would be really helpful to understand how a Registered Apprenticeship program begins. Can you briefly walk us through the process of starting a Registered Apprenticeship program, Hughes?

Hughes McLean

Yeah, so when a sponsor wants to start a program, again, they have options as well. One of the aspects of Registered Apprenticeship is that flexibility for the sponsor to allow them to use this model to serve whatever that need is on their end. So they don't have to develop a program from scratch. They can join an existing program, or they can use like a template from an existing program to start their own program. So again, a lot of options within this space, and Joe can tell us a lot more about this because he deals with this way more than I would. So what do you got, Joe?

Joseph Olivere

Appreciate that, Hughes. So yeah, I mean, I will preface my comments with that this process varies from state to state. Whether you're in a state that, you know, federal officers are in the apprenticeship office or you're in a state like Delaware where we have an agency representative here that's, you know, working for the Delaware Department of Labor. We call them an ATR, an apprenticeship and training representative, and that ATR guides you through the process. We, we kind of like get that interest and we tell people to fill out a brief application form that just gives us some information about that that sponsorship that you want to have, that company that you want to take apprentices into or your facility if you're an educator, it's really going to vary a

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little bit. In Delaware, it's very common for a normal run-of-the-mill type program that is, you know, going to have a lot of examples for us to draw from, think of like, you know, traditional construction trades, things like that, to have a program designed, set up and standard signed and active in a day or two. So that's not a long process. It's just sometimes decoding it a little bit for people and kind of just making them understand that that's what we're here to do is to build that. And a lot of the other occupations, some newer ones or some that are out there that might not be common for certain states, have good frameworks that were created in partnership with the US DOL and partnership with other intermediaries that have worked. And those frameworks can really lay the foundation of saying, here's how this road map works and let's customize it, that flexibility that Hughes mentioned. How do we say, okay, we can make these adjustments to what's pertinent in this area locally? But I'll always kick it back to, and I'm lucky here to have a staff of people that have a good ear and will listen, a really good ATR is going to be there to take your questions, answer them, guide you, and give you the details as you go through to make it simple for you and easy to understand. And somebody who I know knows how to do that too, has worked alongside me in years past, is Ricky. So Ricky, you know, maybe you can add some context to that from a different perspective.

Dr. Ricky Godbolt

Thanks Joe, I'll be happy to. The first thing an individual should do, or either a sponsor, if you're considering as an individual to enroll in a Registered Apprenticeship program, or if you're a sponsor who's considering starting a Registered Apprenticeship program, I will always say go to apprenticeship.gov as your first step. Look to see if there's an occupation there that you would like to train your apprentices in, or if you decide that you have a particular occupation that you want to train in, you've not heard of an individual being trained in that occupation. So again, go to apprenticeship.gov, look for that occupation. If it's there and we have approved it, it will be listed. You will also see on apprenticeship.gov, there are some occupations that have a gold star by. That means that there is a Registered Apprenticeship program there. If you look on apprenticeship.gov, you don't see the occupation, use O*NET online. Search O*NET Online, use keywords. O*NET Online will have information there. One of the things I like about O*NET Online is when you go and you look, there's career clusters there. You can look and it has tasks, it has different types of information there that you can use to build a work process schedule. Now, one of the things, some of the things I will tell you about a work process schedule, and please pay very close attention to what I'm about to say. Sometimes I receive work process schedules that are basically a few words, and I will give an example. If someone is wanting to be trained, they may say electricity. When an individual is looking at the word electricity, it's a title. It's not an expectation. It's not something that explains what you want an apprentice to learn. What you want to use is when you are actually setting up a goal or a work process task, you want to use measurable data, you want to use action words, I'm sorry, action verbs. You want to tell a person, these are the actions I want you to take to accomplish a goal. Once you accomplish a goal or learn a task, these are the skills and abilities that you should obtain, so make sure you use action verbs. Make sure you use complete sentences, make sure that it is an observable option or action that you want an individual to see and do. Because as a mentor, a mentor is going to be observing that apprentice to make sure that apprentice is demonstrating competence in that particular task that they're using. Also, when it comes to related instruction or related training instruction, you're gonna create an outline, make sure that these training or the classroom work that they're getting, relates to the subject that they have just performed. It can be before, during, or after when you're doing related instruction. Sometimes you'll see it before, especially when you're concerning safety. If you're gonna be working with hand tools and power tools, usually your related instruction will be before because

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you don't want an individual to go out and use a hand tool or a power tool and become injured or injure someone near them or damaged equipment. So those are things you wanna look for. So make sure that to create a work process schedule that has tasks. Don't just use one word. Use a complete sentence that has an action verb. Make sure it has data or task in there that's measurable. Make sure that they are observable. Next, once you create your work process schedule and your related training instruction outline, decide how many hours or how much time you want to train this individual in it. In the Office of Apprenticeship, we use three training approaches. One is considered as time-based. That's a set time that you want to train an apprentice on, whether it's five hours, 10 hours, 100 hours, 200 hours, 1,000 hours, whatever. That's a set time that you have set as a goal to train an apprentice on. There's also a competency-based training approach that we use. A competency-based, to give an example, is if you're having an individual who's going through, and I will say, replacing an alternator on an automobile. If that individual is already competent in that, what you would do is set a time for this individual to go work. You observe it. If that person meets your guidelines, your criteria for that task, you sign and date it that that individual is competent in that task, that individual goes to another task. Then there's a combination of time based and there's a combination of our competency based. That's our hybrid training, where there's usually a minimum amount of time you expect this individual to be in that task and then there's a maximum amount of time you expect that individual to be completing that task. So in between that time, if that individual completes that task, that individual is competent, so you can sign them all. But if it takes more time, then you have that maximum amount of time for that training approach for that individual to go to. Now, once you decide that you have the training approach, you have the task, you have related instruction, you have the hours, the amount of time, then you create your work process schedule. If that occupation is not an approved apprenticeship occupation, we have what's called an ARR tool. And that's where you can actually go through, submit that information into our database in the Office of Apprenticeship. What you will also do is, once you submit that information in, you want to put in national contacts, because what we're going to do in the national office, we're going to look at what you submitted. We're gonna go through, we're gonna see if it's correct, we're gonna see if it's a task that can be recognized as the principal task or an occupation, we're going to reach out to your points of contact. We're not going to mention your name, we're not going to mention your organization, so because we want the individual who gives us their fair and objective observation of this work process task and related instruction outline that you gave us. So we want everything to be objective. So if there's any identifiable information or words, we're going to try to remove those words. We're going to let you know why we're removing those words. We're going to let you know that we're going to submit this. We're going to get your permission to submit it. Then we're going to reach out to your points of contact. But prior to us reaching out to your points of contact, what we would like you to do is for you to reach out to them first. Explain to them what you would like to do. Get their name, get their address, get their telephone number, get their e-mail address. Because if we receive an e-mail address that says info at a certain organization.com or.gov or.net, we reach out to them, the e-mail that's going to come from us from our ARR tool, it may go into a junk e-mail folder and it may go into a trash folder. According to if an organization has a firewall set up, it may not allow the e-mail to go through. So make sure, and also if we cannot reach the person, we may call, we may send an e-mail, we may talk to the individual that you listed as your national contact so that we can actually let them know who we are. We may send the information out or the ARR tool will generate an e-mail. So communication is key when you're trying to set up a Registered Apprenticeship program, when you try to get an occupation approval. And also, those individuals are going to give us feedback on a principal determination worksheet. There's a series of questions that we ask them. And just to give an example, we're going to say, is this

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work process schedule one that you would be considered as a principal for an occupation? Or is it related instruction outline something that you would consider as being a principal for this occupation? Do you think there's more to be added? Do you think it should be approved as a principal occupation? Now, once we get all this feedback, we go through the internal process, we put everything together, we submit it up our supervisory chain, our supervisory chain will determine based on what we as ATRs, apprenticeship training representative, or program analysts, what we recommend, it will be reviewed in the national office, and if it's approved, the sponsor who submitted an occupation will receive a letter from the Department of Labor stating that the occupation has been approved. So now with that, once you get that occupation approved, what we recommend that you do is you reach out to someone like Joe and Abi, because they're gonna be the ones who's gonna work with you because you've got the occupation approved. Now you wanna set up a Registered Apprenticeship program. And they're gonna go into more detail on to how to set up a Registered Apprenticeship program. They're gonna give you the forms, they're gonna talk you through, they're gonna walk you through, they're gonna be there with you. And keep in mind, when you're in the Registered Apprenticeship program family, as I mentioned earlier, it's like an alumni, it's like a family, it's a fraternity. You will never be alone. We will always be there to help you, as we said in the military, from cradle to grave from the beginning of the Registered Apprenticeship program until the Registered Apprenticeship program ends, we are always there. And if that Register Apprenticeship program ends and you wanna start another Registered Apprenticeship program, we are always gonna be there for you. So never think that you are alone. We'll always be there, whether it's at the state level, the federal level, the local level, we will always be there. Now to give you more information about the state apprenticeship agency at the local level I'm going to turn you over to Miss Abigail Allen, who is an expert at doing this. So Abi, I turn it over to you.

Abigail Allen

Why thank you. Those were all really thorough good points, Ricky. Yeah, so I've registered a good number of programs over the years and this is a really great question for this specific demographic because veterans can advocate for programs to be started. I've registered quite a few programs over the years where a veteran has worked for a small employer who's doing their training in-house, but they're aware of the use of their GI Bill and how it is worked in and embedded with apprenticeship. And they really worked with their employer to sponsor a program. I can give some examples a little later on that, and it's worked well. And then I've also worked with large national programs, as Ricky talked about that register programs specifically to recruit veterans such as Northrop Grumman and Boeing. So quite a vast spectrum. It really just depends on the pathway that you want to take, that finding that employer connection, and if there isn't an existing program, help champion the cause or finding a new pathway that involves apprenticeship if it's really what you want to do.

Rebecca

Thanks, Abi. Sometimes people may have some preconceived ideas about the fields or occupations that are associated with apprenticeships. So can you talk about some of the more common apprenticeship industries, as well as some of the emerging or non-traditional apprenticeship industries and occupations? And are there any challenges associated with expanding apprenticeships into new career fields? Abi?

Abigail Allen

There are certainly some misconceptions about Registered Apprenticeship, such as it's all trade unions or an alternative to college, but that is certainly not the case. Apprenticeship reflects the

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industries driving the workforce needs in America. At the time that apprenticeship became regulated, especially as a need to ensure the safety of the worker, America was physically growing, and that was reflected in the occupations that were most utilized in apprenticeship, the trade unions. The largest union in America is currently the National Education Association, the NEA, and you can really see that reflected in our current campaigns, which is very, very much a focus on teacher apprenticeships and the national shortage of teachers. Industrial unions such as auto workers and steel workers have longstanding apprenticeships as well. So I wouldn't really say we are expanding into anything new. We are currently building on the existing and adjusting it to the needs of the American workforce. Joe, what's your perspective?

Joseph Olivero

Well, it is true that foundationally speaking, a lot of the people involved in apprenticeship or in the early days were the people that were building America, that were in the construction industry or the building trades. And they've long been the torchbearers for a Registered Apprenticeship as well. They continue to utilize the programming and have always believed in it as a methodology. I do want to say, before I get into some of the areas I think that are growing, I really do agree with Abi in that you know the alternative to college mentality is one that is, is unfortunate. But we've started to really get away from I know at the state level we do and you know at the federal level I think across the spectrum of occupations that are approved for apprenticeship, we have certainly said that college can be a part of those or not. But the alternative to college is really kind of insinuating that this is something that you do as an alternative. You know, if you can't go to college or don't want to go to college, you would do this instead. And I don't think that's fair. I think this is a choice. It is an option, much like college for you to say, hey, maybe I want to go and do a little more hands on learning. And sometimes these newer occupations involve some schooling that is tied to a degree and what they have kind of started to call degree apprenticeships. But that concept that it's an alternative to college really to me is a negative connotation right from the get-go to say it's an alternative. But I think it is a option and one that should be looked at by anyone at any age. Again, that's one of the benefits of apprenticeship. You're never too old or young. Well, you gotta be 16, but you're never too old to get involved in an apprenticeship, and I think it's key. But I do wanna say that there are some non-traditional apprenticeship occupations that are fast growing. The expansion into those areas might be debatable because sometimes there's programming that has been in that area. Education's a great example that, you know, we have apprenticeships there, but in the last two or three years, our number of teacher apprentices has grown by over 100% every year. And that's key, but healthcare, culinary arts, data sciences and information technology, especially data analytics and data sciences. Those ones have come up a lot. There are some occupations that have really grown and have utilized this methodology and, and I would say, you know, with there being thousands of occupations out there, the majority of them suitable for apprenticeship. It is definitely, you know, a misnomer to call apprenticeship niche or as an alternative. It's very much so being intertwined into almost, I'd say, half of our work-based learning programs at our state level. And I think nationally, a lot of people have started to really embrace Registered Apprenticeship as their go-to.

Hughes McLean

I agree with that, Joe. Historically speaking, as the investment started to kind of increase in apprenticeship, we've seen a lot more of those, you know, non-traditional occupations. And that's been going on for a couple of decades now. So I agree with the whole, it's not an alternative to college. It's similar to college, like a path into an occupation, essentially. And within apprenticeship, it seems like there are some academic components and requirements

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that often kind of get overlooked. What would you say about that, Ricky? What are your thoughts on that?

Dr. Ricky Godbolt

I think Joe brought up a great point, and I will compare that to walking into a dark room and turning on a light bulb, because Joe just shined something on the perspective of apprenticeship that I want to address. And I'll tell you, those who are listening to this podcast, when you think about a Registered Apprenticeship, and Abi mentioned it earlier, it's not only just trades and unions. In Registered Apprenticeship, we have advanced manufacturing, we have construction, we have healthcare, we have technology and cybersecurity, we have energy, we have education, finance and insurance, transportation, logistics, hospitality and services. One of the things I don't see promoted enough about Registered Apprenticeship program and I would love to promote it today for those of y'all who are listening and for those of y'all who are considering going to Registered Apprenticeship program is don't just look at the work itself. Think about the academic requirements to be in a Registered Apprenticeship program. For those industries that I just mentioned, you're going to have to learn some form of mathematics regardless of which occupation you go into. If it's anything, there's math involving everything you do. I just took a trip back from New York. And of course, I'm looking at my speedometer, miles per hour. I'm comparing miles per hour. That's mathematics. If you're going to go into an electrical program, if you wanna be an electrician, here's some skills in electricity, academic skills. We know about the manual skills, the hands-on skills that you learn. But how many people realize that if you're gonna be an electrician, you gotta know algebra? You may have to know trigonometry according to what part of electricity you go to, geometry, conversions of decimals and fractions. If you're going in the HVACR profession, you've got to learn thermodynamics, which is transfer of heat. You'll learn about creating energy. You hear the term, energy is never created or the shortage is moved from one place to another. If you are a mechanic, you're gonna be doing, using a torque wrench, and you're gonna be able to transfer inch pounds, I'm sorry, convert inch pounds to foot pounds, or foot pounds to Newton meters. And I will say this, for those of y'all who look at a carpenter, have you ever tried to read a tape measure and convert it quickly. Watch a carpenter. A carpenter can look at that tape measure in a matter of seconds, they can convert fractions in a matter of seconds. Once I was in a organization where an individual called me and said, I have people that I wanna put in your Registered Apprenticeship program, but they can't read and write. Can I enroll them? I said, no, because you have to take a test. You have to read, you have to learn safety. There may be a sign that says warning. You have to be able to read that sign. You also have to be able to use logical deductions. If you run across a problem, you're going to have to troubleshoot. So you've got to be able to use your mental capacity. So the misconception about Registered Apprenticeship programs is just all trades, it's all hands-on. No, it's not. You have to think. You have to be able to perform a function. And I will say to those again who are listening to this podcast, go to one of the websites. There are some organizations out there that share their exams, pre-exams, to give you a general idea. I would say go and look at some of those exams that you have to take. It's specifically electrical, that's one I'd like to point to. Also, operating engineers, also HVAC. Look and see on the website if they have practice exam and look at them. And I will say for anybody who wants to get into any apprenticeable occupation, one thing I will say, never say, I just wanna work with my hands. Because everyone, if you're programming a computer, you're working with your hands. If you're driving a car, you work with your hand. If you go to the doctor, when a doctor's operating on you, they're working with their hands, but they're also using their brains. If you're working in a Registered Apprenticeship program, you're going to use your brains to be successful in a Registered Apprenticeship program. You're going to use your brains. You're going to have to

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think. So again, for those of us who are in Registered Apprenticeship program, for those of us who are listening, for those who are counselors, please promote the academic course and let an individual know what they're getting into. And for those who are veterans, you can download your joint services transcript, which has, which is similar to the verification military experience and training, but yet it assigns to the task that you're using, it assigns recommended credit hours from ACE. You can use that joint services transcript and you can go to a university that's willing to grant you credit for prior learning experience in a Registered Apprenticeship program. If you're seeking a college degree, and as Hughes mentioned before, using the GI Bill, all of these things come into play. So a Registered Apprenticeship Program is a fantastic opportunity for those who want a career, for those who want to be in STEM, for those who want to go out and make a difference. I'll say this and then I'll turn it back over to everyone. One of the things I loved to do when I was in the army, I was stationed in Korea twice. I went past Camp Warrior Base, which is right on the DMZ, the Demilitarized Zone between North Korea and South Korea. And we built ammunition bunkers. And I was so proud to tell everyone on the tour bus, I built those bunkers. So one of the things you'll hear an apprentice say, they're proud. I went to apprentice graduation and the individuals who were graduating, they were so proud. They had their cap, their gowns, their uniform, and their family members were proud that they accomplished a goal, and that goal was graduating from a Registered Apprenticeship program. I met young students that are going to school and in Registered Apprenticeship program. One of the students said, now I don't have to ask my parents for money. I have money. I'm able to help them with the bills. I'm able to buy my parents' presents. I'm able to do everything because I'm in a Registered Apprenticeship program. So with veterans, we're used to being self-sufficient, so enrolling in a Registered Apprenticeship program is a win-win for the veteran, it's a win-win for the sponsor, it's a win-win for the nation, because you actually have individuals who are producing and making America strong. We are a fantastic country, we're the greatest country in the world, so Registered Apprenticeship Program is maintaining that tradition of making us the greatest country in the world. And I thank you for this opportunity to let me talk about Registered Apprenticeship Program, something I love, and I will turn it back over to you.

Rebecca

Thanks so much, Ricky, really appreciate it. Everyone has shared such amazing information. Thank you. But this seems like a great time to start talking about some success stories. We would love to hear some real world examples of successful apprenticeship programs. Abi, want to jump in?

Abigail Allen

Sure. So as I did mention before, I've had veterans reach out to me because they had knowledge of the system and wanted to help their employer start an apprenticeship program. One of those was here in California, where California is one of six states where you don't have to have a Juris Doctorate degree to take the bar exam. You can actually become a lawyer through apprenticeship. It does have to be, it has to meet the bar exam standards, the bar standards of what is required so there is you know there's more than just what we require for an apprenticeship but this individual was able to work with his friend and colleague who was an attorney and they mentored him and they're currently going through the process so that he can meet all the requirements to take the bar exam not going to college for it and using his GI Bill. So that's a really great success story. California is one of six states, like I mentioned, including Maine, New York, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington. And then, like I said, I have those larger programs like Northrop Grumman and Boeing where they utilize apprenticeship because of the clearance obligations. Entering as a civilian, there's so much more security clearance for those

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roles in cybersecurity or non-destructive testing. And there's really that variable, are they even gonna get the clearance? When they decide that they're just gonna recruit veterans, they know they have a dedicated workforce and they have individuals who are gonna be able to progress, there's no variable. So it's a really great fit and there's, multiple success stories on our website and online that you can find to further highlight that. But I believe Ricky and Joe have a few more.

Dr. Ricky Godbolt

Thanks, Abi. One of the things I will say is for the veterans that are listening to this podcast and also for others, when we have National Apprenticeship Week, which we have every year with the United States Department of Labor, if you get an opportunity, please attend one of those. And for the veteran population, if they have one at the National Guard armories or any of the the armories, please go, because what you will hear are other veterans who went into Registered Apprenticeship program. I will tell you one about a veteran I heard got out of the military. And this veteran actually went into a Registered Apprenticeship program and are very successful. The veteran mentioned about how they actually are learning, they're earning a living, a livable wage, and it's so fantastic for this veteran to do that. I also talked to another veteran, and he's out in the state where Abigail's at. This veteran is a multimillionaire. He went through and he learned the trades and he's a multimillionaire. I've talked to other veterans that are in the energy field. These veterans have their own companies. They're producing electricity. So for a veteran, this is a great opportunity for you to learn in a structured learning environment, to go and learn. So National Apprenticeship Week, when it comes to your area, please attend. You will see other veterans and I'll use myself as an example. I transitioned from the army, I was in the Army's apprenticeship program as an electrician. All the skills I use, I actually use it now at my own home. I can save myself money by doing electrical work. I'm also, I was ASC certified as an automotive mechanic. I can do my own work. All of this is because of Registered Apprenticeship program. So these are lifelong skills. Even as you get older, you can still use these skills. You can use them anytime that you want to. But the great thing about Registered Apprenticeship program is there's resources there and these resources are free. It doesn't cost you anything to ask questions. It doesn't cost you to come to us. We are here to support you. We're here, as I said before, from cradle to grave. So anything that you have as a need, support element, whatever you need, please contact us. We will be there to help you. So, Joe, back to you.

Joseph Olivere

Thanks, Ricky. Yeah, you know, in Delaware, there's a really good success story that I've probably told now at so many different events throughout the last year or two. In its infancy stage, recently renamed. So like it's kind of hard like to, I keep wanting to say the old name, but I'll just say a health coalition in Delaware that deals with a lot of rural health and works with many firms to supply community healthcare worker training. Worked with me on an apprenticeship. I was an ATR at the time. I had kind of set up the program and kind of worked with them to create it and then, you know, they really took the ball and ran with it, this health coalition. They had some really good champions there and found a way to continually get people involved in finding ways to fund the training, finding ways to partner with organizations throughout the state. And during the time that, you know, I was not working with them here at the state level, they went from being a single employer, you know, one or two apprentice program, to becoming an intermediary. They currently have 17 employers in the state and have over 40 apprentices and the program is not even two years old. They have done an excellent job of taking a structured model, working it into having multiple different academic options. Students can go to community college, students can go through literacy training, health literacy

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training and work with our Delaware State Health and Social Services and they do a lot of things to really move you through that. And I will say that that that growth that's happened in less than two years really speaks to the effort of that sponsor, the intermediary. And you know, they're working seeking out the resources to make it happen. But it's a great success story for a trade that you know is not commonly thought of when we talked earlier about like that, you know, preconceived notion that Registered Apprenticeship is for construction or for, you know, workers of that nature. These are community healthcare workers making a difference in the lives of their small towns and their rural communities and even in the hospital systems across the state. So I think it's really valuable to look at that as something different than what you would normally hear about with different programs. And I think it's also another fact that, you know, we have a lot of people that come out of time in in the service that are great caregivers and could work into industries like that.

Rebecca

Thanks, Joe. I'm sure that after hearing all of these amazing success stories, our listeners are going to want to learn even more about Registered Apprenticeships. So can you briefly discuss some state and national resources or points of contact? Hughes, you want to get us started?

Hughes McLean

Yeah, well, in regard to points of contact, you can reach out to me, HughesMcLean@dol.gov. The e-mail will be provided, you know, with this, with the podcast. So, and then in terms of national resources, apprenticeship.gov would really be that starting point to learn a lot more about apprenticeship, right, as a concept. Apprenticeship.gov would be a great way to do that. And then we also have state resources as well that Abi can speak to a little more than I can, Abi?

Abigail Allen

Sure, every state almost has a division of labor of their own. So don't ignore your state resources, work through there. And also industry-focused resources. I have agriculture, telecom, and tech, and they all have industry organizations. I was just at NASCAR here in San Diego last weekend, and there was a specific Vets in Agriculture booth. just helping make that transition from service to the workforce and giving resources out. There's also, we have for telecommunications, TIRAP, and they have a specifically veteran geared recruitment tech. There's a multitude of vets in tech organizations. So don't forget about that. And also work directly with your state and their veterans resources and workforce resources. Joe?

Joseph Oliver

Thanks, Abi. Yeah, I think we're all going to probably repeat apprenticeship.gov a few times, but the key factor is that in apprenticeship, on apprenticeship.gov, you can find contacts for every state, whether they're federal or state apprenticeship agencies. And that's the key. You can get somebody to reach out to there. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that saadirectors.org, which is another website, which for all the non-federal states lists all the state directors there. Sometimes that information that you can cross-reference it with what you find on apprenticeship.gov. And then key to, I think, all work in your local area is your American Job Center or your AJC. Your local Department of Labor should have an office or a job center where you can go in and get help and work with them there. And they can be very valuable in pointing you in the right direction. But, you know, reach out to your local state apprenticeship agency via those contacts on those websites. I think Abi makes a great point in a few times throughout this whole podcast. She said, do your homework. And I think that's really key. Just go out and do your research.

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That's one thing that there's no cost to is your time. It's your time. And if you want to spend it getting the good information, it's going to save your time on the back end. So I'll go over to Ricky here for anything he can add.

Dr. Ricky Godbolt

You know, when I was growing up, I used to read Marvel comic books and the late great Stan Lee would always say, 'nuff, N-U-F-F, said. So with Abi and Hughes and Joe, all the things they're said are so great. I really don't have much to add on, but what I will say is this, everyone here in this podcast, everyone here, VETS, DOL, Abi, Joe with the state, we're all working together. Earlier I mentioned about an alumni, fraternity and so forth. We're all working in this together. We're all interconnected. So if you're looking for resources contact us, look for your resources that were just previously mentioned. We are all here together and we will help you find your resource. We'll help you find a career. Just have your motivation, dedication, and determination. Be proud, come in with a positive attitude, go and search on the website, go to your local resources, go to your career centers, contact us on the internet. Now with the internet, there's so much information there, you can find any points of contact, you'll find some of our information there, but so again, I say, we're all in this together. We're all here to help you. So if you're a veteran, if you're a civilian or whomever, just realize we are all here for you. So I'll turn it back over to you.

Rebecca

Thank you all so much for sharing your guidance and expertise with us today. So let's end our conversation with one final question. What would you say to a sponsor who's interested in accepting a veteran into a Registered Apprenticeship program?

Hughes McLean

I think I'll say two things to that sponsor. Number one, if you're looking to get veterans into your program, get the opportunities in front of veterans, right? Best way to do that is send those posting to your state contacts, that apprenticeship agency at the state level, the veteran services agency at the state level, the workforce agency, 'cause you wanna make sure those opportunities are available in places that veterans are going to see them. That's number one. Make the program attractive to veterans by getting it approved for GI Bill benefits. That way they get more compensation than they would in your program than they would at another program, because that veteran status gives them a lot of options, right? So as a sponsor, you want to get it in front of veterans, number one, and then number two, make sure the program is attractive to veterans. That would be my advice to a sponsor. What would you say, Ricky?

Dr. Ricky Godbolt

I would say my advice to a sponsor is ask yourself this. Do you want someone who is dedicated? Do you want someone who has pride? Do you want someone who has worked with millions of dollars of equipment? Do you want someone who has worked long hours? Do you want someone who takes pride again in what they're doing? Do you want someone who's going to be there for you, who's going to be loyal? If you want someone who has all of these qualities, look at hiring a veteran. A veteran is a person who is used to following rules. They're used to being to work on time. Some may be used to working long hours, but the biggest thing about a veteran is they're dedicated and they're prideful. If you want someone who is going to be there for you, just as they are here for the nation, then hire a veteran. Abi?

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Abigail Allen

I can't top that, Ricky. So I'll just say, I'll say it again. Do your homework and utilize your resources. We are here. We are free. Don't ever pay anybody to help you do anything as a misconception that we're too hard to work with. We're not. We're here to help you every step of the way. And if that's a sponsor or a veteran, just utilize your resources and do your homework.

Joseph Oliver

Well said, Abi. I think that is the way to put focus on this. And I would say that my kind of one liner for businesses and, you know, recruiting sponsors that are looking for workers is, you know, make good connections with your local office. And in the case of veterans, your local veterans rep is of great value to you. Your state apprenticeship office and job center, we have people here, again, Abi said it, we're free, that you don't pay anything to walk in and talk to us. We're here to help connect people to jobs. Our mission is to get people into meaningful careers and gainful employment, and we can help connect you to a strong veteran job seeker. So reach out to us, and you'll find that there is a lot of resources that are already out there that you won't have to work hard to get, and I think that's what I would say.

Rebecca

Thank you, Hughes, Ricky, Abi, and Joe for participating in our podcast today. And thank you to our listeners. This has been really important information that you have shared. If you'd like more information about serving veterans, please visit NVTI.org to access resources such as this podcast. We're constantly adding new material, so please check back often. We also, of course, invite you to continue the conversation at the Making Careers Happen at Veterans Community of Practice. Thank you all so much.

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