

**Northern Virginia Technology Council
Foundation**



Business Plan
July 2016 – June 2017

Executive Summary

Nationally in June 2016, there were 442,000 unemployed Veterans and over 10 million Veterans not participating in the U.S. workforce out of nearly 21 million Veterans total according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Virginia is one of three states with an expected increase in its working age Veteran population.

Even with over 20,000 programs nationwide supporting Veteran career transition, very few directly connect the business community with the Veteran. Locally in the National Capital Region, an estimated 3,500 service members will transition from area military installations in 2016. Virginia has the fastest growing population of Veterans in the nation, greatest number of Veterans in the work force per capita, largest percentage of female Veterans and the largest percentage of Veterans under the age of 28.

Evidenced based research supports that Veterans experience numerous challenges during a military to civilian lifestyle transition. Significant among these are:

1. Two-thirds of transitioning Veterans experienced difficulty transitioning from military to civilian life and close to half did not feel ready to transition.
2. Veterans name “finding a job” as the greatest challenge in transitioning, with transferring military skills to a civilian environment as the major hurdle.
3. Most feel their military service is respected by employers, but three in five Veterans express concerns about cultural barriers.
4. Veterans who report a physical or mental health challenge have a more difficult transition, show the highest need for support and report greater employment concerns.
5. Only two thirds of Veterans receive career transition support of which less than half found effective. The primary source was a service-given Transition Assistance Program.
6. Most Veterans say they are prepared to search for a job, but nearly as many say they need more help with multiple job search skills. Veterans report that they need the most help with networking to achieve an interview opportunity.
7. Job seekers report using multiple resources for trying to find employment, but desire additional tools. Interest is high in new transition programs or services customized for Veterans, in which close to three-quarters view as being important to their success.
8. Veterans look to employers to not only nurture their career, but also support their transition to civilian life and accommodate any health challenges they might be facing.

9. Veterans feel that they are just another applicant and in many cases, unless they have a connection, experienced difficulty in having recruiters review their resume.

At the same time, companies in the Northern Virginia technology community maintain that finding qualified workers is one of their most critical long-term challenges. Research shows that the region is facing a manpower shortage and that the demands of the business community cannot be met through traditional gains from K-12 and higher education.

The Northern Virginia Technology Council (NVTC) is the nation's largest technology trade association and is uniquely positioned to expand its Veteran Employment Initiative (VEI) into a community transition and regional workforce program. By bringing together NVTC's 1,000 member organizations, including businesses from all sectors of the technology industry, service providers, universities, non-profit organizations and government agencies, with community, state and federal government resources, and facilitated by the online job board capabilities of Monster through www.novatechvets.org, NVTC has built a model Veteran career transition program that can be replicated across Virginia and other regions across the country. (See National Scope below.)

The key elements of the NVTC Veterans Employment Initiative include:

1. Educating NVTC member companies on the value of hiring Veterans through:
 - a. A series of free videos designed to educate human resource professionals, recruiters, hiring managers, CEOs and COOs on best practices in Veteran hiring.
 - b. Development of an online resource library to help employers navigate best practices to support their Veteran recruitment effort.
2. Assisting the Northern Virginia business community in its efforts to recruit, hire, train and retain Veterans by:
 - a. Further developing and increasing usage of the www.novatechvets.org online job board and recruiter tools.
 - b. Sharing best practices and success stories in Veteran hiring.
 - c. Connecting employers with Veteran job seekers through innovative, high-impact Recruiting Day events.
3. Supporting Veterans in finding employment in Virginia and developing the skills necessary to succeed by:
 - a. Growing the VETWORKING professional development program to support a Veterans' professional and personal growth.
 - b. Connecting them with employers through www.novatechvets.org and Recruiting Day events.
 - c. Partnering with government agencies and nonprofits that support Veterans in career transition. (i.e., VA, Hiring Our Heroes, Virginia Values Veterans, etc.)

- d. Expanding VEI's participation with local area Veteran networking groups (i.e., Operation Rally Point, county Chambers of Commerce Veteran Committees, etc.) and assisting Veterans in connecting with these organizations.
 - e. Developing the VEI Scholars program to open new pipelines of opportunity for student Veterans at NVTC VEI partner academic institutions for internships with NVTC companies.
4. Partner with the region's colleges and universities to address the skills gap faced by many Veterans as they leave military service and to match training and certification to the workforce needs of Virginia's technology sector through:
 - a. Collaboration on connecting Veterans with certifications and degrees that match the current and future workforce needs of member companies.
 - b. Development of internship opportunities within the region's technology business community to help provide Veterans with meaningful work experiences and "hands-on" learning opportunities.
 5. Educate Veterans about the potential of joining a small company or starting their own business by:
 - a. Connecting Veterans to mentoring, coaching or advisory opportunities with seasoned members of the technology and entrepreneurship community.
 - b. Connecting Veterans to Veteran-focused incubators such as The Capital Post and DC Bunker to help identify developing technology based start-ups.
 6. Partner with the Commonwealth of Virginia by:
 - a. Providing private sector counsel and guidance to the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) program through membership on the V3 Strategic Alliance Council and encouraging NVTC companies to gain and maintain V3 certification.
 - b. Collaborating on policy changes that facilitate the hiring of Veterans.

National Scope:

In addition to connecting Veterans to employment opportunities within Northern Virginia, the VEI serves as a model that can be replicated and expanded nationwide. In January 2014, NVTC partnered with Monster, the Consumer Technology Association (CTA) and nine other national technology associations to launch U.S. Tech Vets (www.ustechvets.org), the national expansion of the www.novatechvets.org website. Together, these associations are partnering with the goal to connect the one million transitioning Veterans to civilian employment opportunities within the national technology sector.

NVTC and Monster have engaged with other technology councils to establish their own local/regional programs incorporating local ecosystems and personal connections similar to the VEI. In July 2014, Monster and the Massachusetts High Tech Council launched New England Tech Vets to deliver program support to its member companies. The VEI continues to serve as

a model for regional collaboration in serving the needs of transitioning service members and Veteran employment.

Development Goal:

The Northern Virginia Technology Council Foundation (NVTC Foundation), a 501(c)(3) non-profit, raised over \$275,000 in FY 2015-16, and seeks to raise \$311,000 for FY 2016-17 to support and grow the VEI.

About the NVTC Veterans Employment Initiative

VEI Background

Research by Dr. Steven Fuller at George Mason University's Center for Regional Analysis and others in the realm of workforce development, indicate that Northern Virginia faces a skilled labor shortage and that traditional gains from K-12 and higher education are simply not enough to meet the business needs of the community in a sustainable growth pattern over the near term. This shortage is primarily due to a skills gap in the available workforce, though many of the needed skills can easily be filled with additional training.

Northern Virginia is challenged now with seeking creative ways to invite new workers into the region while providing a healthy ecosystem that will sustain projected growth and development. A significant solution rests in capturing the talented workforce community from the ongoing reduction in force in the military. Research from Monster indicates that military Veterans are significantly more willing to relocate to an area if they understand that their skills are in demand and that a positive employment environment exists.

In a proactive measure to promote the hiring of Veterans in the Northern Virginia and National Capital Region, the NVTC Veterans Employment Initiative was launched in August 2013. The VEI program was later incorporated into the NVTC Foundation, a 501(c)(3) entity in March 2014.

The VEI serves to facilitate and promote the hiring of Veterans among the 1,000 member organizations and companies that make up the Northern Virginia Technology Council. Supported by the NVTC Foundation, the VEI bridges transitioning military members, Veterans and military spouses to job, internship and mentorship opportunities, while also providing support to member companies in their efforts to recruit, hire, train and retain qualified Veteran employees.

The VEI is driven by the Northern Virginia business and technology community, in conjunction with the region's academic institutions and policymakers and is supported in large part through community partnerships and the active engagement of committed volunteers.

The VEI is professionally managed by a full-time employee of the Northern Virginia Technology Council and is overseen by NVTC's Vice President of Communications and Strategic Initiatives, Chief Operating Officer, and President/CEO. The VEI develops and takes its strategic direction from a volunteer Task Force made up of professionals from NVTC member companies, Veteran Service Organizations, Federal and State agencies and the military services.

VEI Mission:

Make it a priority of every NVTC company to recruit, hire, train and retain military Veterans.

VEI Vision:

Be the model community for Veteran employment resource by educating companies on the value of hiring and retaining Veterans, while facilitating training and transitioning of Veterans to employment.

VEI Goals:

1. Increase Veteran employment opportunities among NVTC member companies.
2. Support Veterans in finding employment opportunities by creating a process and support system that expedites the transition from military to civilian employment.
3. Aid Veterans in developing the skills necessary to find a job in the private sector and succeed in their civilian careers.
4. Create innovative ways for companies in our region to recruit, hire, train and retain Veterans.
5. Assist NVTC member companies in establishing or expanding their own internal Veteran employment programs.
6. Collaborate with state and federal policymakers to remove barriers that prevent effective hiring and training of Veterans.

VEI Objectives:

1. Identify and establish relationships with existing Veteran programs and organizations.
(Goal Alignment: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
2. Foster connections (build and expand a network) to facilitate the VEI's goals.
(Goal Alignment: 1, 2, 4, 6)
3. Conduct outreach to external stakeholders and potential partner organizations to promote the VEI within the region. **(Goal Alignment: 1, 2, 4)**
4. Develop programs and materials to engage internal and external stakeholders/NVTC members and support their participation in the VEI. **(Goal Alignment: 1, 4, 5, 6)**
5. Focus on the continued development of the VEI's online presence, including job search and skills matching tools, resume database, success stories and company profiles, and other resources. **(Goals Alignment: 1, 2, 3, 5)**
6. Leverage relationships with the business community to create work-based experiences for Veterans. **(Goal Alignment: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)**
7. Engage NVTC members for outreach to and training for Veterans. **(Goal Alignment: 3, 4, 5)**

8. Develop resources for Veterans who need guidance, mentorship and education to facilitate opportunities to start their own businesses. **(Goal Alignment: 1, 3)**
9. Develop content and solicit subject matter experts/case studies for events to train members on developing and running Veteran programs. **(Goal Alignment: 2, 4, 5)**
10. Engage state level policymakers in discussions on how best to support Virginia's National Guard and Reservists. **(Goal Alignment: 1, 6)**
11. Conduct and/or guide outreach to Veterans **(Goal Alignment: 2, 3)**
12. Promote degree pathways for Veterans into careers in demand in our region (e.g., cyber security, big data) **(Goal Alignment: 3, 5, 6)**
13. Track Veteran employment statistics on a national, state and local level. **(Goal Alignment: 1)**

VEI Accomplishments:

- **National/International Recognition- Joining Forces:** The VEI gained national recognition as a "Best Practice in developing a regional approach to the issues surrounding Veteran employment and education." In April 2015, First Lady Michelle Obama spotlighted the VEI as part of her national Joining Forces campaign. Subsequent media coverage from as far away as Australia highlighted VEI.
- **V3 & Veteran Legislation in the Commonwealth of Virginia:** The NVTC policy team and VEI Program Manager worked with Virginia state legislators and the Virginia Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, Admiral (retired) John Harvey, during the 2015 and 2016 Virginia General assembly sessions to develop a new Veterans Employment Performance Grant incentive that provides businesses with fewer than 300 employees with a \$1,000 grant per each recent Veteran hire. The General Assembly approved the new program as part of their biennial budget and included \$500,000 in funding, which will support 500 new Veteran hires.
- **Relationship with the Military District of Washington (MDW):** The MDW with the consent of the Commanding General assigned the G1 Sergeant Major in charge of all transitioning military members to sit on the VEI Task Force. The Sergeant Major has opened opportunities for the VEI to support transitioning service members in the region's military installations. This relationship has significantly increased the number of transitioning service members the VEI is able to touch and serve.
- **Veterans Hired:** Since the launch of the VEI in August 2013, NVTC can reasonably track over 4,000 Veteran hires using V3 validated metrics among NVTC member companies in Virginia. However, this is limited to those companies who are both

registered to and report accurately as certified members of the V3 program. It is expected that this number is substantially higher if other NVTC companies actively reported their Veteran hires to the VEI.

- **Veterans Served/Activity Level:** In addition to those Veterans hired, the VEI provided over 70,000 unique job seeking visitors free access to the resources of the *www.novatechvets.org* website, directly served 535 job seekers at its Recruiting Days, and provided service and support to 106 job seeking Veterans through the VETWORKING program. The VEI also presented its program to over 600 transitioning US Army members at a MDW transition summit in June 2016.
- **Website Usage:** Visitors to *www.novatechvets.org* spend an average of 12.3 minutes on the site and, on average, 59 percent of these unique visitors will return to the site within one day. These metrics greatly exceed industry standards for job board usage.

VEI Challenges:

- **Engaging small businesses:** 70 percent of NVTC member companies have fewer than 50 employees. While many smaller companies would like to hire Veterans, many have limited human resource capabilities necessary to support a formal Veteran hiring program.
- **Educating companies on “what is a Veteran”:** The VEI recognizes all individuals that have served in any branch of the United States military, including active duty, reserves and members of the National Guard, regardless of rank or era of service, as well as their spouses. If separated from service, the terms of discharge should be under “Honorable” or “General” conditions.
- **Collecting data on Veterans hires:** The VEI is able to track the Veterans it serves directly (through accounts on *novatechvets.org* and *ustechvets.org*, VETWORKING, Recruiting Day events, etc.) and collect hiring data on those individuals based on self-reporting and follow-up with our NVTC member companies. However, tracking the true total number of hires across all VEI efforts remains a challenge, given that job seekers may use VEI tools to learn about a job opening but then choose to apply directly through the company’s job board or may not report back once they are hired. Also, once a prospective hire is internalized by a company the process can take months and the self-reporting loses focus. Achieving more accurate hiring metrics is a focus area for 2016-17.

Targets and Measures (through June 30, 2017)

Strategic:

- Improved tracking of the Veterans served/hired through the Veterans Employment Initiative and in conjunction with the V3 program and NVTC member companies.
- The NVTC Foundation raised \$275,000 in 2015-16 and will continue to maintain an annual development goal of \$311,000 to support and grow the VEI.

Online Community and Job Board:

- Increase the average number of jobs posted on *www.novatechvets.org* by 20 percent.
 - The increase for 2015-16 was 69 percent
- Increase average unique monthly visitors to *www.novatechvets.org* by 20 percent.
 - The increase for 2015-16 was 32 percent
- Increase the number of companies using *www.novatechvets.org* website by 20 percent.
 - The increase for 2015-16 was 16 percent
- Increase average number of jobs posted on *www.ustechvets.org* by 20 percent.
 - The increase for 2015-16 was 10 percent
- Increase the average unique monthly visitors to *www.ustechvets.org* by 20 percent.
 - The decrease for 2015-16 was 48 percent

Recruiting Day Events:

- Host 6 Recruiting Days, serving 60 to 90 companies and 360 to 540 Veterans and transitioning service members.
 - VEI hosted 4 Recruiting Days serving 38 companies and 167 Veterans in 2015-16

VETWORKING:

- Host 5 VETWORKING sessions serving 100 Veterans in Phase I of the program.
 - VEI hosted 3 sessions and served 30 Veterans in 2015-16
- Continue to grow the Phase II networking portion to invite VETWORKING alumni to NVTC **events to interact with members with a goal to host 5 Veterans per event**

VEI Scholars:

- Grow the 2017 VEI Scholars Summer Intern Program to 60 positions offered with 30 NVTC companies.
 - 2016 VEI Scholars offered 40 positions with 9 companies

Market Analysis

According to the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS), Virginia ranks 7th nationally in total Veteran population and 4th in Veteran working-age population. Over the last 5 years, Virginia's Veteran labor force has grown by nearly 20% or 80,000 veterans. This is more than the other 49 states **combined**. Moreover, the Veteran population in Virginia is expected to continue to rise over the next five years.

Approximately 30% of the Veteran population in Virginia resides in the Northern Virginia region. The Virginia DVS estimates that by 2018, 1 in 5 Veterans will live in Northern Virginia, (geographically defined as the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Manassas Park, and Reston, and the counties of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Rappahannock, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Fairfax and Prince William Counties rank first and third in the state, respectively, with regard to Veteran population and both counties rank in the top five localities with the highest number of unemployed Veterans. Fairfax, Prince William and Loudoun rank among the top five counties in terms of Veterans in the labor force. Labor and workforce estimates identify 300,000 jobs currently unfilled due to a lack of skilled workers in the Virginia labor pool. In 2014, there were an estimated 145,658 working aged Veterans in Northern Virginia.

Trends of Transition in Virginia and the National Capitol Region (NCR)

Virginia has the highest number of military bases in the nation. Key among the 27 military installations throughout the Commonwealth are Naval Station Norfolk, Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Naval Air Station Oceana, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Ft. A.P. Hill, Ft. Belvoir, Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall and the Pentagon. Additionally the U.S. Navy Yard, Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, Joint Base Andrews, Fort Meade, and the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center at Naval Support Activity Bethesda are located in the NCR. These bases and installations are not simply way points for service members but are often the final location in a service member's military career and therefore strategic from a talent acquisition prospective. There will be over 3,500 Veterans transitioning in the next year from Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Fort Meade and Fort Belvoir alone. They are enlisted members from all ranks and ranges of years of service, young officers after an initial tour of service to retiring career officers.

Additionally, Virginia has over 726,000 Veterans from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, The Persian Gulf War, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Cold War era. Over half of those Veterans have served since the Vietnam era. In fact, 55 percent of Virginia's Veterans are 35 to 64 years old, and maintain roles as highly productive leaders, workers, and strongly positive influencers in our communities. NVTC works to bring information, services, and connections to Veterans who are in transition after their military service.

NVTC recognizes that all branches of the armed forces work hard to better prepare Veterans as they transition into a still uncertain economy. The US Army's Soldier for Life program continues to expand and has added preparation programs for continued government service, entrepreneurship and employee readiness. The Marine Corps Transition Readiness Program continues to develop specific personal preparation such as personal readiness seminars and employment workshops. The Navy has launched Transition GPS as an overarching program and the Coast Guard operates the Transition Assistance Program for their service members.

Research indicates that one-third of transitioning service members will return to their home of record, one-third will make a home in the community where they exit from their service and one-third will relocate to a new area for better opportunities and working conditions. The VEI, on behalf of the NVTC member companies, has adopted a proactive approach in order to recruit military talent and retain them in the local area after separation while also attracting Veteran talent from other regions.

The VEI has made it a priority for every member company to recruit, hire, train and retain Veterans in Northern Virginia. All honorably discharged members of the service branches, to include active duty and reserve components as well as the Coast Guard, National Guard and military spouses, are eligible for VEI services and support.

In the United States, there are over 40,000 organizations supporting Veteran causes. Additionally, numerous nonprofits whose original missions are unrelated to Veterans have developed delivery vehicles for providing for the needs of the Veteran community and their family members. Joining Forces, a White House-led national initiative to support service members, Veterans and their families, identifies three pillars of need: Employment, Education and Wellness. Through the VEI, NVTC touches on the first two directly and the last indirectly.

A differentiating characteristic of the VEI is its business-driven approach that aims to provide industry with innovative ways to recruit, hire, train and retain Veterans. Seventy private sector partners supported the VEI at its launch in August 2013. Since then, company engagement has grown by more than 400%, with over 300 companies participating in VEI programs through June 2016. Maintaining a strong, relevant and evolving mission is the key to developing further engagement from NVTC member organizations.

While a central focus of the VEI is assisting NVTC member companies in establishing internal Veteran employment programs or hiring a Veteran for the first time, the tools and programs offered also provide real value to larger companies that already have successful Veteran programs. For instance, two large member companies in the region have significantly changed their "go-to-market" approach in talent acquisition through the VEI. These companies have saved time and money as their human resources teams utilized the free tools and resources available to them as NVTC members in proactively seeking Veteran talent.

NVTC is the largest technology council in the United States and unparalleled in its organization, reach and interaction with the business community, influence with state and federal policy

makers and collaborative working relationships with higher education and the workforce development community. The VEI Program Manager was asked to join the Commonwealth's Department of Veteran Services' Strategic Alliance Group for the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) initiative, and has been instrumental in shaping the scope and strategy of the program. The V3 Program Manager for Northern Virginia sits as a member on the VEI Task Force, and the partnership between NVTC and the Commonwealth was highlighted by the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs at the 2015 National Veterans Employment Summit with the V3 Commonwealth Award.

No other business organization in the region or the Commonwealth has a similar Veteran's employment program. NVTC has advised other organizations across the country on how to replicate the VEI and has invited regional tech councils from around the Commonwealth to join its program to expand Veteran hiring in the technology sector statewide. In addition, the VEI was recognized at a statewide workforce development conference among the Virginia Community College System as being a truly unique approach to a very challenging problem.

The VEI continues to provide an innovative approach towards Veteran employment through strong relationships in the business community, partnership with workforce development professionals and state agencies, collaboration with academic institutions and higher education, engagement with national and regional VSOs, outreach to Veterans and through advocacy to state and federal policymakers.

Military District of Washington (MDW)

The National Capital Region is one of the densest populations of military in the country. The MDW is the Army component under the Joint Force Headquarters of the NCR and is comprised of five major garrisons (Fort Leslie McNair, Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Fort AP Hill, Ft Meade, and Ft Belvoir) and connects with over 100 mission partners at those installations. Other significant military installations in the NCR are Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, Joint Base Andrews, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Naval Support Activity Bethesda and the Pentagon.

Since late 2014, the VEI has connected with military leaders from the MDW and NCR to build relationships that facilitate serving transitioning service members. An MDW representative serves on the NVTC VEI Task Force as a liaison and ambassador to the installations and commands in the region. MDW recognizes that the VEI's offerings are unique, comprehensive and represent unprecedented opportunity to improve a service member's transition by engaging the comprehensive ecosystem of stakeholders. This unique collaboration represents an unparalleled relationship and serves as a national example for other installations consistent with best practices in Public Private Partnerships.

As an integral part of the VEI Task Force, MDW advises NVTC on the development of its programs and supports the outreach efforts of the VEI in getting its message to the transitioning military community. In 2016-17, MDW and NVTC will work together to continue to expand Recruiting Day programs on bases. Further, MDW will serve as an ally in helping the VEI

connect with key stakeholders in the Department of the Army, including Soldier for Life and U.S. Army Installation Management Command to further amplify its mission on a national direction.

Veterans Employment Initiative Program Components

The VEI offers the following programs to support member companies in developing or expanding Veteran hiring programs in order to connect Veterans with jobs in the region's technology sector:

Online Community and Job Board

NVTC and Monster.com have built an online community and resource- www.novatechvets.org, which facilitates the hiring of Veterans. The website includes a searchable database of jobs at NVTC member companies, a military skills translator for Veterans to better identify their skills to jobs in the civilian environment and educational resources and tools.

Every NVTC member company is eligible to post job listings at no cost on this site. In addition, NVTC members have access to Monster's database of more than 980,000 Veteran resumes. This is an extremely valuable benefit for recruiting Veterans into our technology community. With over 300 companies currently participating and a monthly average of 16,000 jobs posted on the site, www.novatechvets.org remains one of the most robust regional sites for military talent acquisition on the internet. The site is promoted through search engine marketing, as well as to Veterans around the country through various partner organizations.

In 2016, NVTC and Monster expanded content on the site to include success stories and other resources to assist Veterans in securing employment in the Northern Virginia technology community.

U.S. Tech Vets

USTechVets.org is an online community, powered by Monster.com and sponsored by the Consumer Technology Association (CTA)® and NVTC, to connect Veterans who are transitioning back into civilian life to employment opportunities within the technology industry. Building on the functionality and power of NVTC's [novatechvets](http://novatechvets.org) website, member companies of participating technology associations across the nation are eligible to post jobs on the site and search the Veteran resume database for free, with the mission of developing and fostering a seamless national employment experience focused on the employment and retention of U.S. military Veterans.

As the lead association on this national effort, NVTC coordinates the participation of partner associations and facilitates their communications with member companies about the value of the online tool. In addition, NVTC and Monster are engaged with other regional technology councils to establish their own programs incorporating local ecosystems and personal connections similar to the VEI.

Recruiting Days

In late 2013, the VEI partnered with the Virginia Department of Veterans Services, Virginia Employment Commission and other local Veteran support organizations and workforce investment boards to host recruiting events to match Veteran-friendly companies with qualified Veteran, National Guard and Reserve job-seekers. In October 2014, NVTC took the lead role in managing these programs in the Northern Virginia region.

Unlike a traditional job fair in which candidates circulate to employer tables without structure, Recruiting Days allow employers to pre-screen resumes before speaking with small groups of Veterans in a round-robin format. During the event, recruiters introduce their companies and job openings directly to the pool of Veterans. Following the introductions, recruiters circulate to meet with a maximum of six Veterans per table in 20 minute sessions. These sessions allow the employers to speak directly with candidates about their qualifications and interest in specific positions.

To date, 535 Veterans have participated in VEI Recruiting Days with over 50 companies sending their talent acquisition teams. The events receive high approval ratings from both job seekers and recruiters and both groups note the events' focus on quality over quantity. In a recent post-event survey of participants, 100 percent of Veteran job seekers said they would recommend the Recruiting Day their peers. Furthermore, 89 percent said they gained a positive lead to employment during the event.

During 2016, the VEI program harmonized the Recruiting Day events and the VETWORKING sessions alternating them monthly in order to gain the maximum benefit for the job seeker. NVTC works closely with MDW and the other regional base transition managers to provide increased access to these programs to transitioning service members.

VETWORKING

Transitioning from the military to a civilian career is a challenging task, which is why mentoring, networking and community support is crucial to the success of any Veteran hiring effort. The VEI developed VETWORKING not only to provide Veterans with professional and personal growth experiences necessary for success in career transition but to also improve retention once a job seeker has been employed.

The VETWORKING program is a personal and professional development program which combines elements of career search skills, networking and mentoring. The program connects transitioning service members to other Veterans working in the region's technology sector. Through small group interactions and opportunities to participate in industry events, this program facilitates the development of professional skills, builds professional networks and empowers Veterans through the support of fellow job seekers or newly-employed colleagues.

The MITE Corporation, an NVTC member, created an in-house volunteer team, built a VETWORKING "playbook" and manages the course content. Through six hours of dedicated

classroom time, participants receive education, support and guidance in a high touch setting as they navigate from active duty to job placement to successful careers.

VETWORKING consists of two phases:

Phase I empowers Veterans to gain a better understanding of themselves and educates them on how to translate their skills and competencies and communicate them to others. Using a self-assessment (Strengthfinder 2.0) personality profiles, and strengths and interests surveys, Veterans learn to determine which of their personal attributes, interests and talents will lead to a successful career. After completing the coursework, Veterans work with specifically assigned mentors to further develop their civilian resume in clear and simple language. Phase I also includes a panel presentation from employers to provide insights on getting hired in the region's technology sector.

Phase II empowers Veterans by exposing them to the vast network of opportunities available through NVTC's robust business community. Participants exercise lessons learned in Phase 1 to expand their personal networks, develop their business acumen, improve their soft skills, and explore further opportunities in the civilian sector.

Along with the two phases of the program, VEI has created a VETWORKING LinkedIn group to promote online networking and skills development among VETWORKING participants. The group is used to share resources and expand or continue discussions from the individual team meetings. In addition to promoting ongoing discussions and interactions among participants, the group offers an opportunity for participants to develop additional skills in online networking and building professional connections.

The initial pilot sessions of the VETWORKING program successfully served 78 individuals over four sessions. In 2015-16, NVTC served an additional 28 Veterans and transitioning service members.

The VEI has begun a partnership with the US Chamber of Commerce Hiring Our Heroes program to provide a tailored version of VETWORKING to its Corporate Fellowship program as it expands to the Washington, DC metro area in the fall of 2016. Additionally, the Service Women's Action Network (SWAN) has engaged the VEI to build an all-female Veteran cohort for late 2016.

VEI Scholars

In 2015, the NVTC VEI conducted a "soft launch" of the VEI Scholars Program to provide student Veterans from our region's colleges and universities with meaningful work-based experiences in NVTC member companies, enhancing their career readiness and leading to employment opportunities. Through this program, our eighteen NVTC member post-secondary institutions region are partnering with the VEI to identify student Veterans in educational programs, such as business and project management, engineering, applied skills, computers

(cybersecurity, IT, software) and health care. Participating NVTC member companies identified their skill needs and provided over 40 summer internship opportunities.

Training for Companies

To support the goals of assisting NVTC member companies establish or expand their own Veteran programs and increasing Veteran employment in the region's technology community, the VEI has made educating member companies on best practices in recruiting, hiring, training and retaining Veterans a priority.

The VEI has a formal partnership with the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) program which recruits Virginia companies to help them understand, design and implement nationally recognized best practices. Additionally, the VEI webpages hold an archive of past webinars which highlight a variety of best practices put on by HR subject matter experts designed to educate human resource professionals, recruiters, hiring managers, CEOs and COOs on best practices in Veteran hiring.

In addition, the VEI Program Manager serves as advisor to the Commonwealth of Virginia's Virginia Values Veterans (V3) program. In May 2015, the VEI supported V3's needs assessment and program review and has helped develop new curriculum through outreach to member companies and participation in the focus group used to pilot and deliver feedback on the curriculum. The VEI will continue to support and advise the V3 on the needs of the business community in order to remove barriers and promote Veteran hiring statewide.

Partnerships with Academic Institutions

The VEI works with NVTC's university and community college members to develop and expand Veteran training programs that address the skills gap faced by many Veterans as they leave military service. NVTC's eighteen academic partners support the VEI by identifying the future employment needs of companies in the Commonwealth and providing education, certifications and associated support services to student Veterans to better assure a smooth transition to the workplace. Additionally, the VEI is working to facilitate the availability of work-based experience and career opportunities for Veterans within the region's technology business community. The VEI Education Working Group consists of representatives from academic and workforce development organizations engaged to provide career opportunities to their students.

Public Policy Advocacy

Through NVTC, members advocate for state and federal policies that promote Veteran education, training and employment. This includes policies that provide for a smoother transition for Veterans to the civilian workforce and policies that remove barriers.

For example, during the 2014 legislative session in Richmond, NVTC successfully advocated for legislation that authorized the Virginia Department of Military Affairs to provide, upon request of

a member of the Virginia National Guard, a Guard member's information to the Virginia Employment Commission so that the VEC can help match that Guard member with employers.

NVTC spent several months prior to the 2015 legislative session in Richmond working with Virginia Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Admiral (ret) John Harvey to develop a new Veterans Employment Performance Grant incentive that provides businesses with fewer than 300 employees with a \$1,000 grant per each recent Veteran returning to Virginia that they hire. Companies can apply for up to 10 grants. The General Assembly approved the new program as part of Virginia's biennial budget and included \$500,000 in funding, which will support 500 new Veteran hires.

In 2016, the grant language was further updated to include removal of the prevailing average wage requirement, increasing the hiring window to up to 5 years after discharge and making the grant retroactive to hires dating back to July 2015. Moving forward, NVTC will continue to promote and advance policies at the state level related to Veteran hiring and empowering of businesses to more easily hire and retain Veteran talent.

Outreach Strategy

As shown in the market analysis, the VEI has two target markets: companies interested in hiring Veterans and Veterans seeking or transitioning into employment in the region's technology business community. The VEI's marketing strategy is directed accordingly to reach both audiences.

Outreach to Companies

NVTC promotes the NVTC Foundation and participation in the VEI to member companies through multiple channels including: email marketing, social media, articles in the NVTC quarterly Voice magazine, weekly newsletters and specific topic e-blasts, website and blog, promotion at NVTC events, and during new member orientations and member benefit packets. In addition, NVTC staff and leaders promote the programs of the VEI as a benefit to potential members, their colleagues and staffs and specifically their talent acquisition teams.

In 2016-17, NVTC will continue to expand its outreach to companies to encourage participation in VEI programs and reporting of Veterans hired through the VEI. This includes the production of storytelling videos and public media articles.

Outreach to Veterans and Transitioning Service Members

The VEI has actively fostered relationships with Veterans, military commanders, military transition representatives, and with those organizations that have connectivity and influence on Veterans seeking employment. The VEI will continue to grow its relationship with the MDW and bases in the NCR in order to more consistently reach service members before they transition to their civilian careers. A critical entry path to reaching transitioning military members is the installation transition manager who personally guides a transitioning service member in the last stages of their career. The VEI Program Manager has invested significant time developing

professional relationships with managers at all of the bases in the NCR. In addition, many of the military transition offices conduct regular seminars and allow NVTC corporate leaders and the VEI Program Manager to assist with mock interviews, recruiter panels and resume reviews. The VEI and Monster provide free online resume postings in its 980,000 Veteran database and job search tools for Veterans and their families to search for jobs around the globe. Additionally, the VEI has active formal partnerships with the Virginia Department of Veteran Services, the Virginia Employment Commission, and regional workforce investment boards such as the Skill Source Group and the Alexandria/Arlington Workforce Investment Board.

The VEI has developed partnerships with the American Red Cross, Easter Seals Veteran Staffing Network, US Chamber of Commerce Hiring Our Heroes, and Serving Together and will continue to seek out partnerships with Veterans Service Organizations that are tasked with serving Veterans on a day-to-day basis and can promote the VEI and its programs and services to their constituents.

Finally, to build awareness of the VEI, NVTC will continue to develop marketing materials, including brochures, signs and giveaways, and conduct targeted advertising/marketing to promote its programs and tools to Veteran job seekers. Materials will highlight that NVTC members and the region's technology community are already extremely friendly to Veterans, as evidenced by the large number currently employed within our NVTC community. In 2016, the VEI was offered two in-kind donations by NVTC members- an opportunity to tape a five minute interview on Cox Connections that was shown as a public service announcement through the month of May and the production of a four minute VEI success stories video produced by TriVision Creative that will have great applicability during VEI presentations which occur several times a month.

Community Advocacy

In addition to outreach to companies, Veterans and transitioning service members, the VEI continues to advocate for and conduct outreach to academic institutions, partner organizations and government organizations/leaders to promote the VEI programs, make connections and encourage policies that improve the overall environment for Veteran employment in Virginia, our region and nationwide. In 2016, the VEI Program Manager participated in public panels centered on Veteran employment issues at the National STEM Conference and the Army Women's Foundation's Annual Summit.

Earned Media

Media coverage is an effective way to build awareness of the NVTC Veterans Employment Initiative. When appropriate, the VEI will seek earned media coverage of its programs, leaders, and participants. Specifically, the VEI will share success stories from the program and subject matter expertise of its leaders to highlight the Initiative and its innovative nature. During 2016, the VEI was featured in articles in the US News and World Report (online), *The Fort Belvoir Eagle* and *Pentagram* newspapers and *Virginia Business* magazine (July 2016).

Social Media

VEI “news” is published and promoted via NVTC’s Facebook (1,002 friends), Twitter (4,533 followers) and LinkedIn (1,355 connections) sites. A dedicated VEI Twitter account was established (@nvtcve) in 2016 to promote the VEI activity and connect with likeminded organizations and companies that have an mutual interest in the Veteran Service space.

Fundraising Strategy

The VEI, through the NVTC Foundation, will seek additional financial and in-kind support from NVTC member companies and their charitable foundations, grants, business sponsorship and private donations to support the programs of the NVTC Veterans Employment Initiative through FY 2016-17. In addition to funds raised from outside sources, the Northern Virginia Technology Council is committed to supporting the NVTC Foundation as it matures and expands its funding sources.

Specific planned fundraising activities include:

- Direct appeals for financial support from corporate charitable foundations of NVTC member companies
- Appeals for cash donations on membership applications and renewal forms
- Three fundraising events: a CXO Auction, a sporting clays tournament and an online silent auction
- Corporate sponsorships for events and programs
- Grant funding opportunities, including potential partnerships with partner nonprofit organizations or academic institutions
- Solicitation of in-kind donations, such as meeting space, food and beverage, from member companies and other partner organizations to reduce program costs
- Partnerships with VSOs and other community groups to establish cost-sharing or trade arrangements

2016-17 VEI Budget

Development Income (2015-16):

Donations: \$202,250

Sponsorships:

Recruiting Day events (6): \$6000 (food/space)

Golf/Clay tournaments: \$9K/\$11K = \$20,000

Fundraising Events:

CXO Auction: \$40,000

Online Auction: \$6670

Total: \$274,920

Operation Expenses (2015-16):

Recruiting Day events (6): \$500

Vetworking (5): \$17,500 (MITRE contract)

VEI Scholars: \$0

VEI Management: \$150,000 (salary/expenses/travel/staff time)

Total: \$168,000

Projected Operation Expenses (2016-17):

Recruiting Day events: \$6000 (if no sponsorships obtained)

Vetworking: \$17,500

VEI Scholars: \$0

Marketing materials: \$1500

VEI Management: \$175,000

Total: \$200,000

Development Goals (2016-17):

Donations: \$225,000

Sponsorships:

Recruiting Day events (6): \$6000 (\$1000 per RD)

Shooting Clays tournament: \$20,000

Fundraising events:

CXO Auction: \$50,000

Total: \$301,000

NVTC Foundation and VEI Leadership Team

The NVTC Foundation and the NVTC Veterans Employment Initiative are led by a Board of Directors, VEI Task Force Chairs and key program staff.

Steve Cooker, NVTC Veterans Employment Initiative Task Force Co-chair

Steve Cooker serves as the Executive Vice President for Monster Worldwide, the world's leading global talent platform connecting jobs to people. As a member of Monster's executive team, Mr. Cooker provides strategic leadership for Monster's Government and Commercial Solutions business and overall company direction. Additionally, he is responsible for Military.com, the largest online news and information resource for active duty and transitioning service members, veterans, and their families.

Mr. Cooker has over 25 years of progressive experience driving business in the internet, advertising, and recruitment industries as well as software solutions, information technology, and telecommunications industries. Prior to joining Monster Worldwide, he held the role of Vice President and General Manager of IBM/ISS, a network security company. He has also held executive positions at Nortel, AT&T, and served as president of ATT/NCR's government business.

Mr. Cooker holds a B.A. from the University of Maryland – College Park. He is a member of the Northern Virginia Technology Council (NVTC) Board of Directors where he also sits on the Executive Committee and serves as a Co-Chair of NVTC's Veteran Employment Initiative. Mr. Cooker also serves on the University of Maryland's Board of Visitors for the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences.

David C. Lucien, NVTC Veterans Employment Initiative Task Force Co-Chair

David C. Lucien is currently CEO and founder of DCL Associates, an entrepreneur, investor and patriot. Since 1990, Mr. Lucien has served as an advisor or director for various consulting or information technology companies providing strategic advisory services and, from time to time, assists various equity funds in the review of current and potential portfolio companies that focus on information technology services, telecommunications, and the Internet. Mr. Lucien has an extensive background in information technology within both the commercial and government sectors including federal, state, and local government markets.

He has held several senior-level executive positions for private and public technology companies involved in consulting, information technology, manufacturing and integration. Prior to founding DCL Associates, Mr. Lucien was Chairman and CEO of CMS Information Services Inc., founder and principal of Interpro Corporation, and CEO of Tempest Technologies Inc., a NASDAQ listed company.

Mr. Lucien is Chairman Emeritus of the Center for Innovative Technology and The Innovation and Entrepreneurship Investment Authority, is a founder and Chairman Emeritus of the Northern Virginia Technology Council, Chairman Emeritus of the Virginia Technology Council and is a recipient of both the Earle C. Williams Award for Leadership in Technology and one of the 2014 Federal 100 Awardees, for making an impact within the federal IT community.

NVTC Foundation members and key VEI program staff:

Bobbie Kilberg, President and CEO, Northern Virginia Technology Council and Board Member, NVTC Foundation

Bobbie Kilberg is President and CEO of the Northern Virginia Technology Council (NVTC), the largest technology council in the nation. She has held this position since 1998. In 2001, she was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as a member of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) during his term in office.

Kilberg is a graduate of Yale Law School, Columbia University and Vassar College. In 2013, she was awarded an honorary associate degree in humane letters by the Northern Virginia Community College.

Kilberg served as a White House Fellow on the staff of President Nixon's Domestic Policy Council, as Associate Counsel to President Ford and as Deputy Assistant to the President for Public Liaison and Director of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs for President George H.W. Bush. In the private sector, Kilberg was an attorney with Arnold & Porter, Vice President for Academic Affairs at Mount Vernon College, and Director of the Aspen Institute's Project on the Future of Private Philanthropy.

Kilberg is a member of the boards of directors of United Bank – Virginia, RG Group Inc. and is an Honorary Board Member of the Easter Seals DC/MD/VA. She formerly served on the governing boards of the University of Virginia, George Washington University, WETA, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, Potomac School, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, Lab School of Washington and the Greater Washington Sports Alliance. Kilberg has been the recipient of many awards, the five most recent being induction into the Washington Business Hall of Fame in December 2013 and selection for the *Washington Business Journal's* 2015 Power 100, *Virginia Business* magazine's 2016 Most Influential Virginians and *Washingtonian* magazine's 100 Tech Titans of Washington and 100 Most Powerful Women in 2015.

Christine Kallivokas, COO, Northern Virginia Technology Council and Board Member, NVTC Foundation

Christine Kallivokas has been with NVTC since 1996, serving first as Director of Membership and Programs, before becoming COO in 2000. She is responsible for all NVTC operations and leads the Council's strategic development and projects, including the creation of the Equal Footing Foundation (EFF) from a community development committee to an independent 501(c)(3) charity fostering youth education and development in the region. Kallivokas also contributed to the creation and development of The Entrepreneur Center @NVTC, from its beginning as a committee to its expansion under an earmark grant from the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the eCommute program, which was developed under a grant funded by the EPA to study the effects of teleworking programs and use of technology on the region's air shed measuring reductions of emissions. The project lasted approximately 2 years and the NVTC produced training and educational programs for companies to implement successful telework

programs and use of technology. Additionally, she served on the Executive Council of the Loudoun School-Business Partnership Board of Directors from 2010-2012. Currently, Kallivokas is a member of the Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board.

Allison Gilmore, Vice President of Communications and Strategic Initiatives, Northern Virginia Technology Council and Secretary, NVTC Foundation

As NVTC Vice President of Communications and Strategic Initiatives, Allison Gilmore is responsible for driving complex project-based strategic initiatives, supporting the development of new programs and services and leading collaborative teams. Specifically, she has led the member outreach, public relations, events and national expansion of the NVTC Veterans Employment Initiative since its launch in 2013. In addition to her role with the NVTC Veterans Employment Initiative, Gilmore directs strategic communications for NVTC and the NVTC Foundation. She received a Masters of Public Administration in 2006 and is a certified association executive (CAE).

Steve Jordon, Program Manager, Veterans Employment Initiative, Northern Virginia Technology Council

Prior to becoming the Program Manager for the VEI, Steve spent over 30 years in the Navy, retiring as a Captain in 2012. As a naval helicopter pilot, he flew over 4000 hours in eight different aircraft and survived more than 1000 shipboard landings. His significant military tours included: Commanding Officer of a Navy Strike Helicopter squadron, "Air Boss" of the USS Peleliu during Operation Enduring Freedom, U.S. Delegate to NATO and U.S. Naval Attaché to Canada.

Steve leads the day to day operations of the VEI which bridges job opportunities and job-seeking education to transitioning military, Veterans, student Veterans and military spouses in the greater DC Metro area.

Steve earned a B.S. in Biology and Environmental Studies from Tulane University, M.A. in National Security Studies from the Naval War College, is a Fellow of the Daniel K. Inouye Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies and a Political and Military Affairs sub-specialist. He holds a Certificate in Non-Profit Management and is Chairman of the Emma Jordon Kidz Fighting Cancer Foundation. He serves on the boards of the Parent and Children Fighting Cancer Foundation at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, the Joint Base Andrews Fisher House and is a member of the Steering Committees for the Virginia Values Veteran (V3) program for the Commonwealth of Virginia and the veteran service non-profit Serving Together.