

Education and Career Transition Guide for Servicemembers and Veterans

# Military Advanced Education & Transition

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## TRANSITION TRENDS



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# Readiness Through Partnerships

**U.S. ARMY RESERVE PRIVATE PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES TRAINING AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES.**

By ERIN THEDE

When Staff Sgt. Adam Butler joined General Electric (GE) Health Care's Military Externship Program last year, he thought it would be just an opportunity to get some quality training with a large and well-respected company.

He was only partially correct. Not only did he receive hands-on training from a leading health care company, he began a career with that same company as a Client Service Engineer.

"I can't see how I would have gotten to where I am today without [the program]," said Butler. "I have always wanted to work for an equipment manufacturer, and now I am, thanks to the partnership GE made with the military."

GE works with the U.S. Army Reserve Private Public Partnership (P3) to develop programs that expand the skills and core competencies of soldiers and civilians. The externship program does just that, as it trains veterans and reserve soldiers in biomedical fields and provides paths to promising careers.

Jackie Hammond, a military spouse and veteran, resigned from her job to help her husband recover from back surgery. After he healed, she sent more than 20 resumes and applications daily for positions in Texas, New Mexico and California in hopes of rejoining the work force. She did not receive a single job offer.

"The main reason was my resume," said Hammond. "One thing I learned [from the Private Public Partnership Office] was that you can't use the same resume to apply for different posi-

tions."

She secured three job interviews and two offers within one week after heeding P3's advice—and still receives emails for interviews.

## **U.S. ARMY RESERVE PRIVATE PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP**

For over a decade, direct access to the cutting-edge training and practical experience through employment with private industry has added depth and breadth to the best-trained, best-led and most effective Army Reserve in the history of our nation. As the Army's combat service and combat service support provider, the force's doctors, engineers, military intelligence officers and other Citizen-Soldiers representing scores of highly technical career fields must hone their skills regularly to be ready to support and defend our homeland and interests on short notice.

Budget and end-strength reductions stymie soldiers' involvement in practical, high-quality training and expertise relevant to their career fields. In addition to maintaining their high state of readiness, Army Reserve soldiers must supplement drill pay with private sector employment, which is complicated by the slow recovery of our nation's economy.

The P3 program was developed by the Army Reserve to establish mutually beneficial relationships between its soldiers as well

as private and public sectors to create opportunities for 1) Citizen-Soldiers to increase unit, leader and individual readiness, 2) contribute to national emergency response and peace and stability operations around the world, and 3) permit Army Reserve soldiers to sharpen their technical and leadership skills while employed by companies in their communities. P3 also supports the Army's Soldier for Life program by easing soldiers' transition from active duty to the Army Reserve through its Private Public Partnership Office (P3O), which develops, integrates and directs partner relations for the Army Reserve.

## **HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE P3O**

The P3O was initially established as the Employer Partnership Office (EPO) in 2008 to build and leverage employment relationships between civilian and military communities. In April of that year, the Army Reserve entered into its first partnership agreement with INOVA Health System, a large, not-for-profit health care system in Northern Virginia, to increase employment and technical training opportunities for Army Reserve soldiers.

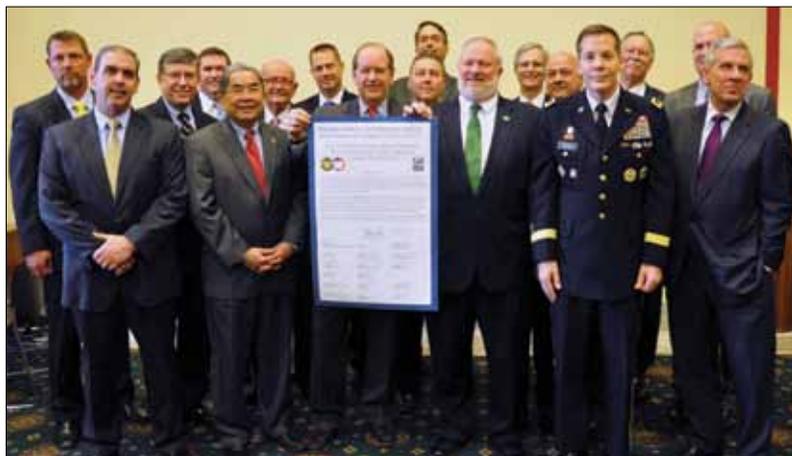
More organizations quickly followed, including large companies such as Wal-Mart, General Electric and the American Trucking Association. EPO then combined efforts with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve and Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program for online job search capability and case management. This collaboration culminated in a successful partnership with Hero 2 Hired, a comprehensive employment program designed to address the unique needs of reserve component servicemembers, in March 2013.

In December 2013, the office expanded its responsibilities to include private and public sector partners that could help the Army Reserve boost its overall readiness level. At that time, the unemployment rate for Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom veterans remained higher than the national average; 250,000 veterans were out of work. On April 23, 2014, the P3O was redirected to respond to this crisis, leveraging veterans' hard-earned and honed leadership skills, technical proficiency, integrity and perseverance to make them better Army Reserve soldiers and employees.

## **A FORCE MULTIPLIER FOR TODAY'S ARMY RESERVE SOLDIERS**

Through its private public partnerships, P3 has had tremendous success mitigating employment, training and transition challenges for members of the Army Reserve community, which includes soldiers, their families and veterans across the country. Over the last fiscal year, the P3O connected over 1,300 of these members to jobs through its national network of approximately 5,000 companies.

Three key factors—disabilities, lack of civilian work experience and obstacles for veterans making the transition—were identified as contributing to the high unemployment rate of veterans who have served since 9/11. P3 utilizes cutting-edge technology and processes to address each by partnering with U.S. companies to improve unit, leader and soldier readiness across the Army Reserve. In exchange, the program provides employers



Lt. Gen. Jeffrey W. Talley, Chief of Army Reserve and Commanding General, U.S. Army Reserve Command, (front row, right) with corporate executives and university leaders during February 2015 Cyber Private Public Partnership kickoff ceremony on Capitol Hill. [Image Courtesy of U.S. Army Reserve]

and the Army Reserve with highly capable soldier-employees who are trained, knowledgeable and experienced in the various facets of each industry. Together, the two entities share and enhance the skills of soldiers, who, in turn, contribute to a robust national economy and defense of our nation.

ACEing the Job Search: Connecting Soldiers and Families with Employers and Resources

The success of the P3 program hinges upon its ability to attract quality soldiers and private industry partners that mutually benefit from one another's distinctive skill sets and resources. Matching soldiers representing 148 Military Occupation Specialties with private, public and academic partners that will test their technical and leadership prowess requires intimate knowledge of the value each party lends to the other. Employers and soldiers alike have been pleased with P3's results.

Bill McLennan, chief executive officer of FASTPORT, a leading trucking company, said that P3's unique organizational structure is "hardwired for success" in that it helps him to educate, inspire and hire soldiers and veterans.

"The desire to serve, lead, train and comprehend a company's operations are but a few of the benefits of hiring soldiers, making them very attractive to employers," said McLennan. "Army Reserve soldiers' breadth of experience and talent earned by having one foot in the military and the other in the private sector makes them particularly valuable to us."

Soldiers' real-world experience, proven performance under pressure and attention to detail are a boon to GE Health Care's business, creating an externship program to tap into their skills and expertise. "Army externs are a model of pride in terms of their backgrounds, the spirit they bring to their work and customers, and the partnership between the Army Reserve and GE Health Care," said Pete Macakanja, Customer Care Specialist in GE Health Care's ultrasound product line and co-leader of its Veteran Network. "The partnership between the Army Reserve and GE Health Care creates an atmosphere of success for these men and women, along with both of our larger organizations."

The "connective tissues" between soldiers and the employers in their communities are P3O's Army Career Employment Specialists (ACES) and Transition Employment Liaisons (TELS). Over 40 ACES are stationed at Army Reserve Career Centers throughout the U.S. as advisers to servicemembers, providing guidance on how to prepare for an interview, develop a resume

## WAY AHEAD FOR P3

and offer feedback on career paths that help Army Reserve Soldiers secure career-broadening employment. In short, they act as conduits between job-seeking soldiers and organizations searching for quality employees by serving as career experts in their local job markets.

Additionally, ACES speak to units and commanders about the free and wide range of employment services offered through P30, attend job fairs to meet job-seeking veterans, soldiers and their family members, and track unemployment trends in their areas of responsibility.

ACES also work with 13 TELs, who are stationed at specific military posts across the country. TELs speak to soldiers transitioning from the active to the reserve component, civilian workforce, or retiring as well as reserve soldiers returning from deployment. Once these soldiers are identified, TELs contact ACES for a “warm-hand-off” to ensure proper case management and consistent care in service.

“My TEL was a breath of fresh air; a confidence booster,” said Staff Sgt. Marvin McClendon, a retired communications officer recently hired as a contractor by NCI Information Systems. “I was discouraged with the transition process. He helped narrow my job search and reworked, critiqued, and provided detailed edits on my current resume.”

He continued: “My job is great—I’m loving it! The work is very rewarding and I enjoy the opportunity to work with all of the same folks I worked with in the military.”

Today’s veterans have attributes companies want in an employee—discipline, critical thinking skills, technical expertise and above all, leadership. Service in the Army Reserve provides the added benefit of being trained in highly technical specialties such as engineering, computer programming and logistics. P3 will continue to develop and expand partnerships with leading corporations, national agencies, civilian service organizations and Department of Defense commands to provide new and greater opportunities to them. Partner organizations will get a sneak preview of top-tier talent as they train veterans to be better employees and servicemembers.

For more information, visit [www.usar.army.mil/Featured/PrivatePublicPartnership.aspx](http://www.usar.army.mil/Featured/PrivatePublicPartnership.aspx) ★

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# NEVER STOP LEARNING

Are you looking for a school that supports and serves military students?

You need **Military Advanced Education & Transition’s 2016 Guide to Colleges & Universities** - A guide to best practices in military/veteran education.

Find the school that best suits your needs by searching the **MAE&T** database.



Compare and contrast schools in these categories:

- Military Culture
- Financial Assistance
- Flexibility
- General Support
- Online Support
- On-Campus Support

