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[Tips and Tools That Can Help Veterans Get Jobs](#)

How to Get a Civilian Job After Military Service

[En español](#)

Veterans of all ages can face a variety of obstacles after leaving the service, and one of the most difficult challenges can be getting into the civilian workforce. But some tools and techniques make it easier for veterans to show how valuable their skills are and to find military-friendly employers.

"It's important to understand that when employers are creating job descriptions, they're not always considering the unique skill set and perspective of veterans and other nontraditional job candidates," says Joe Essenfeld, vice president and general manager of iCIMS, a software company that helps employers identify job candidates.

That means veterans might have to make the first move and clearly show recruiters what they have to offer. Like other job seekers, veterans should [tailor their résumés to the job descriptions of each position](#) they are applying for. And instead of simply listing the daily tasks they performed in the military, veterans should make sure their résumés focus on the skills learned during service, Essenfeld says.

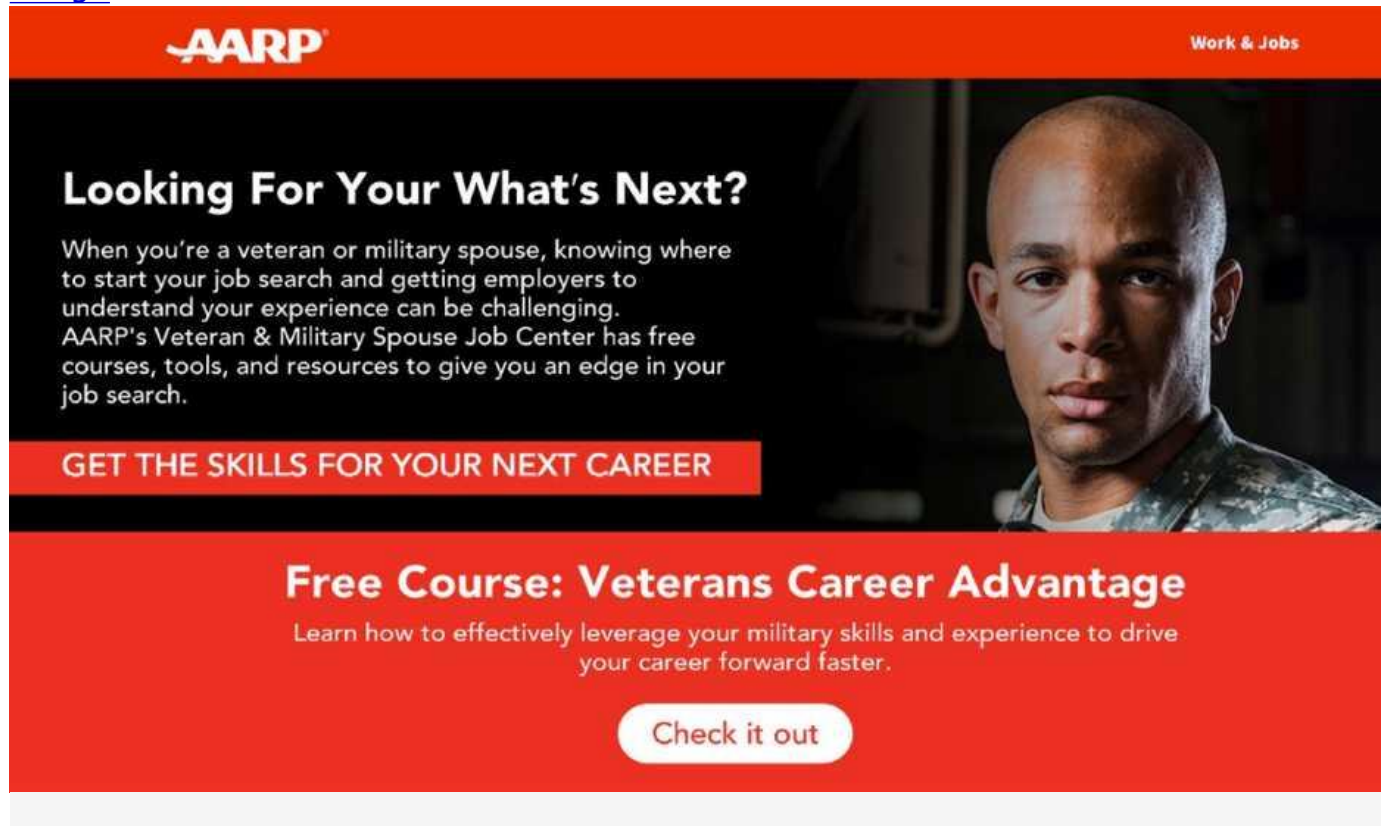
Some tools can help with this process of connecting military skills to civilian careers. If you search on Google for "jobs for veterans," you can enter a military occupation code to reveal jobs opportunities based on that skill set. Job placement companies are beginning to use similar translators that can help with this matchmaking.

"I believe that skills, not titles, are the proper currency for recruitment," says Carisa Miklusak, CEO of tilr, a tech company focused on automating the job recruitment process. "Skills can be more qualifying with more roles than what a title encompassed."

Veterans also should be proactive and learn which terms from civilian job postings match the work they did while in the military, she says. Websites like O-Net have

tools to help veterans create civilian résumés using their military codes.

[Image](#)

The image is a promotional banner for AARP's resources for veterans. It features a dark background with a portrait of a man in military uniform on the right. The AARP logo is in the top left, and 'Work & Jobs' is in the top right. The main text asks 'Looking For Your What's Next?' and describes the challenges of job searching for veterans. A red button says 'GET THE SKILLS FOR YOUR NEXT CAREER'. Below that, a red section highlights a 'Free Course: Veterans Career Advantage' with a 'Check it out' button.

AARP Work & Jobs

Looking For Your What's Next?

When you're a veteran or military spouse, knowing where to start your job search and getting employers to understand your experience can be challenging. AARP's Veteran & Military Spouse Job Center has free courses, tools, and resources to give you an edge in your job search.

GET THE SKILLS FOR YOUR NEXT CAREER

Free Course: Veterans Career Advantage

Learn how to effectively leverage your military skills and experience to drive your career forward faster.

[Check it out](#)

AARP resources for veterans seeking jobs

Visit AARP's free, one-stop resource made to help veterans and military spouses learn how to effectively leverage their military skills and experience to give them an edge in today's competitive job market and avoid underemployment. Among the resources offered by the [Veteran and Military Spouses Job Center](#) are:

[AARP Job Board](#): Veterans can search for employers who value military experience and how it applies to their industry. Use the "Veterans Wanted" filter to search for employers who are actively seeking applicants with a military background.

[AARP Resume Advisor](#): Get a free expert review of how well your résumé communicates your skills, and obtain personalized recommendations on how to make your résumé stand out. Discounted writing packages are also available to rewrite your résumé, cover letter or LinkedIn profile.

[Veteran Career Advantage Course](#): This free online class offered through MindEdge Learning includes short videos of veterans sharing their firsthand

experiences on topics such as résumés, networking, personal branding and the common challenges veterans face.

[Veterans and Military Spouses Job Search Toolkit](#): Learn how to translate military service, skills and experience to the civilian workforce and jump-start a new career path.

Other tips:

- Think about which industries are appropriate for your skills.
- Don't be afraid of adding skills. Applicants often are just one or two skills away from being a perfect fit for a higher-paying position.
- Search for companies that have a “veterans initiative.” You can narrow the results by adding either specific job titles or towns close to you. (In 2017, [Alaska had the highest share of veterans in the labor force](#), followed by Virginia and South Dakota.)
- Networking is always important in the job search. Reach out to other veterans and ask where they work or how they found their job.
- Seek out community groups such as churches, social clubs and veterans organizations that might have a veterans initiative.

Programs like [Onward to Opportunity](#) provide assistance to help veterans build extra skills to boost their appeal to employers. The free program, run by Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families, offers career training, professional certification and job placement support to transitioning service members, veterans, spouses and select reserves.

Because of their military experience, many veterans are well suited to learn quickly.

"Service members tend to be placed in certain situations that their civilian counterparts are not," says Michael Schoeneck, Onward to Opportunity's director. "They develop the ability to adapt in transferring their skills across multiple contexts and tasks. Therefore, they're comfortable in adapting to any environment."

Veterans have had notable success in fields that involve science, technology, engineering and math, according to the university's researchers. Other industries that frequently hire veterans include manufacturing, professional services, retail, education, transportation and construction.

"As a program, we help these individuals mitigate the hurdles through preparation, education, connection to services — whether that's community-based or otherwise — and help further their understanding of the employment landscape," Schoeneck says.

The Onward to Opportunity program has 19 locations across the country and virtual classrooms that work with service members of all ages.

"Individuals in the 50-plus [age range] have a lot of skills, certifications, etc., that they bring to the table that our teams will work with to best position," Schoeneck says.

----- Written by Aaron Kassraie, AARP, January 12, 2022

AARP was founded in 1958 and has over 38 million members. It is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization for people over the age of 50. AARP is well-known for its advocacy efforts, providing its members with important information, products and services that enhance quality of life as they age. They also promote community service and keep members and the public informed on issues relating to the over 50 age group.

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