

Strategies for Recruiting, Hiring and Retaining Military Talent: A Toolkit for Solar Industry Employers

August 6th, 2024





SOLAR READY VETS[®] NETWORK

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY



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FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & DISCLAIMER



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Energy Efficiency &
Renewable Energy

Acknowledgment: This material is based upon work supported by the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) under Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) Agreement Number DE-EE0008493.

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Award Number: DE-EE0000493

Project Name: Solar Ready Vets Phase 3

Agenda

- **What is Solar Ready Vets?**
- **New Resources for Employers**
- **Exploring the Toolkit**
- **Meet our Speakers**
- **Discussion**
- **Follow Up and Next Steps**





Claire Laurentine
Program Manager





The Solar Ready Vets Network™ advances solar industry career pathways for service members and veterans, and helps solar employers recruit and retain military talent at all levels of the workforce.



Solar Ready Vets Network: Through capacity building initiatives, strategic partnerships, and targeted resources, the Solar Ready Vets Network promotes the representation of military talent across all levels and sectors of the solar workforce.

The program has four key objectives

- Support solar career navigation and connection for veterans
- Share tools & resources for employers to recruit and retain military talent
- Advance Registered Apprenticeship pathways to solar industry careers
- Expand and promote solar industry SkillBridge opportunities for service members

Veterans in the Solar Industry

Military talent is diverse!

Some veterans thrive in the field, while others excel in corporate roles ranging from project management to operations, communications, engineering, HR, business development, and much more.

Veterans stand out in the solar workforce:

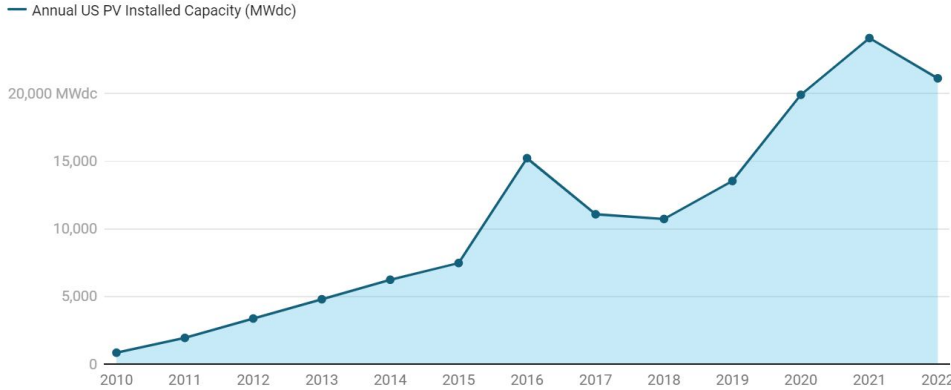
- Dynamic leadership
- Teamwork
- Critical thinking
- Technical skills
- Mission-oriented work ethic

*According to IREC's National Solar Jobs Census: **veterans account for about 8% of the solar workforce** - higher than almost 6% in the overall economy.*

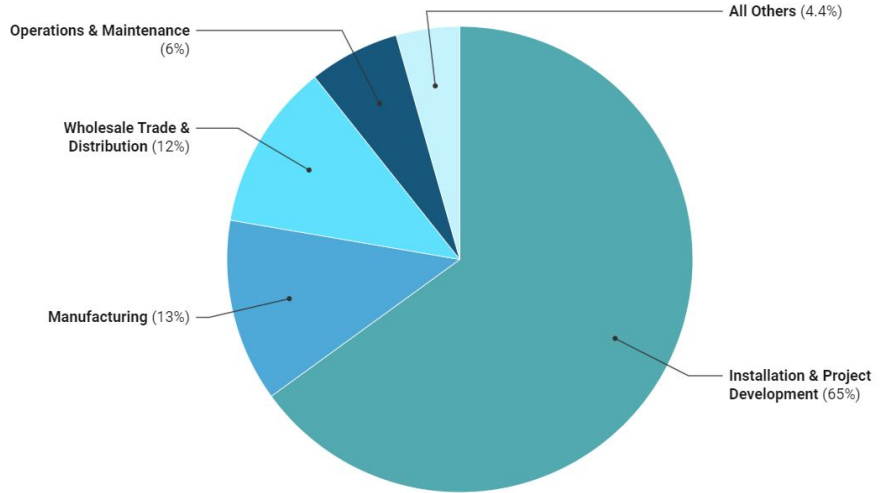
National Solar Jobs Census

2023 Census Coming Soon!

U.S. Solar Capacity Growth, 2010-2022



U.S. Solar Jobs by Sector, 2022



New Resources for Employers



Leveraging Military Veteran Talent Through SkillBridge

Training: Recommendations for the Solar Industry

- Developed by Solar Energy International (SEI) and IREC to be adaptable to employer's needs
- Presents implementing or participating in SkillBridge as a key strategy for solar employers to attract, develop, and retain qualified veteran talent.
- Four model training frameworks that employers can use to implement their own SkillBridge training:
 - Solar Installation
 - Operations and Maintenance
 - Technical Sales
 - Solar Design



New Toolkit: Strategies for Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining Military Talent: A Guide for Solar Industry Employers

Strategies for Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining Military

Talent: A Guide for Solar Industry Employers

- Created by IREC and SEIA, this toolkit for employers explores best practices, strategies, and additional resources for recruiting, hiring and retaining military connected talent
- This guide is intended to support solar employers with resources, strategies, and best practices to recruit, hire, and retain veteran talent across all levels and sectors of the solar workforce.



Speakers



David Seay

Regional Vets' Employment Coordinator
US Department of Labor



Allen Whiteside

Programs Director
NextOp



Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA)

6 Aug 2024

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WHO WE ARE:

NextOp Inc. is a nonprofit veteran service organization.

OUR MISSION:

NextOp recruits, develops and places high-performing middle enlisted leaders into careers.

OUR VISION:

To be the strongest link between industry and military talent.

NextOp launched in 2015 to help high performing, middle-enlisted leaders translate their exceptional military experience into successful civilian careers.

NextOp has offices in Houston, Texas and New Orleans, Louisiana with additional Employment Coordinators in North Carolina, West Tennessee.





BRIDGING THE GAP

Approximately 85% of Post-9/11 veterans were enlisted & nearly 1/3 of veteran job seekers are unemployed or underemployed

Industries are facing a widening skills gap and desperately needs the skills our veterans have to offer

BENEFITS & SERVICES

- Resume building
- Interview preparation
- 1 on 1 career coaching & mentorship
- Direct connection between employers & candidates
- Hiring events
- Federal program management
 - DoD SkillBridge facilitation
 - DoL Employment Navigator Partner Program



ALL-TIME IMPACT



4100+

Veteran candidates placed by NextOp since 2015.



<36 days

Avg time to place a veteran candidate.
Lower than the national avg.



\$66K+

Average NextOp candidate starting salary for 2024.

MILITARY MEMBERS MAKE IDEAL CANDIDATES



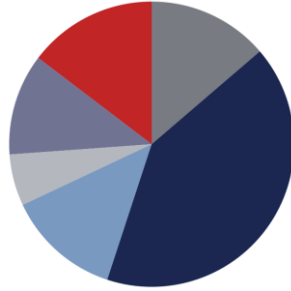
Every year, approximately \$17 billion is spent on military training and education, making the U.S. military one of the top employment training programs in the world. Today's transitioning military members are highly skilled, dedicated, and adaptable individuals with an unparalleled work ethic.

- Exceptional performance under pressure
- Ingrained leadership qualities
- High degree of accountability
- Accelerated learning curve
- Mission/results-oriented mindset
- Team oriented approach
- High adaptability
- Diversity

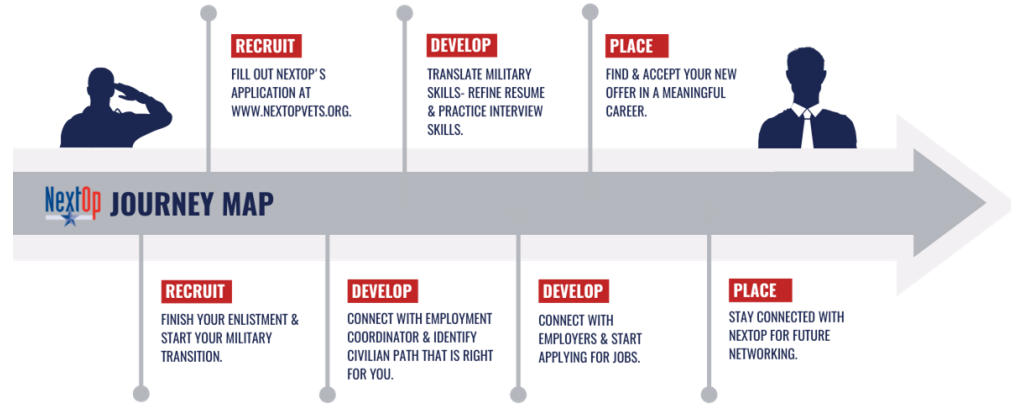
THE PROCESS: RECRUIT, DEVELOP, PLACE

Where we find high quality candidates

- Word of Mouth, 41%
- Referral Program, 14%
- Military Base, 13%
- Social Media, 6%
- Website, 11%
- Other, 15%



Employment Coordinators connect within 72 hours to begin 1:1 mentorship



Traditional NextOp Candidate

Technically & mechanically talented veterans in their mid 20s with 5 to 10 years of experience.

EMPLOYER SERVICES

NEXTOP PROVIDES

Direct access to pre-screened candidates through a dependable and highly responsive team, ensuring timely coordination, communication, and delivery

Targeted events and dedicated marketing support

- In-person/virtual
- Registration management
- Advertisement (materials and social media)
- Military and veteran network access

Business value

- Highly skilled, diverse, and quality employees who tend to stay
- Recruiting cost avoidance
- Potential veteran tax advantages
- Metrics and reporting
- Education on veteran hiring and retention best practices

THE NEXTOP DIFFERENCE



Direct Access to
Qualified Candidates



Promotion of Open
Company Positions



Training on Hiring &
Retaining Veterans



SkillBridge Program
Facilitation

OUR WHY

Current national unemployment and underemployment rates do not accurately reflect our candidates

- 63% of veterans are unemployed or underemployed when exiting service
- 10% of male Veterans of color are unemployed and looking for work
- 14% of female Veterans are unemployed and looking for work
- 22% of female Veterans of color are unemployed and looking for work

Employment Assistance is the lowest funded federal veteran service program

- .01% of the federal budget, or \$300 million
- \$17 per veteran annually

This leads to the one-size-fits-all approach by the current federal programs

- A 22-yo with a GED, a pilot, a doctor, and an astronaut will all receive the same training when exiting service

Individualized mentorship has proven successful

- Veterans that use a coach to help with their resume are 2x as likely to get a job
- Veterans that use a coach to practice interviewing are 3x as likely to get a job



PARTNERS





QUESTIONS?

Let us help you transition to your next career!

www.nextopvets.org

Allen Whiteside

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773.340.9616

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Q & A

Connect with us at RE+!

Connect with us on the show floor and find us at the following events during the annual RE+ in Anaheim, CA from September 9th - 12th.



Veterans & Military Family in Clean Energy Gathering

Wednesday, September 11th from 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm

- Location: ACC South, on level two (held in same area as education sessions)

New Options for Veteran Recruitment: SkillBridge Training and Apprenticeships

Solar Ready Vets will discuss employers can recruit and hire transitioning service members and veterans through SkillBridge training programs and Registered Apprenticeships.

Wednesday, September 11th from Time: 12:30 pm - 12:55 pm

- Location: Industry Trends Booth

Volunteer at RE+

Service members, veterans, military spouses and caregivers can apply to volunteer at RE+ and receive a free pass! [Learn more and apply here.](#)



Join the Network!

Join the **Solar Ready Vets Network** to stay up to date on events, opportunities and resources at **SolarReadyVeterans.org**

Upcoming Opportunities:

1. Be a part of the **Solar Ready Vets Advisory Committee**
2. Participate in our next **SRV Mentorship Series** as a mentor
Interested? Email clairel@irecusa.org
3. If you have specific **employer related programmatic questions**, email E'Lon Cohen Hall, ehall@seia.org

