VETERANS' LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION DEMONSTRATION

A Summary of State Experiences, Preliminary Findings, and Cost Estimates

FINAL REPORT
September 2015
VETERANS' LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION DEMONSTRATION: A Summary of State Experiences, Preliminary Findings, and Cost Estimates

This report was prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor under Contract No. DOLJ131A22038. The views expressed herein are those of the contractor. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Labor or should be inferred, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organization imply endorsement of same by the U.S. government.

Prepared by:

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices
Workforce Development Program

Prepared for:
U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
Office of Policy Development and Research
On behalf of the
Veterans' Employment and Training Service
Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by a team led by Brent Parton with the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and Amanda Dunker, formerly with the NGA Center. The report includes significant contributions from a broader project team including Martin Simon and Alisha Powell with the NGA Center, and Elise Shanbacker and Iris Palmer, formerly with the NGA Center. The report additionally benefitted from the contributions of the team at Solutions for Information Design (SOLID), including Ed Davin, Karen White, Lisa Lutz, and Bill Brigman. Valuable peer-review comments were provided by David Moore, Elliot Schwartz, and Jennifer Brooks (NGA Center) and by Gloria Salas-Kos and Pamela Frugoli (U.S. Department of Labor). We also express our gratitude for the substantial support received from the staff of several other Federal Agencies and national organizations during the planning and implementation phases of the state demonstrations and the NGA Policy Academies. Contributors to the planning, implementation and the NGA Policy Academies include: Marion Cain from the U. S. Department of Defense (DoD) (Readiness); Commander Mitchell Seal, Medic Education and Training (Ft. Sam Houston); Doctor Maryann Alexander, National Council of State Boards of Nursing; Dia Gainor, National Association of State EMS Officials; Severo Rodriguez and Terry Markwood with the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians; LTC Arturo Calzadillas, Jr. with Soldier for Life; Selden Fritschner, U. S. Department of Transportation Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration; Dr. Leslie Adrian of the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy; John Awtrey, Law Enforcement Policy and Support, DoD; Steve Gonzales, American Legion Veterans Employment and Training Division; Rodrigo Garcia, Student Veterans of America; and Bob Simoneau of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies.
Contents

List of Exhibits................................................................................................................................. ii
Executive Summary ............................................................................................................................ 1
Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ 7
  About the Demonstration Project..................................................................................................... 9
  About the Report............................................................................................................................. 11
Part One: Blueprint for Accelerating Veterans’ Licensing and Certification................................. 12
  State Strategies to Address Barriers to Veterans’ Licensencing and Certification....................... 12
  Process for Designing and Implementing Strategies..................................................................... 16
  Implementing State Strategies........................................................................................................ 25
  Conclusion....................................................................................................................................... 27
Part Two: Demonstration Cost Study............................................................................................... 29
  Objective of the Cost Study............................................................................................................ 29
  Cost Study Methodology and Analysis.......................................................................................... 30
  Cost Study Findings....................................................................................................................... 37
  Conclusion....................................................................................................................................... 49
Appendix I: National Scan of State Executive Orders and Legislation 2013-2015......................... 51
Appendix II: Demonstration Specific Executive Orders and Legislation.......................................... 60
Appendix III: Summary of Demonstration State Strategies and Results by Occupation...................... 62
Appendix IV: Demonstration Cost Study Background and Approach............................................... 72
Appendix V: Occupation Specific Resources from Demonstration.................................................. 74
**List of Exhibits**

Exhibit 1: Selected States and Occupations.......................................................... 10
Exhibit 2: State Strategies to Accelerate Veterans Licensure and Certification............ 13
Exhibit 3: Process for Designing and Implementing State Strategies.......................... 17
Exhibit 4: The National Council of State Boards of Nursing Gap Analysis................... 22
Exhibit 5: Occupations Not Included in Cost Study Analysis....................................... 30
Exhibit 6: State Demonstration Programs by Occupation, Program Status and Program Type For LPN and Paramedic........................................................................ 32
Exhibit 7: VOW Act Cost Elements............................................................................ 33
Exhibit 8: LPN Standard and Accelerated Pathway Data by State............................... 37
Exhibit 9: LPN Pathway Comparison - Potential Tuition Savings per Participant by State...... 38
Exhibit 10: LPN Pathway Comparison - Potential Time Savings per Participant by State...... 39
Exhibit 11: LPN Pathway Comparison - Potential Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) Savings per Participant by State........................................................................... 40
Exhibit 12: LPN Pathway Comparison - Average Potential Savings per Participant Across Demonstration States................................................................................ 40
Exhibit 13: Summary LPN Pathway Comparison - Average Potential GI Bill Savings per Participant Across Demonstration States...................................................................... 41
Exhibit 14: Paramedic Standard and Accelerated Pathway Data by State....................... 41
Exhibit 15: Paramedic Pathway Comparison - Potential Tuition Savings per Participant by State... 42
Exhibit 16: Paramedic Pathway Comparison - Potential Time Savings per Participant by State..... 43
Exhibit 17: Paramedic Pathway Comparison - Potential Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) Savings per Participant by State........................................................................... 44
Exhibit 18: Summary Paramedic Pathway Comparison - Average Potential Savings per Participant Across Demonstration States.......................................................................... 44
Exhibit 19: Summary Paramedic Pathway Comparison - Average Potential GI Bill Savings per Participant Across Demonstration States...................................................................... 45
Exhibit 20: LPN Pathway Comparison - Potential Monthly UCX Savings per Participant by State............. 46
Exhibit 21: Paramedic Pathway Comparison - Potential UCX Savings per Participant by State................................. 47
Exhibit 22: UCX Waiver Status and Length of Programs for LPN and Paramedic.................. 47
Exhibit 23: Calculation of a Cross-Program Per-Veteran Estimate of Employment Service Costs.... 48
Executive Summary

Military servicemembers on active duty are the beneficiaries of extensive training that prepares them to perform in a range of occupational specialties. Some of those occupational specialties have direct or proximate equivalents in the civilian workforce, but transitioning servicemembers might lack the relevant civilian occupational credentials required under federal or state law or by an employer to secure employment. Thus, despite their relevant skills and experience, veterans can encounter lengthy processes and requirements to obtain the credentials needed to enter civilian employment. Those processes and requirements can impose additional time and financial costs on veterans and taxpayers, who pay both for the initial military training and for re-training outside of the military, primarily through veterans’ federal education benefits.

In response, the federal government has undertaken several initiatives to streamline credentialing and licensing for veterans. Those initiatives include efforts to provide civilian credentials and identify equivalencies between military and civilian occupations. However, ultimate authority for regulating entry into most professions lies with state governments. The nation’s governors recognize that authority and have made assisting veterans in transitioning from military service to civilian life and employment a priority. As thousands of men and women return from deployments at home and abroad, states have launched and expanded programs to help veterans transition to civilian life. Thirty-nine states issued executive orders or passed legislation to assist veterans in transferring skills gained in military service to civilian employment between 2013 and 2015 (See Appendix I and II). In addition, for Commercial Driver’s Licenses (CDLs), all 50 states have implemented the Military Skills Test Waiver according to the specific administrative procedures applicable within each state.¹

To help accelerate such efforts, section 237 of Veterans’ Opportunity to Work to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 (the VOW Act) amended section 4114 title 38 of the United States Code. That legislation authorized a demonstration project to engage governors in streamlining veterans’ credentialing and licensing. The ultimate goal of section 237 is to identify the most efficient process for moving veterans into civilian employment in an industry with high growth or high worker demand.² The VOW Act directed the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), through the demonstration project, to identify state-level professional requirements that are met through military training and strategies to remove barriers to relevant credentials and licenses. The VOW Act also directed DOL to complete a cost study to inform Congress about the potential federal cost savings of removing barriers at the state level.

DOL contracted with the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) to carry out an 18-month demonstration project. In partnership with DOL, the NGA Center developed a competitive process to select six states to participate in the 18-month demonstration: Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nevada, Virginia, and Wisconsin.³ Each demonstration state selected up to three high-demand occupations to focus their licensing and credentialing strategies that corresponded with one of the three pre-selected military occupational specialties: Medic (Army 68W, Navy Hospital Corpsman, Air Force 4N0X1), Police (Army 31B, Navy Master-at-Arms, Air Force 3P0X1, Marine Corps 5811), and Truck Driver (Army 88M, Marine Corps 3531) (see Exhibit 1).

¹ Military Skills Test Waiver: U.S. Department of Transportation
² 38 U.S.C. section 4114 (a), as amended by the Veterans’ Opportunity to Work to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 (VOW Act), Section 237; Public Law 110-181; H.R. 674, 112th Congress.
³ Participating states hereinafter are referred to as “demonstration states.”
**About the Report**

This final project report on the Veterans’ Licensing and Certification Demonstration was prepared as a summary of state experiences and preliminary findings to date. The report’s findings emerged from the authors’ direct engagement with states and review of state project reports describing their processes and strategies. The report does not attempt to evaluate the success of demonstration state efforts, and findings should be considered preliminary as in many instances demonstration states continue implementation of veterans’ pathways to licensure and certification. Findings in this final report are organized in the following three sections:

- An introduction describes further background on the demonstration project and the technical assistance activities for the six demonstration states.

- Part one organizes findings from the state demonstration into a blueprint that can inform other state-led efforts to accelerate veterans’ licensing and certification.

- Part two describes the findings from the demonstration cost study, which estimates potential federal cost savings for veterans participating in accelerated licensure pathways.

**Key Findings from the State Demonstration**

A number of factors can affect the ability of servicemembers and veterans to attain civilian credentials on a timely basis. The demonstration states encountered three types of barriers commonly encountered by transitioning servicemembers and veterans:

- Veterans who have military training and experience that is equivalent to that of licensed civilians often find that civilian licensing boards are not accustomed to recognizing the military documentation of their training and experience.

- Veterans that experience gaps between their military training and experience and civilian requirements may have to participate in duplicative training to attain relevant licensure or certification.