

## Bridging the Gap

# For AJC Case Managers: Connecting Veterans to Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Programs

Veterans transitioning to civilian life are strong candidates for Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs, which offer paid, hands-on training and structured pathways to long-term employment. These programs provide stability, skill-building, and advancement opportunities many veterans seek when transitioning to the civilian workforce. As businesses continue to search for skilled and dependable talent, our nation's veterans represent a proven and highly capable talent pool.

As an American Job Center (AJC) case manager, you are uniquely positioned to connect transitioning service members and employers with RA opportunities.

This tip sheet provides information and resources to help veterans access RA programs and understand the benefits of being hired into an RA program approved by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

## ■ Intake, Enrollment, and Assessment of Veterans Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Your role in supporting veterans begins at the point of intake and continues through personalized service planning. The following are essential functions for case managers:


### IDENTIFYING VETERAN STATUS

Veteran status can be confirmed through self-disclosure or documentation. If documentation is needed, veterans can [request their military records](#) (including DD-214) through the VA.

### CONDUCTING INTAKE AND APPLYING PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

Veterans and eligible spouses are entitled to "Priority of Service" (POS) for all U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL)-funded employment and training programs, including WIOA Title I programs. AJC case managers must provide veteran career seekers priority access to services when eligibility requirements are met. This is especially important for veterans pursuing RA programs, as WIOA funding can help cover RA program costs, including related instruction, on-the-job learning, and supportive services.

There is a distinct order in which you must provide priority of service:

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1. **Veterans and eligible spouses** who are also part of WIOA statutory priority groups (recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, or those who are basic skills deficient)
  2. **Non-Veterans** who are part of WIOA statutory priority groups
  3. **Veterans and eligible spouses** who are not part of WIOA statutory priority groups
  4. Individuals in priority categories identified by the **governor or local workforce board**
  5. **All other individuals** not in any of the above categories

To learn more about POS, visit

- [WIOA Final Rule Fact Sheet for Veterans and Spouses \(PDF\)](#)
- [WIOA Final Rule 20 CFR 680.600](#) and [20 CFR 680.650](#)

## CONDUCTING INDIVIDUALIZED ASSESSMENTS

You should work with veterans to develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) that incorporates their apprenticeship pathway and identifies the WIOA services needed to support success. This IEP serves as a roadmap for both training completion and long-term employment outcomes.

An effective and comprehensive assessment of a veteran includes the following:

- Military experience and occupational history
- Transferable skills
- Career goals and training interests
- Support service needs

Use a tool like the [Military Crosswalk Search](#) to map military roles to civilian occupations, including apprenticeship opportunities.

## COLLABORATING WITH THE JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS (JVSG) PROGRAM

The JVSG program is a required partner within the AJC network. Many AJCs have dedicated JVSG staff, such as Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, who bring specialized knowledge in serving veterans. As a case manager working under WIOA Title I, you should collaborate closely with JVSG representatives, combining your expertise to connect veterans with the most appropriate resources, including VA-approved RA programs.

## ■ The Benefits of Connecting Veterans to VA-Approved RA Programs

VA-approved RA programs offer a range of additional benefits beyond those of a traditional RA program. You should be well-versed in these benefits as they can significantly enhance a veteran's ability to succeed during their transition.

### KEY BENEFITS OF VA-APPROVED RA PROGRAMS

- ➔ VA approval allows veterans, active-duty service members, and eligible dependents to receive a **Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA)** and/or stipends through the GI Bill while working as apprentices. This makes the program significantly more attractive to the approximately 200,000 service members who transition to civilian life each year.
- ➔ GI Bill payments can help veterans **offset costs** during the early stages of the apprenticeship, when wages might be lower. These benefits increase retention by providing financial stability.
- ➔ Veterans can elect to use some of their **GI Bill benefits** toward training costs such as course tuition, books, and supplies, thus reducing program costs for the business.
- ➔ Veterans also receive **POS** under WIOA, which can provide funding support for the training components of an RA program.
- ➔ Being **VA-approved** shows a commitment to supporting veterans, which can boost the reputation of participating employers and enhance the recruitment brand. Many veterans specifically seek out VA-approved programs when transitioning to civilian careers.

## ■ Identification of VA-Approved RA Programs

You can use the USDOL's [Apprenticeship Finder](#) to locate active RA programs. You can also contact the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship (OA) or State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) staff in your area to learn about local RA programs using the [OA or State Office Contacts Finder](#).

How to verify that an RA program is VA-approved:

1. Open the [GI Bill Comparison Tool](#).
2. In the "Type of Institution" dropdown menu, select "OJT/Apprenticeship."
3. Enter the RA employer's company name or ZIP code in the search field.
4. Review the results to determine if the employer is listed as VA-approved for RA training.



**It is critical to verify this approval status, as not all RA program employers are certified to offer MHA benefits. Only those programs that have been formally approved by the VA will allow enrolled veterans to receive these housing payments.**

## ■ Supporting RA Employers to Ensure Veterans Receive Benefits

To ensure veterans continue to receive their MHA benefits without interruption, employers must comply with VA reporting requirements. You can play a key role by working with employers to provide support and verify their understanding of the process.

### How to ensure your veteran customers receive their benefits:

- STEP 1.** First, confirm that the RA employer has obtained a VA Facility Code for the training location. This is a necessary step for VA certification and must be in place before the employer can report a veteran's participation.
- STEP 2.** Next, verify that the employer has formally enrolled the veteran in the USDOL Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Database System (RAPIDS). This is a requirement for participation in the MHA program.
- STEP 3.** The employer must then enroll the veteran apprentice with the VA's Enrollment Manager system using the RA start date and expected completion date from RAPIDS as the enrollment term.
- STEP 4.** The employer is then required to submit the veteran's RA training hours monthly via the Enrollment Manager system. The [Enrollment Managers Quick Start Guide](#) is a useful resource for this step. Once completed, the system prompts the VA to release the MHA payment directly into the veteran's bank account.



**If the employer fails to report training hours, the MHA payments will not be processed, creating unnecessary hardship for the veteran. You should maintain regular contact with the employer, particularly during the veteran's first few months in the program, and encourage them to assign a designated point of contact responsible for monthly apprenticeship reporting. If the employer needs additional support, you can help them connect with their local SAA or a VA Education Liaison.**

## Key Takeaways for AJC Case Managers



**Use the Apprenticeship Finder** and the GI Bill Comparison Tool to identify RA programs the VA has approved to offer MHA benefits to eligible veterans. Reach out to your state and local apprenticeship staff as well.



**Educate veterans** about the unique advantages of VA-approved RA programs, which provide the opportunity to earn wages, receive tax-free housing support, and develop in-demand job skills all at the same time.



**Coordinate with employers** to ensure they are submitting monthly training hours to the VA, which is the trigger for MHA payments. Delays in employer reporting can lead to missed or interrupted housing benefits.



**Co-enroll eligible veterans** in WIOA Title I programs to provide additional support. This may include transportation, childcare, tools, or other services that help reduce barriers to training and employment.



**Through proactive engagement with both veterans and employers, you can help maximize the effectiveness of these interconnected programs and significantly improve employment outcomes for veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce.**