



Veterans Taskforce Workgroup Meeting Notes

Veterans Resources Taskforce Meeting April 25, 2024; 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM EDT

Via zoom

Attending: Commissioner Whitney Allen, Dallas Kratzer, Everett Bracken, David Best, Jad Davis, John Miles, Mark Colomb, Paula Payne, Nicki Stewart

Administrative Staff: Alisher Burikhanov, Debbie Dennison, Elishah Taylor, LaChrista Ellis

2:03 PM MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Welcome and Overview

Whitney Allen, Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Veteran Affairs (KDVA), greeted everyone and thanked them for attending. He emphasized the importance of resources for veterans, their families, and military personnel. Commissioner Allen then outlined the meeting's agenda, highlighting the upcoming discussion on the next steps reviewing the resources and creating a strategic plan.

Veteran Resources:

Alisher Burikhanov, Executive Director, Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB), provided an overview of the amassed veteran and military (and family) resources received since the previous task force meeting. Alisher mentioned the importance of the resources including utilizing it for business purposes, within Human Resources (HR) roles, for frontline staff members. He emphasized the intention to adopt a “no wrong door” approach, considering the next steps for its dissemination and determining the optimal format. Suggestions to convert the information into a PDF that can be printed or digitally provided were made. Discussion was had around the various resources and numerous overlaps in services. It was agreed upon that overlap would happen and was a good thing.

Alisher mentioned that KDVA had agreed to host the main document and encouraged everyone to also have it on their pages. The plan was to continually update it, initially releasing it as is and subsequently updating it based on feedback and changes received.

There was a discussion about creating a strategy on how to maintain an updated list and ensure smooth transitions. There was a suggestion made that perhaps there could be an assigned role or intern who could help with document maintenance, possibly working with KDVA to ensure it stays refreshed.

Discussion was had around collectively maintaining it as long as the taskforce exists. Additional discussion was had in converting the resource list into a book and would be a great tool to have. Discussions also included providing one last review of the information to ensure its accuracy and make sure there were no duplications or missing information.

Discussion continued around the opportunity to track clicks into an online platform where the information might be housed. Comments were shared about what other states are doing. In Ohio it was stated that they have a paper book, and in Florida, they have an e-book. Discussion was lifted about the target audience for this product. Key users included dependents and spouses before they enter the workforce, followed by young vets, mid-career veterans and military spouses, soon-to-rotate veterans, and retirees—a significant portion of the population. Commissioner Allen stated that he would like to move the conversation into attracting and retaining veterans and introduced **Mark Colomb, Army Veteran**. Mark Colomb shared that he was glad to be present and a part of the taskforce. In his experience with veterans, he knew of three types: those who go where jobs are, those who stay put, and those who return home. He stated that the group could influence all of them, particularly those out-of-state, but from Kentucky.

Commissioner Allan emphasized the significance of developing a coherent strategy during the meeting, particularly highlighting a commitment to supporting military personnel, their families, and veterans relocating to Kentucky. He continued sharing that veterans who retire, and also are underemployed represent a gap in jobs. He went on to say that we need veterans, their spouses, and their families. The goal is to recruit veteran talent to live, work, and retire in Kentucky.

In chat, there was information shared about the last reviewed data: 26% of those leaving the military from Fort Knox were likely to stay in Kentucky, and 37% around Fort Campbell. However, those leaving Fort Campbell primarily were re-locating to Tennessee, acknowledging the opportunity found there.

Also, in the chat, various insights were shared, including the influence of demographics and job availability on veterans' decisions to stay in Kentucky. There was a consensus on the need for better veteran incentives and the importance of addressing challenges such as the perception that only college leads to financial success and veterans' readiness for leadership positions without adequate business knowledge.

Alisher recommended to finalize the resource tools and to work with **Everett Bracken, Program Administrator KDVA**, to create a paper copy and PDF and asked if everyone felt good about the resources. It was decided that the group should take another look to review if anything was missing or wrong or if there were any necessary modifications before KWIB and KDVA continue with next steps.

Commissioner Allen thanked the group for their input and expressed his desire to continue collaborating.

In reference to a unified strategy on attracting and retaining veterans, an agreement was made to develop a collective strategy. It was noted that the **Council on Post-Secondary Education (CPE)** was missing from the discussion. Discussion was had around other missing stakeholders and a request to enter names or agencies in the chat was made. Suggestions were made to organize roundtable discussions and identify key agencies for collaboration.

The importance of targeted strategies tailored to specific audiences was highlighted, rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach. As the meeting concluded, plans were made to reconvene, refine strategies, and identify additional key players involved in the process.

Immediate Objectives to Accomplish and Next Steps

In the chat, Everett Bracken suggested some key points that the task force should focus on in the next meeting. These points are as follows:

1. What is the big idea behind our existence?
2. What is our value proposition?
3. Who are we trying to serve?
4. How can we measure our success?

Everett stressed the importance of resolving these four questions and noted that those who have investment in the outcomes

Alisher stated that he appreciated everyone's input. He Thanked Everett and everyone on the team for their contribution and informed them that he would get back to them with dates and next steps.

Commissioner Allen expressed his well wishes for everybody to have a great Derby weekend. He also commended the team for a good job with the resource guide and expressed his desire to quickly complete it so that it can be published. Finally, he concluded by stating that he was looking forward to starting a recruitment and retention strategy for veterans and military personnel and their families.

2:59 PM EDT ADJOURNMENT

Next Steps

- Review the google doc and solidify the information received.
- KWIB staff to work with communications in convert Veterans Resource List into a PDF format that is digestible.
- Assess the next steps for the taskforce for a unified strategy regarding its value proposition, target audience, and metrics for success.