

Free Service Helps Vets Launch Civilian Careers



Don Fried, a Marine Corps veteran who now serves as director of branding and marketing for VetJobs, says the service has surpassed 75,000 verified job placements, and currently have more than 3 million job listings. *VetJobs*

In 2004, Deb Kloepfel left her executive job at American Airlines to make an overseas permanent change of station with her husband, U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Dan Kloepfel. She hoped to further her career in her new location but discovered the opportunities were virtually nonexistent.

Kloepfel realized she wasn't alone. She met other highly trained and educated military spouses who also had to choose between their careers or their devotion to family and country. So, with a \$323 investment, she started the Military Spouse Corporate Career Network, or MSCCN, to help support people like her.

MSCCN was so successful that in 2010, the Kloepfels cofounded CASY: Corporate America Supports You. CASY's goal was to provide free vocational training and job placement services for people transitioning from all military services, veterans and members of the National Guard and Reserves.

By 2019, CASY and MSCCN had helped more than 57,000 members of the military and their spouses find new civilian careers. That year, the two organizations acquired VetJobs, an online military job board, and launched MilitarySpouseJobs.org. The company is one of the resource partners featured at today's Transition Connection job fair, being held in Cherry Blossom Ballroom from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. This Sea-Air-Space hiring event focuses on providing job opportunities to those with a military family or defense background.

Today, VetJobs.org and MilitarySpouseJobs.org are the largest free online job training, counseling and placement resources for all members of the military and their spouses. Last year, they surpassed 75,000 verified job placements, and currently have more than 3 million job listings, says Don Fried, a Marine Corps veteran who now serves as director of branding and marketing for VetJobs.

“When I separated out in 1999, there were nowhere near the resources we have today,” he says. “I think we had a three-day TAPS [transition assistance program] class. Now, people start planning their transition six to 12 months before they leave the service.”

This is key, Fried says, because statistics show that more than 60% of former service members work at different types of jobs than they did in the military.

“It’s sometimes hard to know your interests and what to look for in a civilian job,” he says. “VetJobs can help with that.”

Any current or former member of the military or their spouses can use VetJobs’ and MilitarySpouseJobs’ online employment listings, job assessment quiz and video job training resources for free. If they register with the sites, they also have access to a free career specialist who can help them navigate a new career search. They can get a direct introduction to employers with job openings, and can also participate in mentorships with industry partners.

Fried estimates that 400 to 700 people use VetJobs every week. The organization is funded by charitable foundations, grants and sponsorship by corporations like Microsoft, Amazon, IBM, Boeing, Wells Fargo, Prudential, Deloitte and Swift Transportation. Job listings are provided by the nonprofit DirectEmployers Association.

Fried says companies like to hire service members for a variety of reasons.

“In a time when employers are having a hard time putting butts in seats, we show up. We have an air of maturity and discipline, and we’re contributors,” he says. “Employers like those types of soft skills. They can take our soft skills and then train us in the technical aspects of a job.”