

The Case for Veterans2Work

A market-based career transition solution for returning military veterans

They are young; they are disciplined; they are among the most innovative, successful workers on the planet. While risking their lives, America's military veterans have shown what dedication, a strong work ethic and real teamwork can accomplish when brought to bear on a clear mission. It makes no sense that so many are unemployed. Veterans2Work intends to do something about that.

There are, of course, many reasons why this chronic problem persists, but they come down to these: Employers don't know how to source, train and integrate veterans into their operations, while returning veterans are ill-prepared for the transition to the civilian workforce. Through its services, Veterans2Work has created the means by which companies can readily tap the full productive potential of our nation's veterans, at the same time providing veterans with the support they need to launch—and sustain—a successful career.

Veterans2Work has the background, we have skills; we need only partners to accomplish the task—partners who recognize the value of putting these remarkable men and women back to work.

Young and disabled veterans remain under-employed

Returning veterans—the young ones in particular—enter today's job market woefully unprepared for a job search. They are unfamiliar with the job market and are generally unable to communicate their many relevant skills and abilities to potential employers. Employers, unaware of the contribution these ex-service members could bring, often overlook this untapped labor pool. Those who do appreciate this potential typically target officers and senior NCOs. Very few companies actively seek to hire younger or disabled veterans. Unemployment among young veterans today hovers at an unacceptably high 21 percent. Ironically, these are the veterans most in need of a job—and, arguably, with the most to give.

Helping veterans and business succeed together

Veterans2Work (V2W), a veteran-run, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was founded in 2008 to help returning and disabled U.S. military veterans—those facing the most daunting re-entry challenges—successfully transition to post-military careers. Whether veterans are placed directly with partner employers or hired into our own services company, V2W provides on-the-job training and career support tailored to meet the needs—and accentuate the strengths—that belong uniquely to veterans. We do this within the context of a competitive business operation focused on delivering business results.

Businesses can fulfill their needs without going out of their way to employ veterans' full productive potential. Veterans2Work accelerates and concentrates the productive collaboration of veterans and businesses by providing the "missing ingredients" that each needs to succeed:

- for **veterans**, training, on-the-job support and career development;
- for **businesses**, competitively-priced business solutions.

By creating a showcase of collaboration between veterans and businesses V2W provides an example for emulation by other sectors of the U.S. economy.

Our “Warrior Transition Quick Start” program provides an easy path for employers wishing to assimilate veterans directly into their own work force.. Our methodology and support services include training, disability management, coaching, continuing education and career development for veterans. We offer other services to all veterans, free of charge, including Career Assessment, Job Search Assistance, Job Placement, Mentoring and Career Development.

As the prototype business for our veteran-business collaboration model, we have developed an outsourced virtual call center. The V2W Call Center will serve the outsourcing needs of businesses, staffed by veterans (and spouses / caregivers) working from their homes. Training and support is provided by V2W. The reasons for starting with a work-from-home call center are compelling:

1. *Veterans’ qualities suit them for service positions.* They understand the need to adhere to policies and procedures. They are mission-focused and they value teamwork.
2. *Customer service is a great entry-level introduction to the business world.*
3. *Call centers are a growth industry,* currently employing 3½ million people in the U.S.
4. *Potential for large scale impact.* Outsourcing contracts can lead to several hundred “seats.”
5. *U.S. companies are bringing customer service jobs back to the U.S.* as they discover the high costs of offshoring in dissatisfied customers and increased defections.
6. *Home-based work is ideal for homebound veterans and those who live in rural areas.*
7. *V2W management has extensive experience in call center design, operation and management.*
8. *Call center performance can be objectively measured,* allowing for definitive proof of the value veterans bring to business.

Veterans2Work will expand this model to other growth sectors (such as health care and virtual administration) and help similar entities replicate its success.

We have teamed with established business partners that allow us to deliver world-class business solutions. These partners bring critical experience, know-how and technology in sourcing, training, work-from-home services delivery, supervision, on-the-job support, career development, and technology infrastructure.

Our Goals (Projected Impact)

Our long term goal is to improve the employability and job success of young and disabled veterans. We will start with our proof of concept—the V2W Call Center. Its success will provide a template and inspiration for other market-based veteran re-integration projects that we will roll out in other sectors. Our 12-18 month objectives:

1. Establish pilot programs with two partner companies.
2. Have 6 active clients.
3. Have 1,000 veterans employed full time
4. Have 2,500 veterans participating at some level in programs
5. “Seed” our business model in at least 4 operations.
6. Be productively utilizing 8,000 volunteer hours (annualized).

7. Be operationally self-sustaining: Cover operating expenses by services income (100% of voluntary contributions will be applied to veteran programs).

Our strategy for achieving these goals is to create an effective business services delivery platform that utilizes the unique strengths of transitioning veterans—unit cohesion, pride, mission focus, dedication—and showcases their business contribution, serving as a veteran engagement model that can be applied to other sectors.

What we've accomplished thus far

Veterans2Work has established a solid platform for large-scale veteran job creation, including:

- A highly qualified **executive team** to manage roll-out and ongoing operations.
- **2,500 qualified veteran job candidates** ready to work.
- **National veteran recruiting network** comprising more than 3,000 VSOs, NGOs and individuals
- **Veteran programs** developed in Career Assessment and Development, Job Placement, Training and on-the-job Support.
- **1,000+ volunteers** ready to help with mentoring, veteran outreach, administration and other projects.
- **Market presence**, including collateral material, database, web site (www.veterans2work.org), newsletter, social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter).
- **Robust technology infrastructure** supporting marketing, business development, fund raising, veteran recruitment and placement; and call distribution to home-based agents nationwide.
- National network of **business partners** 30 + interested businesses
- A **versatile business model** that can be extended to other growth sectors

What we need now

V2W seeks funds to continue the development, promotion and delivery of its programs and services and carry it to break-even operations. \$350,000 will accomplish that goal. 80% of funds will fund the the leadership team, with the remainder applied to associated expenses such as web site and infrastructure development and maintenance, communications, veteran programs, volunteer coordination and management. The following individuals will be hired / contracted:

- *Executive Director (Full time)*
- *Director, Veteran Programs (Full time)*
- *Volunteer Engagement coordinator (Part time, leading to full time)*
- *Project manager, Client Engagement (Part time leading to full time)*
- *Systems development and administration (part time, contract)*
- *Veteran outreach coordinator (Part time)*
- *Communications director (part time)*