Hiring Our Heroes (HOH) is honored to serve them as they search for meaningful careers throughout the United States. Launched in 2011 and growing exponentially every day, HOH has accomplished things that we would not have dreamed possible five years ago. By the end of 2015, we had held 960 hiring events in the United States and around the world, and from those events alone we have seen more than 28,000 veterans and military spouses hired. Beyond that number of confirmed hires, we have facilitated hundreds of thousands of other meaningful connections between employers and job seekers, and in 2016 we look to capitalize on our progress and add to our many successes.

Of course, these accomplishments would not have been possible without the strong relationships that we have forged in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors or the generous support of our partners and sponsors across this military hiring community. Our Veteran Employment Advisory Council (VEAC), Military Spouse Employment Advisory Council (MSEAC), and Wounded Veteran and Caregiver Advisory Council (WVCEAC) have continued to lead the way in their respective fields to ensure that the unique challenges faced by the populations we serve are addressed, and that military families and veteran job seekers are able to find meaningful employment in a 21st century workforce.

2015 was a time of tremendous growth in the veteran and military family employment space, and as this complex landscape continues to change, we are becoming increasingly strategic in our approach and efforts. While it's important to reflect on and celebrate our successes, we are also moving forward with renewed energy and drive to serve those who sacrifice so much for our country.

Our accomplishments in 2015 were many, yet there is much more to come for our program as we lean forward and carry out another fantastic year in 2016.

ERIC EVERSOLE
Vice President, U.S. Chamber of Commerce
President, Hiring Our Heroes
Over the last year, the nation saw record lows for the overall veteran unemployment rate as the private sector truly stepped up its hiring efforts for these demographics, yet at the same time, key segments of the military family population still face challenging rates and struggle to make a smooth transition into the civilian workforce. Post-9/11 veterans under the age of 25, for example, face an unemployment rate of 13%; military spouses, 25%.

These challenges often stem from lack of preparation, inability to translate key skills from military experience into language hiring managers understand, gaps in employment for spouses and insufficient knowledge among employers of the value veterans and military spouses bring to the table.

Hiring Our Heroes (HOH) worked tirelessly throughout 2015 to help veterans and military spouses chart a pathway to employment success and economic prosperity through hiring events, transition summits on military installations, programs that connect job seekers and employers across the country, initiatives focused on specific populations within the military community, and a robust array of online digital tools. As we continue to become more strategic in the ways that we assist job seekers in navigating the complex sea of goodwill available to them, our focus is to ensure that they start the job search process far enough in advance to not only find a job, but to find the right job for them.

We know that the employment space in which we operate is constantly changing, and more challenges lie ahead, but with our committed strategic partners and many new tools and programs at military job seekers’ disposal, we are ready to meet the needs of this incredibly gifted talent pool and help them transition successfully into today’s workforce.

Our focus is to ensure that job seekers start the job search process far enough in advance to not only find a job, but to find the right job for them.

2015 WAS A TIME OF TREMENDOUS GROWTH FOR THE VETERAN AND MILITARY COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT LANDSCAPE.
In 2015, HOH held 95 hiring events of different sizes and scope across the country, as well as in Italy and Japan.

The program built upon the lessons learned in 2014, continuing our traditional hiring events in cities across America, and expanding our programs on military installations and those hosted in concert with professional sports teams.

HOH visited 17 military installations, connecting with 12,486 service members and spouses from Fort Benning, Georgia, to Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. We also brought American employers overseas to the men and women stationed in Japan and Italy, who often face the most challenges in finding post-service employment while searching from thousands of miles away.

Our partnerships with the U.S. Department of Labor, the Small Business Administration, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Army’s Soldier for Life program, and other transition-focused entities highlight resources available once the transition from active duty to veteran is complete. HOH also began partnering with industry leaders such as FASTPORT and Microsoft to present overviews of industry-specific breakout sessions at these events for service members looking to break into emerging markets.

To engage the community and military families, we partnered with 37 professional hockey, basketball, and baseball teams to host events at their home venues and provided tickets to job seekers at the event to catch a game that night. Overall, nearly 3,700 job seekers connected with nearly 1,000 employers at these events.

We continued with our brick and mortar traditional hiring events as well, pairing up nearly 11,000 job seekers with 3,242 employers. Importantly, those events generated 1,508 firm offers. Our traditional hiring fairs count on our local partners, such as Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), state workforce agencies, local Veterans Affairs offices, the American Legion, and local chambers of commerce, to ensure that the employers and opportunities available reflect the skills and talents of the local military community.
Capitalizing on the strength of the military spouse program and its connections across the country, HOH made great strides through both targeted and strategic approaches to impact the lives of military spouses seeking meaningful employment. The military spouse team interacted with more than 2,300 military spouse job seekers in 2015, hosting spouse-specific networking receptions and hiring fairs in 16 cities across the United States. In addition, the team facilitated networking receptions for employers and job seekers at HOH’s transition summits, where the program also hosted spouse-specific workshops. As a result, the program engaged spouses and employers on three continents.

In November 2015, the military spouse program hosted its first networking reception at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. This schoolhouse reception was the first in a series of events that prepare military spouses for employment at their next duty station, while placing the mission of HOH in front of the future leaders of the military.

The HOH Military Spouse network on LinkedIn has grown to more than 4,560 members, with the total increasing daily. In 2015, the Military Spouse Employment Advisory Council (MSEAC) members were invited to take over the LinkedIn group for a week to directly interact with the community of military spouse members.

As we move forward, we continue to refine the military spouse program to fit the changing needs of the active duty and transitioning military spouse community.
T he Business and State Engagement (BSE) team continues to advance employer strategies for hiring and empowering veterans and military spouses. This includes upgrades to the Employer Roadmap, which was originally produced and released in 2014 through the generous support of USAA.

Employer Roadmap 2.0 launched at the Veteran Jobs Mission Coalition meeting in October. Alongside visual and creative enhancements, upgrades to the Roadmap were put in place to better position employers to attract transitioning service members and veterans. The Career Skills Guide highlights programs available to transitioning service members seeking applicable training for private sector employment, or looking to earn credentials to help them bridge the gap from military service to civilian employment. The Military-Friendly Job Description Builder is a tutorial to guide employers on writing job descriptions that will further brand their company as military and veteran friendly.

Dialogue throughout the year continued to focus on industry-specific employment opportunities for job seekers. The first industry roundtable was held in March with assistance from FASTPORT and the American Trucking Associations (ATA). Representatives from 25 private trucking companies attended this event at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, enabling partners — the departments of Defense, Labor, and Veterans Affairs — to share their views on service members and veterans transitioning into the trucking industry. The conversation encouraged sharing best practices among companies such as FedEx Freight, J.B. Hunt, and YRC. Building on the success of the roundtable on veteran trucking, future industry- and population-specific roundtables are planned, particularly as additional industry tracks are added to the Fast Track digital platform.

Team BSE met with numerous employers in one-on-one strategy sessions and shared resources and advice with chambers of commerce from Tampa to San Diego. The Chamber of Valor program continues to recognize the extraordinary work of those chambers of commerce that go above and beyond to support the mission of HOH.

2016 efforts focus on the development of state-based resources, flexible and part-time employment opportunities for student veterans through the Higher Veterans Initiative, and growing programs for veteran entrepreneurs and veteran- and military spouse-owned small businesses. Our partnership with the Coalition for Veteran Owned Business (CVOB) was highlighted in June at the Chamber’s annual America’s Small Business Summit, and the team traveled to Dallas in the fall to join the CVOB team for its first annual meeting at the George W. Bush Institute.

**HOH WELCOMED THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION TO OUR GROWING LIST OF NATIONAL PARTNERS IN 2015, AND WE CONTINUE TO ENHANCE OUR NETWORK AS THE PROGRAM EXPANDS.**

**HOH focused on industry-specific pathways to creating employment opportunities for job seekers.**
Since 2011, HOH trainers have conducted more than 560 employment workshops for veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses. More than 30,000 job seekers have attended these workshops, and more than 7,000 have benefited from one-on-one career counseling at HOH events.

With the generous support of HOH’s sponsors and partners, we hosted training workshops at nearly every HOH hiring event in 2015, training more than 11,000 attendees at 87 events. In addition to past training partners like General Electric (GE), AON, and Goodwill International, our network of corporate and nonprofit training partners continues to grow.

In 2015, HOH surveyed more than 700 workshop attendees. Survey results showed that 83% of respondents felt better prepared for the job search process. Participants reported that the two most critical topics were resume writing and elevator pitches.

In addition to offering training to job seekers, the HOH education team provided employer-focused workshops throughout the year. In partnership with USAA, we conducted 30 workshops for employers that covered best practices for recruiting and retaining veterans and military spouses. Over 600 employers have attended these workshops.

In 2015, HOH recruited 489 volunteers who devoted 1,467 hours to training employment workshops and reviewing resumes.

HOH also continues to develop its volunteer career coaching program. Individuals from corporate and nonprofit sponsors engage in one-on-one sessions with transitioning service members, veterans, caregivers, and military spouses to help them revise resumes, conduct mock interviews, and provide individualized feedback. This efficient and high-touch service plays a significant role in helping job seekers build confidence while networking and preparing to meet with recruiters.

In 2015, HOH recruited 489 volunteers who devoted 1,467 hours to training employment workshops and reviewing resumes for veterans, wounded veterans, transitioning service members, military spouses, and caregivers. Since 2011, GE has provided the greatest number of volunteer hours, hosting 86 workshops and coaching more than 4,500 veterans in transition skills. GE is proud to employ more than 10,000 veterans, and this is one way those veterans give back to the community.

HOH’s training workshops provide a number of volunteer opportunities for organizations and businesses. From conducting training to providing one-on-one coaching to coordinating mock interviews, our program encourages HR and recruiting experts to share their knowledge.

For more information about our training workshops or to volunteer, email Marady Leary at mleary@uschamber.com.
As HOH continues to find innovative ways to serve veterans, we launched the Corporate Fellowship Program in 2015 to provide active duty service members with mid-level management opportunities in the civilian sector. The 12-week program provides pre-transition service members with corporate education, extensive on-the-job training, and networking opportunities.

Through the end of 2015, we hosted four cohorts at Joint Base Lewis-McCord and Fort Hood, with 82 active duty service members participating in those cohorts. More than 87 percent of these fellows were hired by the company they were matched with for the fellowship, with an average starting salary of $75,000 per year.

HOH plans to expand the fellowship program in 2016 to Fort Bliss, Fort Campbell, Fort Carson, Fort Huachuca, and installations in Washington, D.C.

Throughout 2015, HOH leveraged key relationships in the community and external media to communicate the story of the military employment landscape to millions of Americans through traditional and new media strategies. The team worked aggressively to ensure that our message of finding meaningful employment opportunities for military families reached new and diverse audiences.

HOH was mentioned in more than 400 different news articles, television interviews, blogs, and other external media outlets throughout the year. This list included features in USA Today and Military Times, and broadcast appearances on C-SPAN. This also included the day-to-day media attention that was generated from transition summits and other hiring events taking place around the country.

The program generated significant media attention as we partnered with USAA to execute two satellite media tours in September and November, promoting our online tool Fast Track and USAA’s release of the annual Best Places for Veterans list, respectively. All in all, during these two tours, members from HOH leadership conducted more than 50 remote interviews across the country.

C-SPAN carried the Mission Transition summit live, and featured it throughout the rest of the year, reaching a wide swath of the American viewing public with former President George W. Bush’s call to action.

HOH continues to expand its online and digital footprint. By the end of 2015, our social media reach had grown to more than 466,000 followers on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The HOH home page had more than 1.2 million views over the course of the year.
On November 10, HOH held its 5th annual awards dinner at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C. The keynote speakers were Lieutenant General James C. McConville, the U.S. Army’s deputy chief of staff, G-1, and U.S. Marine Sergeant Major Bryan Battaglia, the senior enlisted advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant Dakota Meyer, U.S. Marine Corps, also provided heartfelt remarks regarding his personal experience transitioning from the Marine Corps.

HOH recognized six leaders in veteran and military spouse employment. The 2015 award winners represent the best of the best in recruiting, hiring and retaining military talent.

In addition, HOH and Capital One announced that they reached a significant milestone on their Hiring 500,000 Heroes campaign — specifically, that participating companies hired more than 500,000 veterans in less than three years.

“GREAT GAINS HAVE BEEN MADE IN VETERAN EMPLOYMENT OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS, BUT THERE IS STILL WORK TO BE DONE.”

COLONEL MIGUEL HOWE
Director of the Bush Institute’s Military Service Initiative

On June 24, 2015, HOH, in partnership with the George W. Bush Institute’s Military Service Initiative, held Mission Transition at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C. This national summit represented a cross-section of companies and partners, and focused on the way ahead in creating employment opportunities for post-9/11 veterans and military families.

The keynote speaker was former President George W. Bush. Other speakers included former First Lady Laura Bush, U.S. Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Thomas J. Donohue, U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez, and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral James A. “Sandy” Winnefeld, Jr.

As part of the event, HOH and GWBI launched the Veteran Employment Transition (VET) Roadmap—a simple yet comprehensive guide to help transitioning service members take a strategic approach to the job search process through easy-to-use checklists, best practices, valuable tips, and resource guides.

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In 2015, HOH saw a rapidly changing landscape and adapted to meet the needs of our veteran and military spouse constituents. We became more strategic in executing hiring events, growing our programs, and using our online tools and resources to reach job seekers wherever they are in the world.

We renewed our focus on not only finding jobs for service members and military spouses, but on finding the right jobs for them with targeted programming around the country.

The program expects to see businesses of all sizes continue to develop hiring strategies to recruit and retain the top talent that the military community provides.

As we celebrate the news that the veteran unemployment level has dropped below the national average, we also recognize that there is still important work to be done, as key segments of the veteran and military spouse population continue to struggle in the search for meaningful employment.

We look forward to building on our successes and continuing to vigorously engage with our public, private, and nonprofit partners to rise to the occasion and help every capable veteran and military spouse find a rewarding career.

THE PROGRAM EXPECTS TO SEE BUSINESSES OF ALL SIZES RISE TO THE OCCASION.

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Printed on recycled paper.

Looking Forward

2016