



441 G St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

February 17, 2022

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
The Honorable Mike Rogers
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

Military and Veteran Support: DOD Has Taken Steps to Help Servicemembers Transfer Skills to Civilian Employment but Has Limited Evidence to Determine Program Effectiveness

Approximately 200,000 servicemembers transition from military service to civilian life each year. Servicemembers typically receive extensive, high-quality training and experience during their military careers and acquire skills that can prepare them for a wide range of civilian jobs. However, although many of these acquired skills translate to the civilian workforce, servicemembers and veterans may experience difficulty finding civilian jobs after leaving the military and may face costly and duplicative retraining to obtain credentials for civilian occupations.¹

The William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 includes a provision for GAO to report on the transferability of military skills and experience.²

This report examines (1) the steps that the Department of Defense (DOD) has taken to address reported challenges to transferring military skills and experience to the civilian workforce, and (2) what is known about the effectiveness of DOD’s Credentialing Programs, including their effect on military recruitment and retention.

¹For this report, we use the umbrella term “credentials” to encompass (1) certifications, (2) licenses, and (3) certificates of completion of apprenticeships. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), a certification is a time-limited credential awarded by a non-governmental certification body based on an individual demonstrating, through an examination process, that they have acquired the designated knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform a specific job. It does not convey a legal authority to work in an occupation. According to BLS, a license is a time-limited credential awarded by a governmental licensing agency based on pre-determined criteria. The criteria may include some combination of education, assessments, or work experience. It conveys a legal authority to work in an occupation. According to DOL, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship is a credential that conveys that the apprentice has successfully met the requirements of the apprenticeship program.

²William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, Pub. L. No. 116-283, tit. V, sub. H, § 579, 134 Stat. 3388, 3650 (2021).

To address these questions, we reviewed DOD documents and policies, as well as relevant literature published by national organizations familiar with the military or the workforce including the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Governors Association, and the RAND Corporation. In addition, we interviewed officials with DOD and the Department of Labor (DOL) and other stakeholders knowledgeable about the workforce and credentialing, such as the American Legion.

We also reviewed DOD's voluntary Credentialing Programs' goals, performance measures, and outcomes as noted in DOD policy and guidance documents, as well as two studies evaluating the effectiveness of DOD's two voluntary Credentialing Programs: Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL) and United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP).³ We analyzed data from a DOD report on the number of COOL participants and completions. We also analyzed data provided by DOD on USMAP participants, new enrollments, and completions for fiscal year 2020. We assessed the reliability of these data by reviewing written responses from knowledgeable DOD officials and by comparing similar data from DOL. We determined these data were sufficiently reliable for the purpose of presenting summary data on USMAP participants, new enrollments, and completions.

We also reviewed examples of credentials issued by other federal agencies that may be used in non-federal employment. We used three sources to compile a list of federally issued credentials: (1) information provided by DOD officials, (2) DOD's online credentialing information portal, and (3) DOL's "Certification Finder" database. For illustrative purposes, we then chose four examples of credentials to review based on national stakeholder recommendations. For each credential in our sample, we reviewed publicly available information on these credentials, such as the issuing agency, the type of credential, and any education or testing requirements.

We conducted this performance audit from May 2021 to February 2022 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

The federal government has taken several actions to improve the transferability of servicemembers' skills so that they can be recognized by civilian employers when they leave the military. Among these actions, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2015 required DOD to carry out a program enabling servicemembers to obtain credentials related to their military training and skills that translate into civilian occupations before they

³While DOD does not issue any credentials itself, its Credentialing Programs assist servicemembers with obtaining and maintaining voluntary occupational credentials offered by third parties, according to DOD officials.

leave military service.⁴ Additionally, the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2016 required that any credential in DOD's credentialing program meet certain quality standards.⁵

Several federal agencies play key roles in administering credentialing programs that help servicemembers transition to civilian employment, including DOD and DOL. DOD's Credentialing Programs are:

- Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL), which helps servicemembers obtain occupational credentials related to their military training and skills and translate them to civilian occupations;⁶ and
- United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP), which allows servicemembers to complete civilian apprenticeship requirements while on active duty and can provide more information to future employers on servicemembers' skills. USMAP is a registered apprenticeship with DOL.

Servicemember participation in both programs is voluntary.

DOD Has Taken Steps to Help Servicemembers Mitigate Challenges Related to Transferring Military Skills to Civilian Employment

Transitioning out of the military can present many challenges, one of which can be getting civilian employers to recognize and understand military skills and experience. Challenges related to transferring military skills to the civilian workforce have been noted by national organizations, including:

- **Credentialing organizations may not recognize military training.** According to a report by the National Governors Association, civilian licensing boards may be unfamiliar with the type of documentation the military uses to verify servicemembers' training and work experience. For example, the military may use its own unique forms. Additionally, the National Conference of State Legislatures noted that in many cases, occupation-specific training completed as part of military service is not recognized by licensing regulations, so servicemembers and veterans may spend time repeating trainings or course material in order to obtain a credential.
- **Servicemembers may not easily identify the market value of credentials.** The complexity of the civilian credentialing system, along with a lack of uniformity in

⁴Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, Pub. L. No. 113-291, tit. V., sub. E, § 551, 128 Stat. 3292, 3376 (2014) (codified at 10 U.S.C. § 2015 (2015)). The John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, Pub. L. No. 115-232, div. A, tit. V, § 556, 132 Stat. 1636, 1773 (2018), removed the requirements that the credentials obtained be "related to military training and skills" and "acquired during service in the armed forces incident to the performance of [servicemembers'] military duties," and maintained the requirement that such credentials "translate into civilian occupations."

⁵National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016, Pub. L. No. 114-92, tit. V., sub. E, § 559, 129 Stat. 726, 827-828 (2015). The NDAA for Fiscal Year 2016 required that a credential used in connection with DOD's Credentialing Program (A) is accredited by a nationally-recognized, third-party personnel certification program accretor; (B)(i) is sought or accepted by employers within the industry or sector involved as a recognized, preferred, or required credential for recruitment, screening, hiring, retention, or advancement purposes; and (ii) where appropriate, is endorsed by a nationally-recognized trade association or organization representing a significant part of the industry or sector; (C) grants licenses that are recognized by the Federal Government or a State government; or (D) meets credential standards of a Federal agency."

⁶Military services may have multiple parts to their COOL-related efforts. For example, the Army has a Self-Directed Credentialing Program and an Institutionally-Delivered Credentialing Program.

credentialing quality standards, can make it difficult for veterans and servicemembers to identify and obtain credentials with a high labor-market value. According to a 2018 DOD report, oversight of credentialing and licensing is limited. Additionally, the American Legion has noted that limited research on the labor market credential demand could make it difficult for veterans to transfer their work experience to civilian employment.

Officials described various efforts that DOD has undertaken—often in collaboration with other federal agencies and national workforce stakeholders—to help address challenges that servicemembers may face when transferring their military skills to the civilian workforce. DOD officials told us that for many years the main Credentialing Programs were implemented by each of the service branches. However, in October 2021, DOD issued an Instruction on Credentialing Programs, which established agency-wide guidance, policies, and requirements for its Credentialing Programs. In addition to issuing the DOD Instruction, DOD has taken the following steps to help servicemembers transfer their skills to the civilian workforce.

Facilitation of credential attainment.

DOD officials told us that since DOD itself does not issue any credentials, it has developed credentialing programs to facilitate their attainment.

- The COOL platform has information on credentialing opportunities that matches military occupations to civilian occupational credentials and provides resources to help servicemembers attain these credentials. The website can help servicemembers understand the credentialing requirements for their desired career path and can indicate some possible steps for pursuing a credential. The COOL program also allows payment for expenses related to professional certification—such as books, tuition, and exam fees, among other expenses. Each military service has established its own COOL program with its own set of eligibility criteria.⁷ Even though each military service operates its own COOL website, the credentials listed in COOL are unified across the services because DOD set centralized quality standards for determining which credentials can be listed in the COOL database.⁸
- Servicemembers also can participate in USMAP, a formal military training program that is registered with DOL. This program applies to the trade-related military occupations, such as aviation and construction, and at the end of their specific apprenticeship (recorded in thousands of hours), servicemembers receive an official DOL certificate of completion at no cost and without consuming any off-duty service hours. According to DOD, documented apprenticeships, such as USMAP, can lead to better job prospects and higher wages.

⁷With regard to COOL, payment of credentialing expenses was first implemented in the Navy in fiscal year 2007. Payment of credentialing expenses was subsequently implemented in the Air Force and Marine Corps in fiscal year 2015 and the Army and Coast Guard in fiscal year 2020.

⁸DOD's requirements for credentials to be listed in the COOL database include that they: (1) be accredited by a nationally-recognized, third-party personnel certification program accreditor; (2) be sought or accepted by employers within the industry or sector involved as a recognized, preferred, or required credential for recruitment, screening, hiring, retention, or advancement purposes; and where appropriate, are endorsed by a nationally-recognized trade association or organization representing a significant part of the industry or sector; (3) grant licenses that are recognized by the federal government or a state government; or (4) meet credential standards of a federal agency.

Tools to assess job compatibility and military experience.

DOD has developed tools that provide servicemembers with information on the current civilian job market to help them understand how they can apply their skills to civilian occupations.

- MilGears platform offers a suite of tools to help inform servicemembers about a civilian career path based on their interests, career goals, and experience. One of these tools is the Engage My Career (EMC) feature, which allows servicemembers to input their occupational information, educational background, and credentials. EMC will run an assessment of the servicemember's experience to produce customized results which could include: an assessment of how the servicemember's experience compares to the typical requirements for civilian occupations; a list of apprenticeships, certifications, or education that could help fill training gaps; and recommended next steps.
- The military occupational crosswalk, which is incorporated in COOL, is a tool that helps service members and veterans align their military experience and training with civilian jobs that require similar skills and training. Using DOD and DOL data, the military crosswalk translates codes or titles from military occupations to civilian jobs and careers. The crosswalk can also connect servicemembers and veterans to relevant careers, educational opportunities, or credentials.

Professional development opportunities.

DOD has also developed programs to provide servicemembers with opportunities to bridge gaps in their skillsets and develop additional professional experience that might apply to the civilian workforce more directly. For example, DOD's SkillBridge program offers separating servicemembers the opportunity to gain civilian work experience through training, apprenticeships, or internships during their last 180 days of service. DOD officials also described a program that places senior level military officials within federal agencies, such as DOL. Officials from DOD and DOL said that in addition to providing servicemembers with on-the-job experience, this program has an added benefit of aiding with interagency coordination and communication.

Collaboration with industry and federal stakeholders.

Through our literature review and stakeholder interviews, we identified examples of DOD collaborating with other stakeholders to better understand how military training would relate to various occupations in the civilian workplace. One such effort was the Mil2Mariner initiative, which brought together officials from multiple federal agencies and the commercial shipping industry to develop a "Blueprint to Mariner" guide. This guide provides servicemembers with information on how to apply for the U.S. Coast Guard's National Maritime Center credentials that are required for entry into some civilian mariner jobs. (See enclosure I for additional examples of federally issued credentials that may be used for non-federal occupations.)

DOD Monitors Participation and Completion in Credentialing Programs but Has Limited Evidence on Program Effectiveness

DOD Tracks Participation and Completion in Credentialing Programs and Has Recently Standardized Some Performance Measures

In an effort to monitor its two Credentialing Programs—COOL and USMAP—DOD tracks program participation and completion.⁹ For example, DOD data showed that in fiscal year 2020,

⁹For this report, we use the term "participation" to encompass: (1) for COOL, the number of individuals who were supported for one or more credentialing opportunities (e.g., DOD paid for a credential exam); and (2) for USMAP, the

approximately 18,200 servicemembers participated in the COOL program, and 12,700 completed one or more credential. In the same year, for USMAP, about 111,400 servicemembers participated and about 17,400 completed an apprenticeship.¹⁰ (See enclosure I for data by service.)

In addition to tracking these data, the recently issued DOD Instruction standardized performance measures and reporting across the military services.¹¹ Performance measures for COOL include number of servicemember requests for credentialing opportunities, approvals and disapprovals of credentialing requests, and attempts to renew a credential. For USMAP, they include number of apprenticeship enrollments and completions. According to a DOD official, additional measures may be identified in the future.

DOD Has Not Fully Assessed Program Effectiveness across All Services

We identified two studies that assessed factors of effectiveness for COOL and USMAP; however, the studies provide limited evidence as neither of them included all military services. According to DOD officials and documents, factors of effectiveness include: (1) servicemember promotion, (2) military retention, (3) post-military civilian employment, and (4) military recruitment.

The first study, sponsored by the Navy and published in 2015, used statistical analysis to assess the extent to which the Navy COOL program enhanced sailor advancement and retention and reduced the probability of requiring unemployment payments.¹² It preliminarily found that COOL alone did not directly benefit sailors in terms of advancement. In addition, the study could not estimate the true effect of COOL on retention because at the time, the Navy was downsizing while there was also historically high unemployment. The study found that successful participation may be effective in lowering unemployment for some sailors. Finally, it concluded that a more accurate evaluation would not be possible until COOL had existed for a longer period of time.

The second study, sponsored by DOL and published in 2015, used focus groups and interviews to assess Navy and Marine Corps implementation of USMAP and also provided preliminary insights into possible program effectiveness.¹³ For example, it suggested that USMAP was

number of individuals who enrolled in a USMAP apprenticeship. We use “completion” to encompass: (1) for COOL the number of individuals who had one or more positive outcomes (e.g., passed a credential exam); and (2) for USMAP the number of individuals who completed the requirements for the relevant USMAP apprenticeship.

¹⁰According to DOL, the agency with which USMAP is registered, “completion rate” means the percentage of an apprenticeship cohort who receives a certificate of completion within 1 year of the expected completion date. For example, members of a cohort in a 4-year carpenter program would be given 5 years for completion. As a result, the proportion of participants that completes in any single year is not a meaningful measure of the completion rate.

¹¹In 2016, we recommended that DOD develop and implement program performance measures that include key attributes, such as baselines and goals that can be used to assess performance. DOD identified initial performance measures in the finalized DOD Instruction. See GAO, *Military Personnel: Performance Measures Needed to Determine How Well DOD’s Credentialing Program Helps Servicemembers*, [GAO-17-133](#) (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 17, 2016).

¹²Golfin, Peggy A., and Shannon P. Desrosiers. *The Effect of Credentialing on Sailor Advancement, Retention, and Unemployment* (Arlington, VA: CNA Analysis & Solutions, 2015).

¹³Lerman, Robert, et al. *The United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP): Implementation Study and Feasibility of an Impact Study* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2015).

unlikely to have substantial effects on promotion in the military. In addition, the study implied that participating in apprenticeships might encourage servicemembers to reenlist so they can complete those apprenticeships. With respect to employment, it suggested that USMAP may have potential for increasing servicemembers' employment prospects. Finally, the study reports that in its current form, USMAP may be unlikely to influence recruitment. While findings from this study provided some indication of USMAP effectiveness, the study also noted that an evaluation of the impact of USMAP could better estimate the effect of the program on several outcomes both inside the military and outside the military.

While the two studies provided some evidence about effectiveness of the Credentialing Programs in the Navy and Marine Corps, DOD does not have current evidence of program effectiveness across all services, resulting in an evidence gap. Following these studies, COOL and USMAP expanded to additional services and grew in numbers of participants. For example, COOL expanded to the Coast Guard for full implementation in 2020, and there has been no assessment of effectiveness for Coast Guard participants in COOL. In addition, since fiscal year 2016, participation in USMAP participation has grown by nearly 30 percent, so the 2015 studies do not include those additional participants.

Federal standards for internal control state that agencies should use quality information to evaluate their programs.¹⁴ Additionally, in our prior work, we have noted that federal decision makers need evidence about whether federal programs and activities achieve intended results as they set priorities and consider how to make progress toward national objectives.¹⁵ To ensure that decision makers have the evidence they need, agencies undertake a range of activities. Evidence-building comprises four activities: (1) assessing existing evidence and identifying any need for additional evidence; (2) determining which new evidence to generate, when, and how (i.e., prioritizing new evidence); (3) generating that evidence; and (4) using evidence in decision-making, according to GAO analysis of our prior work and Office of Management and Budget information.

DOD officials told us that they do not yet plan to develop new evidence to more fully assess their Credentialing Programs until the Department implements its new DOD Instruction agency-wide. A DOD official told us that such evidence would help with budgeting, gaining a baseline understanding of what is working and what could be improved, and better understanding of whether servicemembers are getting similar benefits across the services' respective Credentialing Programs. By taking steps to build appropriate evidence about program effectiveness, DOD will be better positioned to demonstrate whether the programs are achieving their intended results and assure that resources are being targeted appropriately.

Conclusions

DOD has taken several steps to help servicemembers successfully transition to civilian life and to address challenges that servicemembers and veterans face when transferring their military skills and experience to the civilian workforce. While DOD has standardized its Credentialing Programs' performance measures across the services, it has not fully assessed the effectiveness of the programs, resulting in an evidence gap. Addressing the gap would serve as

¹⁴See GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, GAO-14-704G (Washington, D.C.: September 2014).

¹⁵See GAO, *Evidence-Based Policymaking: Selected Agencies Coordinate Activities, but Could Enhance Collaboration*, [GAO-20-119](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 4, 2019).

an important step in helping DOD build the evidence needed for effective decision-making and meet its goals of helping servicemembers succeed in the civilian workforce after leaving the military.

Recommendation for Executive Action

The Secretary of Defense should take steps to develop evidence that would allow the Department to assess the effectiveness of its Credentialing Programs.

Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this product to DOD and DOL for comment. DOL did not provide comments. DOD provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate, as well as written comments, which are reprinted in Enclosure II. In addition, DOD concurred with our recommendation and stated that the newly issued DOD Instruction will require consistent and standardized data across all the services to support the assessment of its Credentialing Programs. As we noted in the report, while DOD has standardized these Credentialing Programs' data across the services, it has not fully assessed the effectiveness of the programs. Assessing the standardized information would serve as an important step to understand the effectiveness of the program and would help with informed decision-making.

We are sending copies of this report to the Secretaries of Defense and Labor and appropriate congressional committees. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-7215 or locked@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report.

GAO staff who made key contributions to this report were Meeta Engle (Assistant Director), Anjali Tekchandani (Analyst in Charge), Anna Cielinski, Laila Heid, Aaron Olszewski, Monica Savoy, and Joy Solmonson. Also contributing to this report were Vincent Balloon, Clifton Douglas Jr., Benjamin Licht, and Brian Pegram.



Dawn Locke, Acting Director
Education, Workforce, and Income Security

Enclosures –2

Enclosure I: Additional Data Tables

Table 1: Examples of Credentials Issued by Federal Agencies That Can Be Used for Non-Federal Employment

| Credential | Air Traffic Control Tower Operator Certificate | Aviation Mechanic certificate (Airframe & Powerplant) | Commercial radio operator licenses | Merchant Mariner Credential |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| Issuing agency | Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) | Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) | Federal Communications Commission (FCC) | United States Coast Guard (USCG) |
| Example of non-federal occupation | Air traffic controller | Aircraft mechanic | Radio operator | Pilot of water vessels |
| Requirements include: | At least 6 months practical experience, which may include relevant experience in the Armed Forces | 18 months or 30 months of certain practical experience, or graduating from certificated aviation maintenance technician school | Legally eligible to work in the U.S., hold qualifying pilot certificates (for the purpose of operating aircraft radio stations), and hold the relevant FCC radio station licenses for the purpose of operating that station | Satisfaction of any applicable sea service requirements, which may be met through sea service in the Armed Forces Must also hold a Transportation Worker Identification Credential issued by the Transportation Security Administration |
| Exams | Written knowledge test and practical skills test | Written, oral, and practical tests administered by FAA | Various written elements and Telegraphy Elements (e.g., Morse code) | Completion of any required training courses approved by USCG |
| Renewal or recent experience requirements include: | Must have relevant experience related to occupation for at least 3 of the preceding 6 months | Must have relevant experience related to occupation for at least 6 of the preceding 24 months | Depending on the class of license, it may be valid for 5 years or the lifetime of the holder | Merchant mariner credential is valid for a term of 5 years |

Source: GAO analysis of information from Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, Federal Aviation Administration, and Federal Communications Commission. | GAO-22-105261

Table 2. Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL), by Service, Fiscal Year 2020

| Service | Participants ^a | Completions ^b | Percent of participants who completed one or more credential |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Army active and reserve components | 8,917 | 5,943 | 66.65% |
| Navy enlisted and officer, active and reserve components | 5,013 | 3,590 | 71.61% |
| Marine Corps active component | 519 | 340 | 65.51% |
| Air Force active and reserve components | 3,732 | 2,810 | 75.29% |
| All services' active and reserve components | 18,181 | 12,683 | 69.76% |

Source: Department of Defense (DOD)^c | GAO-22-105261

^aFor Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL), we use the term “participants” in this report to mean the number of individuals who were supported for one or more credentialing opportunities (e.g., DOD paid for a credential exam).

^bFor COOL, we use the term “completions” to mean the number of individuals who had one or more positive outcomes (e.g., passed a credential exam). DOD defines a positive outcome as obtainment of a credential with successful completion of credential requirements and related examinations. A participant may complete more than one credential.

^cDepartment of Defense. *Improvements to the Credentialing Opportunities On-Line Programs of the Armed Forces: A Report in Response to Section 578 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (Public Law 116-283)* (Washington, D.C.: July 2021). This report focused on DOD’s Credentialing Programs and did not include data on participants and completions in the U.S. Coast Guard.

Table 3. United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP), by Service, Fiscal Year 2020

| Service | Participants ^a | New enrollments | Completions ^{b,c} |
|--------------|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Army | 1,495 | 1,012 | 30 |
| Navy | 95,123 | 54,400 | 16,256 |
| Marine Corps | 13,720 | 7,960 | 1,068 |
| Air Force | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Coast Guard | 1,017 | 517 | 65 |
| Total | 111,355 | 63,889 | 17,419 |

Source: Department of Defense. | GAO-22-105261

^aFor USMAP, we use the term “participants” in this report to mean the number of individuals who enrolled in a USMAP apprenticeship.

^bFor USMAP, we use the term “completions” to mean the number of individuals who completed the requirements for the relevant USMAP apprenticeship.

^cAccording to the Department of Labor, the agency with which USMAP is registered, “completion rate” means the percentage of an apprenticeship cohort that receives a certificate of completion of apprenticeship within 1 year of the expected completion date. For example, members of a cohort in a 4-year carpenter program would be given 5 years for completion. As a result, the proportion of participants that completes in any single year is not a meaningful measure of the completion rate.

Enclosure II: Comments from the Department of Defense



READINESS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

28 Jan 2022

Ms. Dawn Locke
Acting Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington DC 20548

Dear Ms. Locke:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) Draft Report GAO-22-105261, "Military And Veteran Support: DoD Has Taken Steps to Help Service Members Transfer Skills to Civilian Employment but Has Limited Evidence to Determine Program Effectiveness," dated December 23, 2021 (GAO Code 105261).

Attached is DoD's response to the subject report. My point of contact is Mr. Boris Kun, who may be reached at boris.kun.civ@mail.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shawn G. Skelly".

Shawn G. Skelly

Enclosure:
As stated

Enclosure II: Comments from the Department of Defense

**GAO DRAFT REPORT DATED DECEMBER 23, 2021
GAO-22-105261 (GAO CODE 105261)**

**“MILITARY AND VETERAN SUPPORT: DOD HAS TAKEN STEPS TO HELP
SERVICE MEMBERS TRANSFER SKILLS TO CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT BUT HAS
LIMITED EVIDENCE TO DETERMINE PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS”**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS
TO THE GAO RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDATION: The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense should take steps to develop evidence that would allow the Department to assess the effectiveness of its credentialing programs.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. On October 13, 2021, the Department of Defense published DoD Instruction 1322.33, “DoD Credentialing Programs.” The Issuance establishes Department-wide credentialing policy and procedures, and requires consistent and standardized data collection/reporting in support of the assessment of credentialing programs.

(105261)

This is a work of the U.S. government and is not subject to copyright protection in the United States. The published product may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without further permission from GAO. However, because this work may contain copyrighted images or other material, permission from the copyright holder may be necessary if you wish to reproduce this material separately.

GAO's Mission

The Government Accountability Office, the audit, evaluation, and investigative arm of Congress, exists to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the American people. GAO examines the use of public funds; evaluates federal programs and policies; and provides analyses, recommendations, and other assistance to help Congress make informed oversight, policy, and funding decisions. GAO's commitment to good government is reflected in its core values of accountability, integrity, and reliability.

Obtaining Copies of GAO Reports and Testimony

The fastest and easiest way to obtain copies of GAO documents at no cost is through our website. Each weekday afternoon, GAO posts on its [website](#) newly released reports, testimony, and correspondence. You can also [subscribe](#) to GAO's email updates to receive notification of newly posted products.

Order by Phone

The price of each GAO publication reflects GAO's actual cost of production and distribution and depends on the number of pages in the publication and whether the publication is printed in color or black and white. Pricing and ordering information is posted on GAO's website, <https://www.gao.gov/ordering.htm>.

Place orders by calling (202) 512-6000, toll free (866) 801-7077, or TDD (202) 512-2537.

Orders may be paid for using American Express, Discover Card, MasterCard, Visa, check, or money order. Call for additional information.

Connect with GAO

Connect with GAO on [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).
Subscribe to our [RSS Feeds](#) or [Email Updates](#). Listen to our [Podcasts](#).
Visit GAO on the web at <https://www.gao.gov>.

To Report Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in Federal Programs

Contact FraudNet:

Website: <https://www.gao.gov/about/what-gao-does/fraudnet>

Automated answering system: (800) 424-5454 or (202) 512-7700

Congressional Relations

Angela Nicole Clowers, Managing Director, ClowersA@gao.gov, (202)-512-4010, U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7125, Washington, DC 20548

Public Affairs

Chuck Young, Managing Director, youngc1@gao.gov, (202) 512-4800
U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7149
Washington, DC 20548

Strategic Planning and External Liaison

Stephen J. Sanford, Managing Director, spel@gao.gov, (202) 512-4707
U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7814,
Washington, DC 20548

