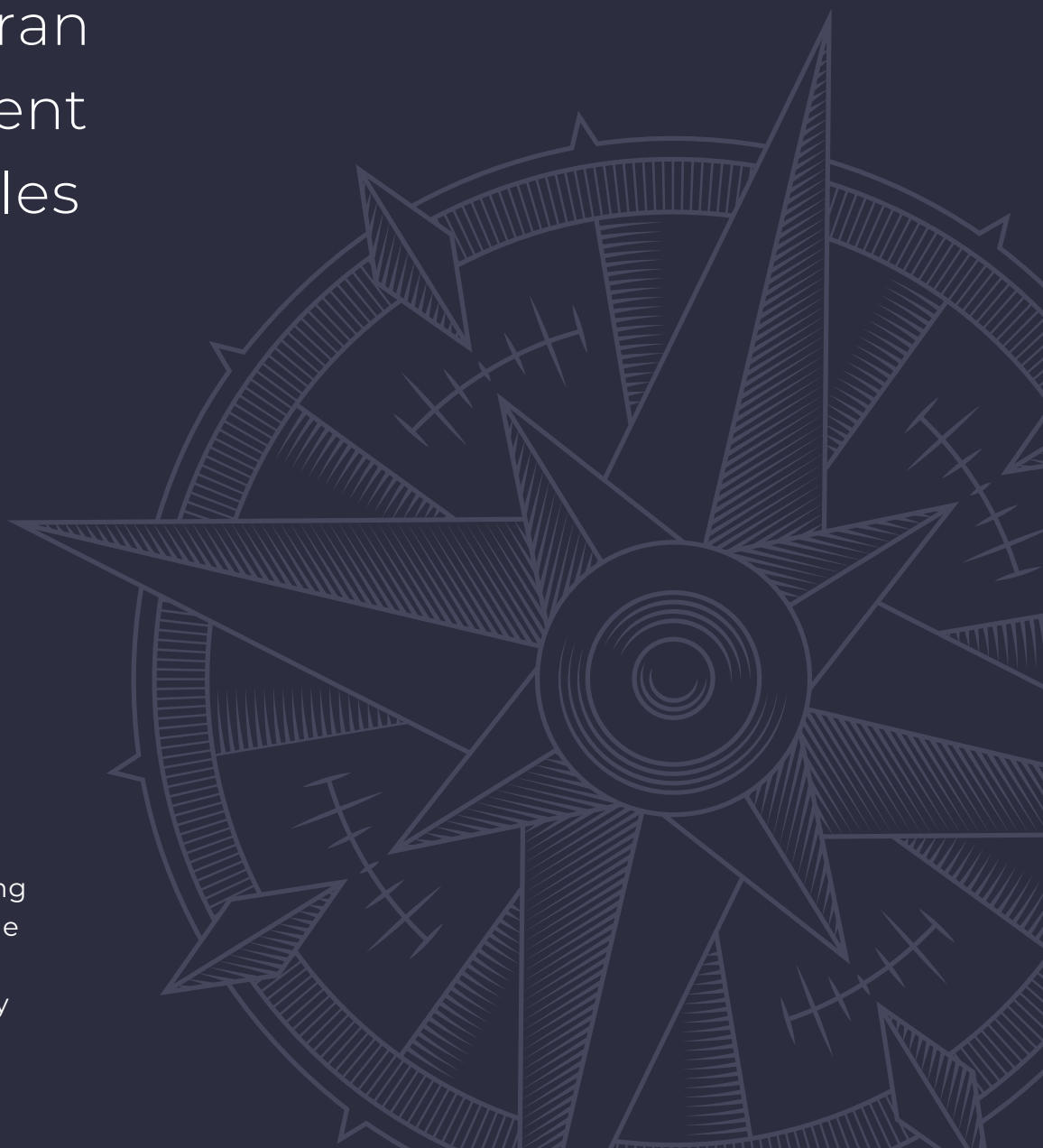
OCTOBER 2026

Veterans Affairs Canada
Anciens Combattants Canada

What We Heard Report

2026 Veteran Employment Roundtables



Informing the Ongoing Implementation of the National Veterans Employment Strategy



Message from the Minister

Across Canada, Veterans continue to make valuable contributions to our communities, workplaces, and economy. Meaningful employment opportunities support successful transition outcomes from military to civilian life.

To better understand the opportunities and barriers Veterans face in today's labour market, the Government of Canada convened a series of roundtables between June and July 2026 with Veterans, employers, industry leaders, educational institutions, Veteran-serving organizations, and government partners from across Canada.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed their time, expertise, perspectives, and lived experiences to these discussions. Your participation provided valuable insights into the factors that support successful Veteran employment and identified opportunities to strengthen outcomes for Veterans as they transition to civilian careers.

These discussions reinforced the significant value Veterans bring to Canada's workforce through their leadership, adaptability, technical expertise, problem-solving abilities, and commitment to service. Participants also expressed strong support for the National Veterans Employment Strategy (NVES) and its objectives. While the NVES continues to provide a strong foundation, participants identified opportunities to strengthen its implementation by improving connection and coordination across the Veteran employment ecosystem.

The feedback gathered through these roundtables will help guide future implementation under the NVES and ensure that programs, services, and partnerships continue to respond to the evolving needs of Veterans. By building on what we have heard, we can strengthen employment opportunities, improve transition outcomes, and better support Veterans as they continue their service to Canada in new and meaningful ways.

The Honourable Jill McKnight, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence

Objective and Context

The Roundtables were convened to gather perspectives from those directly involved in Veteran employment, including education, transition, training, entrepreneurship, and workforce development.

Participants included:

- Veterans and transitioning Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members
- Employers and industry associations
- Skilled trades organizations
- Aerospace and aviation employers
- Marine and shipbuilding employers
- Information technology and cyber security employers
- Educational and training institutions
- Defence and security sector
- Emergency services management
- Veteran entrepreneurs
- Veteran-serving organizations
- Other government departments

What We Learned

Participants identified five opportunities to strengthen Veteran employment outcomes:

1. Supporting earlier and more personalized transition planning.
2. Improving recognition of military training, experience, and transferable skills.
3. Making employment supports and resources easier to access and navigate.
4. Strengthening mentorship, employer engagement, and professional networks.
5. Expanding awareness, support, and pathways for Veteran entrepreneurship and self-employment.

Participants also emphasized that Veterans possess valuable leadership, technical expertise, adaptability, and problem-solving skills that can help address workforce needs across Canada and help grow the economy.

What We Heard

Theme 1: Supporting Earlier and More Personalized Transition Planning

Participants highlighted opportunities to strengthen transition planning by introducing career exploration, education planning, entrepreneurship awareness, and employer engagement earlier in a member's military career. Many indicated that successful transitions are highly individualized and should reflect different experiences, career aspirations, family situations, health considerations, and geographic circumstances.

Participants emphasized the importance of:

- Earlier exposure to civilian industries and career opportunities.
- Greater employer engagement prior to release.
- Expanded work-integrated learning, internships, and experiential opportunities.
- Flexible transition supports that reflect diverse Veteran experiences.
- Supporting Veterans as they explore future career goals and aspirations.

Participants also identified the Education and Training Benefit (ETB) as an important resource for successful transition outcomes and highlighted opportunities to increase awareness of, access to, and flexibility of the benefit.

Theme 2: Improving Recognition of Military Training, Experience, and Transferable Skills

Participants highlighted opportunities to better recognize military training, experience, leadership, and technical skills while making it easier for Veterans and employers to understand how military competencies align with civilian careers.

Participants highlighted the importance of:

- Improve military-to-civilian skill translation and credential alignment through enhanced recognition of military training and experience, while supporting targeted upskilling where additional civilian qualifications are required.
- Expand Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) to ensure military training and experience are recognized and credited toward civilian education, licensing, and employment requirements.
- Increase understanding of military skills among employers.

Participants emphasized that many Veterans possess valuable competencies that are highly relevant to civilian employment and that improved recognition could help strengthen workforce participation and career mobility.

Theme 3: Making Employment Supports and Resources Easier to Access and Navigate

Participants noted that while some employment, education, training, and entrepreneurship supports already exist, awareness of available programs remains low, and barriers to access can reduce participation and uptake.

Participants identified opportunities to improve awareness, coordination, and connection to existing resources for both Veterans and employers, including:

- Increase access to and awareness of available supports and resources.
- Improve coordination across organizations.
- Create clearer referral pathways.
- Enhance online resources.
- Strengthen outreach to underserved populations and communities.

Participants expressed strong support for more coordinated approaches that help Veterans seamlessly connect with programs, services, and opportunities.

Theme 4: Strengthening Mentorship, Employer Engagement, and Professional Networks

Participants identified mentorship and professional networks as important contributors to successful employment outcomes. Veterans highlighted the value of learning from peers who have successfully transitioned, while employers expressed interest in additional tools and

information to support Veteran recruitment and retention.

Participants emphasized opportunities to:

- Expand mentor and peer support networks to support onboarding, professional development and long term career success for Veterans.
- Strengthen employer understanding of military experience.
- Share promising hiring and retention practices to help employers attract and support Veteran talent.
- Support workplace networks and employee resource groups.
- Foster inclusive workplace cultures that support Veteran success.

Theme 5: Expanding Awareness, Support, and Pathways for Veteran Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment

Participants emphasized that entrepreneurship is an important but often under-recognized transition pathway. Many Veteran entrepreneurs described business ownership as an opportunity to continue serving their communities, leverage military leadership and problem-solving skills, create flexible employment opportunities, and pursue meaningful post-service careers.

Participants noted that a variety of supports and programs already exist but are often difficult to navigate or access. Participants strongly supported increasing awareness of existing resources, improving coordination among entrepreneurial support organizations, stronger mentorship opportunities, and clearer pathways connecting Veterans to entrepreneurship resources.

Participants highlighted opportunities to:

- Improve awareness of entrepreneurial supports and funding opportunities.
- Strengthen Veteran entrepreneur mentorship and peer networks.
- Improve connections between local and national entrepreneurship organizations.
- Increase visibility of procurement and supplier diversity opportunities.
- Explore greater flexibility within educational and training supports for entrepreneurial learning.
- Establish clearer pathways connecting transition planning and entrepreneurship.

What We Are Doing

The roundtables identified opportunities to advance the NVES through enhanced collaboration, improved coordination, and greater awareness of existing supports. The following actions outline areas of focus over the short, medium, and long-term.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (0-6 MONTHS)

1. Transition Pathways

- Increase awareness and uptake of existing Career Transition Services, Education and Training Benefit (ETB), employment programs, and entrepreneurship supports by leveraging established connection points with Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Transition Group, members of

the CAF, and Veterans throughout the transition journey and beyond.

  - Enhance promotion of available programs and services at key transition milestones, including pre-release planning and post-release follow-up.
  - Strengthen coordination and information sharing across the federal government, service providers, and community partners to ensure consistent and timely awareness of available resources.
  - Monitor programs awareness and uptake through performance measurement and stakeholder feedback to identify gaps and inform continuous improvement.

- Collaborate with industry and academia to identify opportunities for Veterans to move quickly into jobs in the defence industry or skilled trades through micro-credentialing and skills recognition.

2. Skills Matching and Career Readiness

- Create a resource hub for Veterans and employers that will increase awareness and access of available supports.
- Complete a review of existing military-to-civilian skills matching tools and identify opportunities for enhancement.
- Pilot and launch a skills translation resource toolkit that will include Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled questionnaires and tools to support releasing members, Veterans and employers to better understand military to civilian skills translation.

3. Navigation and System Coordination

- Consolidate information on existing employment, education, training, and entrepreneurship resources into a streamlined employment resource hub.
- Increase awareness of and access to programs, services, and application processes that support successful transitions from military service to civilian employment, education, and training.
- Increase awareness of the Hire a Veteran LinkedIn site which features job opportunities and recruitment initiatives for Veterans.

4. Mentorship and Employer Engagement

- Promote Veteran mentorship programs, networking opportunities, and peer-support initiatives.
- Launch and promote a Veteran Employer Recognition Initiative that will encourage participating employers to adopt leading practices that support Veteran attraction, onboarding, retention, mentorship, leadership development, military cultural competency, workforce measurement, and

public commitment to Veteran employment and encourage the adoption of Veteran-friendly workplace practices across Canada.

- Promote online employer resources including hiring guides and best practices.

5. Veteran Entrepreneurship

- Develop and publish a Veteran Entrepreneurship Hub that highlights Veteran Entrepreneurs and links Veterans to training, funding, mentorship and business development supports.
- Host a career webinar that brings together key resources and stakeholders in the Veteran Entrepreneurship space.
- Engage Veteran entrepreneurs and key ecosystem partners to assess needs, identify barriers, and explore options for strengthening entrepreneurship supports and services for Veterans.
- Introduce the Vision to Venture online learning course through Career Transition Services, designed to support Veterans interested in Entrepreneurship as their next career.

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS (6-18 MONTHS)

1. Transition Pathways

- Partner with other government departments and industry on expanding apprenticeships, work placements, secondments, and experiential learning opportunities.
- Integrate entrepreneurship resources and referral pathways into transition programming.
- Strengthen the Education and Training Benefit performance measurement and data collection to better understand participation, outcomes, and unmet needs.

2. Skills Recognition and Career Readiness

- Develop a skills translation toolkit that will provide AI-enabled tools and practical supports designed to help users translate military credentials and experiences into civilian competencies and develop tailored résumés and cover letters. The toolkit will support users in practicing how to effectively communicate their skills and experience to prospective employers. The toolkit will also enable Veterans to generate civilian-friendly examples of military skills, qualifications, and work experience that they can adapt to their individual circumstances.
- Expand partnerships with educational institutions, regulators, and industry to support Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) to advance career pathways for Veterans in key sectors including skilled trades and the defence sector.
- Support the inclusion of identity-based transition conversations that help Veterans connect their military experience, skills, and sense of purpose to future employment opportunities.

3. Navigation and System Coordination

- Implement a coordinated employment navigation approach to connect Veterans with programs, services, training opportunities, and employers by expanding focus on employment at the time of transition.
- Expand outreach activities for underrepresented communities including for women Veterans, Indigenous Veterans, Reservists, and Veterans in rural and remote communities.
- Develop Veteran Campus Recognition Initiatives using a framework similar to the Veteran Employer Recognition Initiative.
- Implement a common framework for employment outcome measurement, reporting, and data collection.

4. Mentorship and Employer Engagement

- Increase participation in the Veteran Ready Employer Recognition Initiative to expand the national network of recognized employers and enhance the online directory and job postings for Veterans seeking employment opportunities.
- Develop a centralized employer resource hub with practical tools, best practices, and information to support Veteran recruitment, retention, and career advancement.
- Convene a working group of Veteran-ready employers to showcase best practices and explore persistent barriers and gaps impacting the hiring, integration, and retention of Veterans in the workforce.

5. Veteran Entrepreneurship

- Develop referral pathways connecting Veterans with incubators, accelerators, and entrepreneurship support organizations.
- Expand entrepreneur mentorship opportunities through Veteran centered partnerships.
- Build awareness of existing Veteran entrepreneurship initiatives by expanding access to business training, mentorship, networking opportunities, and entrepreneurial education.
- Develop options for increased integration of entrepreneurship supports within transition programming.

LONGER-TERM ACTIONS (18-24 MONTHS)

1. Transition Pathways

- Create clear and connected pathways that support Veterans transitioning from military service to education, skills development, entrepreneurship, and meaningful civilian employment.
- Enhance the Education and Training Benefit framework to better support diverse career pathways and lifelong

learning opportunities for Veterans.

- Strengthen access to specialized entrepreneurship education, training and business development supports to help Veterans successfully start and grow businesses.
- Foster international cooperation to identify, share, and adopt leading practices that improve Veteran transition experiences and employment outcomes.

2. Skills Recognition and Career Readiness

- Expand education opportunities for Veterans by working with academia and industry to identify micro-credentials that support rapid integration into key sectors.
- Advance collaborative work supporting military credential recognition and qualification portability.
- Increase efforts to formally recognize the skills, knowledge and experience Veterans already have, so they can more easily qualify for jobs in industries where workers are needed most.

3. Navigation and System Coordination

- Grow the Veteran and employer resource hub that serves as a centralized access point for information, programs, services, and supports for employment, education, training, and entrepreneurship.

Expand the national employment partner network supporting coordinated Veteran employment services.

- Engage with academia, educational institutions and organizations on establishing a sustainable and integrated PLAR framework that supports the recognition of military learning and experience across education, training, and employment sectors, reducing duplication of training and accelerating Veteran transitions to civilian careers.

4. Mentorship and Employer Engagement

- Expand and regularly promote the Veteran Employer Recognition Initiative to highlight organizations demonstrating leadership in Veteran recruitment, onboarding, retention, mentorship, and career advancement and to encourage broader employer participation.
- Engage Veterans and employers to better understand the challenges, needs, and opportunities experienced during recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and workplace integration, and use these insights to inform the development of enhanced learning resources for both audiences.
- Strengthen the Employment Resource Hub by adding a dedicated section that supports Veterans at every stage of their career journey, from transition planning through employment, professional growth, and business ownership.

5. Veteran Entrepreneurship

- Establish a coordinated Veteran entrepreneurship network connecting training, mentorship, procurement, and business supports.
- Establish long-term partnerships supporting Veteran business creation and growth.
- Establish a sustainable Veteran Entrepreneurship Program that supports business creation and growth through integrated training, mentorship, and access to microgrants to assist Veterans in launching or expanding a business. Measure long-term economic outcomes and continuously refine the program to maximize participation, business success, and Veteran well-being.

Closing Reflections

The NVES roundtables reinforced that Veterans bring valuable skills, leadership, experience, and perspectives that strengthen workplaces, communities, and Canada's economy. Participants consistently highlighted the importance of ensuring that Veterans can fully contribute their talents and continue to thrive following their military service.

The discussions also underscored that improving Veteran employment and economic outcomes requires sustained collaboration among Veterans, employers, educational institutions, Veteran-serving organizations, industry associations, and governments. By working together, stakeholders can help reduce barriers, improve access to opportunities, and create more seamless pathways to meaningful employment, education, training, and entrepreneurship.

The insights gathered through the roundtables support broader efforts to build a highly skilled, resilient, and inclusive workforce, while helping address labour market needs and supporting economic growth across Canada. Veterans possess highly transferable skills, leadership experience, and specialized expertise that can contribute significantly to priority sectors and emerging economic opportunities.

The Government of Canada remains committed to working with partners across Canada to advance the NVES and its objectives. This report represents an important milestone, but not the conclusion of the conversation. The NVES is intended to be an evolving framework that continues to adapt as Veteran needs, labour market conditions, and opportunities change. The feedback and recommendations shared through the roundtables will help inform future priorities, guide ongoing implementation efforts, and shape the next phase of work to improve employment, education, and entrepreneurship outcomes for Veterans and their families.

This collaborative approach will help ensure that the NVES remains responsive, relevant, and effective in supporting Veteran success for years to come.

OCTOBER 2026

Veterans Affairs Canada | Anciens Combattants Canada

What We Heard Report

2026 Veteran Employment Roundtables

Informing the Ongoing Implementation of the National Veterans Employment Strategy

