



TRANSITION GUIDE

**MOAA
PUBLICATIONS:**
YOUR RESOURCE
FOR EVERY STAGE
OF LIFE



ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

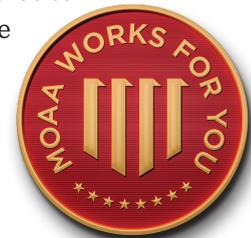
As you approach the last few years of your uniformed service career, it's smart to have transition in mind. MOAA's Transition Guide offers guidance about post-service opportunities and resources to help you during the journey.

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MOAA developed this guide to assist servicemembers making the transition from uniformed service to civilian careers. Inside, you'll find guidance on key components of career transition, including job searching, networking, résumé writing, and interviewing. You'll also find details about MOAA's career transition services — webinars, events, counseling, and other resources — benefits to help MOAA members navigate the post-service career journey.



MOAA's team is available to answer any questions or concerns you might have. Call a member service representative at (800) 234-MOAA (6622) (Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time). You'll also find resources on the facing page of this publication. 

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a nonprofit military and veterans association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired, and former members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors. Membership is open to those who hold or have ever held a warrant or commission in any component of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and their surviving spouses.

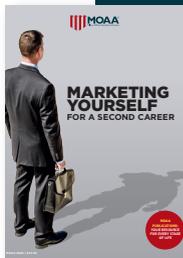


CONTACT MOAA

- Email transition@moaa.org.
- Visit www.moaa.org/career.
- Call the MOAA Member Service Center at (800) 234-MOAA (6622).
- Mail the MOAA Transition Center: 201 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314

MARKETING YOURSELF FOR A SECOND CAREER

This guide contains comprehensive advice on planning and conducting an effective job-hunting campaign. Find tips for self-marketing, job searching, interviewing, creating an attention-getting résumé and cover letter, and more. MOAA Premium and Life members can download it for free at www.moaa.org/publications.



MOAA CAREER TRANSITION SERVICES

Thanks to MOAA Charities, MOAA's career transition consultants support uniformed servicemembers, veterans, military spouses, and surviving spouses with making sound career and life decisions.

Seminars and workshops. These interactive sessions are designed to help you activate a resilient mindset that will serve you throughout the ups and downs of your transition.

TRICARE and VA benefits. Prepare for your next interview or your next salary and benefits negotiation.

Webinars. MOAA's Transition Center presents educational webinars offering in-depth analysis on finance and benefits, advice on careers and transitioning, and information on your benefits. Find the archived productions at www.moaa.org/webinar-archive. (Some webinars are available after initial broadcast to Premium and Life members only.)

Networking and hiring events. MOAA offers a variety of in-person and virtual professional development and networking/hiring events. These are great opportunities to get connected with industry executives, talent acquisition professionals, hiring managers, and resource specialists. Check out our upcoming events at www.moaa.org/events.

Federal job resources. If you are considering civil service, see www.moaa.org/fedjobs for information on working for the government.

Resources for military spouses. Through support from MOAA Charities, transition resources are available to all military spouses, including webinars, virtual career fairs, and in-person events. In addition, spouses can download the *Military Spouse Employment Guide* (www.moaa.org/spouseguide), a free resource that includes job-search strategies, tools to improve networking and self-marketing skills, tips for acing a job interview, and ways to evaluate and negotiate job offers.

MOAA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Make the most of your membership benefits. MOAA's award-winning team of experts provides these personalized services for Premium and Life members:

- Get a jump-start on the competition through a career consultation session, professional résumé critique, and LinkedIn

profile review. Email transition@moaa.org for more.

- Get your questions answered. Contact MOAA's health care, financial education, and military/veterans' benefits experts at beninfo@moaa.org.

Stay up to date with the latest career news and tips at www.moaa.org/careers, with guidance and transition news, event updates, members-only materials, and more information.

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Where to Go Next

Navigate the challenging decisions of your post-military career and life

After spending a career in the military, it can be daunting and exciting to make the transition to the civilian world. You might only be in your 30s or 40s and have several decades before you fully retire, and you can finally decide where to go next.

“This is your opportunity to start thinking about what your personal passions are, what are the things that really motivate you,” said Lt. Col. Kitty Meyers, USAF (Ret), a MOAA Life member who worked her way up in Marriott Corp. after leaving the military and is now a transition liaison. “That helps you in figuring out where to live, what to do, and what kind of job to look for.”

Some people have a career in mind and move to the area where they’re offered the best job. Others choose the location first and then do their job search.

‘This is your opportunity to start thinking about what your personal passions are, what are the things that really motivate you.’

— Lt. Col. Kitty Meyers, USAF (Ret)

Consider the following factors when deciding where to live after leaving the military and focusing your job search:

Explore the possibilities. Several years before you leave the military, start thinking about your next phase. “I call it opening the aperture,” said Meyers. “Think about all the possibilities, then start narrowing it down to your passion, what you want to do, where you want to live, and how you want to live. Take those things into account, so that when you finally plant the flag somewhere, you’re going to be happy.”

She recommends getting the family involved in the brainstorming.

Compare the cost of living. When figuring out how much you need to make in your new job, you first need to calculate the value of the military benefits you need to replace. You’ll no longer have a tax-free housing allowance, and you’ll have to pay income taxes in the state where you actually live — which can be a new expense if you established residency in an income-tax-free state such as Florida or Texas while on active duty. If you are receiving military retirement pay, find out how the state taxes that money, too.

Choosing Your Next Career Field

Discerning the right career field following uniformed service can be daunting. Here are a few tips to help you do so confidently:

1. Conduct a self-assessment.

Write down your top 5 values, strengths, interests/passions, and gifts or talents.

What sticks out to you? Any themes? When you approach your career field from a place of genuine interest and alignment, you are likely to experience much higher job satisfaction and personal fulfillment.

2. Identify your nonnegotiables.

Make a list of your “must haves” or nonnegotiables. Perhaps it’s location, salary, type of role, work environment, flexible work schedule, etc. You might have to compromise on some things, but pay close attention to those that are most important.



3. Research.

LinkedIn, Indeed, and other online job resources are powerful research tools. Capture five to 10 roles, companies, or industries that are most interesting.

4. Network.

Reach out to your network to take your research to the next level. Ask questions about what people actually do in their roles, learn about their organizations from an insider perspective, and increase your knowledge and understanding of company culture.

5. Decide.

Having deepened your knowledge through research and your network, you can confidently narrow your list down to the top three career fields that are most interesting. Trust your gut and intuition.

Income taxes are just part of the picture. Many states have tax exemptions on uniformed service retirement pay, but you need to consider property tax and income tax, too. See MOAA’s State Report Card and Tax Guide (www.moaa.org/statereport) for details. Additionally, add the cost of health care — not just premiums, but also copays and deductibles, and consider the cost of housing, all types of insurance — life, auto, homeowner’s — and other expenses that can vary by area.

A job with a higher salary might not get you more depending on the location. USAA has a calculator at www.usaa.com/leavingthemilitary that helps you compare the cost of living by location, and the military’s Transition Assistance Program tools can help, too (go to www.tapevents.mil/resources).

Family considerations. Sometimes moving near family becomes the top priority, regardless of the cost of living — especially if you have young children or aging parents.

Proximity to military bases and resources. Some people are attracted to areas with military bases because of the resources and active military communities. There are several hubs of job opportunities for veterans, such as San Antonio;

A job with a higher salary might not actually get you more depending on the location.

Pensacola and Tampa, Fla.; Seattle; the National Capital Region in Washington, D.C., northern Virginia, and Maryland; San Diego; Hampton Roads, Va.; and Colorado Springs, Colo.

These cities often have jobs with military contractors that might be similar to the one you had in uniform. You can also benefit from having military health care, the PX, and the commissary nearby.

Moving with the job. You don’t always choose the location first. Some people go where the best job offer takes them.

Take advantage of job-search resources. After you choose the location or the type of job, then you can focus your career search. Do your research. Reach out to those you know in the new area. Connect with the MOAA chapter or the Chamber of Commerce. Make the most of MOAA’s transition resources. Check out transition programs with the Department of Labor and the U.S. Small Business Administration, which has Veteran Business Outreach Centers.

Search for the type of job or location at www.recruitmilitary.com/usaa, which connects military-friendly employers with active duty service-members and spouses. IIII



Post-Service Careers

These job sectors might be a good fit for transitioning servicemembers

Academia/Higher Education

Skill Set: As leaders, mentors, and instructors, you possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to serve in a teaching capacity.

Career Area Description:

- Mentoring students in career and professional development.
- Following your interests — you have the freedom to determine what you want to research and lead a team to pursue it.
- Freedom over your time — often tied to an academic calendar.
- Stability and autonomy to do what you love all the time and get paid and an opportunity to make a long-term impact.

Jobs Within the Field: If teaching is not your thing, opportunities in higher education extend well beyond the classroom, with roles in re-

search, operations, finance, and facilities management.

MOAA Webinar: Exploring Academia and Higher Education Careers

Aerospace

Skill Set: They commonly include analytical skills, problem-solving, mathematics, and critical thinking skills, and a passion for the industry.

Career Area Description:

- Booming industry with highly in-demand skills.
- Exciting, ever-changing career field.
- Flexible schedule and travel opportunities.
- Career development — improvements in safety, customer service, and environmental sustainability mean the sector is constantly changing, and it needs workers who can keep pace with changes.
- Low barriers to finding the right career fit. Airlines and aircraft maintenance providers such as Delta, United, or American Airlines and aircraft manufacturers such as BAE Systems, Boeing, and Northrop Grumman offer a large selection of apprenticeship programs.

Jobs Within the Field: Opportunities include

space exploration, aerospace engineering and design, defense contracting, manufacturing, commercial aviation, and occupational safety, to name just a few.

MOAA Webinar: Explore the Aerospace Industry

Agriculture

Skill Set: Whether you have experience in sales, administration, engineering, science, or manual labor, you can specialize in agriculture.

Career Area Description:

- Professional paths related to farming, cultivation, and animal husbandry involving everything from growing crops and nurturing the soil to raising livestock.
- Incorporate research, engineering, manufacturing, marketing, and selling the products that result from crops and livestock as well as providing support and assistance throughout the field.

Jobs Within the Field: Agriculture production (farming and ranching); agriculture processing and products (sales and distribution); agriculture engineering, science, mechanics, and biotechnology; forestry; agriculture renewable natural resources; and agriculture sales, supplies, and services.

MOAA Webinar: Veteran Opportunities in Employment, Education, and Entrepreneurship in Agriculture

Cybersecurity/IT

Skill Set: Did you know there is a serious shortage of people with the skills needed to plan, implement, and manage a cybersecurity strategy? Despite the influx of 700,000 professionals into the cybersecurity workforce, a 2021 study shows that global demand for cybersecurity professionals continues to outpace supply — resulting in the cybersecurity workforce gap. If you want a job that involves plenty of technical research and data analysis, consider a career in cybersecurity.

Career Area Description:

To advance in this field, get your certifications and credentials. Not only does getting certified

MOAA Resources for Entrepreneurs

Whether you are considering a small business as a post-service venture or already well on your way, MOAA might have resources to support your journey. Here is a quick look at what is available:

MOAA Webinar. MOAA hosted an online event featuring an expert from the Small Business Administration's Office of Veterans Business Development. Attendees learned how to tap into no-cost entrepreneurship training programs and to find their local Veterans Business Outreach Center for access to even more offerings, including business plan analysis and mentorship opportunities. Premium and Life members can access the webinar at www.moaa.org/webinar-archive (login is required).

MOAA.org. A quick search of our online library yields plenty of helpful tools, including:

- Basic tips and resources for starting a small business.
- A primer on growing your business via federal contracts.
- Guidance for securing startup funds and investors.

Franchise 101. A franchise might offer some entrepreneurs the best of both worlds — the freedom associated with running a small business alongside the support offered by a large corporate entity. Find resources and additional information at www.moaa.org/franchisesupport.

MOAA WEBINARS

Find archived productions at www.moaa.org/webinar-archive. (Some webinars are available after initial broadcast to Premium and Life members only.)

show prospective employers you are skilled in cybersecurity, but it also shows you are dedicated and serious about your career. While you do not need a certification to succeed in this field, having one can impress hiring managers, expand your knowledge of the field, sharpen your skills, and provide opportunities for advancement. Cyber-related certifications are often available for free. Learn more at ACT Now Education www.actnoweducation.org.

- Further your education. Advance your cybersecurity knowledge with a master's degree or by taking continuing education courses.
- Improve your skills. Take a course, and gain experience collecting and analyzing large data sets and information. Other skills to consider improving include technical skills to help with things such as operating system security and firewalls, your analytical and critical thinking skills to help you find solutions for security issues and your attention to detail to help you identify system vulnerabilities and potential security threats.

Jobs Within the Field: Chief information officer, software and systems integration engineer, IT technician, systems administrator, and information security analyst.

MOAA Webinar: Is Cybersecurity the Right Career Fit for You?

Engineering

Skill Set: Did you turn on water from your faucet, get in your car and drive on the roads, or go to an airport today?

An engineer must be able to think creatively to create innovative designs while also possessing technical knowledge to produce an effective

product or process that meets all federal and local regulations and industry standards. They also must have strong people skills to effectively manage the many professional relationships made on a project and an analytical mind and the ability to focus on big-picture concerns. Problem-solving is an essential skill that allows the engineer to find new methods of achieving the project's end goal.

Career Area Description:

- Multiple specialties with compensation at more than twice the median wage for all workers, and/or a projected growth rate double the national average.
- A rising demand for workers, thanks in part to a \$375 billion infrastructure investment in the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act.
- A low barrier of entry, with a bachelor's degree required to begin your career journey.
- An array of specialties, including many which will allow you to draw on military experience.

Jobs Within the Field: From civil, chemical, and construction to design, electrical, mechanical, and more in between, engineering offers many job opportunities and specialties.

MOAA Webinar: Which Engineering Specialty Is the Right Fit for You? 



Finding Your Dream Job

The job search can be tough and time consuming. Refer to these tips to keep you focused, organized, and efficient:

Develop a job-search tracker. Create a tracker that includes the company, position title, and position description (use hyperlinks to company website). Add sections to capture notes, next steps, and points of contact.

Light up on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is your personal, professional online self-marketing platform. Be sure that your profile is current, includes a headshot, and has a compelling headline. Fill out the about, experience, education, and skills sections. The more complete your profile and the more active you are on LinkedIn, the more your

Tips for Polishing Your Résumé

Crafting a winning résumé can lead to job search success. When starting to write your résumé, the key is to think of who will be reading it. As you explore new and perhaps different opportunities, consider these industry standard, common résumé practices and tips:

- Write your résumé with the reader in mind.
- Keep it simple and easy to read. Your résumé should be two pages or less.
- Tailor each résumé to the job you're applying for or considering. If you've not yet identified a job, no worries — simply focus on the industry of most interest to you.
- Ensure sufficient white space (use 1-inch margins) and readability.
- Dump the jargon. Most readers won't understand a hodgepodge of military acronyms and service-specific lingo.



- Watch your personal info. Include your name, phone number, email, and customized LinkedIn URL. Only list metropolitan area or city and state — not your personal address.
- Describe your specific accomplishments instead of providing a long job description. And keep your work experience recent and relevant — only go back 10 to 12 years.
- Choose your words (and commas) carefully. Lead with action verbs (“led,” “streamlined,” “created,” “produced,” “designed”).
- Remember to proofread, and then proofread again and again.
- You want your résumé to be influential, so write to influence the reader. Always remember: Your résumé, while about your particular skill set, is not written for you. It is written for the reader. Moreover, your résumé might get less than seven seconds of attention from a reader. 📖

profile is searchable. Market what you want to do next, not what you have already done. Note: If you do not want your current employer to know you are job searching, set up the appropriate privacy profile settings.

Conduct job-specific research. After you have narrowed down your career field, you can further refine your search by the types of roles that align to your strengths and skill sets. Set alerts on various job boards accordingly.

In addition to LinkedIn, check out the MOAA job board, company websites, and of course, your personal network.

Leverage your personal network. When you find a specific role to which you want to apply, see

MOAA'S JOB BOARD

Search job listings for an array of levels and positions at www.moaa.org/jobboard.

whether you have a connection with someone who is already at the company and if that individual would be willing to do a personal referral. Remember, over 80% of jobs are found through one's network.

Refine your résumé, and tailor your cover letter. Write your résumé from the perspective of the employer. Recruiters are seeking to fill specific needs. So include only the relevant aspects of your career experience that speak directly to those, and use language from the position description to demonstrate your qualifications. Include a thoughtful, succinct cover letter indicating why you are a great fit for the role. Good luck!



Strengthening Your LinkedIn Network

LinkedIn can be an incredibly effective tool for networking — but it also can be inefficient and can even cause frustration while searching for your next job.

If you're looking to maximize the power of your LinkedIn connections, here is some guidance, courtesy of an article from the Harvard Business School.

When it comes to growing your network, it is not just a matter of connecting with everyone willing to accept your invitation or accepting all invitations you receive. Rather, it's about making the "right" connections.

What makes a connection right? A study of more than 20 million LinkedIn members dives into that very question:

Connection types. The "strength of weak ties" theory suggests acquaintances "are more likely to have information that you don't already have access to within your circle of close friends and, therefore, are more valuable in discovering options you didn't already know about," the Harvard article said.

New people, new information, new access — makes sense, right? It does not mean you should make as many new cold connections as possible

and certainly not at the cost of nurturing existing relationships. The theory doesn't say you should give up on quality over quantity; instead, it suggests we shouldn't discount the value of making a connection with an acquaintance.

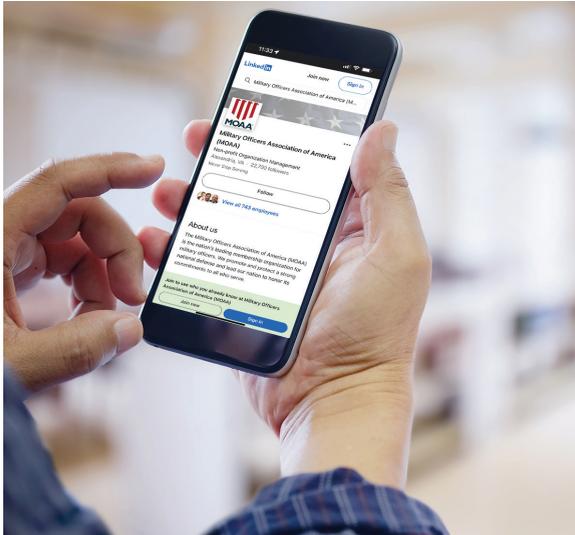
License to connect. What does this mean in practice? Don't gloss over casual encounters at a symposium, networking event, or social gathering. If you sensed a genuine encounter and want to learn more about the person, or you merely enjoyed a good chat, send a connection request with a personalized note.

Don't be shy to share your transition story and what you are exploring for your next career. LinkedIn is precisely the platform for making professional connections — and you never know where those might lead.

As you gather courage to connect with acquaintances, know not everyone will accept. That's OK. It might be because the person has not been on LinkedIn in a decade or are tapped out on connections. Do not take it personally. It's wasted energy; you have more important things to do, like pursuing connections with those who do accept. 



Connect with MOAA on LinkedIn at www.moaa.org/linkedin.



Connect With MOAA

LinkedIn is the most popular networking tool for professionals. If you're not sure how to optimize it in your career-transition process, Let MOAA's groups and guidance give you an assist.

Join MOAA's Career and Networking Group on LinkedIn (LinkedIn login required), where you can post resources and job opportunities, share other career information, and ask questions of the community. The group is open to all individuals interested in military-to-civilian career transition and advancement opportunities in their post-military careers.

Follow MOAA on LinkedIn and join more than 28,000 other users who can keep up with upcoming MOAA events and get the latest news on military-related careers.

Your Next Step: MOAA's Military Transition Report offers a weekly look at topics of interest to transitioning servicemembers, veterans seeking a new direction or struggling to find the right career fit, military spouses ready to reenter the workforce, and other service-connected professionals who can benefit from MOAA's expert guidance. The free newsletter is available to all LinkedIn users; get a link to subscribe, plus learn more about MOAA's LinkedIn offerings, at www.moaa.org/moaaonlinkedin.

MOAA Premium and Life members can get help with their LinkedIn profile as part of MOAA's career counseling benefit. Learn more at www.moaa.org/career. 

Networking 101

Networking is about relationships, so the key is to always be growing, honing, and working your network. What you will find is that people genuinely want to help. And while they might not necessarily want to be on the hook for "getting you a job," they are absolutely interested in helping you shape your professional career naturally. It's easy to get started with these five networking tips:

- Start early and use your 30-second elevator pitch.
- Network all the time with everyone.
- Make it two-way networking by also showing interest in them.
- Attend networking events.
- Informational interviews are a terrific way to interact with others to exchange information and develop professional contacts. What is an informational interview? It's a short meeting with a person of interest, in your desired industry/career field, designed to help you gather information without specifically asking for a job. Include a short professional biography, especially if you don't know the person — this gives them key information about you without sending your résumé.

Given that companies, human resource professionals, and hiring managers would much rather have targeted, referred candidates than a large number of résumés, remember that job search success is powered by relationships — your network. Moreover, often job search success is tied to who you know and what you can know in advance.

In networking, you're interacting with others to exchange information, learn more about a particular industry or position, and develop increasingly more professional contacts. You never know when that networking connection you've made an impression on will be speaking with someone with a job need, and your connection will say, "Wait, I know someone with those key skill sets you might want to speak with."

Networking is synonymous with mastering the art of creating lasting friendships, so keep it simple and go out and engage in networking today.



How to Find a Career Mentor

A mentor serves as one of the most important people in your network — someone to help you develop communication skills, show you the ropes in new situations, offer a trustworthy second opinion, sharpen your goal setting, and connect you with key resources.

No matter what type of mentor you're seeking, one (or more) of these resources will prove helpful.

Go local with MOAA. Did you know MOAA has a network comprising nearly 400 chapters in communities across the country? Many of those affiliates have an active transition liaison/networking coordinator who has forged ties with area employers and community leaders to showcase the value of hiring transitioning uniformed servicemembers and veterans and their spouses. In turn, these liaisons can serve as vital networking contacts and mentors when seeking employment opportunities in their community. Find your local MOAA chapter at www.moaa.org/chapters.

Partner with American Corporate Partners (ACP). ACP helps military spouses and veterans achieve

career goals through a free national mentorship program and is a proud partner of MOAA. An ACP mentorship allows you to build your professional network, find career and internship opportunities, improve your résumé and interview skills, and advance at your current job. Learn more at www.moaa.org/acp.

Don't innovate alone. Starting your own business? Reach out to your local Veterans Business Outreach Center, where counselors with entrepreneurship know-how can offer insights tailored to the military community. And check out SCORE (www.sba.gov/score), the nation's largest network of volunteer expert business mentors, which is dedicated to helping small businesses plan, launch, manage, and grow.

Go virtual. ACT Now Education's MilMentor program offers free, one-hour calls for enrolled participants with mentors in a desired sector. ACT Now Education mentors represent organizations such as NASA, Google, Oracle, and Bank of America. Visit www.actnoweducation.org/milmentor. 



Learn more about MOAA chapters at www.moaa.org/chapters.

Reads to Accelerate Your Transition

As you assess your options, discuss your family's desires, and build your self-marketing plan, consider these four quick reads to help accelerate your transition to your new role.

Marketing Yourself for a Second Career. This MOAA publication (available at www.moaa.org/marketingyourself) offers a complete review of the essential elements for a successful career transition, including self-assessment, network development, use of social media and LinkedIn, interview preparation, negotiation strategies, and dealing with rejection.

Pitch Perfect: How to Say It Right the First Time, Every Time by Bill McGowan (Harper Business, 2014). This read offers concrete tips on improving your presentation and interview skills as well as your ability to connect with strangers in person and virtually. The author's advice on managing subordinates, delivering impactful presentations, and orchestrating panel discussions will accelerate your success after starting your new role.



From 'Hero' to Zero and Back! Lessons From a Veteran's Civilian Employment Experience by Lt. Gen. Steve Speakes, USA (Ret) (self-published, 2017). The author's short and readable book chronicles what he did right in his career transition — and where he stumbled. He talks with amazing candor about experiencing failure after three years in his first post-military job, discusses what he should have done differently, and walks the reader through the essential steps of self-assessment, onboarding, and ultimately excelling.

The First 90 Days by Michael Watkins (Harvard Business Review Press, 2013). This is a seminal guide to transition into any organization, whether as a team leader or member. The author discusses strategies to thrive, including sensitivity to informal lines of authority, alignment with the boss' priorities, the importance of communications (especially with remote or hybrid work), connecting with the five generations in today's workforce, and more. ■■■

Prepare for Your Next Interview

When it comes to interviewing basics, the style and methodology are straightforward. Anticipate either a one-on-one or panel format, conducted on a virtual platform such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams or in-person. Regardless of the interview structure, one question you can count on being asked is: "Tell me about yourself." This is by far the most common question you will face because the interviewer wants to gain a better understanding of who you are, your unique value proposition, and your interest in the position.

To help you craft your answer, follow this simple template:

- Offer a short welcome and introductory comments.
- Provide an overview of your experience and ex-



THE RIGHT FIT

They already know you are qualified for the position from your résumé, and now they want to ensure you would be a good fit for the organization.

pertise, along with key knowledge, skills, and abilities as highlighted in the vacancy announcement.

- Follow up with a transition like, "I have a reputation for ..." This allows you to demonstrate intangible qualities and your unique value proposition — both of which should reflect material from the job posting that describes the ideal candidate.
- Wrap up with a strong closing statement reinforcing your interest in the position, what you want to achieve for the employer, and why you are the ideal candidate and should be hired over the competition.

But no matter the structure of interview or the specific question asked, project your passion and enthusiasm by expressing a genuine interest in the position. Not only will this help you make a memorable and lasting impression on the interviewer, but it also might lead to a job offer.

Crafting a Federal Job Résumé

While much advice on building a better résumé might bear fruit in the private sector, there are several differences between materials for private-sector jobs and the federal résumés, both in terms of content and presentation. Here's a quick guide to building your best federal résumé:

Résumé Template. USAJOBS.gov has a résumé builder outlining what items are needed in a federal résumé. Use that guidance to create a résumé with the same content, laid out in a typical résumé format.

Format. For federal jobs, especially General Schedule (GS) and equivalent jobs, use a chronological format. This works best because most federal human resource specialists understand the chronological format best.

As with private-sector résumés, members of the Guard and Reserve might find it challenging to present both military and civilian work experience on the same timeline. Consider highlighting uniformed service experience at the end of the “Experience” section of your federal résumé.

Length. Like most private-sector résumés, federal résumés are limited to one or two pages. Hiring managers are looking for quality content, so focus on telling your story in the shortest space possible.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Almost all federal job announcements have a section titled “How You Will Be Evaluated.” This section typically refers the applicant to the section titled “Specialized Experience” and might list four to eight competencies.

Your résumé needs to address each of these items in at least one of your jobs.

FONT, MARGINS, AND PAGE NUMBERING.

Your font should be size 11 or 12 and in Times



Find even more helpful links as you begin your research into a federal job at www.moaa.org/fedresources.

MOAA Federal Job Resources

Whether you're currently serving and seeking information about joining the federal workforce after leaving uniform, a veteran considering a career change, or a spouse looking to see what programs might ease your path to a federal position, MOAA's resources can help. Find must-read articles, webinars, and related news on MOAA's Federal Job Resources page. Premium and Life members can access all materials, including recorded webinars. Visit www.moaa.org/fedjobs.

New Roman, Arial, or another simple, easy-to-read font. Margins should be 1 inch on all four sides. Pages should be numbered in the bottom right corner.

Keep in the know about recent changes to the federal hiring process with MOAA's webinar, “Federal Employment: What's New for 2026 and Beyond.” MOAA Premium and Life members can log in to access the recording at www.moaa.org/fedwebinar. 



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