A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE DoW SKILLBRIDGE PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

The National Academy of Public Administration (the Academy) has launched a new study on behalf of the Department to evaluate the SkillBridge Program. The evaluation will examine implementation and outcomes, identify opportunities for improvement, and provide recommendations to help the Department better leverage SkillBridge, including in coordination with tuition assistance and credentialing pathways, to support participant success, workforce readiness, and national security priorities. The report shall present a comprehensive, objective assessment of the Department's SkillBridge Program, including its implementation, outcomes, and strategic value in supporting the transition of military experience and training into mission-critical civilian opportunities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Academy has been tasked with assessing the SkillBridge Program's:

01 Design, evolution, and implementation

02 Participant pathways

03 Participation outcomes

04 Interaction with related support functions

05 Alignment with broader Department workforce development priorities

06 Barriers, gaps, and variation in partnership quality

Stakeholders' perspectives will help shape findings by sharing insights on program value, barriers to participation, implementation challenges, and promising practices.

Oversight and deliverables: The primary deliverable will be an unclassified final report authored by an independent Panel of Academy Fellows. The Panel and Study Team are listed on the following page. The final report with findings and recommendations, along with an executive briefing on the report, is scheduled to be completed by August 2027.

About the Academy

Chartered by Congress to provide nonpartisan expert advice, the Academy is an independent, nonprofit organization established in 1967 to assist government leaders in building more effective, efficient, accountable, and transparent organizations.

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Fellows and Study Team

The Academy has appointed a five-member Panel of Fellows to oversee and guide this study.



Terry Gerton (Panel Chair)

Terry Gerton brings extensive military, defense, and veterans' employment experience, including 20 years as an active-duty Army officer and nearly 12 years in the Senior Executive Service. As Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service, she worked directly on veteran employment and transition issues. She also held senior leadership roles within DoD and Army Materiel Command.



Ricardo Aguilera

Ricardo Aguilera has extensive experience in defense management, program evaluation, and performance measurement. His career includes serving as Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller and senior roles at DoD, OMB, and GAO. His expertise supports the assessment of SkillBridge's effectiveness, outcomes, and value to the Department.



Bill Leighty

Bill Leighty brings extensive experience in government performance and public-sector management, including serving as Chief of Staff to the Governor of Virginia and Director of VCU's Government Performance Initiative. His background overseeing complex public programs is particularly relevant to evaluating SkillBridge implementation, governance, and opportunities for improvement.



Elizabeth Kolmstetter

Elizabeth Kolmstetter is a human capital and workforce strategy expert who has held senior leadership positions across CISA, NASA, OMB, USAID, CIA, ODNI, TSA, and the FBI. Her expertise includes talent strategy, personnel assessment, workforce development, data analytics, and program evaluation, directly supporting SkillBridge's focus on workforce pathways and participant outcomes.



Ellen Tunstall

Ellen Tunstall has deep expertise in defense workforce policy and human capital, including service as Acting Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Workforce Issues and International Programs. She also led defense civilian assistance and re-employment efforts and served as a RAND national defense policy analyst. Her experience is particularly relevant to SkillBridge's military-to-civilian transition and workforce objectives.

STUDY TEAM

Brenna Isman
Senior Director of Research and Government Solutions

Kyle Romano
Senior Manager

Jesse Roth
Project Director

Kate Kellen
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