ATTACHMENT F

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES (VETS) APPRENTICESHIP PILOT

MILITARY APPRENTICESHIP PLACEMENT COUNSELORS

VETS APPRENTICESHIP PILOT

Program Staff Interview Topic Guide

INTRODUCTION

I am/we are researchers with The Urban Institute/Mathematica/Capital Research Corporation, private research organizations based in Washington, DC/Arlington VA which conduct policy-related research on a variety of social welfare and economic issues.

This project is being conducted under contract to the U.S. Department of Labor. Our visit here today is part of the Apprenticeship Evidence-Building Portfolio project, a national study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor. The study will learn how the VETS Apprenticeship Pilot program can help improve the skills and employment outcomes of transitioning military service members. A major aim of the study is to learn more about service delivery design and implementation, challenges, and promising practices. We will visit programs at eight military installations implementing the pilot. We will be speaking with program staff and participants.

Privacy Statement: I/we want to thank you for agreeing to participate in the study. I/we know that you are busy and we will be as focused as possible and will only ask questions that are relevant to your experience. We have many questions and will be talking to many different people, so please do not feel as though we expect you to be able to answer every question. Your participation in this discussion is voluntary and you may choose not to answer any of our questions.

We believe the risks of participating in this study are minimal.

We believe there are no direct benefits to you, but we hope that the findings from this study will benefit the VETS Apprenticeship Pilot by providing research insights to improve the program.

My colleague and I will be taking notes in order to document what we hear during our discussion, and we may record this discussion. We do not share these notes with anyone outside of our research team, including Department of Labor, and we will destroy these notes after the end of our project. When we compile our reports, the names of individual respondents will not be included. If we choose to quote you, you will only be identified by your title. You will not be quoted directly by name in any of our reports. While it is possible that you might be identified by your title, we will do our best to minimize the chance of that occurring.

Finally, to help us accurately capture the information you share, we would like to record this interview. The recording is just a back-up for our notes and will be kept within our small research team. The interview recording will be deleted once we have developed a full set of notes from the interview.

OMB Burden Statement: According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is XXXX-XXXX. The time required to complete this collection of information is estimated to average 60 minutes,

including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed and complete and review the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden Chiefevaluationoffice@DOL.gov and reference the OMB Control Number XXXX-0NEW.

Do you have any questions before we begin?
[If we decide to record the interview] Are you okay with us recording the interview to improve the accuracy of our notes?

Do I have your permission to begin the interview? [BEGIN INTERVIEW IF CONSENT GRANTED]

INTERVIEW TOPIC AREAS

- Interviewee background
  - o Name, title and organization/affiliation
  - o Role in the pilot effort
  - o Length of involvement with the organization and with the pilot
  - o Educational background and prior work experience (briefly)
- Key pilot goals and outcomes to be achieved (i.e., at the military base served by Apprenticeship Placement Counselor [APC])
  - o Key outcomes for TSMs (# of TSMs and spouses served, # of TSMs and spouses placed in registered/unregistered apprenticeships, etc.)
  - o Any other key outcomes (such as # TSMs expressing interest in apprenticeships, % of TSM attending TAP workshops that opt-in, total and average # of interactions/visits per APC, average and range of starting salaries for TSMs placed in apprenticeships, # of employers APCs interacted with under the pilot; # of employers hiring TSM into apprenticeships under the pilot; effects (if any) of pilot on expanding employer interest/engagement in apprenticeships, outcomes for registered apprenticeships vs. unregistered apprenticeships; outcomes for spouses)
- Environmental context (at the base served by the APC)
  - o Basic background on the military base served (e.g., branch, # of TSMs per month/per year; # workshop sessions APCs attend per year/per month, average and range of TSMs attending transition assistance workshops per year/per month, services offered to spouses)
  - o General demographic characteristics of TSMs served at base and any distinguishing characteristics that may affect pilot or participant outcomes
  - o Economic environment and context facing TSMs in securing apprenticeships (e.g., geographic location of apprenticeship opportunities/placements for TSMs (e.g., locality, region, nationwide); industry sectors and types of employers that are most likely to feature apprenticeships/pre-apprenticeships; extent to which registered apprenticeship opportunities and nonregistered apprenticeships are available, and in which industry sectors/occupations for TSMs opting-in under the pilot; constraints/challenges/trade-offs TSMs face in accessing and qualifying for apprenticeships)
  - o Apprenticeship infrastructure and extent of linkages to available apprenticeship opportunities, including established relationships with apprenticeship intermediaries, industry associations, AJC and employers; extent to which TSMs placed in apprenticeships before the pilot
  - o Environmental/external factors that influenced design and implementation of the pilot
- Organizational structure of the pilot at the base, including key staff, partners and their roles in the pilot
- Apprenticeship Placement Counselors role and services provided under the pilot
  - o # hired and deployed by contractor at the base (*note: plan is for 16 APCs across the 8 bases*)
  - o How recruited and qualifications

- o How trained, deployed, and monitored
- o Where APC is located and any issues/challenges with the location (e.g., difficulty finding space for office or location to meet with TSMs, difficulty getting Wi-Fi access, etc.)
- o Role and caseload, including any variation if there is more than 1 APC serving the base
    - # of TSMs served to date and average caseload per week/per month
    - When interaction with the TSM occurs (e.g., during the transition assistance workshops, immediately after workshop, etc.) and ends
    - How pilot and services offered by APC operate in relation to the overall TAP program and after TSM exits the program
    - How APC informs TSMs and spouses about available services (e.g., presentation at TAP workshops, flyers/brochures, social media, attending job fairs, other marketing materials)
    - How and where this interaction with the TSM and spouses occurs (e.g., at base, at AJC, via telephone, email, at job fairs, etc.)
    - Whether TSMs or spouses voice a geographic preference for their apprenticeship (e.g., to move/work in a specific state or stay in same area as separation) and if a specific preference for another locality is expressed, how the TSM is handed off so they can receive assistance in other states
    - How the APC directly assists TSMs and spouses (e.g., identifying apprenticeship opportunities, assessing TSM and their fit with available apprenticeship slots, helping with placement into apprenticeship, monitoring/troubleshooting problems that could lead to attrition, arranging support services, etc.)
    - How the APC assesses and matches TSMs and spouses to available apprenticeships
    - Role of the APC (if any) after TSM or spouse is placed in an apprenticeship
    - Reasons TSMs or spouses are placed or not placed into apprenticeships and factors that contribute to more successful placements
    - Role of the APC (if any) if a TSM (who opts in) or their spouse is not placed in an apprenticeship
    - APC perceived challenges in getting TSMs to opt-in for services, maintaining ongoing contact with the TSM, and in finding/placing APCs in apprenticeships
    - How such challenges have been overcome
    - Views on effectiveness of services and what works and does not work in serving TSMs (e.g., including APC perspectives on strategies/practices that appear most promising for increasing awareness and willingness of TSMs to consider and be placed in apprenticeships
- State Veteran Apprenticeship Coordinator role and services (if any) provided under the pilot (*note: some bases may not have an assigned coordinator*)
    - o Where the coordinator is located and provides services for APC and/or TSMs/spouses (e.g., state apprenticeship office, on base, etc.)
    - o How recruited and qualifications
    - o How trained, deployed, and monitored

- o Service provided by State Veteran Apprenticeship Coordinator for Apprenticeship Placement Coordinator at military bases served
  - Extent of interaction with APC (on weekly/monthly basis)
  - How and where this interaction occurs (e.g., on base, via telephone, email, at job fairs, at AJC, etc.)
  - How the State Veteran Apprenticeship Coordinator assists APC (e.g., identifying apprenticeship opportunities, conducting employer engagement activities to expand apprenticeship opportunities for TSMs/spouses, etc.)
  - Views on effectiveness of services and what works and does not work in serving APCs
- o Services provided by State Veteran Apprenticeship Coordinator directly for TSMs
  - Whether State Veteran Apprenticeship Coordinator provides any direct services to TSMs/spouses
  - If yes, # of TSMs/spouses served to date and average caseload per week/per month
  - When interaction occurs (e.g., during transition assistance workshop, immediately after workshop, etc.)
  - How and where this interaction occurs (e.g., at base, via telephone, email, at job fairs, etc.)
  - How the State Veteran Apprenticeship Coordinator directly assists TSMs/spouses (e.g., identifying apprenticeship opportunities, conducting employer engagement activities to expand apprenticeship opportunities for TSMs/spouses, etc.)
  - Views on effectiveness of services and what works and does not work in serving TSMs/spouses
- Key partners in pilot that work with the Apprenticeship Placement Counselor or State Veteran Apprenticeship Coordinator, including anticipated role and actual role; whether partners are meeting expectations:
  - o Role of military base and transitional assistance workshop components and staff (e.g., employment representatives at the installation)
  - o Role of educational organizations/RTI provider – e.g., community colleges, 4-year institutions, on-line RTI providers, other instructional providers
  - o Role of workforce development organizations (e.g., American Job Centers (AJCs), local workforce development agencies, regional veteran employment staff)
  - o Role of Office of Apprenticeship and State Apprenticeship Agency staff
  - o Role of employers
  - o Role of industry associations
  - o Role of unions
  - o Role of any other partners (e.g., SkillsBridge leaders, schools, associations, veterans' groups, chambers of commerce, etc.)
- Start-up and early implementation challenges of the pilot at the base (e.g., obtaining space for APC that is conducive to TSM interactions, difficulties engaging with base personnel or

transitional assistance workshops, challenges engaging TSMs and getting TSMs to opt-in under the pilot, etc., coordinating with various TAP components)

- Data collected on TSMs/spouses by APCs for the pilot, including characteristics, services received/interactions with the APC, outcomes; any challenges in collecting such data
- Reporting under the pilot by the APC – data systems used to collect data, quarterly/annual reports submitted, who and how the report data is compiled and any challenges with reporting certain data elements or where the data is incomplete/unreliable
- Key participant outcomes to date under pilot for the base for the following (*note: if data are not available on outcome measures from the APC, then APC perspectives on key outcomes*):
  - o #/% of transitioning service members (TSM)/spouses placed into [registered or unregistered] apprenticeships prior to final separation from the military
  - o # of employers that have hired TSMs/spouses into [registered or unregistered] apprenticeships prior to their final separation from the military
  - o #/% of transition assistance workshop participants that opt into the placement process
  - o #% of those that opt in that are hired as apprentices, including TSMs and spouses – and if available:
    - ▪ #/% hired that remained in the local area
    - ▪ #/% hired that returned to their home state
    - ▪ #/% hired that preferred a specific region
    - ▪ #/% hired that had no geographic preference
    - ▪ #/% of TSMs that opt into the program that expressed a state preference and were placed in that state
    - ▪ #% of TSMs that were hired into apprenticeships by sector, functional area or industry
  - o Starting wages hired TSMs/spouses earn as apprentices and what they are expected to earn 36 months later (after apprenticeship)
  - o Other participant outcome goals (e.g., credentials, licenses)
  - o Other pilot process measures (e.g., average duration of service delivery, average number of apprenticeship opportunities identified per TSM/spouse, average number of apprenticeship offers per TSM/spouse served, average number of offers the TSM/spouse accepts or rejects)
- Basic flow of TSMs and spouses at base through the pilot (e.g., from the time first encountered through apprenticeship placement/completion; if possible, collect handout and/or PowerPoint slides that APC uses during transition assistance workshop session)
- TSM reasons for deciding to opt-in/opt-out of the pilot
- Differences in TSMs' characteristics (such as race, age, education level, occupation/position in military, other) in who decides to opt in or who is placed in apprenticeships; characteristics of spouses who receive services or are placed in apprenticeships
- Approaches/strategies that appear to work best (and that are not effective) in terms of placing TSMs/spouses in apprenticeships
- Main sectors/occupations in which TSMs/spouses are interested in (or enrolling in) apprenticeships
- How APC's access and/or credit TSM's prior learning, skills, and credentials in making apprenticeship placements

- Perspectives on the digital tool (if it is being used by the APC or TSMs/spouses) and how it is being used; views on how tool is being used to connect TSMs/spouses to apprenticeship opportunities; how digital could be improved; perspectives on the extent to which such a tool could be used to supplement APC services and/or in the absence of the APC
- Role of the pilot in engaging with current and potential employers and sponsors to start or expand apprenticeship opportunities for TSMs and spouses
- Apprentice supports (if any are provided, including funding source and who makes the service available)
  - Support services made available/provided during apprenticeship (e.g., case management, career coaches/navigators, counseling, tutoring and mentoring)
  - Financial supports (e.g., transportation assistance, work clothes/equipment, childcare or childcare assistance, and needs-based payments)
- Extent to which TSMs expectations about apprenticeships match the reality of available apprenticeships (e.g., in terms of duration, wage, sector)
- Rates of (early) attrition from apprenticeships and reasons; effective approaches to reducing attrition
- Employer motivations for engaging in the pilot and challenges; what works best in engaging employers
- Other partner (e.g., chambers of commerce, industry/employer groups) motivations for engaging and what works best.
- Views on promising strategies for improving TSM's recruitment, retention, and completion of apprenticeships
- Views on whether pilot should be sustained after pilot period or expanded to other bases; potential changes that could be made to improve pilot for full-scale implementation
- Lessons learned
- How did circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic affect implementation of the pilot, services, activities and outcomes?