

# Joining Forces for Women Veterans

Inaugural Summit  
*October 21, 2010*



## SUMMARY REPORT

Prepared by  
Business and Professional Women's Foundation  
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Business and  
Professional  
Women's Foundation

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BPW Foundation supports workforce development programs and workplace policies that recognize the diverse needs of working women, communities, and businesses. BPW Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) research and education organization.

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*The Joining Forces for Women Veterans Inaugural Summit held on October 21, 2010, provided an invaluable opportunity for Business and Professional Women's (BPW) Foundation to present a day of education, networking, and action related to the world of women veterans. It brought together leaders from business, government, and non-profit organizations to hear the stories, accomplishments, and potential of this distinguished group of women. It also taught this audience about the support and commitment needed by all of us to ensure women veterans the resources they need for a complete and successful return to their civilian lives. This inaugural summit report summarizes the scope of the event, highlights the messages given by women veterans as experts and leaders, and captures the initial momentum and actions for ongoing collaboration to address the successful reintegration and employment transition of women veterans. The report is a summary of early BPW Foundation research; and discussions and recommendations of participants at the Summit. While it discusses veterans benefits, it is not a report of the benefits and services available to veterans by the government or other organizations.*

## Introduction

Throughout American history, women have served our country valiantly in times of peace, war, and conflict. However, for far too long, women veterans have been invisible. Every day women in the military proudly serve our country, but when they return home they often do not receive the recognition, benefits, and services they have earned. Women represent 15 percent of the military and are the fastest-growing veteran population segment. Yet public and private sector tools, services, and programs for veterans are still largely designed with men in mind and do not necessarily meet the distinct needs of women veterans.

As a nation, we are missing the mark when it comes to supporting women veterans through the challenges that arise during their transition to civilian life. It is unacceptable that the tens of thousands of women veterans who experience military sexual trauma are not aware of or have difficulty accessing gender-specific care. It is unacceptable that women veterans are four times more likely than male veterans to become homeless. It is unacceptable that women veterans who served after 1990 have higher rates of unemployment than their male counterparts.

When skilled women veterans are not aware of, do not take advantage of, or cannot access available services, opportunities are missed at every level—achieving personal and career goals, participating in family and community life, and fulfilling societal commitments. As the percentage of women in the military reaches a high of 15 percent it is time to team public and private attention and resources to address the challenges faced by women veterans, leverage their skills and ensure their successful transition.

With support from the McCormick Foundation, the Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust, and more than 30 other organizations, Joining Forces for Women Veterans: An Inaugural Summit issued a call to action to address the challenges of women veterans and their potential contributions to the workplace. Held on October 21, 2010, at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC, the summit brought together more than 80 government, business, and community leaders as well as a diverse group of women veterans.

The summit was the first step in building a repository of information, resources, and evidence-based programs for women veterans. Public and private stakeholders learned about three key issues—family and community reintegration, homelessness, and employment and careers—and identified specific avenues and actions to support women veterans in transition to civilian life.

This report provides a summary of the summit's content, findings, and next steps. A long-term action plan and fund to "Join Forces for Women Veterans" aims to implement ongoing solutions and national models of public-private partnerships. With these resources, we can afford women veterans equal access to the full opportunities for re-establishing healthy post-military families and achieving their career and leadership potential.

## Background

Separation from the military and re-entry into civilian life and work are often viewed as temporary processes by those who provide transition supports. BPW Foundation's 2007 groundbreaking study, *Women Veterans in Transition*, challenged that assumption. BPW Foundation findings indicated that for many women veterans it can

take up to seven years to feel fully acclimated to civilian life. (Findings are available at [http://www.bpwfoundation.org/resources/women\\_veterans\\_project/](http://www.bpwfoundation.org/resources/women_veterans_project/))

The study found that the transition is not only lengthy, but also nonlinear. The data revealed that the transition from the military into the civilian workforce is a multidimensional process that requires coordinated efforts. Women veterans often need supports at different moments throughout their lifetimes. These findings have important implications for the design and delivery of transition resources.

Further, a woman veteran's transition journey and needs for ongoing assistance are shaped by key characteristics such as educational attainment, marital status, and whether or not she has dependents. In addition to professional career support such as resume assistance and mentoring, women veterans often need services to address life/family issues or gender-specific medical and behavioral health needs. Traditional transition activities do not account for the full breadth and range of such needs experienced by many women veterans.

The results of the *Women Veterans in Transition* study sparked public discussion about the need to create programs and services that work for women veterans and their employers throughout the entire transition process. As a neutral convener, BPW Foundation is uniquely positioned to bring this discussion to fruition, drawing government, business, and community leaders together to discuss the challenges and solutions to ensuring the success of women veterans as civilians.

### Summit Summary

**B**PW Foundation developed a substantive program comprising both informational and interactive sessions that addressed three key transition areas: family and community re-integration, homelessness, and employment. The one-day summit included remarks by government officials representing the White House; the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Labor, and Defense; and the Small Business Administration. Three panel presentations provided information and the opportunity to discuss each of the key issue areas.

Each panel included leading experts and at least two women veterans who told their stories relative to the panel's

topic. Specific efforts were made to ensure that panelists and program content represented the diversity of women veterans' experiences and included women veterans of multiple generations, both enlisted and officers, and those with disabilities. At the end of the day, two sessions provided time for audience questions and discussion with the speakers and opportunities to brainstorm on the design of an action plan to develop and implement solutions.

Over the Horizon Consulting, the summit graphic recorder, graphically outlined each segment of the summit. The recordings created a complete picture of the day's outcomes and a good basis for discussion. (The recordings are available at <http://picasaweb.google.com/dhchpd/BPWJoiningForces>.)

### Morning Sessions: Introduction and Keynote Remarks

**A**n opening video, *Faces of Women Veterans*—developed and edited for the summit by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Learning University staff—set the summit's tone. It features three women veterans from three different eras—World War II, the Vietnam War, and Operation Iraqi Freedom—who shared their transition stories. Like the video, the summit gave a voice and a face to a cadre of women who have given part of their lives to serve their country and who struggled with readjustment when they returned home.

“We have to develop an action plan that's going to be regional and local to attack these issues. We have to develop relationships that include corporate America, that understand that these are our people. These are our people and they are not just veterans. They are our sisters, our mothers and we care enough to make sure that we stand by them, because that's what this country does.”

—Marsha Four, *Director*  
*Philadelphia Veteran Multi-Service and Education Center*  
*and woman veteran*

The morning sessions included keynote remarks and panel discussions on family and community reintegration and homelessness. Keynote remarks were made by Valerie B. Jarrett, senior advisor and assistant to the President for

intergovernmental affairs and public engagement, and the Honorable Tammy Duckworth, assistant secretary for public and intergovernmental affairs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Ms. Jarrett and Ms. Duckworth both complimented the summit. Ms. Jarrett stated, “What you are doing with this summit is exactly the type of thing we need.”

Assistant Secretary Duckworth described the summit as “a perfect example of public-private collaboration” in support of women veterans. Sara Manzano-Diaz, director of the Women’s Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, shared the bureau’s research and activities underway to address homeless women veterans. The morning sessions concluded with remarks from Marie Johns, deputy director of the Small Business Administration, and Michele S. Jones, special assistant to the secretary of defense at the U.S. Department of Defense.

### **Afternoon Sessions: Panel Discussions and Conclusions**

**T**he afternoon sessions included special remarks, a panel on employment and careers, and two interactive sessions. The afternoon began with remarks from Ray Jefferson, assistant secretary of Veterans’ Employment and Training Services, U.S. Department of Labor. Ana Harvey, assistant secretary for the Small Business Administration’s Office of Women’s Business Ownership, followed with remarks about an important source of employment: self-employment. After hearing from government officials, experts, and women veterans, attendees discussed how the information could be applied within their respective spheres of influence and brainstormed broad-based solutions to transition challenges.

### **Content**

**T**hroughout the day, government officials expressed their commitment to women veterans with examples of their agencies’ programs and resources that women veterans can use. The summit’s panel moderators—women veterans who are subject matter experts—helped frame each program area and provided context for the transition challenges. These experts had both professional credentials and personal insight, having experienced the transition journey firsthand. Government officials also stressed the need for corporate partners to become involved, as government alone cannot meet all of the challenges women veterans confront.

The expert and government perspectives were followed by stories from women veterans that grounded the summit by attaching faces and voices to issues and statistics. Although they could relate to the issues of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), military sexual trauma (MST), homelessness, and unemployment, these veterans spoke not as victims but rather as strong, confident women.

These women veterans had returned from military service to their families and communities changed by the military culture and experiences, unsure how or when to express their adjustment concerns or where to access support to sort them out. There was little guidance or assistance to prepare them for the realities of civilian life beyond the military Transition Assistance Program (TAP) designed to provide direction and support prior to discharge. Interestingly, they all possessed high-quality skills and a breadth of experiences that could benefit companies and communities. They just needed some help and guidance to recognize and apply these capabilities in the civilian environment.

The women veteran panelists represented different eras of service, different ethnicities, different life stages, and different challenges. The diversity of the panelists highlighted that the transition journey for women veterans is a heterogeneous experience, reminding attendees of the importance of

“When I speak out about the post-traumatic stress disorder that I know a lot of people struggle with, I worry that by bringing attention to those issues, I may be scaring off potential employers, and that is something that I really struggle with and worry about. How do I call attention to gaps in services and ask people to step up and help us fill those gaps without making potential employers think, “Oh, maybe I shouldn’t hire a vet because they come with so much baggage?” And that is something that I am still struggling with, and it is one of the reasons that I am so excited to be a part of this conference, so that we can try to find out how to bridge that gap and why I think it is so wonderful what the BPW Foundation is doing.”

-Kayla Williams, *woman veteran and panelist*

targeted interventions for different segments of the women veteran population. The needs of a 25-year-old woman veteran from Operation Iraqi Freedom, for example, differ



from those of a 62-year-old woman veteran who served during the Vietnam era. Older women veterans blazed a trail for women behind the front lines but in combat theatres often as nurses and administrators. Their needs are those of mature workers, leaders, and family members heading into retirement, who may still suffer health issues and PTSD unique to that time and place. Younger women veterans who represent a multifold increase in numbers return with their whole lives ahead of them yet 30 percent or more will suffer from MST and/or PTSD, face difficulties finding employment, and be resistant to asking for help or unaware of the services and benefits they are entitled to.

## Summit Findings

**A**s a call to action, the summit was designed to educate business, government, and community leaders about the challenges and opportunities women veterans face and connect these issues with organizational goals and priorities. Speakers and panelists made a business and moral case for acting on behalf of women veterans. Women veterans identified contributing factors hindering their ability to access resources that could meet their needs. Together speakers, panelists, and participants identified opportunities for action and rallied around key principles for collaboration. The following key findings pertain to the why, what, where, and how of identifying and implementing solutions that support women veterans.

### **Finding 1. There is an economic and moral imperative for addressing the distinct needs of women veterans.**

If we fail to act on behalf of women veterans, we not only fall short of our moral obligations but also forfeit the opportunity to benefit from the experiences and skills women veterans bring to our workplaces and communities. Supporting women veterans is not only the right thing to do; it is the smart thing to do. Improving transition outcomes for women and strengthening the nation's economic competitiveness are mutually supportive goals. Supporting the advancement of women veterans will increase their success along with that of business, communities, and families. The wealth of training and experience women veterans bring to the civilian workplace as employees and employers is squandered when women's unique transition needs are ignored.

*Investing in women veterans as employees is smart business.* Women in the military are leaders, managers, and team members. The military has expended extensive resources to train its personnel to be the most skilled, efficient, inventive, disciplined, and adaptable employees. Addressing women veterans' constraints and opportunities is, as Assistant Secretary Tammy Duckworth stated, "an opportunity to improve your organizations and improve businesses across the United States by harnessing the power and the strength and the skills of these women veterans."

If more than 80 percent of military jobs have civilian counterparts, why do women veterans have difficulty securing meaningful civilian jobs? It's not just a question of how many women veterans are employed or unemployed, but also a question of *where* women veterans are employed. When women veterans' military skills and experience are ignored, their labor is often misallocated. For example, woman veteran and panelist Joyce Leaneve was informed that the only civilian jobs her military experience in operating and maintaining complex communications systems equipped her for were a file clerk or a waitress. That was a waste of her skill and talent. When human resources are misallocated, companies forfeit talented workers and increased productivity and our nation's overall competitiveness is compromised.

*Investing in women veterans as employers is smart economics.* Women in the military possess an enterpreneurial mindset, are proactive and goal-oriented, and get the job done using resources effectively. Women veterans have experience making decisions in the face of significant ambiguity, uncertainty, and danger. They understand the importance of having an alternate plan and they are willing and able to adapt.

Although these traits align with key characteristics of successful business owners, women veterans are underrepresented among business owners. Veteran-owned businesses account for 14 percent of U.S. small businesses. Based on the most recent available census business survey data from 2002 (2007 data should be available soon), only 2.7 percent of veteran-owned firms were owned by women, despite the fact that overall women's business ownership is growing much faster than men's. This could be due to the fact that women veterans are still a small, albeit growing, veteran population. Given the importance of small businesses to the U.S. economy—accounting for 50

percent of all non-farm gross domestic product and 99.7 percent of employer firms—women veterans are a potential entrepreneurial force that should not be overlooked.

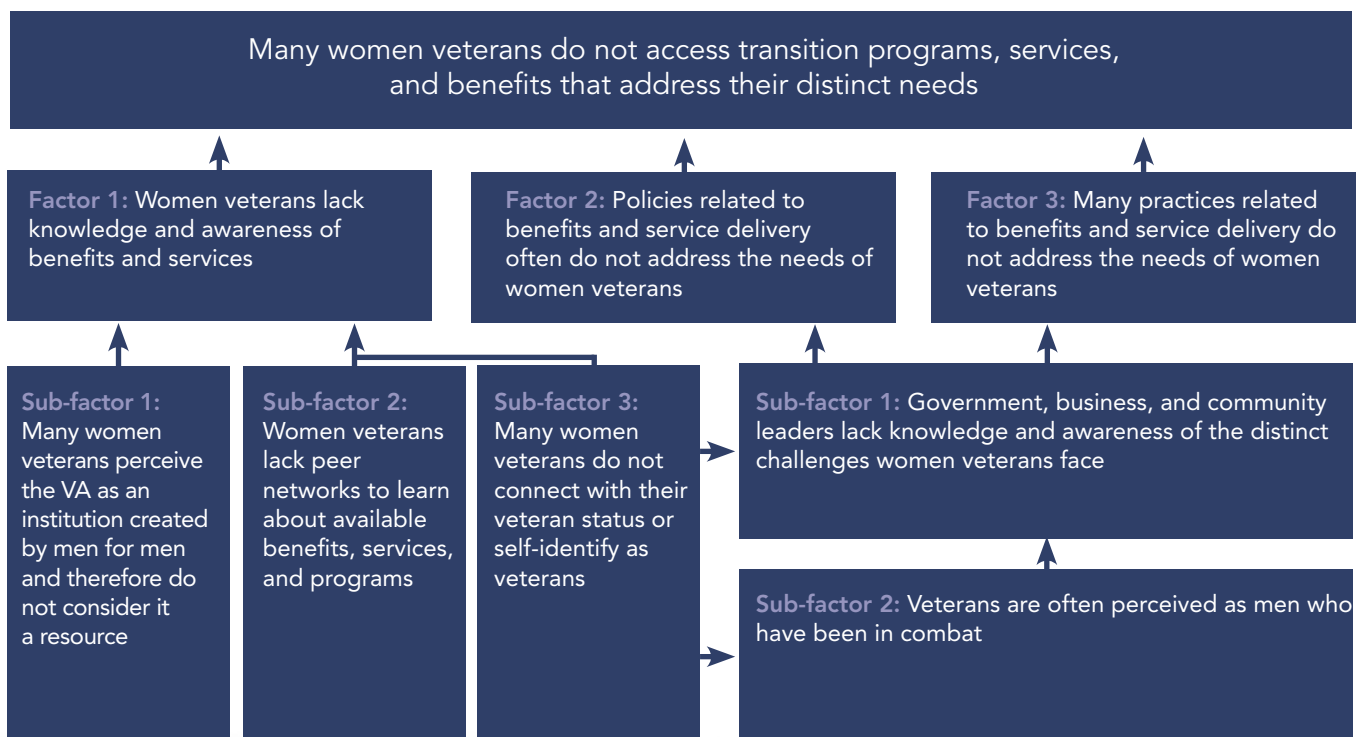
*Investing in women veterans is a moral obligation.* Through their service, women veterans protected our freedom and liberties yet they return home with little protection of their own. They lack assurances of housing or a stable income. If we do not act on their behalf, we will have failed our women veterans, our country, and ourselves. As President Obama stated, “Our nation’s commitment to our veterans is a sacred trust...upholding that trust is a moral obligation.”

As government, business, and community leaders, we need to embrace and adapt the military creed of “leave no man/woman behind” to our women veterans. Yet housing and employment statistics indicate that women veterans are being left behind. Upholding our moral obligation to women veterans requires a spirit and culture that says it is unacceptable to leave a woman veteran behind and unsupported in her journey to a fulfilling civilian life.

**Finding 2. Women veterans lack awareness of or access to benefits, services, and programs that address their distinct needs.**

The remarks provided by government officials about the programs and services available to women veterans contrasted sharply with accounts of women veterans who did not know where to turn to for help. As woman veteran panelist Veronica Harrison stated, “My fall was because we have benefits that we’re not accessing because we don’t know. We don’t have any advocacy going on for anyone to know that there are programs out there for us to use.” A common theme throughout the summit was a lack of awareness of existing benefits, services, and programs. Obviously, unless women veterans know about their benefits and available services, it matters little that they exist.

Moreover, while programs and services exist for veterans, few are designed specifically for women veterans. The sessions highlighted the need to examine opportunities for interventions specific for the woman veteran population. Throughout the day, several factors were identified that hinder women’s access to transition-related resources. The chart below provides an overview of the contributing factors.



**Finding 3. Efforts to address women veterans' transition challenges must include dual focus: support for women veterans and capacity-building for organizations.**

Designing tailored tools and resources requires an understanding of the target population. Business, government, and community leaders lack knowledge of the women veterans employed in their organizations and living in their communities. According to data from the pre-summit survey, only five attendees knew how many women veterans their organization employed.

To understand the needs and challenges of women veterans, organizations must first identify women veterans in their midst and foster a culture that encourages women veterans to self-identify. Moreover, companies need a better understanding of the challenges that women veterans may face and the prospect that women veterans may not seek help until these challenges interfere with their jobs or personal lives. Employers also can better support women veteran employees by becoming familiar with how to access GI benefits for health and education.

**Finding 4. Actions and solutions that address women veterans' transition challenges should be informed, holistic, collaborative, and community-based.**

Throughout the summit, participants highlighted several principles for action. Actions and solutions must be:

- 1. Informed.** Developing customer-driven programs and services requires in-depth knowledge of the customer. Business, government, and community leaders need to listen to and learn from the stories and experiences of women veterans. As Dr. Lynda Davis, founder and CEO of the See.Care.Do Institute, stated, “We have to wisely join forces. It is not sufficient just to think up a clever idea, get a cute little acronym, find some money for a year, and throw a program out there. That’s not going to do any good for anybody who is trying to have a lifelong plan to thrive. We’ve got to listen to the voices [of women veterans], join forces, and support their choices.” Developing informed actions requires

not only listening to the voices of women veterans but also drawing on lessons learned from evidence-based programs.

- 2. Holistic.** Reintegration, housing, and employment challenges are interconnected and have compounding effects. Supporting women veterans requires supporting them as whole beings and addressing their economic, social, mental, and physical needs. Only holistic efforts will lead to successful transitions for women veterans.
- 3. Collaborative.** The government alone cannot effectively address the needs of women veterans. The U.S. Departments of Defense, Labor, and Veterans Affairs all play a vital role in the transition of our military; however, these agencies are not charged with all levels of adjustment and support. Supporting women veterans’ employment transition, for example, requires companies, training organizations, and support systems for solutions. Public agencies and private companies must share the risks and rewards of supporting women veterans.

“We were glad that Valerie and the Council on Women and Girls could support this event [the summit]. We know that BPW understands what we do—that government needs public-private partnerships to truly make a lasting change.”

-Jenny Kaplan, *Deputy Director*  
White House Council on Women and Girls,  
*Council on Women and Girls blog, October 21, 2010*

- 4. Community-based.** While the statistics and challenges that women veterans face are national in scope, solutions can only happen locally, where veterans live. As Dr. Lynda Davis reminded attendees, “In Washington, DC, we think it is about the buildings and bureaucracy. We have vet centers, but even that ... is not where people live, and it is not where they heal, and that is not where they get about with their lives.” Women veterans return to communities and it is within those communities that employers, service providers, and networks must be leveraged to support their return to civilian life. While we may need a national framework to support the scope and quality of services, organization and delivery of services must be in the community with leveraged resources from all levels.

## Recommended Actions from the Summit

The chart below provides suggested actions identified at the summit to address the challenges of women veterans in transition.

<b>Goal 1: Increase women veterans' awareness and use of existing benefits, services, and programs</b>		
<i>Recommended Actions</i>		
Research	Policies and Practices	Programs and Services
Identify women veterans' networking patterns and resource acquisition to understand how to increase their awareness and access to benefits and services	Allow veterans to retain their military email addresses to increase access to information on VA benefits and resources at state and local levels  Add email address to DD Form 214	Develop a system of benefits and care coordination at the state and local levels  Develop a toolkit to help women veterans understand and navigate benefits, programs, and services  Use military email to notify veterans of their service entitlements and how to receive assistance  Establish a "one stop" model for women veterans that is community-based and includes linkages with veterans' benefits providers and other support services
<b>Goal 2: Address the distinct needs of women veterans in transition-related programs and services including increasing their capacity to utilize resources and benefits</b>		
<i>Recommended Actions</i>		
Research	Policies and Practices	Programs and Services
Identify gender-based constraints to reintegration, secure housing, employment, and entrepreneurship to better inform the development of programs and tools for women veterans  Identify characteristics and attributes of programs that successfully address women veterans' reintegration, housing, and employment needs	Include gender-specific programming and resources in the military Transition Assistance Program (TAP)  Make the TAP program mandatory and standardized	Develop employer models of recruitment and advancement for women veterans  Develop and implement model networking and mentoring programs for women veterans  Develop standards of excellence for publicly and privately funded women's services at veteran centers  Provide advocacy and assertiveness training and modeling for women veterans to support their success in the civilian world  Empower women veterans to better navigate and negotiate VA and employment-related systems



**Goal 3: Increase the capacity of business, government, and community leaders to attract, support, and advance women veterans in businesses, agencies, and organizations**

*Recommended Actions*

Research	Policies and Practices	Programs and Services
<p>Continue to reach out to women veterans and catalog their experiences through company and organization-based sessions</p> <p>Identify needs and solicit possible approaches for assistance at state and community levels</p> <p>Organize women veteran groups to discuss successful methods of recruiting and integrating women veterans into the workplace</p>	<p>Instruct shelters to ask if homeless women are veterans and refer veterans to special services</p> <p>Designate and promote state contacts for women veterans in state VA offices</p> <p>Identify and reach out to women veterans at the state level through DD Form 214 information</p>	<p>Develop company and organization-based affinity groups for women veterans</p> <p>Collaborate on adaptation of existing women veteran-specific programs that are working</p> <p>Provide information, assessment, and resource avenues for women veterans to explore entrepreneurship opportunities</p>



### A Quick Response to a Call for Action

Summit attendees saw support in action when Dan Nichols of Military to Medicine provided a scholarship to Joyce Leneave, a veteran who struggled with homelessness. Joyce found support (and was sponsored to come to the Summit) through the Cincinnati American Legion Post for Women. Military to Medicine is offering 10 women veterans scholarships through BPW Foundation as a contribution to the Joining Forces for Women Veterans initiative. This scholarship will enable Joyce and other women veterans to follow a dream of becoming a nurse. This is one of many possible actions that companies and individuals can take to make a difference.

### Next Steps: Where We Go From the Summit

**T**he Joining Forces for Women Veterans Inaugural Summit was a starting point, a select gathering of business, government, and community leaders who are interested in the issues and possible solutions to the transition challenges facing women veterans. As this veteran population continues to increase, these and more leaders must better recognize the challenges and subsequently commit to building the partnerships that provide solutions. Women veterans have much to contribute to the labor market and must have access

to the economic mainstream, suitable housing, and the benefits that they have earned. We will need to collaborate and act now.

Regarding next steps, BPW Foundation's Board of Trustees has designated women veterans as the organization's top priority and is finalizing a strategic plan specific to that priority. A key element of the plan is to identify leadership partners and investors to help address the issues identified through the summit. BPW Foundation will immediately undertake the following steps:

- Establish the National Fund for Women Veterans Initiatives
- Develop a national framework and platform for guiding women veterans' activities and leveraging resources
- Establish a business leadership council for the Joining Forces for Women Veterans initiative
- Develop guidelines for public-private partnerships that address women veterans' transition challenges
- Identify best practices and establish standards for addressing women veterans' transition challenges
- Identify policy and advocacy opportunities for addressing women veterans' transition challenges
- Conduct regional or local women veterans' summits and policy and action forums

As BPW Foundation launches activities inspired by the summit, we encourage businesses, organizations, and women veterans to initiate steps as well. The chart below lists many possible steps.

Employers	Organizations	Individuals, including Veterans
<p><b>Identify</b> the women veterans on your staff. How many are there? Who are they? What types of positions do they hold?</p> <p><b>Organize</b> brown bag lunches for women veterans where they can share their transition experiences.</p> <p><b>Host</b> roundtables with diversity officers to discuss best practices for recruiting and retaining women veterans.</p> <p><b>Create</b> a women veterans' affinity group.</p> <p><b>Develop</b> mentoring programs and career coaching tools specifically for women veterans.</p> <p><b>Support</b> the National Fund for Women Veterans to ensure coordination and expansion of quality programs.</p> <p><b>Participate</b> in local public-private partnerships to ensure coordination and access to service for women veterans.</p>	<p><b>Identify</b> women veterans in your community and your state. Initiate networking and mentoring activities.</p> <p><b>Examine</b> your local and state women veterans' support services and resources. How accessible are they in location, hours, and scope to meet needs?</p> <p><b>Advocate</b> through tracking and providing input on policies affecting women veterans and supports tailored to their needs.</p> <p><b>Encourage and engage in collaboration</b> among service providers to address all aspects of needs directly or through referrals.</p>	<p><b>Volunteer</b> at local American Legion or other veterans service organizations. Find out what they are doing to support women veterans and how you can help.</p> <p><b>Seek out</b> other women veterans for networking and awareness through veteran businesswomen- related organizations.</p> <p><b>Report</b> concerns and problems using any of the VA related systems.</p> <p><b>Educate</b> yourself and others about the distinct issues affecting women veterans.</p> <p><b>Consider donating</b> resources to women veteran-related causes.</p>

## Conclusion

The Joining Forces for Women Veterans Inaugural Summit was catalytic in bringing attention to the issues that impact the reintegration and success of women veterans. We learned that the resources intended to support these women are not always known or available, and assumptions that women veterans easily find employment or transition their skills to comparable positions in the civilian world are unfounded. The summit raised awareness and led participants to recognize and respect the skills and attributes of women veterans as leaders and valuable participants in their workplaces and communities. As action steps are developed we understand that only through public-private partnerships, targeted resources, and recognition of the distinct needs of women veterans, can we assure them a respected place in the labor market and community.

What we do next is critical. BPW Foundation will continue its partnership with the McCormick Foundation to launch the National Fund for Women Veterans. With support from corporations and foundations and matching funds from the McCormick Foundation, the fund will enable evidence-based programs and strategies to be expanded, and local public-private partnerships to be formed with leveraged dollars. Ensuring that women veterans are afforded services to advance their adjustment and reintegration will take a good deal of support from all levels of leadership in business, government, and community organizations.

## Summit Program Agenda

### MORNING SESSIONS

- 8:00 – 9:00** Registration and Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 – 9:15** Welcome & Opening Remarks
- Deborah L. Frett, CEO, Business and Professional Women's Foundation
  - Jack Amberg, Senior Director, Veterans Programs, McCormick Foundation
- 9:15 – 9:30** Video - Faces of Women Veterans
- 9:30 – 10:15** Keynote Speakers
- Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisor and Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Engagement; Chair of the White House Council on Women and Girls
  - Introduction by Darienne Page, Assistant Director, Office of Public Engagement and Lead for Veterans, Wounded Warrior, and Military Family Outreach
  - Tammy Duckworth, Assistant Secretary for Public & Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs
- 10:15 – 10:30** BREAK
- 10:30 – 11:25** Reintegration
- Linda Schwartz, Commissioner of Connecticut Dept. of Veterans Affairs; President, National Association of State Directors of Veteran Affairs
  - Lynda Davis, Ph.D., Founder and CEO, See.Care.Do Institute; former Deputy Undersecretary of Defense – Military Community and Families
  - Kayla Williams (Veteran)
  - Veronica Harrison (Veteran)
  - Adrienne Simmons (Veteran)
- 11:30 – 12:25** Homelessness
- ABC News Video
  - Sara Manzano-Diaz, Director, Women's Bureau, U.S. Dept. of Labor
  - Marsha Four, Executive Director, Philadelphia Veterans Multi-Service and Education Center
  - Joyce Leneave, Chaplain, The Greater Cincinnati Women's American Legion Post 644 (Veteran)
  - Denise Washington (Veteran)
  - Jessica Campbell (Veteran)

### AFTERNOON SESSIONS

- 12:25 – 12:35** Special Remarks
- Michelle Jones, Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, White House Liaison, U.S. Dept. of Defense
- 12:35 – 1:45** LUNCH
- Marie Johns, Deputy Administrator, Small Business Administration; former President and CEO of Verizon, Washington, D.C.
  - Working lunch sessions
- 2:00 – 3:00** Employment and Careers
- Ray Jefferson, Assistant Secretary, Veterans' Employment & Training Service (VETS), U.S. Dept. of Labor
  - Susan Schieren, Manager, Military Programs, General Electric (Veteran)
  - Dawn Halfaker, CEO, Halfaker & Associates (Veteran)
  - Erica Banks, Director of Talent Programs, USAA (Veteran)
- 3:00 – 3:05** Special Remarks by Ana R. Harvey, Assistant Administrator, Office of Women's Business Ownership, U.S. Small Business Administration
- 3:05 – 4:15** Solutions and Opportunities Discussion
- 4:15 – 4:45** Outcomes & Action Plan
- Announce Joining Forces for Women Veterans National Fund
- 5:00 – 6:30** Cocktail Reception and Networking





## Women Joining Forces Advisory Council

Congresswoman Susan A. Davis (D-CA), Member, House Armed Services Committee

Lynda Davis, Ph.D., Founder and CEO, Sec.Care.Do Institute; Former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense- Military Community and Family Policy (Veteran, Army National Guard and Reserve)

Evelyn “Pat” Foote (BG, U.S. Army, Ret.)

Marsha Four, Executive Director, Philadelphia Veterans Multi-Service and Education Center (Veteran, U.S. Army)

Barbara Goodwin (BG, U.S. Air Force, Ret.)

Congresswoman Kay Granger (R-TX), House Majority Whip, Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Member

Velma Hart, CAE National Finance Director/CFO, AMVETS; Board of Trustees BPW Foundation (Veteran, U.S. Army)

Joy Ilem, Assistant National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans (Veteran, U.S. Army)

Lucretia McClenney, R.N., MSN, CNA Director, Center for Minority Veterans – U.S. Dept. Veterans Affairs (COL, U.S. Army, Ret.)

Gail McGinn, President, McGinn Consulting, LLC; Former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Plans

Ruby Miller, Director, Administration & Logistics Support, Office of Operations Coordination, U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security (CDR, U.S. Navy, Ret.)

Betty Moseley Brown, Ed.D., Associate Director, Center for Women Veterans – U.S. Dept. Veterans Affairs (Veteran, U.S. Marine Corps)

William Offutt, Director, External Affairs, Military to Medicine (Veteran, U.S. Army)

Kimberly Olson, Executive Director, Grace After Fire (COL, U.S. Air Force, Ret.)

Linda Spoonster Schwartz, DrPH, MSN, R.N., Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, State of Connecticut; President, State Directors of Veterans Affairs (COL, U.S. Air Force, Ret.)

Irene Trowell-Harris, R.N., Ed.D. Director, Center for Women Veterans, U.S. Dept. Veterans Affairs (MG, U.S. Air Force, Ret.)

Wilma Vaught, President, Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation (BG, U.S. Air Force, Ret.)

Danielle Corazza, Project Manager, Joining Forces for Women Veterans Initiative, BPW Foundation (Veteran, U.S. Army)









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