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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pittsburgh employers' alliance announces launch of first data-centric Veteran Employment Coalition

Institute for Veteran and Military Families at Syracuse University and The Heinz Endowments join forces to empower veterans

PITTSBURGH, Pa., May 22, 2019 — An alliance of Pittsburgh businesses announced today the launch of the Pittsburgh Veteran Employer Coalition (PVEC), a first-of-its-kind, community-based employment collaborative that will advance the lives and combat the pervasive underemployment of Pittsburgh's veteran and military-connected residents. The Coalition is a result of a 24-month collaboration between [The Heinz Endowments](#), [Institute for Veteran and Military Families](#) at Syracuse University (IVMF) and an eight-member steering committee. Approximately 60 businesses are expected to join PVEC during the remainder of 2019.

On an unprecedented scale, PVEC will connect the city's estimated 50,000 Post-9/11 veterans and military-connected families with skill and experience-matched corporate sector employment opportunities, recruit active-duty personnel prior to exiting the military, and foster employment retention and data-based benchmarking.

PVEC will operate under the auspice of a steering committee consisting of representatives of eight major employers, including [Accenture](#), [City of Pittsburgh](#), [FedEx Ground](#), [Giant Eagle](#), [Highmark Health](#), [PITT OHIO](#), [Oberg Industries](#), [PNC Financial Services](#), and the Endowments.

All steering committee members have approved a charter agreeing to uphold the commitments of the coalition's companies, including sharing recruiting, hiring, and retention data. Progress on initiative benchmarks will be determined by data provided by PVEC members and will be shared in aggregate with the community at large.

Putting their competition for workforce development aside, businesses in the group are committed to a partnership that strengthens the community of Pittsburgh by empowering veterans, recognizing their individual and collective skills and worth, and creating an extensive talent pipeline for employers in the city.



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From May 2017 to May 2019, IVMF, the nation’s leader in veteran transition services, joined the Endowments in guiding eight forums with employer representatives and veteran groups from the Pittsburgh region that provided input for the creation of the Coalition.

Data from a 2017 [Call of Duty Endowment/ZipRecruiter study](#) shows that nearly 1/3 of all veteran job seekers – a rate 15.6 percent higher than non-veteran job seekers - are underemployed in positions that do not utilize the full potential of their skill sets.

PVEC will address veteran underemployment through shared data, networking opportunities and skills translation tools, as well as work with businesses on how they can best serve and retain their veteran employees. Data to be collected and shared in aggregate to the community includes the number of veterans hired, education level, fulltime/part-time status, salary range, retention rate, zip codes where veterans live, years of service, and Military Occupational Specialty.

Almost \$100,000 has been provided by the Endowments to support the initiative, with future funding provided by the Endowments and employers committed to the Coalition.

“The estimated 50,000 Post-9/11 veterans who have chosen the Pittsburgh region as their home - and the 5,200 more that are predicted to join them each year - are a highly trained and experienced pool of talent,” said Endowments’ President Grant Oliphant. “The Pittsburgh Veteran Employer Coalition will help connect veterans with top employers, ensuring veterans’ employment potential is fully realized while providing companies with the first-rate employees they need.”

Sharing PVEC’s mission to employ and serve veterans and military families, the IVMF currently offers two programs for veterans in Pittsburgh—PAServes and Onward to Opportunity (O2O). PAServes is the Greater Pittsburgh branch of the IVMF’s AmericaServes network of coordinated care, connecting military veterans, service members and their families with resources specific to their unique needs, while O2O provides career preparedness training for service members leaving the military, veterans, and military spouses.

“Today is an exciting day in Pittsburgh as the work of so many comes to fruition in support of the city’s veterans and families,” says Mike Haynie, vice chancellor of Syracuse University and founder & executive director of the IVMF. “The thoughtful and strategic formation of PVEC will create lasting and sustainable impact for the city, its veterans and families, and the economic landscape. The IVMF is proud to have a hand in creating supportive systems across Pittsburgh for those who have served.”



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“PITT OHIO is proud to partner with the PVEC and looks forward to working with and providing career opportunities for the many veterans and military-connected families in the greater Pittsburgh region,” said Brian McGuire, vice president of Human Resources, PITT OHIO. “We value the many diverse qualifications and skills veterans obtained while serving our country and now appreciate the special contributions they will provide to our organizations.”

“With unparalleled skills, experiences and commitment to teamwork, veterans strengthen Pittsburgh’s sense of civic responsibility and its economic vitality,” said Deborah Rice-Johnson, president, Highmark Inc. “Highmark has benefited in countless ways from our veteran employees who have served our country. We are excited and proud to join forces with other leading western Pennsylvania employers to expand job opportunities and resources available to these special individuals who have sacrificed so much, yet have so much more to contribute.”

A complete list of employers who have committed to PVEC will be released later in 2019. In the coming months, the Coalition will continue to expand its network with the greater Pittsburgh community to identify organizations with like-minded values who may have employment opportunities for veterans, including but not limited to businesses, academia, non-profit groups and government organizations.

Entities interested in partnering should contact info@thepvec.org.

Media Contacts

Scott Roller
The Heinz Endowments
office: 412.338.2619
cell: 412.725.0023
sroller@heinz.org

Leah Lazarz
Institute for Veterans and Military Families
Syracuse University
315.944.8504
llazarz@syr.edu

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About The Heinz Endowments

[The Heinz Endowments](#), one of the nation's leading private foundations, aims to create more just communities, and model solutions to major national and global challenges. The Endowments focuses on advancing a sustainable future for our community and planet, successful learning outcomes for young people and their families, and a culture of engaged creativity for all.

About the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University

The [Institute for Veterans and Military Families](#) (IVMF) is the first interdisciplinary national institute in higher education focused on the social, economic, education, and policy issues impacting veterans and their families. Through its professional staff and experts, the IVMF delivers leading programs in career, vocational, and entrepreneurship education and training, while also conducting actionable research, policy analysis, and program evaluations. The IVMF also supports communities through collective impact efforts that enhance delivery and access to services and care. The Institute, supported by a distinguished advisory board, along with public and private partners, is committed to advancing the lives of those who have served in America's armed forces and their families. For more information, visit ivmf.syracuse.edu.

