



## **Project Overview**

For 50 years, Cornell University's Yang-Tan Institute (YTI) has advanced policies and practices to enhance equal opportunities for individuals and veterans with disabilities. Recognized as a leading resource in employment and disability, YTI promotes inclusive and productive workplaces. With funding from the Kessler Foundation, and the expertise of YTI and its partners, Combat2Careers (C2C) is honoring those who have served and sacrificed by assisting student veterans make campus-to-career transitions through gainful and meaningful employment. According to [recent statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau](#), there are 18.2 million veterans in the United States. About one-quarter of these veterans have a disability; about ten percent are women. For many, pursuing higher education is a key part of their transition to civilian life. Though much attention has been given generally to veterans in higher education, less attention has been given to student veterans who have disabilities or who are women. The purpose of the C2C project is to enable student veterans to move successfully from higher education to careers, with a focus on the unique situations of veterans with disabilities and women veterans.

## **C2C Operative Mission**

Work is not just about getting a paycheck. It is also about identity, pride, growth, and connection. Moving veterans into meaningful and sustainable work is key to their well-being. This is as true for veterans with disabilities and for women veterans as it is for others. The C2C operative mission is to include veterans with disabilities and women veterans fully in all aspects of the college-to-career process. Representing more than fifteen percent of active-duty military and ten percent of all veterans, women are the fastest-growing subpopulation of the military and veteran communities (Disabled American Veterans, *Women Veterans Report*, 2018). Despite recent progress, veterans continue to face significant barriers. In addition to difficulties in adapting to civilian, higher education, and workplace culture, veterans with disabilities must also navigate through accessing treatment, determining accommodations, making a disclosure decision, and possibly facing stigma and discrimination in their employment lives. Similarly, women veterans face additional transition challenges, such as being more likely to have PTSD but less likely to use veterans' benefits and services. Though transition services for veterans have recently improved, transition challenges remain for these two groups of veterans and need to be addressed through C2C.

## **C2C Partners**

Working with DirectEmployers Association (DE), East Central College (ECC), and SUNY Oswego, YTI will foster new approaches in serving student veterans with disabilities by linking their Military Occupation Specialties (MOS) to career pathways and fostering work-based learning, mentoring, and career opportunities. DirectEmployers is a member owned and managed consortium of talent acquisition and compliance professionals with over 900 employers varying in industry and size. Improving veteran





employment outcomes must include proactive strategies and employer partnerships to make a significant difference in the workplace for veteran engagement, employment, and retention.

With close proximity to Fort Leonard Wood Army and Scott Air Force bases, East Central College is a comprehensive community college, in the St. Louis metropolitan area, that leads the nation in the number of U.S. Department of Labor registered apprentices at area manufacturers where incumbent workers are receiving workforce training toward the completion of a certificate or degree. SUNY Oswego is a public college in the City of Oswego, New York, near Fort Drum Army base, that was named a Best for Vets College by *Military Times* and a Military Friendly School by *Military Advanced Education and G. I. Jobs* for the past five years. Oswego, one of 13 university colleges in the 64-campus SUNY system, offers 110 majors and graduate programs and is recognized as one of the state's most veteran-friendly campuses.

### **C2C Tactical Approach**

Combat2Careers aims to improve the recovery and quality of life of Post 9/11 veterans with disabilities by utilizing evidence-based Customized Employment (CE) assessment, Career Pathways (CP) apprenticeships, and disability-related support services while engaging employers and partners, to obtain full- or part-time employment over the two-year project. To facilitate military transition to the civilian workplace, C2C will establish intensive mentoring relationships with DE business professionals for guidance and assistance on education and employment opportunities as a proven strategy, both in the business and military environments, to help support and guide student veterans.

Preferential services will be extended to female veterans with disabilities. Women in this group often resist male-oriented veteran services and face unique challenges in addition to having unemployment rates higher than their male peers (Disabled American Veterans, 2014). C2C will also demonstrate how targeted outreach and female veteran-specific employment and supportive services can help veterans identify and achieve their job and career preferences.

For more information on C2C, contact Kathleen Lee, Business Outreach Consultant, at 314-369-6292.

*The Center for Grantmaking at Kessler Foundation focuses on solutions to address the persistently high rates of unemployment among people with disabilities. Through strategic funding and philanthropic leadership, Kessler Foundation has invested more than \$46 million in programs to increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. Creating job opportunities through development, placement, employer education, and social enterprise has enabled greater independence and economic self-sufficiency.*

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