



# The United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP) Implementation Study and Feasibility of an Impact Study

## SUMMARY

In 2013, the Department of Labor (DOL) Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with the Employment and Training Administration's [Office of Apprenticeship \(OA\)](#) and funded L&M Policy Research to publish the *United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP) Implementation Study and Feasibility of an Impact Study*. This report examines USMAP program operations and the extent to which participants perceive the provided training and assistance supporting greater career success. Data sources included interviews with key staff members and focus groups with USMAP participants and supervisors. In addition, researchers sought to determine the feasibility and possible structure of an impact evaluation.

[USMAP](#) provides active-duty service members in the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Navy with the opportunity to take part in a formalized on-the-job training program and also earn a nationally recognized certificate of completion from the US DOL upon program completion. Participants earn wages for their work while simultaneously taking relevant courses or receiving a formal education. The program allows apprentices to receive both experience and training in fields that can lead to greater success both within and outside of military service.

This Department of Labor-funded study was a result of the annual process to determine the Department's research priorities for the upcoming year. It contributes to the labor evidence-base to inform [employment and training](#) programs and policies and addresses Departmental strategic goals and priorities.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **USMAP keeps records of the skills and experiences that program participants obtain while in the military.** Service members will document their work experiences for USMAP, most of which take place during their normal assignments.
- **Recommendations for future studies include the establishment of a pilot program that would allow private organizations to examine USMAP approaches and encourage participating employers to hire service members that have completed the program.** Evaluation of the program would involve comparing hiring rates of USMAP participants by participating and non-participating private employers.
- Service members reported that **completion of the apprenticeship does not have a greater effect in participants' military careers compared to non-participants.** Although apprenticeship certificates led to some promotion advantages, focus group participants described their advantages over non-USMAP participants in a similar field as modest.
- **USMAP documents skills and experience that service members routinely attain in military training and service.** Participants mainly document the work



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experiences that are part of their normal assignment; in addition, they may add specialized experience representing 10—20% of their overall training. In the future, USMAP may be well-placed to support service members in translating their skills and experience to civilian employers.

- **Both apprentices and their supervisors reported a limited understanding of USMAP.** According to feedback from focus groups, the absence of a program orientation contributes to this lack of knowledge. Participants receive little or no information about how USMAP certifications are relevant to military promotion or to civilian employers.
- **The study found that USMAP has not communicated extensively with or established ties with civilian employers.** This may be due to lack of program resources. With limited communication, employers are less aware of the benefits of hiring USMAP completers and USMAP is less able to adapt and meet changing demand in civilian sectors.
- **Data suggests that less than half of USMAP participants completed their apprenticeships.** Administrative data does not follow participants from program start through completion, so this may be an undercount. According to focus groups, limited resources, minimal communication with private employers, and administrative barriers all contributed to the lower completion rate.
- Researchers identified **three possible structures for an impact evaluation, which may be pursued independently or in combination.** The first would involve testing different strategies for marketing USMAP to eligible service members; the second would involve identifying factors that predict whether a service member participates in and/or completes USMAP, but do not influence civilian earnings; and the third would use sample resumes to test whether employers are more likely to contact USMAP participants.

[SEE FULL STUDY](#)

**TIMEFRAME:** 2013

**SUBMITTED BY:** L&M Policy Research

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**PARTNER AGENCY:** Employment and Training Administration (ETA)

**SPONSOR:** Chief Evaluation Office

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