

Allegheny Conference Launches Service to Opportunity: a Strategic Initiative Matching Veterans with In-Demand Energy and Advanced Manufacturing Jobs in the Pittsburgh Region

*Free service launched in Pittsburgh, named top U.S. metro for veterans transitioning to civilian life
Thousands of veterans expected to return, relocate to Pittsburgh region in next few years
Pittsburgh Forum on Veteran Employment – including Career Fair – on November 18 & 19, 2014*

(PITTSBURGH – Nov. 10, 2014) [The Allegheny Conference on Community Development](#) today announced the launch of Service to Opportunity (STO; [ServicetoOpportunity.org](#)), a strategic initiative to connect military veterans with energy and manufacturing employers in the Pittsburgh region who need to fill in-demand jobs.

Service to Opportunity features a powerful matching database that helps veterans match their skills and interests directly to these in-demand jobs and employers. It also includes a toolkit for employers with best practices and techniques for interviewing and hiring veterans.

“Our goal is to help regional employers attract and retain skilled workers. Veterans are a good fit for many of the critical workforce needs of energy and advanced manufacturing companies here. They bring technical skills, teamwork and leadership experience and a strong work ethic,” said Laura S. Fisher, senior vice president, workplace and special projects for the Allegheny Conference.

According to the Allegheny Conference’s [ImaginePittsburgh.com](#), a regional job aggregator and portal to work, live, play and learn opportunities in southwestern Pennsylvania, there are more than 25,000 open jobs in the 10-county region today. In 2012, the Conference did an in-depth study on energy companies to identify the most critical in-demand jobs they had, the expected hires in the coming years and the degree of confidence companies had that they could successfully make those hires.

“What we found was a prediction of thousands of open jobs but employers who were only confident that they could fill one in every five of these jobs. It became clear to us that we needed to do more – through highly targeted efforts – to help employers find the skilled workers they need,” said Dennis Yablonsky, CEO, Allegheny Conference.

Pittsburgh Best Destination for Transitioning Vets

Over the next five years, 1.25 million service members will be returning to the U.S. Allegheny County is home to one of the largest concentrations of veterans in the U.S. and more than 10,000 veterans are expected to return to this region over the next five years. In fact, Pittsburgh is the best place in the nation for veterans to pursue higher education and jump-start their transition into civilian careers, according to a new [study](#) commissioned by USAA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes program.

Employers Ready to Hire Veterans

“At Schlumberger, we are hiring. We’re looking forward to directly connecting with qualified military veterans through this program. We want to recruit, place and retain veterans because they are a good fit for our in-demand jobs,” said Phil Duda, Schlumberger Vice President, Northeast Basin.

“I believe that we have been given a great opportunity to attract veteran talent to our company. We are actively partnering with the Allegheny Conference and other organizations that are leading the way,” said Ed Malinowski, Strategic Account Manager, WESCO Distribution, Inc.

Support for Service to Opportunity

A free service to employers and veterans, STO is funded by a major grant from Chevron through the [Appalachia Partnership Initiative](#) (API). In addition to its financial commitment, Chevron is contributing industry expertise and connectivity to energy supply chain companies in support of this program.

Service to Opportunity is one of the newest programs to be supported through the recently announced API, a \$20 million commitment to address education and workforce development in 27 counties across southwestern Pennsylvania, northern West Virginia and eastern Ohio.

“Our growing energy and related manufacturing sectors have the potential to bring greater prosperity to the Pittsburgh region. We’re excited to help launch Service to Opportunity because it will close the skills gap faster, putting military veterans to work and generating economic growth across our region,” said Trip Oliver, manager of policy, government and public affairs for Chevron.

STO received critical early development funding from the Colcom Foundation as well.

“Livability thrives with meaningful employment. Cultivating the talent of our people assures the region’s long term viability. By focusing on local talent, STO enables Pittsburgh’s veterans to remain team players on the home front long after completing their military service,” said John Rohe, vice president of philanthropy for the Colcom Foundation.

Service to Opportunity Represents Innovative Approach to Hiring Veterans

“Those who have served their country in uniform already have proven themselves in a mission-driven environment -- they appreciate teamwork, they have demonstrated leadership skills and have applied their abilities in a diverse workplace. Hiring these veterans is good for business. Service to Opportunity is an innovative approach to veteran hiring at the regional level that has real promise for both veterans and employers. We look forward to working with the Allegheny Conference to leverage the VA’s Veteran Employment Center with this new tool,” said Curt Coy, deputy under secretary for economic opportunity, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Service to Opportunity to Debut at Next Week’s Pittsburgh Forum on Veteran Employment

STO will be a featured resource at the upcoming November 18 and 19, 2014 [Pittsburgh Forum on Veteran Employment](#), a two-day summit and career fair and the first one in the U.S. to be held in a civilian location. The November 19 program, sponsored by Chevron will bring together employers, veterans, military personnel (active, guard and reserve) and family members for industry presentations and a career fair at Heinz Field. Participation in the summit is free; register at www.vetsforum.org.

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The Allegheny Conference on Community Development and its Affiliates – the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, the Pennsylvania Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance – work in collaboration with public and private sector partners improving the economy and the quality of life in southwestern Pennsylvania. Learn more at AlleghenyConference.org.

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