

Transition Connection Provides Career Support for Service Members



Over a million men and women serve as active-duty members of our military, with an additional 800,000 in reservist roles. Every year, approximately 200,000 of those service members transition out of the military and into civilian roles. That transition is not always easy.

Transition Connection is an important hiring and networking event that links everyone in the military community, from enlisted service members to veterans to military spouses and civilians, with organizations looking for the caliber of employees that come from having a strong military connection.

Navy League CEO Mike Stevens kicked off the event, introducing Dr. Ernie Rosado, Director of Military Outreach for Columbia

Southern University. The Navy League has recently partnered with Columbia Southern to offer a new scholarship for military spouses that grants 60 credit hours towards any degree program at CSU.

“You folks are critical in this next process for all these folks that are transitioning,” said Rosado. “I know you will match that individual that has been protected by the military for years. And now they’re stepping out and they’re by themselves with their families. So, help them out. Let’s do a good job today,” he said.

During the four-hour event, members of the military had the opportunity to meet with some of the leading employers seeking to make offers to individuals that are either transitioning out of military service, trying to find a job that offers flexibility for military families on the move, or looking for out-of-the box options and support for civilian employment.

First time participants from [American Systems](#) commented on the big turnout and were excited to assist service members with the hiring process. “We support a number of different types of programs throughout the country and enterprise,” said Ed Wakeley and Chris McBeth of American Systems. “I support mostly Navy waterfront programs,” commented McBeth. “So engineering, training of getting ships ready to get back out to the South China Sea.”



Amazon, a regular Sea-Air-Space participant, have pledged to hire 100,000 transitioning service members, veterans, and spouses over the course of five years, said representatives John Pierce and Matt McGury. “As transitioned service members and advocates, we’re here to help answer questions [and] give guidance,” said Pierce. He also stressed that [many of the roles at Amazon](#) are a good fit because they utilize similar skill sets. “A lot of our data center positions are cleared facilities [...] operations mission critical facilities, very similar for military individuals. The skill sets that they offer work very well within our teams and the jobs that we have,” Pierce said.

Laura Hatcher, a 31-year [Navy veteran turned photographer](#), wasn’t at the event to hire, but to provide professional headshots to attendees at no cost. “This is my second career, and the majority of my clients are transitioning veterans,

because that's what I went through," Hatcher said. "I understand it. And I love these kinds of events, mainly because you get to stay in the community and [help] a lot of people that are looking for jobs," she said.