U.S. Department of Labor

Assistant Secretary for
Veterans' Employment and Training
Washington, D.C. 20210

NOV 4 2011

VETERANS' PROGRAM LETTER NO. 01-12

MEMORANDUM FOR: ALL REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS AND DIRECTORS FOR VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
ALL STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY ADMINISTRATORS, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

FROM: for ISMAEL ORTIZ, JR.

SUBJECT: Gold Card Initiative

I. **Purpose**. The purpose of this Veterans' Program Letter (VPL) is to provide information on the new "Gold Card" initiative of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) for Post-9/11 Era Veterans.

II. **Background**. On August 5, 2011, President Obama announced a comprehensive plan to lower veterans' unemployment and ensure that service members leave the military career-ready. The announcement included several initiatives including the creation of a suite of Gold Card services for veterans. The Gold Card provides unemployed post-9/11 era veterans with the intensive and follow-up services they need to succeed in today's job market. As of September, over 900,000 veterans were unemployed and the jobless rate for post-9/11 era veterans was 11.5 percent. And as we end the war in Iraq and wind down the war in Afghanistan, over one million service members are projected to leave the military between 2011 and 2016. The President believes we have an obligation to make sure our veterans are able to navigate this difficult labor market and succeed in the civilian workforce. The Gold Card initiative is a joint effort of the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) and will become available after Veterans' Day, November 11, 2011. ETA and VETS have developed a suite of enhanced intensive services, including follow-up designed to address the barriers to employment faced by post-9/11 era veterans. By increasing collaboration between VETS-funded programs and the One-Stop Career Center system, these services, when provided under the veterans priority of service,

are designed to overcome these barriers to employment and return our post-9/11 era veterans to the workforce.

III. **Gold Card Services**. Because of the persistent high unemployment rates being experienced by veterans, Gold Card services are being offered to assist them in getting the help they need to get them back into the labor market as quickly as possible. Information about this new initiative can be found on the DOL website, http://www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard - here veterans will be able to print a Gold Card (see sample card attached) and get information on how to access available services. Gold Card services are offered at One-Stop Career Centers. Other entities such as the National Resource Directory and the Department of Veterans Affairs' EBenefits will be advertising the services and provide a link to DOL's website. Post-9/11 era veterans going through the Transition Assistance Program's (TAP) employment workshop will also be informed of the availability of the Gold Card services and how to access those services.

Upon obtaining a Gold Card, an eligible veteran can present the Gold Card at his/her local One-Stop Career Center to receive enhanced intensive services including six months of follow-up. The Gold Card services will include a combination of intensive services, including skills assessment, career coaching, and job search assistance over a six-month period to jump-start the veterans' job search process and reconnect them to the civilian labor force in high-demand sectors. Such services are designed to help jobseekers navigate a more complex and challenging job market and can do so by helping veterans identify transferable skills, career goals and job search strategies. Veterans will be able to access a suite of services in-person and on-line. The enhanced in-person services available for Gold Card holders at local One-Stop Career Centers may include:

- Job readiness assessment, including interviews and testing;
- Development of an Individual Development Plan (IDP);
- Career guidance through group or individual counseling that helps veterans in making training and career decisions;
- Provision of labor market, occupational, and skills transferability information that inform educational, training, and occupational decisions;
- Referral to job banks, job portals, and job openings;
- Referral to employers and registered apprenticeship sponsors;
- Referral to training by WIA-funded or third party service providers; and
- Monthly follow-up by an assigned case manager for six months.

Veterans seeking Gold Card services can also learn about an enhanced suite of on-line tools for all veterans that will be launched as part of this initiative. On **My Next Move for Veterans** (www.MyNextMove.org/vets) veterans will find a simple and quick search engine where they enter their prior military experience (branch of service and military occupation code or title) and link to the information they need to explore information on civilian careers and related training, including information they can use to write resumes that highlight related civilian skills. In addition, My

Next Move for Veterans contains a link to an online assessment, the O*NET Interest Profiler, which provides results comparable to the Strong Interest Inventory being used in the new TAP. Veterans who have not received an interest assessment as part of TAP can access and take this interest assessment online from a link in the lower right-hand corner of My Next Move for Veterans or directly at: http://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip.

Dedicated veterans resources located on the Career One-Stop web site: http://www.careeronestop.org/VetsJobs will allow veterans to quickly identify civilian job openings related to their prior military experience, locate training and identify benefits and other assistance after military service. Transitioning service members and veterans can use these enhanced sites directly. Workforce system professionals who assist veterans will also find these tools useful.

A demonstration of the features of these new sites will be part of a Webinar for workforce system staff on the Gold Card initiative (see below under "Action Requested.)" This Webinar will also be recorded and available for subsequent viewing on workforce3One.org for those who are unable to participate in the first session.

IV. **Roles and Responsibilities**. All staff at One-Stop Career Centers, including receptionists or greeters must ensure that all veterans receive priority of service for all Department of Labor funded programs, as explained in Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 10-09, "Implementing priority of service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses in all Qualified Job Training Programs Funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)" and Training and Employment Notice No. 15-10, "Protocol for Implementing Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses in all Qualified Job Training Programs Funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)". As part of our responsibility to ensure that veterans receive priority of service, we have determined that providing Gold Card services will ensure that priority is fully implemented for those veterans most in need of employment and training services. Under the new Gold Card Initiative, post 9/11 era veterans receive enhanced intensive services. The process for guiding individuals to these services is as follows:

Intake staff should inform any veteran inquiring about Gold Card services or who may be Gold Card eligible, of the enhanced services available, as described above. Intake staff will determine veteran status as they currently do but will have to determine post-9/11 status. Local staff may be able to make this determination using their existing process or may have to add a verification step. If a new step is required the state and/or local office will determine how to accomplish this. Once eligibility is determined, the veteran should then be scheduled for an initial appointment with a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist, a Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) or One Stop Career Center staff who will provide the enhanced services. LVERs will also continue to provide employer outreach services.

Post-9/11 era veterans (referred to in this section as the "client") will meet with their assigned case manager (CM) who may be a DVOP, LVER or other staff in the One-Stop and complete appropriate enrollment documents to receive intensive services. The CM will provide the appropriate assessment and career guidance necessary to prepare an IDP with the client. Based on the needs of the client, the CM will provide the client with appropriate services, such as resume develop, referral for training, and job referral. The final step during the initial meeting should be to confirm an appointment date and time for a follow up meeting within 30 days. At the conclusion of the meeting the CM will create the Case Management Record for annotating pertinent information on the client's occupational goals that will then be used for employer outreach to develop job opportunities. The CM is encouraged to utilize the services and expertise of other staff to deliver the necessary services. The CM will provide follow-up services at least once every thirty days until the client is employed *or* for up to six months.

V. Action Requested. State Workforce Agency and Veterans' Employment Training Service staff, LVERs, DVOPs, and local One-Stop Career Center staff should familiarize themselves with the expectations for the provision of Gold Card services. These staff and others interested should participate in the Webinar introducing the Gold Card scheduled for November 14, 2011 at 3 pm EST. (Register for Webinars at www.workforce3one.org.) While the Gold Card initiative targets post-9/11 era veterans, all staff working with any veteran should become familiar with the two new electronic tools being released, My Next Move for Veterans and the Veterans Re-Employment Portal.

VI. Inquiries. Questions should be directed to your ETA or VETS Regional Offices or State VETS staff.

VII. Attachment

Sample Gold Card