



# 2025

# ANNUAL REPORT



[www.nextopvets.org](http://www.nextopvets.org)

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# NextOp's Mission

NextOp's mission is to recruit, develop, and place high-performing, post 9/11, enlisted leaders into industry careers. We aim to be the strongest link between industries and military talent.

## Veteran Candidates

Our team of Employment Coordinators serve as dedicated career architects for transitioning service members. We go beyond the resume, working one-on-one to identify the ideal civilian profession. Whether the path leads directly to a new role or requires strategic training and education, we guide every candidate through the necessary certifications and interview prep to ensure a high-impact career start.

## Employers

NextOp collaborates with corporate leaders and strategic partners to provide more than just a talent pipeline; we facilitate referrals, specialized training, and apprenticeship programs. By demystifying the translation of military skills, we ensure that veteran talent is never overlooked and always integrated effectively into the modern workforce.



## Letter from the Executive Director Shelby Mounts



It remains a profound honor to serve as the Executive Director of NextOp. Our mission, supporting enlisted veterans through career transitions, is vital to our nation, our industries, and the very foundation of an all-volunteer military. As we reflect on 2025, it is clear that our team's impact has reached unprecedented heights. Our theme for the year, "Continuous Improvement," served as the catalyst for evaluating every process and partnership, ensuring we delivered maximum value to those who served while refining our efficiencies for future growth.

I am pleased to report that 2025 was the most successful year in NextOp history, a fitting way to cap off a decade of service. Our performance highlights our commitment to exceeding national standards for veteran success:

- **Candidate Placements: 1,105** - This monumental milestone represents a 43% increase over last year and a new annual record. More importantly, it represents over a thousand veterans and families transitioning into meaningful new careers.
- **Average Starting Salary: \$66,645** - This remains highly competitive with the \$68,680 projected average for 2025 college graduates.
- **Time to Place: 67 Days** - While our internal goal was 60 days, our average remains significantly faster than traditional public-sector pathways. For comparison, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reported an average of 100 days to onboard new hires in 2025. While national hiring trends affected this rate, we remain committed to keeping this metric as low as possible while delivering a premium candidate experience.

As we enter 2026, we are transitioning into our next strategic phase: "Sustainment with Incremental Growth." Our roadmap is anchored by a bold objective of 1,450 candidate placements.

To achieve this, we are shifting our focus toward unlocking workforce development pipelines. We are deepening collaborations with industry and educational partners to build robust training, education, and apprenticeship pathways.

By integrating these "earn-while-you-learn" opportunities, we ensure our veterans are not only ready for today's job market but are uniquely qualified for high-growth roles in sectors like advanced manufacturing and defense.

There are really easy ways for you to get involved and join us in reaching our 2026 Goals! Partner with us to design industry-tailored apprenticeships, provide strategic investment to fuel our coaching efforts, or advocate for veterans by referring transitioning service members to our no-cost career services.

We are incredibly grateful for the supporters who stand with us. Together, we have built a powerful momentum that we will carry into 2026, providing confidence, stability, and purpose to those who have served.

Sincerely,

Shelby Mounts  
Executive Director

# 2025 Numbers

At NextOp, we bridge the gap between military talent and industry careers, ensuring enlisted leaders find meaningful opportunities where they can thrive. Our impact is best measured by the lives we change. Every number on this page represents a veteran who has taken the next step toward a successful future.

**5,692**

All-time hires

**1,105**

2025 hires

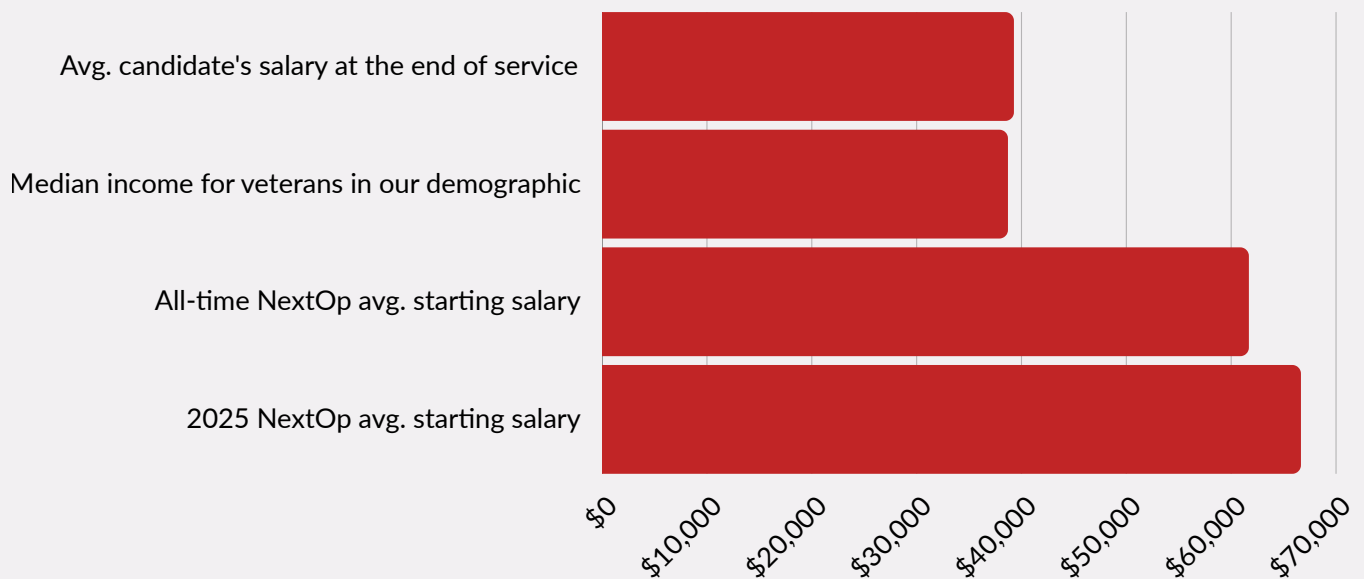
**67**

Avg. days to place

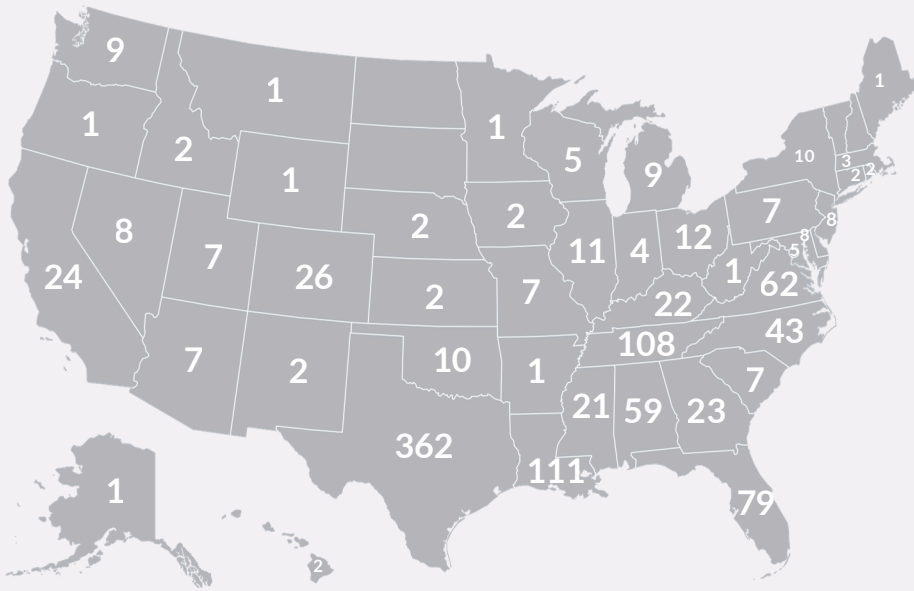
**\$66,654**

Avg. starting salary

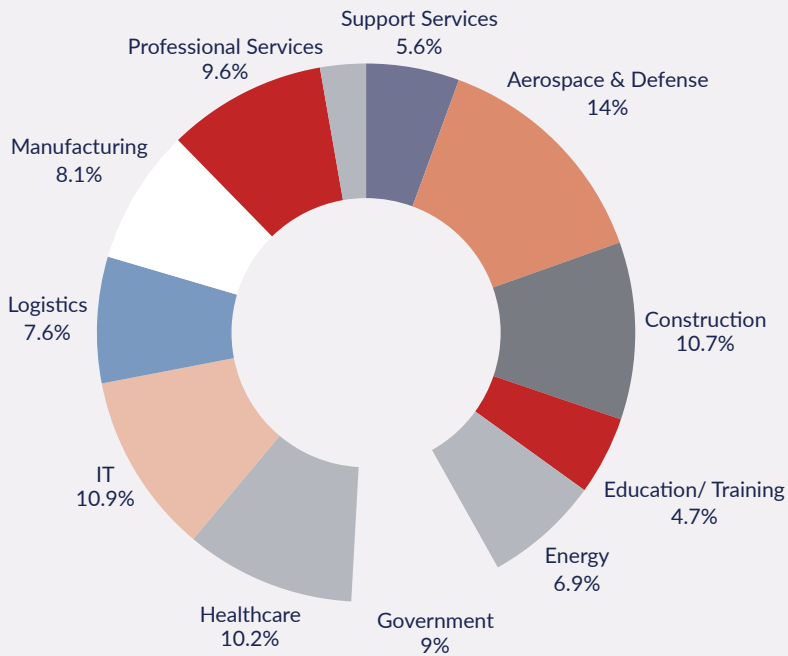
Veterans placed through our program earn salaries that are 52% higher than the median income for their demographic, leading to greater financial stability and opportunity. With personalized support and direct access to top employers, we're transforming the post military transition for those who've served.



## Candidates Hired by State



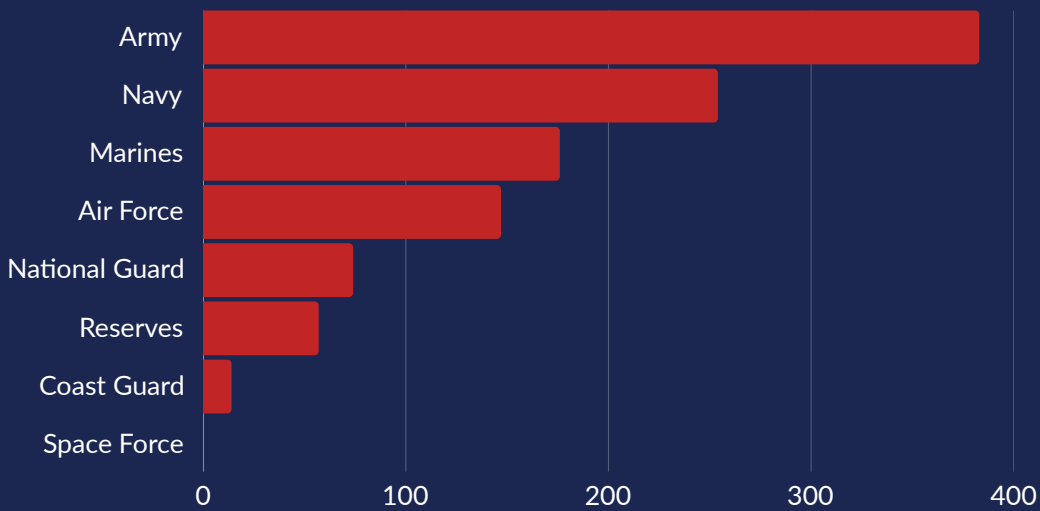
## Industries by Candidate



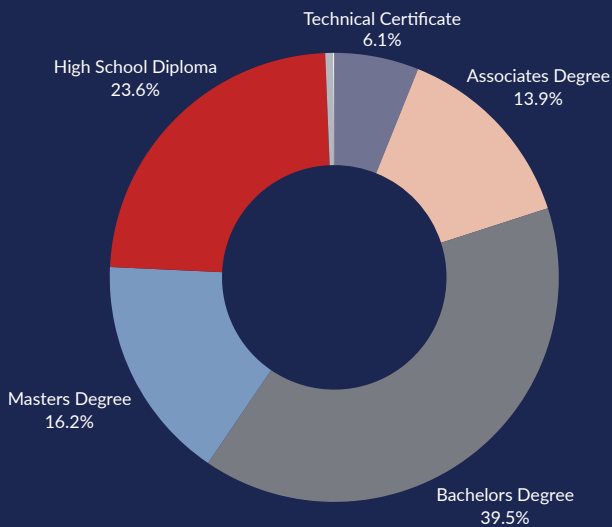
# Who We Support

Our military's enlisted make up 80% of military personnel, but are provided the least amount of employment assistance of any veteran demographic. That is why at NextOp, we remain dedicated to serving high performing, enlisted, transitioning service members and post 9/11 veterans. In 2025, we placed 1,105 veterans into meaningful careers. To learn a bit more about the clients we serve, see the demographics of our placed candidates.

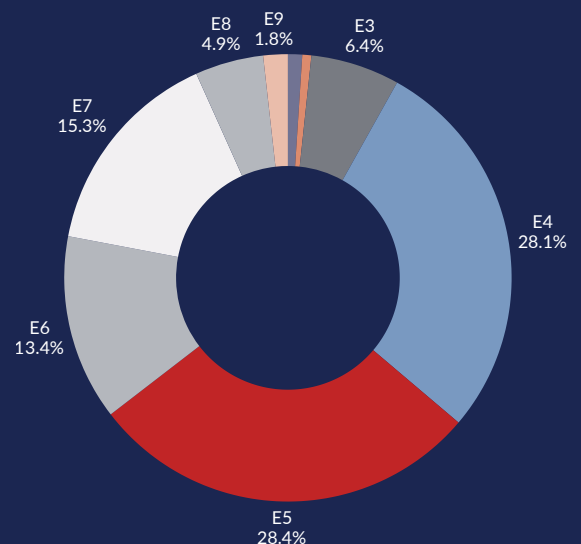
## Branch



## Education



## Rank



## What is the NextOp Difference?

The current federal veteran employment assistance program is the lowest funded veteran service program and takes a one-size-fits-all approach. A 22 year-old with a graduate equivalency degree will receive the same transition training as a nuclear-power qualified officer, medical doctor or astronaut. At NextOp, we provide an individualized, hands-on approach to veteran employment and military transition.

**Enlisted service members disproportionately suffer from transition challenges and underemployment.**

**160,000** enlisted service members transition out of the military annually

**10%** of enlisted service members have civilian careers secured before leaving the military

**60%** of enlisted service members have families to support, creating a greater urgency for steady pay

**30%** of veterans, predominately enlisted, experience underemployment

**Individualized mentorship has proven successful**

**8hrs** is the avg. 1:1 development time each placed candidate receives from NextOp

**2x** as likely to get a job if the veteran uses a coach to help with their resume

**3x** as likely to get a job if the veteran uses a coach to help practice interviewing

**NextOp is helping improve veteran employment across a variety of industries**

NextOp strengthens employers' ability to recruit and retain veteran talent by educating them on veteran skills and experience, encouraging the development of veteran resource groups, and helping identify and remove unnecessary barriers to veteran employment.

**427** different companies worked with NextOp to hire veterans in 2025

**Lisa P.**  
**U.S. Army Veteran**



Lisa is a U.S. Army Veteran & NextOp Alumni who found a new career as an Additive Manufacturing Technician at Fastech. “NextOp has been a valuable resource for me. It is clear that they are committed to assisting veterans in transitioning to the civilian workforce. I was paired with a recruiter who provided resources in order to give me the best outcome for my job search. I highly recommend them to all veterans.”

**Todd B.**  
**U.S. Navy Veteran**



Todd is a U.S. Navy Veteran & NextOp Alumni who found a new career as a Systems Support Specialist at Central Counties Services. “When I transitioned out of active duty, I expected my military experience alone to open doors. I quickly realized that navigating the civilian job market required new skills—just like adapting to a new duty station with different protocols and expectations. That’s where NextOp made all the difference. Their tested and proven approach provided structure and guidance through every step of the process. The weekly emails, bi-weekly teleconferences, and continuous support kept me on track. Rejections were inevitable, but NextOp was there to refine my approach, improve my interview skills, and keep me motivated. Their dedication ensured I stayed mission-focused, ultimately leading me to success.”

# Success Stories

## Michael E. U.S. Marine Veteran

Michael is a U.S. Marine Corps Veteran and NextOp Alumni who found a career as a Windows System Administrator at Integration Innovation Inc. "I first encountered NextOp at a career fair at Camp Lejeune, NC. After a brief conversation with their representative, I initially wrote them off as "just another veterans group" that would collect my data for a report and never follow up. I couldn't have been more wrong. The contact I made that day doggedly tracked me down, checking in regularly to provide leads and help me find meaningful employment.



Originally from Center Line, a small suburb of Detroit, I joined the Marine Corps in 2003 to escape a difficult trajectory. During my first enlistment, I married my wife (we've now been together for 18 years). Like many young Marines, I transitioned out after four years thinking the grass was greener on the other side. However, after nine months as a civilian, I realized my heart was still in the service. I rejoined and served another 16 years, finally retiring in August 2024. As retirement loomed, I realized that my target field, Cybersecurity, was highly saturated. Through a professional mentor, I discovered my biggest hurdle was "getting in the door." While my resume was solid, I knew I could truly impress employers once I secured an in-person interview. That's when my wife noticed that NextOp was hosting a fly-in to Huntsville, Alabama, to meet local employers. Since Huntsville was already on my radar, I applied and was selected.

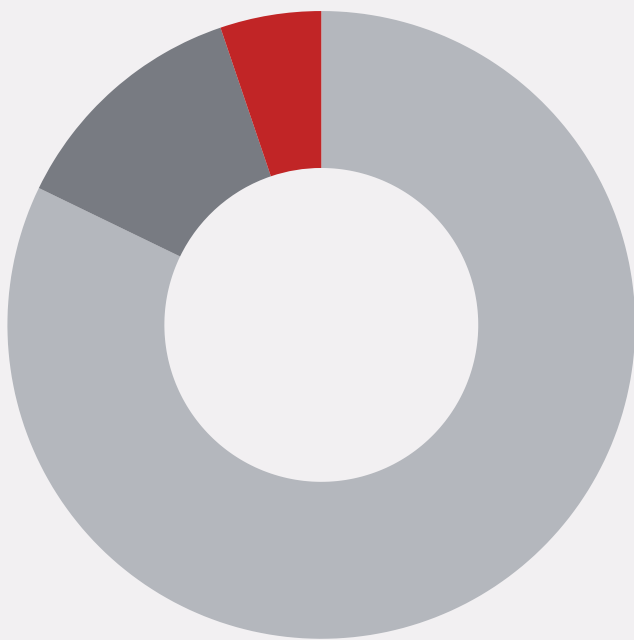
During the event, I connected with several recruiters looking for my specific skill set. I made such a strong impression on one HR team that they personally advocated for my resume with the hiring manager.

Without NextOp, I likely wouldn't have the job I hold today; the company wasn't even on my radar before the fly-in. From that first contact at Camp Lejeune to the present day, the NextOp team has been incredibly supportive. I cannot recommend them enough to transitioning service members, their personalized approach made all the difference in my transition."

## Financial Disclosure

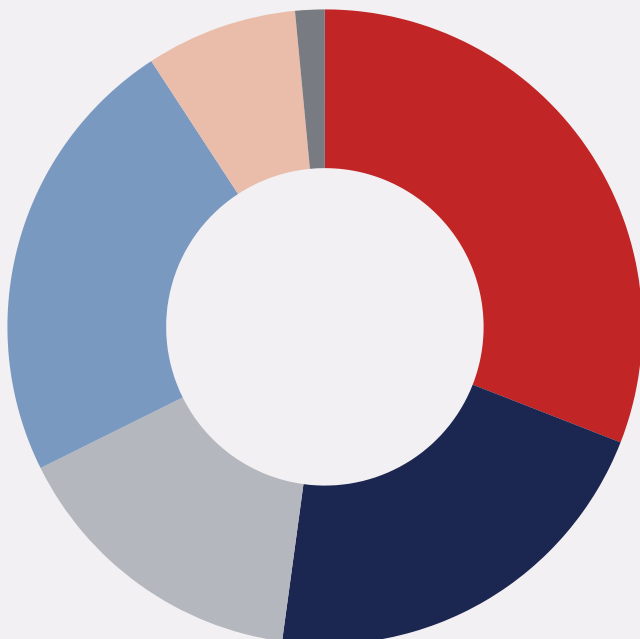
Based on average first year earnings. 2025 audited financials available upon request. NextOp received an unmodified opinion that the financial statements presented fairly, in all material respects, the financial position, changes in net assets, and cash flows of the organization. The financial audit was completed by Schafer, Tschopp, Whitcomb, Mitchell & Sheridan, LLP.

# 2025 Financials



### Expenses

- Programs (82.1%)
- Development (12.6%)
- Management & General (5.2%)



### Revenue Sources

- Government (30.9%)
- Corporations (21.2%)
- Public Charities (15.5%)
- Private Foundations (23.1%)
- Individual Donors (7.7%)
- Investment Interest (1.5%)

## 2025 Awards

At NextOp, we take pride in our commitment to supporting transitioning service members and veterans as they embark on new career paths. Our work is made possible through the dedication of our team, the support of our partners, and the resilience of the veterans we serve. This year, we are honored to have received the following awards and recognitions.

### Military Times Best for Vets Employer Award



This award recognizes companies and organizations that demonstrate a strong commitment to recruiting, hiring, and supporting veterans in the workplace. This annual ranking evaluates employers based on their veteran hiring practices, retention efforts, military-friendly policies, and overall workplace culture for service members.

### Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency



This is the highest level of recognition awarded by Candid to nonprofits that demonstrate a strong commitment to financial transparency, accountability, and impact. Organizations that earn this seal provide extensive information about their mission, programs, financials, and performance metrics, helping stakeholders make informed decisions.

### U.S. DoL Hire Vets Platinum Award



This award is the highest level of recognition in the HIRE Vets Medallion Program, honoring employers that demonstrate exceptional commitment to recruiting, hiring, and retaining veterans. It recognizes organizations that go above and beyond in creating veteran-inclusive workplaces policies, offering career development opportunities, and fostering long-term success for veteran employees.

# Supporters

## Thank You FY25 Supporters

Through the support of our generous donors, we are able to assist transitioning service members & veterans at no charge. Support like this allows NextOp to guide and coach military veterans into the next chapter of their lives. Thank you to all foundations, corporations, and individuals who supported us this year!

### \$100,000+

U.S. Department of Labor  
BlueForge Alliance  
Powering Economic Opportunity Fund (GitLab)  
Delta Regional Authority (DRA)  
Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)  
Bob Woodruff Foundation  
Doug & Sarah Foshee  
Texas Mutual

### \$50,000-\$99,999

May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust  
The Williams Stamps Farish Fund  
New Orleans Saints & Pelicans Foundation  
Boeing  
Combined Arms  
Oscar J. Tomas Charitable Trust  
Chevron Veterans Employee Network

### \$20,000-\$49,999

Comcast Texas  
Texas Veterans and Family Alliance Grant Program  
Albert & Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation  
Bank of America  
Friedkin Group  
Halliburton Charitable Foundation  
Vaughn Construction

### \$10,000- \$19,999

Shell Oil Company & Shell Oil  
Company Foundation  
Kevin & Cathy McFadden  
George & Mary Josephine Hamman  
Foundation  
Keesler Federal Credit Union  
Lewis Verash  
Powell Industries  
Roots of Hope Foundation (Brown &  
Root)  
The Harry S. & Isabel C. Cameron  
Foundation  
TransCanada USA Services Inc.

### \$5,000-\$9,999

Texas Workforce Commission  
Jennifer & Ryan Bickley  
About You in Home Care  
BFW Marcum  
Cox Charities  
GAF  
Harris Health System  
Pilot Foundation Services  
Susan Verash  
Texas Dow Employees Credit Union

The Williams Companies  
Warrior Assist Foundation  
Willis Johnson & Associates

## **\$1,000-\$4,999**

Iron Mountain Solutions  
Patricia & Eric Darnauer  
EHRA Engineering  
Carry the Load  
Louisiana Pepper Exchange  
Christine Bassitt  
Chemetec Engineered Equipment  
Kyle Verash  
Peter Holland  
Arlington Economic Development  
Bill Chiles  
Capital One  
Donovan Campbell  
Hypori  
Virtual Service Operations  
Joseph Brent  
Entergy  
Henry Adams  
Frances Willms  
Academy Securities  
Braskem  
Eckerd Connects  
Haun Mena PLLC  
Heat Exchange Group  
Laitram  
Mazda Toyota Manufacturing  
Mizuho Securities USA  
Pepin Distributing Company  
Quanta Services Inc.  
Rebecca Lowrey Group  
ST Engineering  
Strake Foundation  
Chevron  
Diamond in the Rough  
RoofTec  
Virginia Riggins

Drew & Sarah Scafide  
Dan & Angela Condley  
Alamo Title - Houston  
Barnes Cantrell Mortgage Group  
Jeff & Gerianne Prom  
Martin McHale  
Gaw Jones Jr.  
David Stapenhorst  
Kelli Fondren  
Shelby Mounts  
John Antel  
David Ornstein  
Ace of Cloud  
AdamsKeegan  
American Home Shield  
Anderson Coastal  
Benjamin Clark  
Cadence Bank  
Chariot Energy  
Choice Home Warranty  
Contour Mortgage  
Cross Country Mortgage  
Cutco  
DBA Costal Truck Driving School  
First American Home Warranty  
Fox Residential Services Group  
Freemodel  
Goosehead Insurance  
Mark Sheridan  
McKight Title  
OriginPoint, LLC  
Patten Title Company  
Providence Title  
Rapid Talent  
Saratoga Homes  
Scott Hayes  
The Boot  
Traditional Title Company  
WFG National Title Company

## Carry The Load Cross Country Walk



Throughout Memorial Day weekend, NextOp reaffirmed its commitment to the veteran community by participating as a nonprofit partner with Carry The Load. In Dallas, Houston, and New Orleans our team and supporters walked to honor legacies of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. By carrying the names of the fallen, we were reminded that our work, assisting transitioning veterans, is a living tribute to their memory.

## Louisiana Awards Reception



NextOp hosted our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Louisiana Awards Reception to recognize the vital role our partners play in empowering veterans statewide. The evening served as both a celebration of our shared mission and a tribute to those who go above and beyond in their commitment to the veteran community. We were proud to honor the Louisiana Pepper Exchange, Coastal Truck Driving School, and the New Orleans Pelicans & Saints with our 2024 Partner Awards.

## Kentucky Derby Day Fundraiser



The first annual Derby Day Fundraiser, held at The Nichols Venue, successfully brought together community leaders and supporters for a day of philanthropy and tradition. The event combined the spirit of the Kentucky Derby with a focused mission: generating the critical funds necessary to support veterans in their transition to civilian life. Through themed raffles and community engagement, the event underscored the strength of our donor network and their commitment to providing veterans with the resources they deserve.

# Military May

## Army vs. Navy Game Parties



## Mandeville Veteran's Day Parade



## Easy Honda Car Giveaway



NextOp brought together veterans, supporters, and community members across Houston, New Orleans, and Pittsburgh for an incredible series of Army vs. Navy watch parties. In Houston, two hundred fans filled the Community Fieldhouse to enjoy the historic rivalry with great food and drinks, while the New Orleans event offered a lively atmosphere focused on networking and raising funds for veteran employment initiatives. Together with the gathering in Pittsburgh, these events served as a powerful celebration of the military community, successfully blending sports and camaraderie with a shared commitment to supporting local veteran advocates and career transitions.

This signature event combined a patriotic Veteran's Day Parade with a friendly, community-driven Jambalaya Cook-off in Mandeville. Families, veterans and local businesses came together to honor those who have served while enjoying delicious food and entertainment. Proceeds from the event directly supported NextOp's veteran employment programs in Louisiana, making it both a fun and impactful celebration.

On Veterans Day, NextOp partnered with Easy Honda in Houston to host a surprise celebration, gifting a deserving veteran with a three-year lease on a brand-new vehicle. This event highlighted our commitment to strategic partnerships that remove barriers for transitioning service members. For our veterans, reliable transportation is often one of the essential "bridges" that connects them to new employment, education, and family stability.

# Remember November

# NextOp Leadership

## Board of Directors

### Jennifer Bickley

Board President  
Founder  
Bickley Law Firm

### Kevin McFadden

Board Treasurer  
Managing Director  
Mizuho Securities USA LLC

### Joseph Brent

Board Secretary  
Banker  
JP Morgan

### John Antel

Managing Director  
Greenhill & Co.  
U.S. Navy Veteran

### Hank Adams

Owner  
HA Solutions LLC  
U.S. Navy Veteran

### Kyle Verash

Commercial Advisor  
Chevron Supply & Trading  
U.S. Army Veteran

### Chris White

President/CEO  
Louisiana Pepper Exchange  
& Chemetech  
U.S. Army Veteran

### Gaw Jones Jr.

Workforce Development Manager  
Brown & Root Industrial Services  
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

### Will Hales

Managing Director  
Market Cross LLC.

### Amy Buck

U.S. Army Veteran

## Advisory Board

### Kristie Colpo

Military Recruiting Strategist  
Peraton  
U.S. Navy Veteran

### Scott Hayes

Vice President  
Fidelity Investments

### Shane Pilgrim

Independent Consultant  
Kaya Co Ventures  
U.S. Air Force Veteran

### Michael Belt

Director of Recruiting, Intern  
Programs, and BD Assist  
Crew Training International  
U.S. Navy Veteran

## Staff Members

### Shelby Mounts

Executive Director  
U.S. Navy Veteran

### Adam Forbes

Aerospace & Defense Program  
Manager  
U.S. Air Force Veteran

### Chris Brown

LA & MS Regional Manager  
U.S. Navy Veteran

### Anthony Dominguez

Programs Operation Manager  
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

### Charles Bischoff

North Texas Regional Manager  
U.S. Army Veteran

### Erica Waters

TN & KY Regional Manager  
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

### Cierra Johnson

Alabama Regional Manager

### Lovell Sims

Employment Coordinator  
U.S. Army

### Allen Whiteside

Programs Director  
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

### Patrick McManus

Assistant Aerospace & Defense  
Program Manager  
U.S. Air Force Veteran

### Paul Levya

Employment Coordinator  
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

### Marcus Barnes

Energy Program Manager  
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

### Stephen Sider

Employment Coordinator  
U.S. Navy Veteran

### Jessica Beaubrun

Employment Coordinator  
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

### Maddie Hipkind

Marketing Manager

### Terri Wallace

Development Director

### Melvin Jackson

Employment Coordinator  
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

### Kieron Coulon

Employment Coordinator  
U.S. Navy Veteran

### Frank Ketcham III

Employment Coordinator  
U.S. Army Veteran

### Robert Valenzuela

Employment Coordinator  
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

### Adam Shura

Recruiter  
U.S. Air Force Veteran

### Victor J. Krc Jr.

Employment Coordinator  
U.S. Army Veteran





## 2025 Highlights

2025 was a year of milestones & accomplishments. Our team, spread across the U.S., gathered in New Orleans for our annual strategy session to plan for the year ahead and share best practices for supporting veteran candidates. From impactful hiring events to engaging workshops, the year was marked by collaboration, innovation, and connection.



Our NextOp Employment Coordinators continued to visit military bases across the country-participating in job fairs and transition workshop classes.



At NextOp's Employment Readiness Workshops, veterans are equipped with essential skills for transitioning into the civilian job market.



NextOp hosted its 1<sup>st</sup> Veteran Technology Conference, a cornerstone event dedicated to bridging the gap between service members and the tech industry.



Our partners at BlueForge Alliance hosted NextOp at the NASCAR Cookout 400! Over two days, we shared our story and connected our mission to build submarines!



NextOp was honored to receive nominations in two categories at the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber Small Business Awards Gala, recognizing our commitment to the local veteran community.



NextOp hosted veteran fly-ins in Memphis, Huntsville, and Paducah bringing in former service members from across the nation to explore the unique professional and lifestyle opportunities in these regions.

## Thank You

As we reflect on the milestones of the past year, we are reminded that none of this progress happens in a vacuum. Our mission to empower veterans and bridge the gap between military service and the corporate world is fueled entirely by the unwavering support of our donors, employer partners, and community advocates.

Because of your commitment, we are doing more than just filling jobs; we are changing trajectories, strengthening local economies, and ensuring our nation's heroes find the purpose-driven careers they deserve. Thank you for standing with NextOp and for being an essential part of our veterans' success stories.

“The strength of our mission is found in the community that supports it.”