



## **Keeping Our Promise to Kentucky's Veterans: Creating More Good-Paying Jobs for Those Who Served**

A note from Andy —

As governor, I will run an administration prioritizing veterans, and that means getting them actual results.

Our approach to doing right by Kentucky's veterans starts by focusing on expanding job opportunities, especially in agritech and rebuilding our infrastructure—two areas where Kentucky can thrive.

We will release additional components of our policy priorities for veterans in the coming weeks, but our plan must begin with jobs. Mine is a commitment that our veterans can count on. As attorney general, I used the full power of the office to protect veterans from scams. We partnered with the Kentucky American Legion, AARP in Kentucky, Vietnam Veterans of America, and Reaching Rural Veterans, among other groups, to specifically focus on reversing the high number of veterans and military families that are targeted by frauds and scammers.

Veterans should know how deeply Jacqueline and I appreciate their service. And that our administration will focus on implementing policies that can actually make a meaningful, real-world difference in their lives.

Thanks,

Andy



## A Job-focused Approach for Veterans

There are approximately 300,000 veterans living in Kentucky.<sup>1</sup> Andy Beshear and Jacqueline Coleman understand that we have a lasting compact with the men and women who have served our country. That means doing right by them when they come home. This must start with a good-paying, family-supporting job—but too many of those job opportunities are lacking, especially in areas of eastern and western Kentucky.<sup>2</sup>

A Beshear/Coleman administration will prioritize skills training and expanding jobs for veterans that pay a living wage in **every part of Kentucky**. These are the kinds of jobs that will allow veterans to transition back to civilian life with the economic security to raise their families, while being able to retire with dignity.

Specifically focusing on jobs for veterans is not only about caring and looking out for those who served our nation, **but it will also allow our commonwealth to utilize the experience and skills Kentuckians gain in the military to grow and modernize our economy.**

**Here's how the Beshear/Coleman vision to create a big, bright future for Kentucky will boost skills training and create good-paying jobs for veterans:**

**Vets to Agritech:** Under a Beshear/Coleman administration, Kentucky will launch a “Vets to Agritech” program, which will help transition veterans into good-paying jobs in Kentucky’s agritech sector. Kentucky’s agriculture industry contributes \$45.6 billion<sup>3</sup> to the economy every year, and jobs in the industry are expected to continue with strong growth.<sup>4</sup> These jobs can support a family and will be a strategic focus for the Beshear/Coleman administration. Training our veterans can help them develop new skills to fill open jobs. While current programs exist<sup>5</sup> to transition veterans to the agriculture industry, this program will expand and modernize the effort to prioritize employment in the agritech jobs of the future.

**Helmets to Hardhats:** Helmets to Hardhats is already a prominent, national nonprofit organization that connects veterans to lucrative careers in skilled trades.<sup>6</sup> The Beshear/Coleman administration, in partnership with our trade unions, will focus on expanding and localizing the Helmets to Hardhats program to provide more training and job opportunities for veterans. There is a desperate need for skilled craftsmen and engineers in Kentucky’s construction industry and

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<sup>1</sup> [U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [“New Report Shows Job Growth Lagging in Rural Kentucky,”](#) WKU, 8/29/18.

<sup>3</sup> [“The Importance of Agriculture for Kentucky,”](#) University of Kentucky, 02/15.

<sup>4</sup> [“Kentucky Occupational Outlook to 2026,”](#) Kentucky Center for Statistics, 9/18.

<sup>5</sup> [Kentucky Proud Jobs for Vets.](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Helmets to Hardhats.](#)



building trades, and creating more chances for skilled veterans to enter this field will help them adjust to civilian life, earn a good living, and build Kentucky's infrastructure and economy.<sup>7</sup>

**Expanding Credit for Military Skills:** Going to college or technical school after returning home is one of the best ways to make sure veterans have the skills they need to secure good-paying jobs. Our veterans already return with invaluable skills gained while serving in the military, and it's up to us to make sure those skills align with educational opportunities—instead of being dismissed. While many Kentucky colleges already offer ways for veterans to transfer their military experience and skills to credit, the Beshear/Coleman administration will expand these efforts on a statewide level so any veteran can get on the fast-track to employment. We will also make sure veterans are seeing their experience get the maximum credit possible and find ways to improve the process in existing programs.

**Expanding Veterans Treatment Courts:** Far too many veterans return home with scars on both the inside and outside. The Beshear/Coleman administration will provide more opportunities for veterans to earn a good living by expanding Veterans Treatment Courts for veterans suffering from PTSD or other mental and substance abuse issues when they encounter the criminal justice system. In 2012, Jefferson County launched its Veterans Treatment Court, the first of its kind in Kentucky. The program has since expanded with success to Christian, Fayette, Hardin, and Kenton counties.<sup>8</sup> Instead of relegating veterans with mental health or substance abuse issues to the criminal justice system, where they run the risk of getting trapped in a cycle of incarceration, the program provides court-supervised mental health, substance abuse, anger management, and other types of treatment to help veterans get the care they need and re-enter our communities and workforce. Expanding this successful program will ensure that we do not turn our backs on our veterans when it matters most.<sup>9</sup>

Additionally, Kentucky should expand current efforts to provide pro bono legal services for qualified veterans.<sup>10</sup> Whether they are dealing with PTSD-related offenses or seeking other legal services, veterans deserve fairness and access to help. This can be accomplished by providing grants to Kentucky law schools.

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<sup>7</sup> ["Addressing state's construction workforce shortage requires team approach,"](#) Louisville Business Journal, 7/11/18.

<sup>8</sup> ["Veterans Treatment Court,"](#) Kentucky Court of Justice.

<sup>9</sup> ["Veterans get life back through Treatment Court,"](#) Matthew Glowicki, Louisville Courier-Journal, 6/15/16.

<sup>10</sup> ["Kentucky Volunteer Lawyer Program."](#)