

The VetTEC™ Program For Returning Veterans – *First to be Hired; Last to be Fired!*

The National Science Foundation's ATE Program was created to bring two-year colleges and industry together to educate the new workforce. A national center of excellence for aerospace called **SpaceTEC®** has taken that approach one step further by implementing **VetTEC™** – a program specifically designed to open career pathways for veterans. The key to success in workforce technical education is matching skills and competencies to employer needs.



Certified Military Aerospace Technicians at Cape Canaveral AFS

VetTEC™ links the service experience and skills of returning veterans to credentials for civilian jobs that match their Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). In November of 2012, TV's *60 minutes* reported that, *“Just in manufacturing, there are as many as 500,000 jobs that aren't being filled because employers say they can't find qualified workers.”* That is significant because **VetTEC™** assessments provide employers with performance information and skills verification.

We plan to fill STEM technician shortages by matching qualified returning veterans to existing openings through aptitude surveys and performance-based examinations resulting in stackable credentials.

The **SpaceTEC®** program is formally identified in this year's National Defense Authorization Act as a recognized credentialing organization and is already listed on the [Army Cool](#) and [Navy COOL](#) sites as well as the [Community College of the Air Force educational site](#) and the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration's [CareerOnestop site](#).

Developing methods for making the most of our nation's investments in military training by linking the competency of veterans to skills credentialing so they can be hired are important goals. Your comments, ideas, and suggestions in this blog for the best pathways for accomplishing this could help employ this tremendous talent pool.