

# SmartLab Expands Support for Veterans Through Hiring Our Heroes and DoD SkillBridge

*New partnerships empower transitioning service members with skills, support, and meaningful career pathways*

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SmartLab Learning has proudly joined the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes (HOH) Corporate Fellowship Program, expanding its commitment to workforce development and community engagement through meaningful support of transitioning service members. This strategic partnership aligns seamlessly with SmartLab's belief in purposeful, real-world learning and extends the core tenets of the SmartLab Approach beyond classrooms and into the civilian workforce.



Two young engineers bring ideas to life in their SmartLab, turning gears and imagination into a functioning design. In this space, teamwork powers innovation—and every challenge is a chance to grow.

At the heart of SmartLab's mission is the idea that learning should be immersive, collaborative, and driven by curiosity. That same philosophy underpins the Hiring Our Heroes Fellowship Program, which places active-duty service members in 12-week roles with private-sector companies during their final 180 days of military service. Participants continue to receive full military pay and benefits while building civilian work experience in fields that align with their skills and goals.

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By participating in HOH, SmartLab is applying the same principles it uses in STEM classrooms to professional

development—offering applied, hands-on learning that builds confidence, capability, and career

readiness. Much like students in a SmartLab who engage in open-ended problem solving and collaborative exploration, veteran fellows are immersed in purposeful projects that foster critical thinking, adaptability, and a sense of belonging.

"Hiring Our Heroes and the SkillBridge programs have been a total win for SmartLab. We get top-tier talent with fresh perspective, and our veterans get to use their hard-earned skills in a corporate setting," said Denise Basler, VP of People at SmartLab. "I'm all in on continuing this partnership and seeing how much stronger our teams can get."

These workplace "ah-HA! moments"—sudden realizations that spark when learners connect ideas in meaningful ways—are as valuable in the office as they are in the lab. Through the HOH program, SmartLab is extending its ecosystem of active learning and experiential growth into new territory, empowering veterans to transition with clarity and confidence.

This initiative is also a direct expression of SmartLab's commitment to building STEM identity—a mindset that says, I belong here. I can master this challenge. My ideas matter. I'm ready for what's next. For service members stepping into a new civilian role, these beliefs are transformative, helping them see themselves not just as job seekers, but as problem-solvers and innovators.

Dr. Jennifer Berry, CEO at SmartLab noted, "Partnering with Hiring Our Heroes and the DoD SkillBridge program is more than a workforce initiative — it's a values alignment. The military is often the first place young men and women begin to build a strong STEM identity through real-world problem-solving, technical mastery, and mission-driven teamwork. It's a powerful, full-circle moment of service, impact, and purpose."

SmartLab's recent designation as a Department of Defense SkillBridge Industry Partner further strengthens this commitment. While distinct from the HOH program, the SkillBridge partnership enables SmartLab to host additional transitioning service members in structured internship roles across various business functions, reinforcing the company's long-term dedication to veteran



A transitioning service member prepares for the next chapter through the Hiring Our Heroes Fellowship Program. At SmartLab, veterans bring their skills, leadership, and perspective into a workplace where purpose-driven learning continues beyond the classroom.

workforce inclusion.

"At SmartLab, I found more than a team—I found a mission I could get behind. The Hiring Our Heroes Fellowship gave me the chance to channel my military experience into building systems and strategies that support the next generation of problem solvers in developing their STEM identity." Added Ted Gerodimos, People Business Partner and HOH Fellow at SmartLab.

By welcoming service members into its workplace and culture, SmartLab is modeling the very outcomes it seeks to create in schools across the country: resilient, future-ready individuals who learn by doing and lead with purpose. It's a living example of the SmartLab Approach in action—turning theory into practice, curiosity into capability, and opportunity into impact.



With focus and curiosity, even the youngest learners at SmartLab dive into hands-on discovery—building, exploring, and laying the foundation for a lifetime of innovation.

#### SmartLab Learning

SmartLab delivers turnkey, career-centered K-12 STEM programs that equip today's students for tomorrow's challenges. Every hands-on PBL learning environment integrates grade-appropriate STEM applications across industry pathways to create real career connections. SmartLab programs include dedicated or flexible learning environments along with standards-aligned curriculum, professional development, and ongoing support. [To learn more, visit SmartLabLearning.com.](https://www.smartlablearning.com)

#### Hiring Our Heroes (HOH)

Hiring Our Heroes (HOH) is a nationwide initiative of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation launched in 2011 to connect the military community—service members, military spouses, and veterans—with meaningful employment opportunities. Through innovative programs, comprehensive hiring events, and strategic partnerships with private-sector employers, HOH empowers the military community to thrive in the civilian workforce. [To learn more, visit hiringourheroes.org](https://www.hiringourheroes.org)

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