

Job Connection Education Program: Sgt. Zavala

Story by Mary Weaver

Job Connection Education Program

Sergeant Hugo Zavala has plans for his future and he knows what to do to achieve them. Last year, after a buddy told him about a new program located at the Sandage Armory in Fort Worth, Zavala reached out to the Job Connection Education Program (JCEP) to assist him in finding employment. Immediately after registering with JCEP Zavala was deployed to Afghanistan, and his counselor recommended that he reconnect with her about ninety days prior to returning home.

Zavala did just that. His return date was toward the end of July and Zavala reached out via email to the JCEP counselor he had previously worked with in the spring, asking for job search assistance while deployed. When asked about his first thoughts concerning the Job Connection Education Program, Zavala stated, "I thought the program would be like another veteran service agency, which tried to be helpful but was limited on what they can do." What he learned through the job search process with JCEP was very different, "My perspective changed with all the help I received, and when we met face-to-face. The one-on-one offered personal assistance and gave me motivation."

He went on to explain that the job blasts received while deployed provided encouragement that jobs would be available upon his return. Zavala provided a basic resume reflecting his education, work experience, and skills. Together, Zavala and the counselor created a

resume that identified his strengths and interests, which ultimately got him employed.

Another factor that encouraged Zavala, "They [counselor] were always checking up on me and took an interest in the jobs I was applying for and what I thought about the outcome." After returning from deployment, Zavala's Counselor recommended that he participate in a mock interview to prepare for the real deal. Zavala stated, "The mock interview and resume put me over the top!" He went on to say, "I'm sure that's why I was hired so quickly."

Zavala understands the importance of patience. He commented, "It may take time, but JCEP will help you get a job. Just give them a chance." Ultimately, Zavala had four job offers from JCEP employer partners to choose from in one week's time. He chose the position that would allow him to grow in his career interest – Information Technology.

Along the way, Zavala has encouraged others to reach out to JCEP for assistance. Zavala encouraged a friend to register with JCEP; the Soldier took his advice, and like Zavala was hired within one week of landing in Texas after returning from deployment. All in all, Zavala understands the importance of planning ahead and he is enjoying his new job.

The Job Connection Education Program (JCEP) is an employment partnership initiative designed to provide relevant and timely workforce training



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and job-placement assistance to Texas National Guardsmen. The program's specialized education, training, and job-search services will enhance participants' abilities to obtain and retain meaningful employment.

JCEP's objective is to help participants identify aptitudes and abilities honed in the military, arrive at a plan for transferring them to a civilian job setting, and assist program participants in understanding and mastering key job-search resources and services for optimal job placement. For more information or to register for employment assistance, visit www.jcep.info

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