

## LPF paves way for more veterans to get into LP



VA now will reimburse some certifications

by: Amy Canfield - Wednesday, July 2, 2014

BALTIMORE—U.S. Marine Corps veteran Joseph O'Brien is one of the Loss Prevention Foundation's success stories, according to Gene Smith, LPF president.

After spending five years as a Marine, O'Brien applied for and won an LPF scholarship under its Hire A Vet program and received LPQ certification. He's now employed as executive team leader for asset protection at a Target store here.

"I was picked to open a brand new store, so that came with a lot of challenges," O'Brien, 24, told Security Director News.

"It is my dream job."

Thanks to LPF's work over the past couple of years to secure reimbursement for LPQ and LPC exams for veterans from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, scores of others like O'Brien will be assisted in finding work in LP, Smith said.

The VA reimbursement announcement was made last month.

The path to getting Veterans Affairs to sign on to the program was sometimes arduous, Smith said. But, "it was a tremendous achievement," said John Clark, director of corporate asset protection for Sports Authority, the chairman of LPF's military transition committee.

"This now provides us the ability to bring even more value to our transitioning men and women of the military as well as our veteran community," Clark said. "This will in turn afford these professionals an opportunity to bring those values, knowledge, skills and abilities they earned while serving to our retail partners, along with the added benefit of having achieved a designation as a dedicated professional of the loss prevention industry."

Veterans are "hidden diamonds," Smith said, and retailers want them on their LP teams. They have the discipline needed, they've learned to be flexible, and they understand the challenge of taking on assignments and meeting them, he said.

"They are great team players. All the skills they learn in the military are just fabulous skills. They're dedicated and committed to doing the best they can to accomplish the job," Smith said.

O'Brien said LPF recognized that both his skills and interests applied to LP.

In his five years as a U.S. Marine, O'Brien worked in security forces in Washington, D.C., and at Camp David before being deployed as an infantry leader in Afghanistan. When he returned, he finished out his service as an asset accountability NCO, keeping track of weapons and armor.

Then, he was a civilian, and he wasn't gainfully employed.

"It was very hard. There were a lot of challenges involved. There were lots of veterans getting into the job market," O'Brien said.

His interest in loss protection led him to the Loss Prevention Foundation.

LPF helped O'Brien make an easier adjustment from military life, he said. Along with completing his undergraduate degree in security management from American Military University, working with LPF's Military Transition Committee gave him a career, he said.

In addition to achieving his LPQ certification, LPF mentorship helped him revamp his LinkedIn account and work on his interview skills, among other things. LPF also set up pre-interviews for him with LP pros at major retailers.

Now, through the VA reimbursement program, others will find LPF certification courses more accessible to them and no longer have to be concerned about how they will pay for them, Smith said.

The reimbursement program also applies to veterans who are already working in LP who want to advance their careers with further certification. "Unfortunately, a lot of retailers don't pay for that," he said.

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