



ACI-NA Launches Edge4Vets at Airports Program

by Kevin M. Burke
ACI-NA President and CEO

This Memorial Day, ACI-NA celebrates the service members who have dedicated their lives to honoring and protecting the United States of America. In my mind, there is no better way to say thank you than to provide veterans with the skills and access necessary to make the transition to the civilian work force.

That's why I am thrilled to announce the launch of our Edge4Vets at Airports program which aims to translate returning veterans' military aviation skills to the civilian airport industry. This program, run through Fordham University's Human Resiliency Institute and funded by the Walmart Foundation through the Syracuse University Institute for Veterans and Military Families, will begin phase I in New York at JFK and LaGuardia airports. The hope is that this pilot effort will expand across our ACI-NA network to member airports in the United States.



On May 21 Edge4Vets and ACI-NA officially announced this partnership at JFKIAT, and also hosted an informal 'teach-in' with young veterans looking to get into the civilian aviation industry and older aviation veterans who have been working the civilian side for many years (*pictured at left*). The event boasted 50 participants, including 25 veterans from a half-dozen schools and 25 airport mentors from Delta, American Airlines, JetBlue and Hudson Group.

For me, the 'teach-in' solidified the genuine interest returning service members have about working in our industry and affirms my commitment, as a CEO of a leading association in one of the United States' top industries, to make sure we reach out to veterans about the opportunities in U.S. aviation.

Edge4Vets at Airports will be working with ACI-NA's Human Resources Committee to train returning service members in four separate workshops, all of which will take place at airports to maximize veterans' exposure to the facilities and employees. While we are just in the initial stages, the goal is to expand to member airports around the country, using our HR network and capitalizing on the Edge4Vets program infrastructure.

We're fortunate that airports represent a wide variety of skills and career opportunities that match well to the types of training and skills service members already possess, and ACI-NA is proud to take this next step with this Edge4Vets at Airports program. As the nation's military commitments return to peacetime readiness and more veterans are looking to return to civilian life, we are preparing to welcome our returning heroes with exciting career opportunities.

Edge4Vets at Airports is led by its founder, Tom Murphy, director of the Human Resiliency Institute at Fordham University. The Walmart Foundation, through Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families, provided the grant to develop the plan for Edge4Vets at Airports. Edge4Vets will conduct a campaign to raise funds to implement the plan as a pilot in New York and then expand the program nationally to airports across the U.S. Edge4Vets will be working with Goodwill Industries "Operation: Good Jobs" program on this project.