2026/27 VETSEXCEL MENTOR APPLICATION FORM

Supporting Fellow Veterans in Sports and Fitness Industry Career Transitions

Application Deadline: November 12, 2026

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

VetsEXCEL – an SFIA Career Transition Program – represents our commitment to supporting America's military heroes as they navigate the challenging transition from military to civilian careers in sports and fitness. This cohort experience, which spans four months or more, from fall through winter, connects up to 10 carefully selected veteran Fellows with industry mentors, networking opportunities, and targeted career development.

The Challenge: Military veterans possess exceptional leadership, discipline, and teamwork skills, but often benefit from guidance in translating these strengths into success in the civilian sports industry.

The Solution: Strategic mentorship from veterans who have successfully made this transition, combined with industry access and professional development support.

YOUR ROLE AS A VETSEXCEL MENTOR

As a veteran professional working in the sports and fitness industry, you bring irreplaceable value to transitioning veterans. Your experience navigating a military-to-civilian career change provides authentic guidance that only someone who has walked this path can offer.

Key mentor responsibilities: • **One-on-one guidance** - Monthly meetings focused on career development and industry insights • **Skills translation** - Help Fellows connect military experience to civilian opportunities • **Network introductions** - Open doors and make strategic professional connections • **Industry reality check** - Provide honest perspective on career paths and growth opportunities • **Transition support** - Share lessons learned from your own military-to-civilian journey

Program timeline: Four months (November 2026-February 2027)
Cohort size: Up to 10 Fellows
Mentor matching: Based on experience, industry focus, and personal preferences

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PERSONAL INFORMATION

Full Name: _____ **Date:** _____

SFIA Member Organization: _____

Title/Position: _____

Work Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

LinkedIn Profile URL: _____

Preferred Contact Method: _____

MILITARY SERVICE BACKGROUND

Branch of Service: _____

Rank at Separation: _____

Years of Active Service: _____ **Separation Date:** _____

Primary Military Role: _____

Deployment Experience: _____

Key Military Leadership Roles: _____

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Current Role and Responsibilities:

Years in Sports and Fitness Industry:

_____

Career Path Since Military Separation:

Areas of Industry Expertise:

MENTORSHIP EXPERIENCE & APPROACH

1. Why do you want to mentor transitioning veterans in the sports industry?

2. Describe your own military-to-civilian transition experience. What challenges did you face and how did you overcome them?

3. Have you mentored other veterans before (formally or informally)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, describe the experience:

4. What unique perspective does your military background bring to your current industry role?

MENTORSHIP PREFERENCES

Do you prefer to be matched based on: *(Check all that apply)* ☐ Military Branch/Service Background ☐ Career Functional Area ☐ Industry Sector Focus ☐ Gender ☐ Race/Ethnicity ☐ No preference - open to any match

Elaborate on matching preferences:

_____

_____

_____

AREAS OF GUIDANCE

Select areas where you can provide the strongest mentorship: *(Check all that apply)*

☐ Military Skills Translation ☐ Career Planning & Development
☐ Leadership Skills Development ☐ Industry-Specific Knowledge ☐ Networking Strategies
☐ Interview Preparation ☐ Professional Communication ☐ Work-Life Balance ☐ Overcoming Transition Challenges ☐ Building Industry Credibility ☐ Other:

_____

_____

TIME COMMITMENT & AVAILABILITY

☐ **I commit 1-2 hours per month supporting my mentee**

This includes: • Monthly one-on-one meetings (virtual or in-person) • Attendance at VetsEXCEL networking events when possible • Responsive communication via email/phone • Participation in program kick-off and wrap-up sessions

Preferred meeting format: ☐ Video calls (primary program format) ☐ Phone calls ☐ In-person when opportunities arise ☐ Flexible based on mentee needs

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSIGHTS

Share one book, podcast, or resource that has been valuable in your career transition or current role:

What advice would you give to a veteran entering the sports industry today?

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Is there anything else about your background, experience, or mentorship approach that would help us make the best mentee match?

AUTHORIZATION

I confirm that all information is accurate and I am committed to supporting VetsEXCEL Fellows through meaningful mentorship. I understand this is a four-month commitment requiring consistent engagement and professional guidance.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who can apply to be a VetsEXCEL mentor?
Military veterans currently employed by approved SFIA member organizations who want to support fellow veterans transitioning into sports and fitness careers.

What time commitment is required?
1-2 hours per month over four months or more, including monthly one-on-one meetings with your mentee, occasional program events, and responsive communication.

How are mentor-mentee matches made?
The VetsEXCEL Leadership Committee will carefully match mentors and Fellows based on military background, industry experience, career interests, and personal preferences.

What if I don't have formal mentoring experience?
No formal mentoring experience required. Your military background and successful career transition provide the foundation. Program orientation will include best practices in mentoring.

Can I mentor more than one Fellow?
The program focuses on quality over quantity - one mentor per Fellow ensures meaningful relationships and manageable time commitments.

What support will I receive as a mentor?
SFIA will provide ongoing guidance and mentoring resources and will facilitate connections with other mentors to offer peer support and share ideas.

Do I need to be located near my mentee?
No. VetsEXCEL is primarily a virtual program with the potential for in-person opportunities. Geographic location is not a factor in mentor-mentee matching, allowing for the best possible pairing based on experience and expertise.

What if my mentee and I aren't a good fit?
The VetsEXCEL Leadership Committee will work to ensure strong matches upfront but will facilitate adjustments if needed to ensure the success of both the mentor and the Fellow.

How does this differ from other mentoring programs?
VetsEXCEL focuses specifically on veteran-to-veteran mentorship, leveraging shared military experience and understanding of the unique challenges in military-to-civilian career transitions.

Submit completed form to: vetsexcel@sfia.org
Deadline: November 12, 2026

Questions? vetsexcel@sfia.org