



YEAR-IN-REVIEW 2021

2021 was a big year for SOLID! With a new year upon us, we thought it would be a great opportunity to look back on the past year and share some of the projects we've worked on, new horizons we're exploring, and how the SOLID team has grown and evolved in 2021.

Here's a snapshot of some of the exciting things our team has taken on this year to continue to enhance our nation's military and civilian workforce by strengthening career pathways, guiding skill attainment, and improving communication of worker skills and abilities, and a little sneak peek at what is on the horizon for 2022!

SOLID BY THE NUMBERS

20

**projects/
contracts**

Provided support for 20 projects/contracts



\$2,500

Toys for Tots

Donated more than \$2,500 worth of toys to local children during our annual Toys for Tots event



6

advisory boards

Provided subject matter expertise to six advisory boards and committees, including:

- Credential As You Go (CAYG)
- Non-Credential Research Network (NCRN)
- George W. Bush Institute (GWBI)
- Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) Government Affairs Committee and the related Military and Veterans Task Force
- American National Standards Institute Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Program (IRAP) Expert Committee
- T3 Innovation Network, US Chamber of Commerce Foundation



7 national conferences and events presentations

Presented at seven national conferences and events, including:

- I.C.E. webinar launching Military and Veterans Toolkit
- Council of College and Military Educators (CCME) Annual Symposium
- American Legion MCAI Report Event Launch
- Women Offshore Maritime Career Day
- Bush Institute Veterans Leadership Program
- NGA Virtual Convening: State Strategies for Skills and Lifelong Learning Systems
- 50strong presents Exploring MilGears



7 new SOLIDzens

★★★★★



Hired seven new team members, including five Veterans and one military spouse, increasing our **military-connected members** to **38% of SOLID staff**

2 company awards

Recognizing our support for Service members and Veterans:



2021 CCME Corporate Award

"For steadfast dedication and commitment toward the cause of military and Veteran education and professional development."



HIRE Vets 2021 Platinum Medallion Award

"In recognition of verified efforts to recruit, employ, and retain Veterans."

SOLID PROJECTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SOLID had the great privilege of continuing to support many cutting-edge projects and to participate in new endeavors to further the career success of Service member and veterans.

Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL)

COOL enhances career readiness and supports professional development for Service members and Veterans by helping them find information on credentials related to their jobs including certifications, licenses, and apprenticeships. SOLID has been supporting the COOL programs for all Services since their inception, beginning in 2002 with Army and expanding to all Services in the ensuing years.

Highlights from SOLID's support in 2021 include:

- COOL usage continues to increase year after year, with more than 1.4 million users engaging with the sites in 2021.
- Developed a military occupation to educational degree program crosswalk to help Service members identify degree programs that are most related to their current military occupation.
- Created an online application to support collaboration with stakeholders to review, assess, and approve credential related recommendations for military occupations.
- Added 146 new credentials to the COOL sites for a total of 2,345 total unique credentials, including national exams used for state licensing purposes in at least 25 states.
- Enhanced apprenticeship information with the addition of the Department of Labor's Registered Apprenticeship Programs, allowing Service members to search for more programs related to their military occupation.



MilGears (Powered by COOL)

MilGears helps Service members and Veterans connect their learning and experience to career and education opportunities in the military and beyond.

In 2021, SOLID:

- Released MilGears version 2.0, which included a site-wide design refresh and a host of new features including a downloadable resume, a job search and SkillBridge opportunities added to results cards, and stackable credential information.
- Realized a **277.5% increase in users** from 2020.
- Worked with Microsoft on Verified Credential technology, presenting a demo at the Council of College and Military Educators (CCME) symposium.
- Expanded Navy MilGears to all Services and released to Services for beta testing.
- Refactored code for the MilGears expansion with Blazor, a new emerging technology from Microsoft that will enhance site performance in alignment with DOD's efforts towards technology modernization.

Affinity

Integrated the Affinity Interest Profiler into MilGears to provide additional functionality for users. The Interest Profiler presents a series of questions designed to gauge a user's interest in different types and styles of work, then provides a report with detailed information about the typical requirements, job details, apprenticeship opportunities, and related credentials that align with their identified interests.

Education Design Lab / XCredit

SOLID began a partnership with Education Design Lab (EDL) to support their XCredit Design Challenge, an initiative aimed at improving how job-seekers signal to employers the soft skills attained informally on the job or in life.

During the 2021 pilot year we:

- Developed a methodology to align Navy tasks with EDL's 21st Century Skills Framework to better articulate the essential skills Service members bring to the workplace.
- Improved MilGears Learning and Employment Record (LER) to include badgeable skills – skills that are verified using open badging efforts.
- Stood-up a MilGears Sandbox Environment featuring functionality for prior learning assessments of 21st Century Skills.

Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) and IBM

Began a partnership with CNM and IBM to produce a report, "A National Interoperable Learning and Employment Records (LER) Infrastructure," which will outline the background, requirements, and technology needed to support a national LER system. LER systems verify and accumulate an individual's educational and occupational experience and stores it in a machine-readable format, allowing these records to be shared between organizations, institutions, and individuals.

Navy College Program (NCP)

Continued to support Sailors using the Navy College Program to pursue higher education through website enhancements and the addition of interactive tools such as a Knowledge Base, live chat, and an interactive chatbot. SOLID also supports online learning for NCP, including development and enhancement of the **Virtual Learning 101** e-learning course and assessment tool. SOLID supported the Navy's transition to exclusively virtual support for Sailors using NCP, and the program has maintained and improved satisfaction levels.

Lumina Foundation

SOLID has been supporting Lumina Foundation since 2019 with their efforts to increase the recognition of military-based learning. As the technical assistance provider for the Military Credentialing Advancement Initiative (MCAI), SOLID supports the creation of credential pathways linked with quality career opportunities that allow credential providers to recognize, value, and award credit for military training and experience. In 2021, we began expansions to the Learner Credit Analysis Tool (LCAT) that streamlines the equitable application of credit for military-based learning, leveraged the military perspective within the T3 Innovation Network, and more.

American Legion

Prepared the "Future of Credentialing for Service Members and Veterans" report based on the findings of the American Legion and Lumina Foundation's Military Credentialing Advancement Initiative, which convened public and private sector stakeholders across industry, education, labor, and the military to provide recommendations to support the recognition of military-based training, education, and experience towards high-quality credential pathways.

Dallas College

Partnered with Dallas College to stand up "MapMyFuture," a civilian version of MilGears, to better account for all learning, both formal and informal, and better provide occupational and professional development opportunity results (such as apprenticeships) for both military-connected and non-military connected students.



SkillBridge

SOLID continued to support DOD in the implementation of the DOD SkillBridge Program, which assists eligible Service members in accessing civilian job training, including pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and internships, to improve their employment opportunities in the private sector after separation.

In 2021, we:

- Doubled the number of programs/providers; from approx. 400 to 1000+
- Quadrupled the number of opportunities; from approx. 600-2900+
- Enhanced the SkillBridge website and developed plans for future enhancements

United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP)

Developed requirements and implemented programming logic to improve functionality of the USMAP Trades page for all Services.

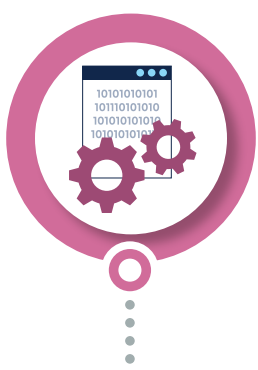
SOLID GOALS FOR 2022

We have BIG plans for 2022—from continued evolution and expansion of the SOLID team to new clients, projects, and innovations—and we've already hit the ground running! Here's a sneak peek at a little of what you can expect to see from us this year.



Refresh the COOL Websites

Refresh of the COOL websites, updating the design to take advantage of the latest ensuring in information architecture while ensuring information is organized and formatted to allow users to easily find what is important to them.



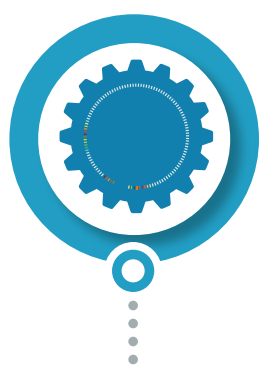
Continue improvements to the Learning and Employment Record (LER)

Through several pilots, the MilGears-generated LER will be formatted in an interoperable schema, specifically the IMS Global CLR data standard and will allow us to plan for exchanging a user's LER with an external system.



Launch the Learner Credit Analysis Tool

With the conclusion of the MCAI Pilot Pathways Project, SOLID will launch the Learner Credit Analysis Tool and begin to explore expansion to additional higher education institutions to continue to support increased recognition of military-to-store learning toward "credit".



Expand the MilGears Platform to serve all branches of the military

Expansion will include personalized outputs that connect Service members and Veterans to unique and credentialing pathways based on their career education, training and employment history.



Obtain Authority to Operate (ATO) for MilGears

Obtain Authority to Operate (ATO) acknowledging operational security allowing us to store profiles with personally identifiable information (PII) within the MilGears platform. This is a necessary step towards our goal of a verifiable Military Learning and Education Record (LER).