



HIRE HEROES USA



EXTERNAL
BRAND GUIDELINES
2026



TABLE OF CONTENTS



ABOUT HIRE HEROES USA	4
MISSION & VALUES	5
WHO WE ARE	6
OUR STORY	7
BRAND MESSAGING	8
ELEVATOR PITCH	9
BOILER PLATE	9
VOICE AND TONE	10
GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS	11
LANGUAGE GUARDRAILS	15
BRAND STYLE GUIDE	16
LOGO LOCKUP	17
LOGO USAGE	18
SPACING	19
SHIELD USAGE	20
COLOR PALETTE	21
COLOR SCALES FOR DIGITAL USE	22
ACCESSIBILITY COLOR PAIRINGS	23
TYPOGRAPHY	24
WORKING WITH THE HIRE HEROES USA BRAND	25

A dark, atmospheric landscape photograph of a desert valley. In the foreground, a light-colored path or road leads from the bottom center towards the middle ground, flanked by dark, scrubby vegetation. The middle ground shows a wide, flat valley floor. In the background, several mountain ranges are visible under a dark, cloudy sky. The overall tone is moody and dramatic, with a color palette dominated by dark blues, greys, and muted earth tones.

ABOUT HIRE HEROES USA



MISSION & VALUES

OUR MISSION

Hire Heroes USA empowers transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses to succeed in the civilian workforce.

OUR VALUES

COMMITMENT - Being dedicated to a cause, mission, or activity. Giving of our time and energy to our mission without expectation of return from the people we serve.

EXCELLENCE - To be consistent in good character, attitude, quality, and standards through extraordinary stewardship and continued improvement.

EFFECTIVENESS - The ability to appropriately prioritize initiatives and dedicate resources to achieve goals, meet customer needs, and deliver value to stakeholders.

INTEGRITY - Conducting business in a way that is ethical, responsible, and transparent. Acting with honesty, consistency, and accountability

INCLUSION - Building and promoting an inclusive workforce that is representative of the veterans and military spouses we serve.

At Hire Heroes USA, our values shape the way we serve clients, support one another, and advance our mission. They reflect our commitment to showing up with purpose, doing meaningful work, and creating lasting impact for the military community.



WHO WE ARE

Hire Heroes USA is a national nonprofit that supports transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses as they navigate their career journeys. We provide one-on-one personalized support, expert guidance, and practical employment resources to help our clients build meaningful careers in the civilian workforce.

We recognize the unique dynamics that shape their experience when transitioning into the civilian workforce. Because careers don't move in straight lines, our support is designed to meet clients wherever they are and grow with them over time.

WHO WE SERVE

Today, Hire Heroes USA supports a broad and military-connected community, including veterans at every stage of their careers and military spouses navigating careers shaped by service. We partner with our clients over time—providing lifelong support as they navigate transitions, pivots, and long-term career growth. Because meaningful careers aren't built in a moment—they're built over time.

WHAT WE DO

Through personalized, one-on-one support, Hire Heroes USA equips clients with the tools, confidence, and guidance needed to move forward—whether they are preparing for transition, navigating a career pivot, or seeking new opportunities years after service.

Our services are provided at no cost and never expire, ensuring continued access to support through every stage, shift, and milestone.

We proudly support military spouses, recognizing the complexity of building careers alongside military life and the resilience required to navigate frequent transitions.



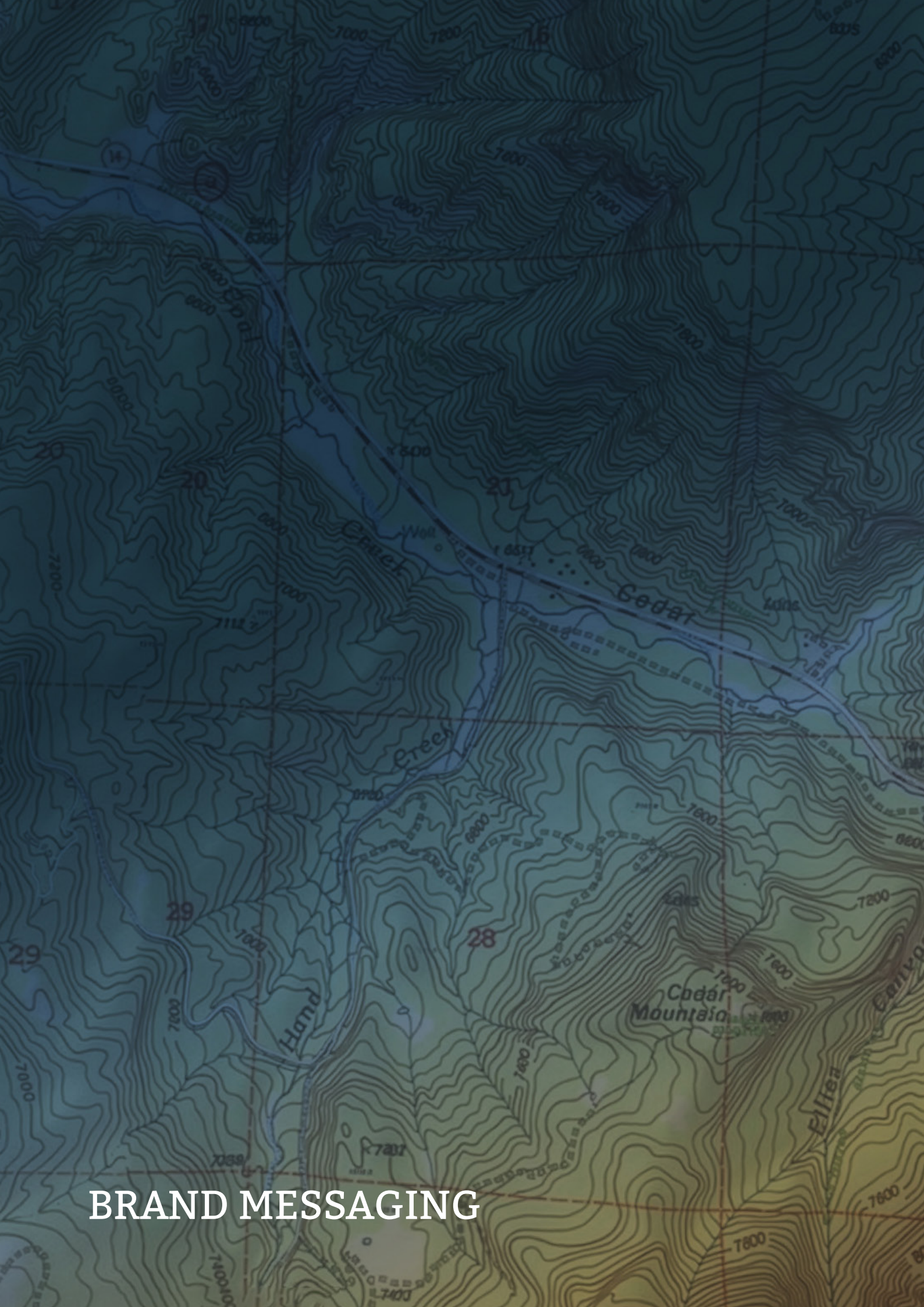
OUR STORY

Hire Heroes USA was founded on a simple belief: those who have served—and the families who support them—deserve meaningful opportunities to build successful careers beyond military service.

In 2005, at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, John Bardis met a medically separated Army Sergeant who believed his injury had ended his future. John saw something different: leadership, discipline, and untapped potential. That encounter revealed a critical gap—highly capable military professionals entering a civilian workforce that often struggled to recognize their value.

Over time, our approach has evolved to reflect what we’ve learned from the people we serve. Careers don’t move in straight lines—especially within the military community. Transitions happen more than once, paths shift, and priorities change. That’s why every client's journey begins with a conversation. From there, we work alongside each individual to identify goals, explore opportunities, and shape a personalized path forward—grounded in their experience, aspirations, and evolving direction.

Today, Hire Heroes USA supports a broad and military-connected community, including veterans at every stage of their careers and military spouses navigating careers shaped by service. We partner with our clients over time—providing lifelong support as they navigate transitions, pivots, and long-term career growth. Because meaningful careers aren’t built in a moment—they’re built over time.



BRAND MESSAGING



ELEVATOR PITCH

Hire Heroes USA is a national nonprofit that supports transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses at every stage of their career journey. Every client begins with a conversation, receiving one-on-one personalized coaching, expert guidance, and practical employment resources. We provide lifelong support as they navigate transitions, pivots, and long-term career growth.

BOILER PLATE

Hire Heroes USA is a national nonprofit that supports transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses as they navigate their career journeys. Through one-on-one personalized support, expert guidance, and practical employment resources, we help our clients build meaningful careers in the civilian workforce.

For more than two decades, Hire Heroes USA has delivered free, lifelong career services to the military community, supporting over 120,000 veterans and military spouses in securing employment and advancing their careers. Our approach centers around the lived experiences of our clients—recognizing that careers don't move in straight lines and that meaningful support must evolve over time.

Funded through public donations and federal and private grants, Hire Heroes USA remains committed to delivering high-impact guidance that strengthens careers, supports families, and creates long-term economic stability.

Hire Heroes USA has earned a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator and the GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency. For more information, visit hireheroesusa.org.



VOICE AND TONE

Our voice and tone is confident, credible, and grounded in experience. We speak with clarity and purpose—centering the lived experiences of veterans and military spouses while emphasizing outcomes, progress, and long-term impact.

We avoid exaggeration, trends, overly inspirational language, and framing that portrays our clients as helpless, dependent, or defined by hardship. Instead, we favor authentic, human-centered storytelling that honors their strength, agency, lived experience, and long-term potential.

GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS

This glossary is designed to support clear, consistent communication across internal and external audiences. When used externally, terms should be defined or translated into plain language where appropriate.

TRANSITION AND SEPARATION TERMS

- **C&P Exam:** Compensation and Pension Exam, a VA medical exam used to evaluate disability claims
- **DD-214:** Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, the official document issued when a service member separates from active duty
- **DOS:** Date of Separation, the official date a service member leaves military service
- **EAS:** End of Active Service, the date active duty service ends
- **ETS:** Expiration Term of Service, the date a service member's contract ends
- **GI Bill:** Education benefit available to eligible service members, veterans, and in some cases dependents
- **MGIB:** Montgomery GI Bill, an education benefit program for eligible service members and veterans
- **Post-9/11 GI Bill:** A specific GI Bill education benefit program for eligible service members and veterans who served after September 10, 2001
- **PTDY:** Permissive Temporary Duty, an authorized absence that does not count against leave in certain approved situations, often related to transition or relocation
- **Service-connected:** A VA term used to describe an injury, illness, or condition determined to be related to military service
- **SkillBridge:** A DoD program that allows eligible service members to gain civilian work experience during their final months of service
- **TAP:** Transition Assistance Program, a program that helps service members prepare for civilian life and employment as they leave the military
- **Terminal Leave:** Accrued leave used at the end of military service before official separation date
- **VA:** Department of Veterans Affairs



GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS CONTINUED

JOB CODES, TRAINING, AND CAREER TERMS

- **A-School:** Navy technical training school for a service member's job specialty
- **AFSC:** Air Force Specialty Code, or the Air Force's job classification system
- **AIT:** Advanced Individual Training, the Army's job-specific training completed after Basic Combat Training
- **BCT:** Basic Combat Training, the Army's initial entry training program
- **Billet:** An authorized job position or role within a unit or command
- **C-School:** Advanced Navy technical training completed after A-School for specialized skills
- **KSAs:** Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities
- **MOC:** Military Occupational Code, a general term for military job classification
- **MOS:** Military Occupational Specialty, the Army and Marine Corps job classification system
- **NEC:** Navy Enlisted Classification, a Navy code used to identify specific skills or specialties beyond a basic job field
- **OSUT:** One Station Unit Training, an Army training model that combines Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training into one course
- **PME:** Professional Military Education, formal leadership and career development training completed throughout military service
- **Prior Service:** A term used for someone who previously served in the military and may have later reentered service or remained affiliated in another capacity
- **Rate / Rating:** Navy terms used to describe an enlisted service member's rank and occupational specialty
- **Tech School:** Air Force job-specific technical training completed after initial military training
- **TIG:** Time in Grade, the amount of time a service member has spent at their current rank
- **TIS:** Time in Service, the total amount of time a person has served in the military

RANK AND LEADERSHIP TERMS

- **CO:** Commanding Officer, the senior officer in charge of a unit or command

- **CoC / COC:** Chain of Command, the leadership structure a service member reports through
- **Command:** A military unit or organization led by a designated commander
- **E (followed by a number):** Enlisted rank pay grade, such as E-4 or E-7
- **NCO:** Noncommissioned Officer, an enlisted service member in a leadership role
- **O (followed by a number):** Officer rank pay grade, such as O-1 or O-5
- **SNCO:** Senior Noncommissioned Officer, a more senior enlisted leader designation used in some branches
- **Warrant Officer / WO:** A military officer category that falls between enlisted and commissioned officer ranks and typically serves in a highly specialized technical role
- **XO:** Executive Officer, the second-in-command of a unit or command

DUTY STATION, TRAVEL, AND LOCATION TERMS

- **CONUS:** Continental United States, generally referring to duty locations within the 48 contiguous states
- **Deployment:** A temporary assignment, often overseas or away from home station, in support of military operations
- **GOV:** Government Vehicle
- **OCONUS:** Outside the Continental United States, generally referring to duty locations outside the 48 contiguous states
- **Off-post:** Living, working, or accessing services outside a military installation
- **On-post:** Living, working, or accessing services on a military installation
- **PCS:** Permanent Change of Station, an official relocation to a new duty station
- **POV:** Privately Owned Vehicle
- **TDY:** Temporary Duty, official military travel or a short-term assignment away from a permanent duty station
- **Tour:** A period of duty at a specific location or in a specific assignment



GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS CONTINUED

EVERYDAY MILITARY WORKPLACE TERMS

- **CONOP / CONOPS:** Concept of Operations, a document or plan outlining how an operation or effort will be carried out
- **DoD:** Department of Defense
- **OPSEC:** Operational Security, the practice of protecting sensitive information that could put people, missions, or operations at risk
- **PERSEC:** Personnel Security, the protection of personal and workforce-related information tied to security and mission readiness
- **POC:** Point of Contact
- **SOP:** Standard Operating Procedure, a documented process for how a routine task or activity should be done

MILITARY FAMILY AND SUPPORT TERMS

- **BAH:** Basic Allowance for Housing, a monthly housing allowance provided to eligible service members
- **BAS:** Basic Allowance for Subsistence, a monthly food allowance provided to eligible service members
- **CDC:** Child Development Center, military-operated child care on or near an installation
- **Commissary:** A military grocery store located on an installation
- **EFMP:** Exceptional Family Member Program, a required support program for military families with qualifying medical or educational needs
- **FRG:** Family Readiness Group, a command-supported network that provides communication and support to military families
- **MFLC:** Military and Family Life Counseling, a confidential support program that helps service members and families manage everyday stressors
- **MWR:** Morale, Welfare, and Recreation, programs and services that support quality of life for service members and families
- **PX / BX / NEX / MCX:** Military retail stores on installations, with names varying by branch



LANGUAGE GUARDRAILS

1. Spell out “Hire Heroes USA” in external communications instead of using “Hire Heroes” or “HHUSA.”
2. Use the terms “Career Advisors (previously known as “Transition Specialists”) and “Client Services Managers” (previously known as “Area Managers”).
3. Avoid the words “Thrive” or “Thriving,” as these have been trademarked by another VSO.
4. Stay away from DEI-centric or generalized “diversity” language.
5. Always use the phrase “transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses.”
6. Do not use language that portrays clients as victims or in need of saving.
7. Avoid political or overly patriotic clichés that do not reflect the lived experience of our clients.
8. Stay away from trend-driven or overly casual language that may reduce credibility or longevity.



BRAND STYLE GUIDE

LOGO LOCKUP

PRIMARY (CLASSIC)



HIRE HEROES USA

HORIZONTAL VERSION



SHIELD-ONLY VERSION

See page 20 for
shield-only usage.





LOGO USAGE

PRIMARY/PRIORITY

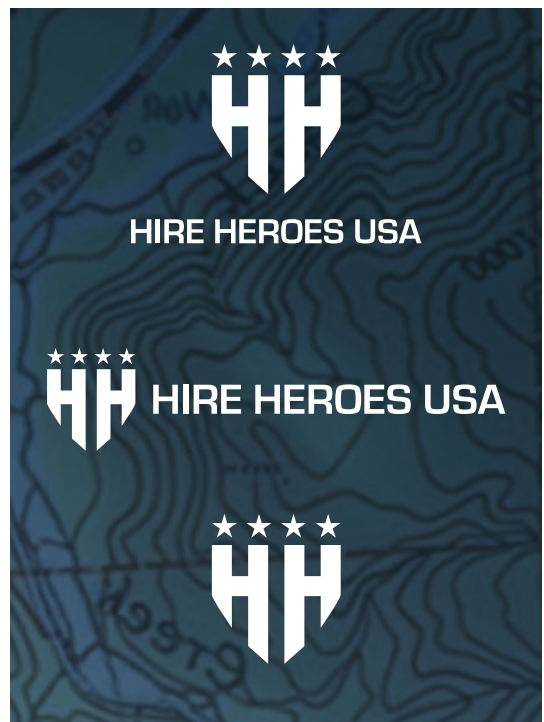


OTHER ALLOWED APPEARANCES

Black and white



White over dark background



SPECIAL LOGO APPLICATIONS

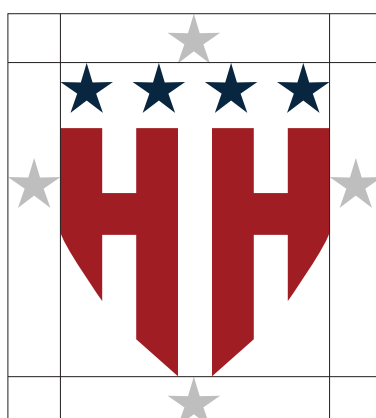
Certain signature events, campaigns, partnerships, or organizational initiatives may warrant a unique logo treatment or approved variation. To protect the integrity of the Hire Heroes USA brand, any request for a new logo, alternate logo usage, or custom lockup must be reviewed and approved by the Marketing & Communications team before development or use.

SPACING

The logo requires specific spacing in relation to the size of it's display. Below are some rules to ensure your use has the proper sizing and spacing.

The distance between the Shield and the Wordmark is the star. Double that for the padding around the logo. One needs two stars distance between the logo and any other visual elements, besides a background.

This logo should never be used smaller than 150 pixels tall or 1in. tall.

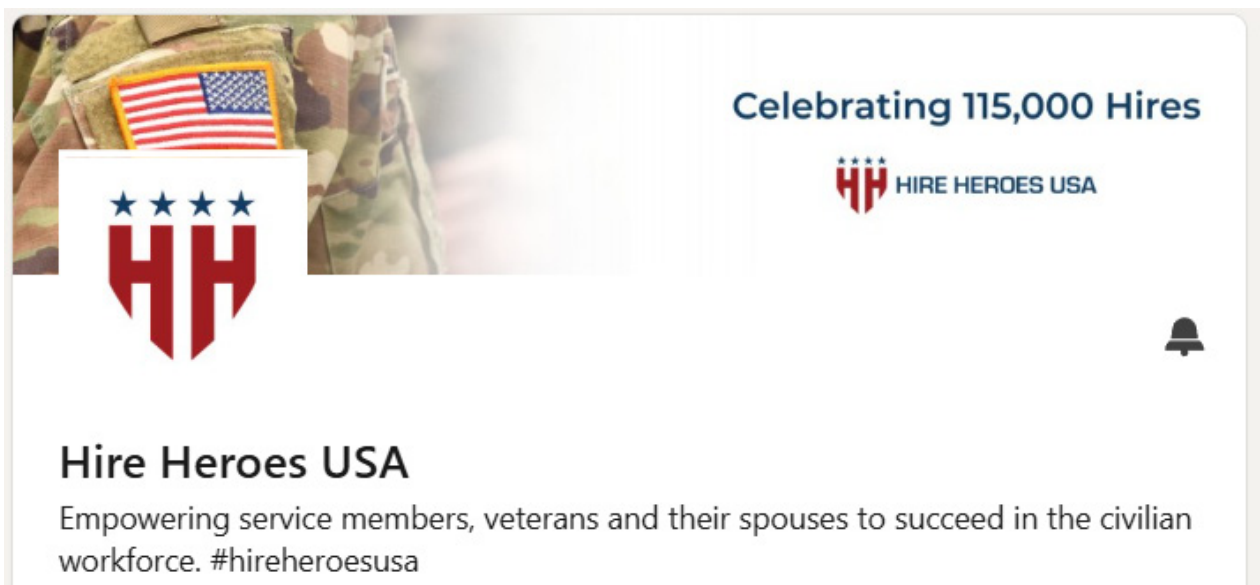




SHIELD USAGE

When using the shield logo alone:

- the text 'HIRE HEROES USA' must appear as a heading element elsewhere on the same page.
- the masthead photo must contain the brand colors.



COLOR PALETTE

PRIMARY PALETTE

NAVY

#0B2741



RED

#9F1D21



GOLD

#C9A24D

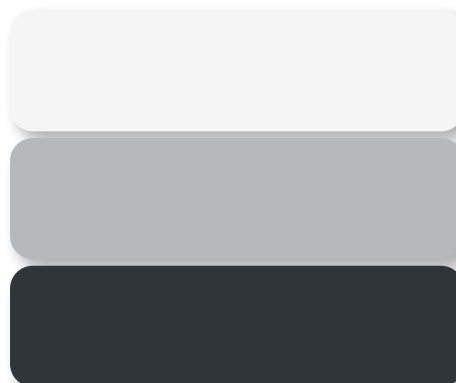


NEUTRAL GRAYS

LIGHT #F3F2F1

HERO #B5B8BB

DARK #2F3439

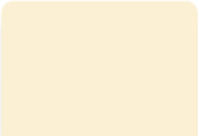
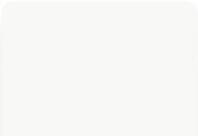
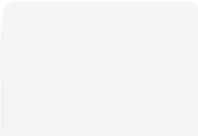
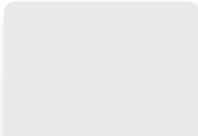




COLOR SCALES FOR DIGITAL USE

These scales provide a range of tones for hierarchy, interaction states, and backgrounds, allowing for more nuanced and cohesive design decisions while maintaining brand consistency.

Most of these tones are intended for functional use within the interface, such as hover states, highlights, and system feedback, and are not meant to be used as primary brand colors. This ensures the core palette remains focused, while still supporting the needs of modern digital experiences.

 NAVY-400 #6E93B2	 NAVY-500 #446F95	 NAVY-600 #2A567D	 NAVY-700 #113C63	 NAVY-800 #0E3253	 NAVY-900 #0B2741
 RED-400 #E38A8D	 RED-500 #CF585C	 RED-600 #B73A3E	 RED-700 #9F1D21	 RED-800 #84171B	 RED-900 #6B1316
 GOLD-300 #FAEED2	 GOLD-400 #EEDBB1	 GOLD-500 #E2C890	 GOLD-600 #D6B56F	 GOLD-700 #C9A24D	
 WHITE #FFFFFF	 NEUTRAL-50 #F7F6F5	 NEUTRAL-100 #F3F2F1	 NEUTRAL-200 #E9E7E4	 NEUTRAL-300 #D6D3CF	 NEUTRAL-400 #B5B8BB
 NEUTRAL-500 #7E858B	 NEUTRAL-600 #646A70	 NEUTRAL-700 #4A5056	 NEUTRAL-800 #2F3439	 NEUTRAL-900 #161A1E	 BLACK #000000

ACCESSIBILITY COLOR PAIRINGS

Specific color pairings maximize contrast across type treatments, ensuring readability and consistency on both light and dark backgrounds while meeting established accessibility standards.

While this doesn't represent every possible color combination, the system is designed to guide and, where appropriate, restrict usage to accessible pairings.

Aa

NEUTRAL-900 Foreground	NEUTRAL-0 Background
Normal Text	Large Text
✓ AA 4.5:1	✓ AA 3:1
✓ AAA 7:1	✓ AAA 4.5:1

Aa

RED-700 Foreground	NEUTRAL-0 Background
Normal Text	Large Text
✓ AA 4.5:1	✓ AA 3:1
✓ AAA 7:1	✓ AAA 4.5:1

Aa

NAVY-700 Foreground	NEUTRAL-0 Background
Normal Text	Large Text
✓ AA 4.5:1	✓ AA 3:1
✓ AAA 7:1	✓ AAA 4.5:1

Aa

NEUTRAL-900 Foreground	NEUTRAL-100 Background
Normal Text	Large Text
✓ AA 4.5:1	✓ AA 3:1
✓ AAA 7:1	✓ AAA 4.5:1

Aa

RED-700 Foreground	NEUTRAL-100 Background
Normal Text	Large Text
✓ AA 4.5:1	✓ AA 3:1
✓ AAA 7:1	✓ AAA 4.5:1

Aa

NAVY-700 Foreground	NEUTRAL-100 Background
Normal Text	Large Text
✓ AA 4.5:1	✓ AA 3:1
✓ AAA 7:1	✓ AAA 4.5:1

Aa

NEUTRAL-0 Foreground	NAVY-900 Background
Normal Text	Large Text
✓ AA 4.5:1	✓ AA 3:1
✓ AAA 7:1	✓ AAA 4.5:1

Aa

GOLD-700 Foreground	NAVY-900 Background
Normal Text	Large Text
✓ AA 4.5:1	✓ AA 3:1
✗ AAA 7:1	✓ AAA 4.5:1



TYPOGRAPHY

Headlines should appear 2x+ size of body type and in Bitter.

Standard type should appear in IBM Plex Sans.

BITTER (HEADLINES)

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

1234567890!@#%^&*

Bitter introduces warmth and a more human, grounded presence to the system. Its sturdy forms feel confident yet approachable, adding personality, credibility, and emotional resonance where it matters most.

IBM PLEX SANS (BODY COPY)

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

1234567890!@#%^&*

IBM Plex Sans brings a disciplined, structured tone that subtly references service documentation and military systems. Its condensed proportions and precise letterforms help create clear hierarchy while maintaining strong legibility in tighter spaces.



WORKING WITH THE HIRE HEROES USA BRAND

Our goal is to make it easy to represent Hire Heroes USA clearly and confidently.

Whether you're creating a co-branded asset, recognizing Hire Heroes USA as a partner, or requesting approved brand materials, the Hire Heroes USA Marketing & Communications team is your primary point of contact.

Before publishing or producing materials that feature the Hire Heroes USA brand, please:

- Contact marketing@hireheroesusa.org to request approved logos, brand assets, or guidance.
- Share co-branded concepts or creative proofs with the Marketing & Communications team for review prior to publication.
- Reach out with any questions regarding logo usage, brand representation, messaging, or partnership recognition.

This helps ensure the Hire Heroes USA brand is represented consistently across every partnership, campaign, and communication.



HIRE HEROES USA