

Coding for Veterans provides path to work after military career

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Information technology or cybersecurity can be well-paying career paths for former military members, says Pat Shaw, Coding for Veterans' academic director, in Kingston on Friday. PHOTO BY ELLIOT FERGUSON /The Whig-Standard

KINGSTON — A training program for veterans is meant to give current and former military members a route into lucrative information technology jobs.

Representatives from Coding for Veterans were in Kingston for two days this week promoting the program to Armed Forces members nearing the end of their military careers and looking for a way to transition to the civilian sector.

"It's software development or cybersecurity training for veterans so they can transition to well-paying IT jobs in civilian life after the military," Pat Shaw, the program's academic director, said.

"What is really cool about it for veterans is you don't have to have been in that trade in the Armed Forces to be able to move into that trade or career path."

The program provides students with 650 hours of online training that leads to industry accreditation and a certificate from the University of Ottawa.

Veterans are particularly suited to jobs in information technology because many of them have security clearance through the military and are familiar with security concerns.

Veterans also often bring a mix of maturity and life experience that employers want, Shaw said.

"They have some life experiences that they can superimpose over their work environment," Shaw said.



"What we've been hearing from the employers is that the schools can teach pretty much anybody a topic. What you can't teach is the value of what you are coding in real life."

Government estimates have indicated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of unfilled information technology jobs across the country has spiked to close to 150,000 positions, Shaw said.

The program has also been opened up to Afghan interpreters who are able to immigrate to Canada.

Coding for Veterans is visiting major military bases across Canada during the week leading up to Remembrance Day.

