



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

MAY 28 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS

SUBJECT: Securing the Southern Border: SkillBridge

Following Presidential Proclamation 10886, "Declaring a National Emergency at the Southern Border of the United States," January 20, 2025, the Department has taken aggressive measures through Joint Task Force Southern Border to enhance border security and ensure total operational control of the southern border. The deployment of over 6,600 active duty personnel underscores the Department's unwavering dedication to working alongside the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to secure our southern border and maintain the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security of the United States.

Recognizing the importance of leveraging talent and furthering our commitment to work with DHS, the Department is expanding opportunities for transitioning Service members to support southern border activities, particularly through the SkillBridge program, which provides real-world job experience during their final 180 days of service.

To support this effort, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness has established the necessary agreements with DHS to support United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to enhance SkillBridge opportunities within those organizations. The Defense Human Resource Agency (DHRA) will work with the Military Departments, as an exception to policy, to prioritize and broadly advertise these critical DHS career opportunities to transitioning Service members. In support of the Military Departments' efforts, DHRA will update the SkillBridge web site and use other social media venues to highlight these opportunities.

The Military Departments will approve Service member requests for SkillBridge participation with CBP and ICE to the maximum extent possible in the last 180 days of service. Requests should be disapproved only where approval would impact the critical readiness and operational needs of the Military Service concerned. The Military Departments shall provide implementation guidance to all approving authorities ensuring utmost support for Service members pursuing DHS SkillBridge participation.



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