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Why Hiring Veterans Is Important Business

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN: One of the biggest mistakes hiring managers can make is overlooking this talent pool; veterans are worth a closer look.

IMAGINE A POOL of talented job candidates, over 500,000 strong, with impressive skills, leadership ability and unwavering character. Experienced prospects who could help your company grow. Versatile, driven job seekers who are being... overlooked. They are the unemployed U.S. veterans and reservists.

Most of them served in the years after 9/11, are in their prime working years and have skills that match up well with the requirements of civilian jobs. But all too often those skills are getting lost in translation. When veterans who have served our country with honor talk about their sacrifice, they do so with humility and reserve. Hidden behind that tempered response is a wealth of experience and accomplishments performed under some of the most strenuous circumstances.

The benefits of hiring veterans and reservists—citizens who continue to serve in the military on a part-time basis—are enormous. They are high-tech wunderkinds. Team players. Trailblazers. They thrive under pressure. They are trainable. They stay in their jobs longer. They don’t stop until they get the job done. They rise through the ranks.

Their spouses, too, many of whom are also seeking work, have versatile skills to offer, a depth of experience that may surprise you and a quality any manager would value: grit.

How would you describe the size of your business? Small? Medium? Large? As you go through this workbook, think about your business size and how it relates to your strategies. Then go to employerroadmap.org to find out more on how to organize the information into customized action steps based on your company’s size.

As a hiring manager, one of the best moves you can make for your company is to take a closer look at all of these candidates. Not because hiring these heroes is the patriotic thing to do (even though it is). But because it’s smart business.

Companies often say that their most valuable asset is their people. Well, veterans and reservists are people of the highest caliber. But how to go about hiring them? Read through this workbook, get to know them a little better, learn about how you can go about finding them, then add them to your team and support them. They will do your company proud, just as they’ve made America proud.

Just don’t wait too long. As you know, capable candidates eventually get snapped up. This pool of talent presents an extraordinary opportunity. Make sure your company is seizing it.

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Just don’t wait too long. As you know, capable candidates eventually get snapped up. This pool of talent presents an extraordinary opportunity. Make sure your company is seizing it.
Veterans and Military Spouses
Add Tangible Value

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- Veterans have a wealth of skills that often go untapped by civilian employers.

STUDIES SHOW THAT veterans have a real impact on the success of American businesses. Among the findings:

- A survey of more than 800 executives showed that veterans were better or much better than civilians in areas including teamwork and work ethic.
- Those drawn to military service show high levels of self-efficiency, dynamic decision-making ability and drive.
- Veterans receive technical training at a more accelerated rate than nonmilitary workers, which enhances their ability to apply tech-based solutions to organizational challenges.
- Veterans can be especially valuable to small businesses, since they thrive in environments that call for them to do more with limited resources.
- S&P 500 companies led by CEOs with military experience had higher-than-average returns.

“Isn’t a shame that so many companies miss out on such a quality group of employees.”

BRIAN BRYSON, Talent Manager
Praescient Analytics

Why is this? Answer: the attributes they’ve acquired in their service. More on that shortly. But first, take a minute and list some qualities you seek in your employees:

VETERANS HAVE SKILLS

You have to develop extraordinary skills to survive in a military environment. When brought to the civilian world, these abilities help veterans not just survive, but thrive.

Here are some qualities shared by veterans:

- They are professional in their appearance and manner.
- They know how to lead.
- They know how to follow.
- They know how to adapt.
- They are comfortable with technology.
- They do more with less.
- They attack a challenge.
- They work with people of all stripes.
- They live by a code of integrity.

They come to you needing less training than your typical employee. Not only do they have specific job skills, but they have also studied:

- Leadership
- Stress management
- Risk management
- Crisis management
- Problem-solving
- Team building

Training in these and many other areas has made veterans highly efficient at taking in new information and applying it quickly and effectively. In other words, they are quick learners.

FOCUS ON SPOUSES

IF YOU THINK VETERANS ARE IMPRESSIVE, YOU SHOULD MEET THEIR SPOUSES.

They serve right along with their husbands and wives. They’ve adapted to changing environments and gained organizational and leadership skills through their own experience. Often, this experience is acquired through volunteer positions that they have taken and run with. Spouses regularly manage and coordinate large groups of people, building extensive networks across vast distances. They handle budgets, planning and communication between groups across the country and around the world, building communities as they go. Spouses share their military mates’ beliefs in core values, including a deep sense of honor, duty and service.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE VALUE OF VETERANS IN THE WORKPLACE

The Employer Roadmap website is packed with information about the value veterans and their spouses bring to companies. Here’s a great place to start:

employerroadmap.org/prepare/realize-the-business-value
What You Think About Veterans May Be Wrong


Now read about some common myths and see if they address any concerns.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN • To capitalize on the opportunity of hiring veterans, you must discard any preconceived ideas you have about them.


MYTH: National Guard and Reserve employees have to drop everything and leave at a moment’s notice.

TRUTH: The vast majority of veterans have no health issues—including those returning from a combat zone.

MYTH: Legal obligations involved in hiring veteran workers are too much of a pain.

TRUTH: There are no legal hurdles for hiring veterans. Once they join you, companies simply have to abide by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), the law governing employers’ relationship with military employees. One of the primary facets of this law is that workers can’t lose their jobs while deployed on military duty.

MYTH: Veterans make good police officers and firefighters, but that’s about it.

TRUTH: There are hundreds of military specialties. Veteran applicants have the same wide range of skills and competencies as their civilian counterparts, but they generally have a broader depth of experience.

MYTH: Veterans coming off active duty need time to adjust before they’re worth hiring.

TRUTH: The transition from active duty to civilian life is just like any major life change, but transitioning veterans have even more assistance available to them than civilians.

MYTH: Veterans are unstable or unreliable because of trauma they’ve experienced.

TRUTH: The military has changed its policy of moving families around, and now most stay put for years at a time. Part-time Guard and Reserve families never move unless they choose to. Today’s military recognizes that stable families are healthier families. Stable families also mean reliable employees. Military spouses are hardworking, dependable workers who tend to be loyal to their employers—especially ones who strive to be military-friendly.

MYTH: Veterans coming off active duty long enough, they will have moved at least once or twice. These moves often lead to breaks in employment for their spouses. New locations also often mean new opportunities, which in turn lead to changes in career direction. Far from being a warning sign, these career changes demonstrate their resourcefulness and resilience, and give military spouses a wide variety of experience that they bring with them to their new jobs. This broad knowledge base of best practices, along with the confidence that comes with life experience, often ranks into the spouses’ greatest strength as employees. Additionally, many spouses do not realize that they can showcase volunteer experience conducted in these “gap years” on their resumes.

MYTH: Veterans have employment gaps in their resumes because they lack commitment and skills.

TRUTH: Just like civilians, there are often great reasons for these gaps and career shifts—you just have to ask.

LEARN MORE BY EXPLORING THE TRUTHS IN GREATER DETAIL

If a veteran has been on active duty long enough, they will have moved at least once or twice. These moves often lead to breaks in employment for their spouses. New locations also often mean new opportunities, which in turn lead to changes in career direction. Far from being a warning sign, these career changes demonstrate their resourcefulness and resilience, and give military spouses a wide variety of experience that they bring with them to their new jobs. This broad knowledge base of best practices, along with the confidence that comes with life experience, often ranks into the spouses’ greatest strength as employees. Additionally, many spouses do not realize that they can showcase volunteer experience conducted in these “gap years” on their resumes.

MYTH: Military spouses move constantly.

TRUTH: The military has changed its policy of moving families around, and now most stay put for years at a time. Part-time Guard and Reserve families never move unless they choose to. Today’s military recognizes that stable families are healthier families. Stable families also mean reliable employees. Military spouses are hardworking, dependable workers who tend to be loyal to their employers—especially ones who strive to be military-friendly.

MYTH: Military spouses don’t have work experience.

TRUTH: Military spouses who do not have a traditional resume still have lots of skills that employers value. For example, as a Spouse Club officer, one might recruit members, maintain budgets and spearhead marketing campaigns. Spouses’ extensive volunteer experience is usually indicative of lots of workplace skills.

MYTH: Military spouses have employment gaps in their resumes because they lack commitment and skills.

TRUTH: Just like civilians, there are often great reasons for these gaps and career shifts—you just have to ask.

MYTH: Military spouses don’t have strong educational backgrounds.

TRUTH: More than 85 percent of military spouses have gone to college or completed coursework at that level. This is more than the general population. Twenty-five percent have attained a bachelor’s degree, according to a 2013 report by Syracuse University’s Institute for Veterans and Military Families. A large percentage of spouses are actually “underemployed,” meaning that they have more formal education than they need for their job.

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Learn to Speak “Military”

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN • The difference between active duty and reserve, and the three main categories of service members.

BEFORE YOU CAN assess military job candidates, it helps to understand the structure and culture they came from. Here’s a quick overview.

THE BRANCHES

There are five branches of the military: Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard. Each has its own mission and culture. There are a total of about 2.2 million current service members.

THE STATUSES

Each branch has two main statuses: active duty and reserve. Active duty members serve in the military full time. Reserve members (who make up about 830,000 of the 2.2 million) serve on a part-time basis (a minimum of one weekend a month with two weeks of annual training). Reserve members may serve as full-time support or can be activated to full-time when needed.

National Guard troops, part of the reserve force of the Army or Air Force, are organized in each state and are used most often for stateside missions such as disaster relief—although many have been activated for overseas deployment during the last several years.

What WORKS

CONNECTING WITH VETERANS

Prascent Analytics, headquartered in Alexandria, VA, puts a priority on having its own employees and managers understand the veteran population. First, it’s important for a company to have an appreciation for a veteran’s history as well as their future potential. More of their advice: Avoid putting the burden on applicants to understand what a job actually entails and how it translates to their skills. Talk to veterans currently working at your company to help get an idea of what they find valuable in terms of reaching out to candidates and understanding their abilities. Then, think about what skills can be taught on the job.

THE RANKS

There are three main categories of rank:

- **ENLISTED PERSONNEL**: The rank and file, working in hundreds of roles from truck drivers to graphic designers. Experienced enlisted personnel, known as noncommissioned officers, are among the military’s most valuable trainers and leaders.
- **WARRANT OFFICERS**: Highly skilled technical and tactical experts, specializing in one field and relied on for their problem-solving acumen.
- **COMMISSIONED OFFICERS**: Well-trained managers who lead groups of troops, from hundreds to thousands.

Within each category, there is also a hierarchy, with each rank assigned a letter/number designation and a title (lieutenant, sergeant, etc.).

- **ENLISTED PERSONNEL** ranks all start with an “E”
- **WARRANT OFFICER** ranks all start with a “W”
- **COMMISSIONED OFFICER** ranks all start with an “O”

The lowest officer rank is an O-1, and the highest is O-10. The titles for ranks differ from service to service.

LEARN MORE ABOUT MILITARY CULTURE

Go to employerroadmap.org/article/military-101

Sample Translation of Military Ranks

| Junior Enlisted | E-1 to E-4 |
| Noncommissioned Officer | E-5 to E-6 |
| Senior Noncommissioned Officer | E-7 to E-9 |
| Warrant Officer | W-1 to W-5 |
| Company-Grade Officer | O-1 to O-3 |
| Field-Grade Officer | O-4 to O-6 |
| Flag Officer | O-7 to O-10 |

They have 0-10 years of service. They start in entry-level college graduate positions and rise to manage people and programs. Could oversee 50-500 people.

They have 0-10 years of service. Seasoned managers/strategic leaders. Manage large organizations of thousands of people and millions/billions in assets and facilities.

They have 18-35 years of service. Strategic executive leaders who lead large, complex organizations across many geographic locations.
Get to Know Veterans and Spouses

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN • By taking even a little time to talk to veterans and spouses, you will begin to have a much deeper understanding of the skills they offer.

THE BEST WAY to familiarize yourself with veterans and spouses—how to relate to them, tap their skills and understand their needs—is by meeting and talking with them. And the first place to start is inside your own company.

• Consider setting up an informal breakfast meeting to talk with veterans and/or spouses in your company about their experiences, what they value in a company and how a company can attract them. Listen to what works for them and what doesn’t.

• Plan an after-hours event, so your veteran employees can bring their spouses as well.

• Go to a military function open to the public, such as a deployment ceremony, homecoming event or family support group meeting.

• Use your personal network to find those who have military experience.

• Other companies are willing to share their experience with hiring veterans. So reach out to your peers and pick their brains.

Who do you know who might know veterans you can talk to?

• CO-WORKERS: __________

• FAMILY: __________

• FRIENDS: __________

• NEIGHBORS: __________

After seeking out veterans or spouses, answer these questions:

What were these veterans and spouses like in person?

What do I know about veterans or spouses that I didn’t know before?

What are some takeaways for hiring veteran and spouses that I can share with company leadership?

READ the thorough primer on the military produced by JPMorgan Chase & Co. You can download it at: veteranjobsmission.com/leading-practices/military-101-introduction-hiring-military-candidates

TAKE THE TIME to meet and talk with a few veterans and spouses, either in your company or through people you know. For the veterans in your company, ask them to help you find job candidates.

VISIT the Military Spouse Employment Partnership (msepjobs.militaryonesource.mil), a program by the Department of Defense (DoD) and the nonprofit Military Spouse Corporate Career Network (msccn.org) for help in finding qualified military spouses.

READ MORE THAT WILL HELP YOU TO HIRE VETERANS AND SPOUSES

Go to employerroadmap.org/prepare

LEARN more about military structure and culture by registering for Hiring Our Heroes webinars: Military 101, Employer Best Practices and Wounded Veteran Employment. Go to uschamberfoundation.org/employer-webinars

DOWNLOAD the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Guide to Hiring Veterans for your HR recruiting team. It can be found at: ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/downloads/veterans-hiring-guide-2014.pdf

VISIT the Military Spouse Employment Partnership (msepjobs.militaryonesource.mil), a program by the Department of Defense (DoD) and the nonprofit Military Spouse Corporate Career Network (msccn.org) for help in finding qualified military spouses.

READ MORE THAT WILL HELP YOU TO HIRE VETERANS AND SPOUSES

Go to employerroadmap.org/prepare
HIRE VETERANS AND MILITARY SPOUSES

Create a Website That’s Military-Friendly

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

• What an employee value proposition (EVP) is and why it’s essential.

LIKE ANY JOB seekers, veterans want to see the complete package as they consider your company: your organization’s purpose and values; the rewards, recognitions and opportunities for promotion; and the work, people and environment that make up your company’s landscape.

So make sure your company website has military-friendly language and is attractive to veterans. Lisa Rosser, founder and CEO of The Value of a Veteran website (thevalueofaveteran.com), offers these tips on the CareerBuilder.com blog The Hiring Site on what you should include—and should not:

• CROSS-REFERENCE YOUR NEEDS WITH THEIR SKILLS. Break down what you need in a description that will relate to veterans. According to Rosser, one way to do that is by showing them where other veterans have had success in your company.

• MAKE IT EASY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUR ORGANIZATION DOES. Consider posting a video that explains your company in broad terms, and include some of your current veteran employees in the video.

• DON’T PUT VETERANS IN THE DIVERSITY CATEGORY. Military members don’t think of themselves in that classification.

• HIGHLIGHT JOBS YOU’VE ALREADY IDENTIFIED AS A GOOD FIT FOR VETERANS OR SPOUSES. EXPLAIN WHY THEY WOULD HAVE SUCCESS IN THESE POSITIONS. Remember, you want to give veterans information most other companies won’t provide on their sites.

• PROVIDE A LINK SO VETERANS CAN CONTACT YOU THROUGH THE WEBSITE. Allow candidates to email the national military recruiting director directly. Also, consider adding a tool that enables visitors to register and receive notifications by email or text message.

• SET UP SPECIFIC TIMES FOR TRANSITIONING SERVICE MEMBERS TO CHAT WITH RECRUITERS. Remember that some transitioning service members are stationed overseas, have a small window of time available and may be in a different time zone. Set up a live chat on your site that veterans can easily access.

• PUBLISH YOUR MISSION STATEMENT AND CORPORATE VALUES. Veterans are trained to be “mission focused” and generally respond well to a company that has a clear goal and makes its values known upfront.

CONTINUED

EMPLOYEE VALUE PROPOSITIONS

Another element to include on the website is an employee value proposition (EVP). This is basically a statement of what you will provide as an employer, in exchange for the veteran’s productivity and performance, according to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). Think of the EVP as an advertisement of sorts: Everyone who reads this would know everything the company would offer a veteran for working there. Start the process of creating an EVP by answering these questions:

What are some of the values that define your company?

What are some of the pathways for development that you offer employees?

What does your company have to offer veterans and spouses for their performance?

What separates you from other military-friendly employers?

What benefits at your company might attract a veteran or military spouse?

A) Flexible work schedule

B) Gap pay for deployed service members

C) Mentoring program for veterans

D) All of the above

Answer: D, all of the above. (And see below for a concrete example of answer A.)

More than 17% of military spouses surveyed said they couldn’t find work flexible enough to accommodate their spouse’s schedule.

MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT REPORT

Syracuse University, Institute for Veterans and Military Families, 2013

LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT VETERANS LOOK FOR IN A COMPANY

Go to employerroadmap.org/article/what-veterans-look-for
HIRE VETERANS AND MILITARY SPOUSES

Make Your Job Descriptions Attractive to Veterans and Spouses

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN • A job description needs to be translated into language that veterans who see it can understand and correlate with skills they refined in their service.

TO ATTRACT A veteran to your company, be sure to craft a job description that correlates to the military mindset and uses language that communicates to veterans that your job will be both fulfilling and a natural fit.

The military has more than 7,000 jobs across more than 100 functional areas, the majority of which have a direct civilian job equivalent, according to Sherrill A. Curtis, principal and creative director for HR consulting firm Curtis Consulting Group, LLC. So it’s not difficult to find information from the military world that aligns with civilian jobs and can be incorporated into job descriptions.

Follow these steps to produce a veteran-friendly and effective job description:

• DO YOUR RESEARCH. Use the online tool O*NET OnLine (onetonline.org/crosswalk), where you can search a Military Occupational Classification (MOC) or job title and cross-reference military job functions and skills to the civilian equivalent, and vice versa.

• SEEK GUIDANCE. Consider hiring a veteran or military spouse to help manage your recruitment efforts, or consult a veteran already working at your company. These sources may have a helpful suggestion or be able to translate a description from the civilian world to military language that veterans use.

• BE INCLUSIVE. Make sure you appeal to military values and priorities. Remember that some veterans didn’t attend college. When a job listing says “bachelor’s degree required,” consider adding the phrase “or equivalent military experience.”

• BE STRAIGHTFORWARD. Veterans sometimes don’t realize their military experience aligns with a job description. Firms that successfully attract veterans to their websites lay out job descriptions along with skills in an easy-to-follow grid, according to Curtis. Veterans can easily correlate their military position to your job requirements and identify the best opportunities.

• ID THE NECESSARY SKILLS. After assessing your hiring needs (apprenticeship, internship, part-time or full-time employment), determine the specific skills veterans possess that fit your job. You’ll then be able to describe the job in language that can appeal more effectively to veterans. If you have a large company, reach out to veterans directly by creating a special page on your company website that contains customized information just for veterans on what you offer and how they can apply for work.

58% of the [Military Spouse Employment Report survey] respondents indicated that they believed informing a prospective employer that they are a military spouse would make a prospective employer less likely to hire them. More than 46% indicated they had been asked by a potential employer if they were a military spouse.

MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT REPORT
Syracuse University, Institute for Veterans and Military Families, 2013

LEARN MORE ABOUT MAKING JOB DESCRIPTIONS VETERAN- AND SPOUSE-FRIENDLY
Go to employerroadmap.org/article/what-veterans-seek
HIRE VETERANS AND MILITARY SPOUSES

Get the Word Out, and Start Looking

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- LinkedIn can be applied on a number of fronts to land more applicants, and Facebook can be especially useful by showcasing your company’s family-friendly side.

YOU’VE CREATED a military-friendly website and generated job descriptions. What now? Here are several suggestions on how you can start to recruit veterans and military spouses:

- Use your company’s Facebook page to showcase family-friendly policies, photos and write-ups about your company’s military support and community volunteerism.
- Mention your military commitment on your LinkedIn site, and establish a point of contact on your LinkedIn page that’s dedicated to recruiting veterans and spouses of veterans.
- Have veteran employees alert contacts in their LinkedIn network to job opportunities.
- Register for free hiring fairs offered by Hiring Our Heroes, an initiative of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Go to hiringourheroes.org.
- Create an EMPLOYER SEARCH ENGINE account through Hiring Our Heroes’ Resume Engine website at resumedengine.org/employer/. This will enable you to search a database of thousands of resumes from veterans and military spouses.
- Attend local hiring fairs in person, and register for an online hiring fair at VIRTUAL JOB SCOUT, another program run by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, at virtualjobscout.org.
- Post job openings to the VETERANS JOB BANK (ebenefits.va.gov/benefits/jobs), a massive data bank of job seekers operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Contact your local VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM, the government agency that works with veterans who have a service-connected disability, at benefits.va.gov/vocarehab/index.asp to inquire about candidates.
- Reach out to your local AMERICAN JOB CENTER (servicelocator.org), a service of the U.S. Department of Labor, or your local representative of the EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE (esgr.mil), an office of the DoD devoted to promoting understanding between reservists and civilian employers, for help finding veterans and spouses who meet your needs.
- Ask existing veteran employees for referrals to talented comrades who are seeking positions.
- Have a recruiter visit a TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (dol.gov/vets/programs/tap) office at a military installation. These programs, which the military requires service members to attend upon leaving the armed forces, seek to prepare veterans for today’s job market.
- Provide recruiting materials to local veterans organizations.

What WORKS

RECRUITING INCENTIVES

According to private equity firm The Blackstone Group, which has studied best practices as part of its own efforts to recruit and hire veterans, the security services company AlliedBarton introduced an internal rewards program for its military recruiters called Operation Top Gun. The goal: Focus on raising the company’s percentage of military hires among all hires. Such hires were tracked, with recruiters receiving awards with “challenge coins” and cash as their numbers increased.

Recruiters also received “ranks” based on the level they achieved in the number of veteran hires they found. For instance, a recruiting “sergeant” reached the 15 percent mark; a recruiting “captain” reached 20 percent; a “colonel” 25 percent; and a “top gun” 30 percent. Overall, the program enabled the company to emphasize its focus on veterans and led its recruiting team to build more skills in working with this talent pool.

LEARN MORE ABOUT RECRUITING VETERANS AND SPOUSES

Go to employerroadmap.org/article/finding-military-spoouses, employerroadmap.org/article/government-tools and employerroadmap.org/article/hiring-fairs-and-job-boards

Focus ON SPOUSES

- Contact the MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIP (mssjobs.militaryonesource.mil), a program by the DoD, and the nonprofit MILITARY SPOUSE CORPORATE CAREER NETWORK (msccn.org) for help in finding qualified military spouses.
- Attend a HIRING OUR HEROES MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM hiring fair (uschamberfoundation.org/hiring-our-heroes) or networking reception.
Use the Resources of Hiring Our Heroes

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
Four platforms by Hiring Our Heroes can put you in touch with countless qualified candidates you might not otherwise connect with.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE HOH PROGRAMS EMPLOYERS CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF?

Fast Track (fasttrackforheroes.org) integrates the National Labor Exchange and other job resources for veterans and organizes data by geography, highlighting industries and concentrated job markets. Employers can post to the National Labor Exchange, review candidates and list job requirements.

Virtual Job Scout (virtualjobscout.org) facilitates online hiring fairs that allow veterans and spouses to connect with employers. Businesses can post as many jobs as they want for free.

The Personal Branding Resume Engine (resumeengine.org) is a resume-building tool for veterans that translates their military occupation into civilian language. Employers can search these resumes for qualified candidates by creating an Employer Search Engine account (resumeengine.org/employer).

HOW ELSE DOES HOH HELP VETERANS AND SPOUSES FIND WORK?

Employment workshops for job seekers are held at each of the hiring fairs. These events cover job searches, elevator pitches, resume writing and interviewing skills. HOH also offers free webinars for employers on topics such as Military 101, Employer Best Practices and Wounded Veteran Employment. Register at uschamberfoundation.org/employer-webinars.

WHY IS HIRING OUR HEROES SUCH A KEY RESOURCE?

As a result of more than 900 hiring events in all 50 states; Puerto Rico; Washington, D.C.; and Germany over the past four years, more than 27,000 veterans and military spouses have been hired by 2,000-plus businesses. Through the Hiring 500,000 Heroes campaign with Capital One, more than 2,000 employers have hired over 500,000 veterans and their spouses. Employers can make a pledge at uschamberfoundation.org/hiring-our-heroes. Once your company makes a commitment, spread the word to your employees, customers, community and suppliers.

THE U.S. CHAMBER of Commerce Foundation’s Hiring Our Heroes (HOH) program works to create meaningful job opportunities for veterans, transitioning veterans and military spouses. The program is an excellent one-stop resource for HR professionals seeking to recruit veterans. Employers can post jobs, and veterans can respond to them.

The HOH program offers information on hiring fairs, workshops, hot markets and networking events for spouses. Use this FAQ to learn what you need to know.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HIRING OUR HEROES RESOURCES
Go to employerroadmap.org/article/hiring-our-heroes-resources

Focus on Spouses

HOW DOES THE HOH MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM WORK?

The program hosts career fairs and networking receptions for military spouses. For a complete calendar, go to hiringourheroes.org. If you can’t get to an event but would still like to stay connected, check out one of the military spouse LinkedIn groups connecting employers and job seekers. Career Spark (mycareerspark.org) serves military spouses by enabling them to build a resume that focuses on their skills.

LEARN MORE
Go to employerroadmap.org/article/hiring-our-heroes-resources
HIRE VETERANS AND MILITARY SPOUSES

Turn Social Networking Into an Edge

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
• Twitter and Facebook can be powerful tools for employers.

WITH A PRESENCE in many social media arenas, your company can position itself as a savvy employer that understands the nuances and advantages of technology with a military-community workforce. Here are some social media sites and how you can leverage them in recruiting veterans.

LINKEDIN

Identify veterans with a presence on the site who can reach out to contacts in their network to alert them to new opportunities. It’s wise to have a point of contact on your company’s LinkedIn page who is dedicated to recruiting veterans and spouses. Check out the Veteran Mentor Network’s LinkedIn Job Seeker Subscription subgroup to see how veterans are using the site to find you.

FACEBOOK

Think of Facebook as a place where people can get to know the human side of your operation: your company’s family-friendly policies, or short write-ups about community activities or military support. It represents a significant opportunity to reach military families and job candidates on a visual and emotional level. It’s a place to showcase your outreach efforts, philosophy about hiring veterans and spouses, and corporate culture. It’s also worth connecting with military advocacy groups that have a strong presence on Facebook.

94% of recruiters use or plan to use social media in their job search efforts.

JOBVITE
2013 Social Recruiting Survey

Twitter and Facebook can be powerful tools for employers. A Program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

What WORKS

OUTREACH

USAA’s Military Talent Management team attends meetings at the Warrior and Family Support Center at Fort Sam Houston, TX, to brief transitioning injured service members and their families about job searches and preparing for civilian careers. That team also has continued to increase its outreach through military blogs and a presence on social networking sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook, which helps to reach millennial job seekers. USAA also advertises job openings in a wide range of military-related publications, including job-related veteran publications, local military newspapers, websites and hiring fair brochures.

Twitter

Considering how effective Twitter can be for advertising a company’s products, it deserves a look for your recruiting outreach efforts. A designated military recruiter can follow groups like the Military Officers Association of America (twitter.com/militaryofficer) and the National Military Family Association (twitter.com/military_family). Engaging in conversations with them and their Twitter followers in real time can lead to conversations about employment.

94% of recruiters use or plan to use social media in their job search efforts.

Jobvite
2013 Social Recruiting Survey

Learn More About Using Social Networking as a Recruiting Tool

Go to employerroadmap.org/article/social-networking
Know How to Interview a Veteran

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN • What NOT to say to a veteran, and how to unearth more details of a veteran’s service.

You may have to probe for their accomplishments and dig for details about their adaptability and how their experience can contribute to your company. That’s because they have been operating in a team environment and aren’t accustomed to speaking up about their achievements. Getting them to open up will require open-ended questions, solid listening skills and judicious phrasing of questions.

Here are a few do’s and don’ts, with some information provided by Sherrill A. Curtis, principal and creative director for HR consulting firm Curtis Consulting Group, LLC, in the report *Support From Behind the Lines*, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs:

I DO

- **Know what they bring.** Be familiar with the candidate’s Military Occupational Classification (MOC) that corresponds to the job opening. O*NET OnLine (onetonline.org/crosswalk) can help with this.
- **Recognize their service.** At the start of the interview, thank the veteran or spouse for their service and sacrifice.

You want the veteran to open up and share freely about their achievements and sacrifice.

- **Explain the job.** Clearly describe the job role and its responsibilities, defining expectations upfront and avoiding generalizations.
- **Make them comfortable.** Draw out applicants to discover their “thread of excellence.” Ask candidates know they can be more relaxed and respond in a more casual manner.
- **Lend them your ears.** Focus on active listening for skill sets, and correlate them with job functions within your organization.
- **Ask if they can do the job.** It’s a good practice to ask candidates whether they think they could perform the job. One method is to ask: “Have you read the job description? Can you, with or without a reasonable accommodation, perform the essential functions of the job?”
- **Dig for details.** When trying to delve deeper into their experience and how it might translate to your business, consider phrasing questions that will ensure that the candidate provides more detail about their responsibilities. For example: “Tell me about the type of training and education you received in the military?” Or: “Were you involved in day-to-day management of personnel and/or supplies?” Or: “How many people did you supervise?”
- **Ask about their values.** Explore how a veteran’s values correspond with your company’s needs.

CONTINUED

- **Avoid closed-ended questions.** These are questions that elicit a “yes” or “no” response. You want the veteran candidate to open up about their skills and experience, and that won’t happen with these types of questions.
- **Keep these questions off your list.** Some questions are off-limits: What kind of military discharge did you receive? When will you be deployed? Have you killed anyone? Were you injured in combat? Will you miss much work for your military service? Instead, ask: “Were you able to perform the duties in the job description? What did you do in the military? Which of your experiences will translate to this job?”
- **Don’t include questions about disabilities.** Asking veteran candidates about possible disabilities is a violation of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act and the Americans With Disabilities Act.

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What works

In his recruiting efforts, Dave Dunckel—veterans initiatives manager for Roush Industries, a global automotive engineering company headquartered in Livonia, MI—tries to talk about job opportunities with everyone he meets. He calls this networking endeavor “ABC—Always Be ‘Connecting.”

Here are some of Dunckel’s tips:

- **Focus on the guard and reserve.** Members of these units are together for a weekend each month, which means there are plenty of opportunities to meet them. You can go directly to local units or to the state-level leadership to get a contact. Line up a time to meet with veterans that doesn’t interfere with training or present a distraction. Sunday afternoons, before the service members leave, are a good time.
- **Bring your laptop.** This enables candidates to apply on the spot. Make sure to take marketing materials and business cards, too. If you can, speak directly to the senior members of the unit (such as the first sergeant or unit readiness officer) to remind them that you’re always available if someone becomes interested in employment or wants career advice.
- **Be aggressive and out front.** “At hiring fairs, I don’t stand behind the table,” Dunckel says. “I am out in front shaking hands and introducing myself to job seekers.” Bring more than one person to a hiring fair. One or two recruiters can talk to people who come to the table, and someone else can walk around and meet veterans and spouses.
- **Keep an open mind.** During one of the first hiring fairs his company attended, Dunckel met a lieutenant colonel in the Marines who had applied for a warehouse supervisor position. While his previous experience didn’t exactly align with the job description, the Roush recruiters appreciated that the candidate had moved two Marine task forces from Camp Lejeune in North Carolina to Afghanistan, which translated to warehouse logistics. The veteran has excelled in his position.
QUESTIONS

What are some questions that can get a veteran to open up about themselves?

• EXAMPLE: Can you talk about a personal goal you set, and how you accomplished it?

What are some questions that can get a veteran talking about their military job?

• EXAMPLE: Can you tell me about your primary roles and responsibilities in that job?

What are some questions that might give insight into how their abilities translate into the position?

• EXAMPLE: Can you tell me about a difficult problem you faced in your job, and how you handled it?

Focus ON SPOUSES

DON’T FORGET THE FOLLOWING TIPS WHEN INTERVIEWING MILITARY SPOUSES.

• ASK SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES. Find out about their role, actual duties, size of the group and length of service.

• GIVE THE SPOUSE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN ANY GAPS IN THEIR RESUME.

• INQUIRE HOW THE JOB THEY ARE INTERVIEWING FOR FITS THEIR PAST EXPERIENCE AND THEIR FUTURE CAREER GOALS.

MAKE a commitment to hire veterans through Hiring 500,000 Heroes at uschamberfoundation.org/form/hiring-500000-heroes.

CREATE AND PUBLISH an employee value proposition (EVP).

CREATE a special page on your website dedicated to recruiting veterans and spouses.

HIRE OR DESIGNATE a veteran or military spouse to manage your recruitment efforts, and ask existing veteran employees for referrals.

ESTABLISH a company presence on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and other social media.

LEARN MORE ABOUT INTERVIEWING VETERANS

Go to employerroadmap.org/article/interviewing

LEARN MORE ABOUT RECRUITING VETERANS

Find out more about recruiting veterans, including how to use other available government tools, at employerroadmap.org/recruit

USE language in position descriptions that would attract a veteran (for example, "bachelor’s degree or equivalent military experience preferred").

CREATE an Employer Search Engine account at resumeengine.org/employer to search a database of veteran and spouse resumes.

REGISTER for a virtual hiring fair at Virtual Job Scout (virtualjobscout.org), and for free Hiring Our Heroes hiring fairs at uschamberfoundation.org/events/hiringfairs.

POST jobs to the Veterans Job Bank at ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs.

HAVE a recruiter visit a Transition Assistance Program session—information sessions required by the military for service members who are leaving—at a military installation.

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WELCOME AND SUPPORT YOUR VETERAN EMPLOYEES
Help Your Staff
Recognize Veterans

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN • It’s important to tap into the expertise your company may already have in the form of current veteran employees.

ONE OF THE keys to creating a positive work environment for veterans is educating your workforce about service members, their spouses and the military experience. Here are some suggestions that will help establish a welcoming culture:

• TEACH EMPLOYEES THE MILITARY BASICS.
The more your workers understand and appreciate veterans’ service and experiences, the more effective they will be interacting with them. No two veterans will have had the same experience in the military, but everyone’s relationships will be stronger if nonveteran workers have a solid grounding in the basics.

• UTILIZE OR LEVERAGE VETERANS ON YOUR STAFF.
There might be veterans or military spouses in the company willing to help educate your workforce; engage them in the process. Educate your employees on the culture, values and structure that veterans come from. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs also recommends a free military primer at essentiallearning.net/student/content/sections/lectora/militaryculturecompetence/index.html.

• TAKE ADVANTAGE OF DIGITAL OFFERINGS.
Register for one of the Military 101 webinars presented monthly by Hiring Our Heroes. Or you can invite your local Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) representative to speak about serving in the National Guard or Reserve and provide Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) guidelines.

• DISPEL THE MYTHS. Make sure you debunk myths such as, “Veterans are unstable because of the trauma they’ve experienced.”

• EDUCATE EMPLOYEES ON DISABILITY ISSUES AND RIGHTS.
The vast majority of veterans don’t experience disability issues. But for those veteran employees who do, your company should do all it can to support them. These resources are good starting points for educating your staff on these workplace issues:

  Rights of veterans with disabilities:
  ADA: A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS
  eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/ada_veterans_employers.cfm

  Post-traumatic stress disorder:
  NATIONAL CENTER FOR PTSD
  ptsd.va.gov/public/community/info-employers-vets.asp
  askjan.org/media/ptsd.html

LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT YOUR COMPANY NEEDS TO DO TO ACCOMMODATE EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES. Go to employerroadmap.org/article/accommodations

ACCOMMODATE YOUR VETERAN EMPLOYEES

ACCOMMODATE YOUR VETERAN EMPLOYEES

Explain How Veterans Can Advance

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN • Veterans are accustomed to a world in which they receive frequent feedback, and their achievements are always noted.

IN A 2013 Department of Veterans Affairs report, some veterans acknowledged that they are “frustrated by the lack of written rules, a clear chain of command and a clear path for advancement” in their companies.

Based on their military experience, veterans are used to working within a structure and process through which they can ascend. Civilian employers should set up a similar scenario, establishing a defined career pathway to success for veterans.

Here are some other suggestions that will help veterans advance in the workplace:

• Give specific dates for reviews, explain any timetable involved in potential advancement and discuss ways they can put themselves in the best position to get promoted.

• Give specific details about the criteria involved in becoming eligible for raises.

• Provide constant feedback in a constructive tone. Veterans are accustomed to receiving reviews of their performance—and getting advice on how to improve it. “Give veterans timely, specific and actionable feedback in a private setting,” says Chad Storlie, a 20-year veteran and now a marketing executive who writes a blog about veterans and civilian employment called Every Veteran Hired. He adds that in the military, there are performance coaching sessions every 30 to 60 days, where opportunities for improvement are discussed. Veterans might respond well to a similar process at your company.

• Challenge them, and reward them. “Veterans live to be challenged,” Storlie writes. So don’t hesitate to present them with a range of business problems to attack and solve. And when they accomplish something, be sure to recognize them for it. The military hands out medals, citations and other forms of official praise. Think of ways your company could reward all of your employees, not just veterans or spouses, for their achievements (pins, challenge coins, bracelets, etc.).

CONTINUED
What WORKS
PATHWAYS TO ADVANCEMENT

Safeway Inc., headquartered in Pleasanton, CA, created an intensive, multimonth training program for former junior military officers and noncommissioned officers, placing them into an accelerated leadership program. Safeway views this effort as an opportunity to find proven leaders who have been educated and trained, and who have experience leading people under a variety of circumstances.

According to a 2012 Washington Post article, employees hired through the program are given a signing bonus of about $10,000 and paid a base salary that starts at roughly $75,000 per year.

Here are some key points of the program, which has led to the hiring of more than 200 veterans:

• It kicks off with one week at corporate headquarters and includes a combination of on-the-job training; interaction with co-workers and customers on the sales floor; seminars; job shadowing; independent study; and participation in various department and key leadership meetings.

• At the conclusion of the program, participants are equipped to fill various positions at Safeway, including retail store managers, warehouse superintendents and maintenance engineers. The career progression of veterans includes higher-level positions in retail, as well as in marketing, supply chain and logistics.

• To assist with the transition, individuals hired into the program participate in focused periodic training.

• The company’s military talent acquisition recruiter performs periodic check-ins with participants and conducts surveys twice during the program. Senior leadership reviews each survey, and comments and suggestions are instituted where applicable.

• Ross Merritt, a 12-year Marine Corps veteran, program participant and Safeway’s category manager for dairy/refrigerated, says, “Safeway gave me a chance to continue with a profession, without starting from scratch. One of the greatest obstacles I experienced when leaving the Marine Corps was finding a company that valued my years of leadership experience and was willing to allow me to grow them further by placing me in a key leadership role and allowing me opportunities for further advancement.”

LEARN MORE ABOUT WAYS TO RECOGNIZE VETERANS’ ACHIEVEMENTS
Go to employerroadmap.org/article/reward-veterans

ACCOMMODATE YOUR VETERAN EMPLOYEES
Onboarding Veteran Employees

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN • The importance of considering starting and supporting a mentoring program as well as an Employee Resource Group.

WHEN YOU WELCOME a veteran to your company, keep in mind they are transitioning from environments dictated by discipline, clear direction and daily structure, and are accustomed to strong connections with their family, their community and their employer/supervisor. Follow this onboarding plan to help them feel at home in their new environment.

CREATE A MENTORING PROGRAM
A 2013 Department of Veterans Affairs report indicated that mentorship programs were the support plans most advocated by transitioning veterans, supervisors, executives, developers of veteran initiatives, and HR and Employee Assistance Program directors. Link veterans with other veteran employees who can educate them on company culture and discuss concerns a new employee might not otherwise raise.

CONTINUED
ESTABLISH EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS (ERGS), OR AFFINITY GROUPS, TARGETED TO VETERANS

ERGs are employee-led groups whose members have a common interest or background—in this case, the military—and have several benefits. They let your company’s veterans (and other interested employees) connect with and support one another; discuss company issues and have a dialogue with managers; organize volunteer events in the community that fulfill their desire to keep serving others (and improve your company’s community engagement); help generate referrals for new company hires; and more. In short, they make your company a better place to work and help your business grow.

START THE TEAM BUILDING

On the veteran’s first day, get the department together (if possible) for lunch, or at least have two team members take the new employee to lunch. You can also introduce the veteran to a resource group leader and other internal engagement groups that they might be interested in, such as a women leaders group.

OUTLINE COMPANY STRUCTURE

Also on the first day, provide clear information about who manages specific roles in the organization—offer an organizational chart, if available—and introduce the employee to key contacts. This information is especially important to veterans, who are used to a clear delineation of duties.

TALK ABOUT WHAT’S NEXT

Explain benefits, policies, dates for upcoming evaluations (after a month or six months, etc.) and expected timelines for career advancement. Create information packages that list existing resources inside and outside the company and make sure the new employee knows that asking questions of these people is encouraged.

KEEP THE DIALOGUE GOING

Be clear in communications and about all expectations for the job in those first critical weeks when everyone is getting to know one another. Proactively set up check-in meetings to see how the new employee is integrating into the workplace.

DISCUSS LEARNING NEW SKILLS

Explain that the veteran or spouse will be trained to handle new duties. Veterans are used to working with training plans that are realistic and measurable. If possible, provide an example of a training plan or a schedule for the employee to review.

SET UP REGULAR TIMES FOR DISCUSSION

Help establish a routine of communication and agreed-upon deliverables with specific delivery dates. Include the employee’s direct supervisor as well as other necessary colleagues in these discussions.

FOLLOW UP

In addition to regularly scheduled meetings with his/her manager, the new hire should have weekly meetings with an HR employee during the first three months. This provides an opportunity for new workers to ask questions and express concerns that they may not feel comfortable voicing to their manager.

LEARN MORE ABOUT EASING THE TRANSITION

Go to employerroadmap.org/article/employee-support
ACCOMMODATE YOUR VETERAN EMPLOYEES

Show Your Support and Celebrate Their Service

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN • Supporting veterans is easy to achieve, but it’s something a company must commit itself to doing every day.

Whether they are at their civilian workplace, in the middle of a deployment or at a training exercise, veterans need support from their civilian companies. Here’s how you can show you care for veterans and their families inside and outside of the workplace.

EVERYDAY SUPPORT

- Put your support in writing by signing a Statement of Support for the Guard and Reserve (esgrp.mil) and display it prominently.
- Have regular company outings to enhance the sense of “team.” Celebrate your veteran and spouse employees annually through a recognition or social event that includes families.
- Implement initiatives to retain military spouses such as providing a work-from-home option, offering job relocation assistance or providing on-site day care.
- Consider developing a flexible work schedule based on the needs of the veteran or spouse. Read the Society for Human Resource Management’s When Work Works Toolkit for guidance.

What WORKS: VETERANS EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

USAA of San Antonio, TX, provides VetNet, its internal Veterans Employee Resource Group. VetNet boasts a communication site and social media community designed for veteran and military spouse employees that works much like LinkedIn. VetNet is used for sharing information, posting military-related events, seeking/offering help on the job, mentoring, listing military-related websites and establishing focus groups for specific business needs. The VetNet team also executes internal social and professional development events.

DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT

- Consider providing “gap pay,” which means a company makes up the difference between what veterans make in the military and what they would have made had they not been deployed.
- Organize a Big Brother/Big Sister–style program to help support a deployed employee’s family.
- While a Guard/Reserve employee is deployed, invite the spouse to company events.
- Check in with the spouse of a deployed Guard/Reserve employee regularly to see if he/she needs help in any way, and enlist the help of your Veterans Employee Resource Group.
- Stay connected with employees on deployment through cards, letters, care packages, video conferencing and pictures.
- Throw a homecoming event when the employee returns from deployment (but be sure to consult a family member first).

What are other ways the company can demonstrate its support to veterans and spouses, whether they’re on deployment or not?

LEARN MORE ABOUT WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT VETERANS AND SPOUSES

Go to employerroadmap.org/article/reward-veterans and employerroadmap.org/article/workplace-flexibility
Your Responsibilities When a Guard/Reserve Employee Is Called

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN • The basic legal rights a Guard/Reserve employee has from an employer should he or she be required to report for duty.

EMPLOYERS NEED TO understand their obligations when an employee is called to military duty through a deployment or training exercise. Requirements are carefully outlined in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) of 1994, which ensures that persons who serve or have served in the armed forces, Reserve, National Guard or other uniformed services are:

1. Not disadvantaged in their civilian careers because of their service;
2. Promptly re-employed in their civilian jobs upon their return from duty; and
3. Not discriminated against based on past, present or future military service.

The Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense office, works to educate service members and their civilian employers about their rights and responsibilities, including:

- Not only are employers required to re-employ service members, but they must re-employ them at the level they would have achieved had they not been absent for military service. This is called the "escalator" principle, giving veterans "the same seniority, status and pay, as well as other rights and benefits determined by seniority.
- For disabled veterans, employers are required to "make reasonable efforts to accommodate the disability."
- Service members recovering from injuries received during service or training have up to two years from the date of completion of service to return to their jobs or apply for re-employment. If not, alternative re-employment positions must be provided.
- The cumulative length of time an individual can be absent from work for military duty and retain re-employment rights is five years.
- While performing military service, a service member is "deemed to be on a furlough or leave of absence" and has "the nonseniority rights accorded other individuals of nonmilitary leaves of absence."
- While Guard/Reserve employees are on military duty, employee-sponsored health insurance is available to them for up to two years. All pension plans are also protected.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN • The basic legal rights a Guard/Reserve employee has from an employer should he or she be required to report for duty.

Educate your nonveteran employees about veterans and military basics to ensure their support.

Establish a Veterans Employee Resource Group for veterans, and one for military spouses.

Explore flexible work schedules, work-from-home possibilities and other accommodations.

Create a mentorship structure for new veteran employees.

Clearly outline steps veterans can take about how they can advance.

Train appropriate managers on complying with ADA, FMLA and USERRA.

Familiarize yourself with company obligations for USERRA compliance when an employee reports for military duty.

Learn about company requirements regarding the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Designate an HR manager to keep track of veteran employees and spouses to calculate turnover and retention rates.

Plan events, large and small, that celebrate veterans, and include their spouses and families.

If your new employee is in the National Guard or Reserve, start to plan for when the veteran will be training. Contact a Guard or Reserve member’s commander or supervisor, get to know them and ask them to provide you advance notice of an employee’s military duty schedule.

Learn more about ways to support veteran employees

Go to employerroadmap.org/empower