



VETERAN EMPLOYMENT STARTUP GUIDE



ABOUT THE VETERAN JOBS MISSION

The Veteran Jobs Mission is a private sector-led coalition committed to hiring transitioning U.S. military veterans. It is not only a commitment to hire them, but to report on that progress and meet periodically to share leading practices in hiring, acclimating and retaining military talent.

The Veteran Jobs Mission, originally named 100,000 Jobs Mission, began in 2011 as a coalition of 11 companies committed to hiring 100,000 U.S. military veterans by 2020. Surpassing this goal in 2014, the coalition was renamed the Veteran Jobs Mission (VJM) and raised its hiring goal to 1 million veterans.

The coalition now comprises more than 200 companies that represent almost every industry in the American economy. Each company has committed to hire veterans, report their hiring number on a quarterly basis and share best practices.

ABOUT THIS STARTUP GUIDE

This guide is based upon shared experiences from contributing VJM members. It should serve as a reference for VJM members who are interested in developing their veteran employment programs.

GETTING BUY IN

Executive Sponsorship

No matter the size of your company, having an executive sponsor for veteran initiatives and veteran resource groups/veteran affinity groups is a critical first step to ensure long term success. Depending on size and scope of your company, getting an executive sponsor may not be an immediate possibility; however, leadership is critical to help formalize and firmly establish your company's veteran focus both internally and externally. The executive sponsor will be expected to represent and speak on behalf of the entire company publicly, and as such must have a deep understanding of issues related to the military as well as to the organization's brand and public image.

The following are key roles for the sponsor:

- Give strategic direction to align with the organization's business strategy
- Help to identify measurable success criteria that support business goals
- Provide advice and counsel to guide the veteran's initiative development
- Connects to a broad network of internal and external relationships
- Liaises with the executive team and accepts accountability
- Helps identify and overcome obstacles and resistance within the organization
- Supports the veteran initiative through communication and visibility

The stronger your sponsor, the stronger the group! An effective sponsor shares valuable business knowledge, demonstrates leadership, and is genuinely willing to help others.

Set a Goal

Engaging an executive sponsor should be closely followed with selecting a few clear priorities that everyone can grasp. Some recommendations for goals include developing targets for hiring veterans and military spouses, setting veteran retention targets, creating a process for self-identification of veterans and military spouses within your company, identifying community engagement opportunities for the veterans in the company, and formally establishing a veteran affinity group within the company.



VETERAN SOURCING

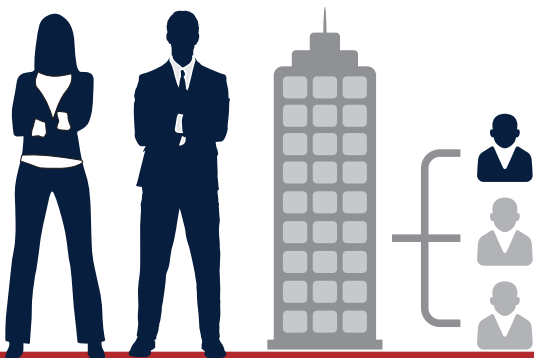
Dedicating Resources

Depending on the size of your company, resources dedicated to veteran issues may range from a portion of one person's work load to dozens of staff dedicated to this effort full time. Developing a successful veterans program will require a focused effort to discuss the best way to handle a variety of veterans issues to include:

- Supporting recruiting efforts
- Commemorating military holidays (service birthdays/Veterans Day)
- Establishing policies for reserve members
- Developing a mentor and sponsor networks for veterans

Developing effective practices for hiring veterans is a process that can take time. Here are three key steps to serve as a foundation for successfully sourcing veterans.

- 1 Engage your HR representatives and recruiters to help identify areas where military talent would serve as high fit. Work with recruiters and hiring managers to tailor these job descriptions and state, when appropriate, that relevant military experience qualifies.
- 2 Leverage your current veteran employee population and collaborate with them as ambassadors on behalf of your company when marketing that you are a military-friendly work environment. You can also partner with them to review job descriptions and relevant marketing materials.
- 3 Connect with the military installations that are located near your company. Build relationships with transition offices and determine if there is a pipeline of talent that fits your company's hiring needs. Utilize the resources that the bases offer for transitioning military members.



Key Sourcing Partnerships



Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)

<https://esgr.mil/>

Contact: Bruce Townshend, Chief, Employer Outreach | Email: Bruce.d.townshend.civ@mail.mil



Four Block

<https://fourblock.org>

Contact: Lauren Schulz-Carnes, Executive Director | Email: lschulz@fourblock.org



LinkedIn for Veterans

<https://linkedinforgood.linkedin.com/programs/veterans>

Contact: Dan Savage, Head of Military and Veterans Programs | Email: dsavage@linkedin.com



Onward to Opportunity

<https://onward2opportunity.org>

Contact: Anthony Cosby, Director for Employer Outreach | Email: latcosby@syr.edu



Hiring our Heroes

<https://www.hiringourheroes.org/employers/>

Email: hiringourheroes@uschamber.com



Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP)

<https://msepjobs.militaryonesource.mil>



Hire Heroes USA

<https://www.hireheroesusa.org/>

Contact: Elizabeth (Liz) Reyes, Director of Employment Opportunities | Email: lereyes@hireheroesusa.org



Soldier for Life Network

<http://soldierforlife.army.mil>



Marine for Life Network

<http://marineforlife.org>

VETERANS ACCLIMATION AND RETENTION

While hiring is a critical first step, acclimation and retention will ensure that your company harnesses military talent and becomes an effective military-friendly workplace. Here are the central elements to acclimating and retaining veterans.

Onboarding

Early engagement with new veteran hires is key for employee retention. Transitioning from life in the military into a corporate setting has unique challenges regarding changes in culture, expectations for advancement, and differences in communication among others. These changes, if not addressed, can result in some veterans feeling out of place and could potentially contribute to attrition. When reaching out to new veteran employees, make sure you include the resources your company offers, e.g. a veteran affinity group, mentorship program, service opportunities, etc.

Sponsors and Mentors

Supporting veteran employees to build networks and personal relationships across your company strengthens the ability of your organization to develop talent within. Many VJM companies have used mentorship programs to support their development goals. These programs typically focus on introducing company values and organizational structure as well as tracking career objectives and progression.

Alternate Models to Support Veteran Acclimation

Veteran Briefing Sessions

Including a veteran acclimation training in your new employee onboarding curriculum is another option. Training could be conducted once a month by an individual with both company and military experience. Your target audience could include all veterans hired in the past month.

Manager Training

Training managers to better understand your veteran population is also essential for supporting your company's retention goals. If a hiring manager knows how to recognize the signs of veteran fatigue, then they can easily provide feedback and recommend appropriate actions to benefit both parties.

Affinity Groups

Developing a veteran-focused affinity group or employee resource group (ERG) is another critical step for your company to engage with veterans within the company. ERGs offer military personnel opportunities to network with other employees who are veterans and reservists to help ease the military-civilian divide. Connecting with others from across the organization who share similar life experiences, speak their language and have successfully made the transition to civilian life boosts morale, reduces stress and enhances employee satisfaction—all of which increase veteran employee retention and help build the company's external reputation as a military-friendly organization.



No matter the size of your company, you should consider formally establishing one of these groups. Develop a process to opt in to the group, create an email alias to keep members apprised, and use it to engage with veteran members to aide in recruiting efforts. The groups can also be used as tools to provide sponsors and mentors for onboarding veterans, and to share in veteran outreach.

Career Mapping and Job Promotion

Common feedback from transitioning veterans entering the civilian workforce is that they miss the structure and clear career progression of the military. Having those conversations early with veterans is critical in order to set expectations. Typically a career path is not going to be as clear cut as it is in the military and no longer will you have a career counselor/monitor/detailer that is tracking your career and providing guidance. Making sure transitioning veterans understand the promotion process, resources available to discuss career opportunities, and examples of others that have had successful career progression is essential to providing a robust onboarding experience. Lack of transparency for career development is often cited as a reason why veterans quickly leave the roles they enter.

Recognition Programs

Developing some formal recognition programs for veterans is also a great way to improve retention. From doing little things like recognizing veterans on specific military related holidays and service birthdays, to providing some type of pin/t-shirt/lanyard/coin to recognize their status as a veteran goes a long way to making veterans feel included on their new team. That level of camaraderie is often cited as what they miss the most and these recognition steps can help to ease the transition into the civilian world.



VETERAN JOBS MISSION

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JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.



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Community Engagement

Partner with regional veteran service organizations to provide your veteran employees with service opportunities. This will not only support additional touchpoints for engagement with your veteran population but will also help to promote your company's brand through strategic partnerships.

VJM members have successfully partnered with the following veteran services:

- ✓ **Team Rubicon** unites the skills and experiences of military veterans with first responders to rapidly deploy emergency response teams to communities affected by natural disaster. For more information, email Brian Meagher at meagher@teamrubiconusa.org or visit teamrubiconusa.org.
- ✓ **Mission Continues** empowers veterans who are adjusting to life at home to find purpose through community impact. We deploy veterans on new missions in their communities, so that their actions will inspire future generations to serve. For more information, visit missioncontinues.org.
- ✓ **Team RWB's** mission is to enrich the lives of America's veterans by connecting them to their community through physical, social and volunteer service activities. At over 130,000 members, operating in 205 communities, Team RWB increases veteran engagement and aids in developing authentic relationships to support better mental, emotional and physical health. These activities provide the basis to develop authentic and genuine relationships between veterans and civilians. To join the team and find your chapter, go to www.teamrwb.org. Contact: Sarah Holzhalt at sarah.holzhalt@teamrwb.org.
- ✓ **PsychArmor Institute** works to bridge the civilian military divide by ensuring that every American has the knowledge, tools and resources needed to engage effectively with the military and veteran community. For more information, contact Margaret Riley at mriley@psycharmor.org or visit www.psycharmor.org.
- ✓ **Pat Tillman Foundation's** mission is to unite and empower remarkable military veterans and spouses as the next generation of public and private sector leaders committed to service beyond self. For more information on the Pat Tillman Foundation visit www.pattillmanfoundation.org or email Cara Campbell at chammer@pattillmanfoundation.org.
- ✓ **Travis Manion Foundation** empowers veterans and families of fallen heroes to develop character in future generations. To learn more about the Travis Manion Foundation visit www.travismanion.org or email Hugo Lentze at hugo.lentze@travismanion.org.

CONCLUSION

Our goal for this startup guide is to provide resources and best practices for companies that are incorporating veteran hiring into their business objectives. Companies can use these recommendations as a starting point for implementing or improving their veteran employment strategies.



For more information please visit veteranjobsmission.com.