

# Guide to Hiring Veterans

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**2012**

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## Introduction

Across the nation, many entities (non-profits, for-profits, civic organizations, institutions of higher learning, community-based efforts, etc.) are committed to assisting Veterans as they transition out of the services and pursue civilian careers, higher education, institutional positions, or start their own businesses. This guide is intended to provide you and your organization the information needed to recruit, retain, support, and educate veterans in your area and across the nation.

## Veterans Legal & Policy Developments

### Veterans Opportunity to Work to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 (VOW Act)

On November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011, President Obama signed the Veterans Opportunity to Work to Hire Heroes (VOW) Act of 2011 into law. There are two tax credits associated with this law:



- The *Returning Heroes Tax Credit* is a new hiring tax credit that will provide an incentive for businesses to hire unemployed veterans.
  - *Short-term unemployed*: A new credit of 40 percent of the first \$6,000 of wages (up to \$2,400) for employers who hire veterans who have been unemployed at least 4 weeks.
  - *Long-term unemployed*: A new credit of 40 percent of the first \$14,000 of wages (up to \$5,600) for employers who hire veterans who have been unemployed longer than 6 months.
- The *Wounded Warrior Tax Credit* will double the existing tax credit for long-term unemployed veterans with service-connected disabilities.
  - Maintain the existing Work Opportunity Tax Credit for veterans with service-connected disabilities (currently the maximum is \$4,800).
  - A new credit of 40 percent of the first \$24,000 of wages (up to \$9,600) for firms that hire veterans with service-connected disabilities who have been unemployed longer than 6 months.<sup>1</sup>

The VOW Act provides additional support to assist unemployed veterans secure employment.

- The *Veterans Retraining Assistance Program* provides up to 99,000 unemployed Veterans age 35 to 60 with 12 additional months of training.
  - Veteran must not be eligible for any other GI Bill benefits
  - Leads to an Associates Degree or Certification in a high demand occupation
  - Offered by Community College or Technical School

<sup>1</sup> [www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/21/fact-sheet-returning-heroes-and-wounded-warrior-tax-credits](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/21/fact-sheet-returning-heroes-and-wounded-warrior-tax-credits)

- Upon completion of the program, Veterans receive free employment assistance and job placement services from Department of Labor “CareerOneStop” locations nationwide
- The *Special Employer Incentives* program is available to Veterans, who in some instances face obstacles in gaining meaningful employment.
  - Veteran is placed in an on-the-job training (OJT) program with the employer
  - VA will pay up to half the Veteran’s salary for the first six to nine months
    - Payments are **in addition** to the tax incentives listed above

## Veterans Gold Card

<http://www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard/revisedgoldcard5.pdf>



The Gold Card provides unemployed post-9/11 era veterans with the intensive and follow-up services they need to succeed in today's job market. The Gold Card initiative is a joint effort of the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS).

An eligible veteran can present the Gold Card at his/her local One-Stop Career Center to receive enhanced intensive services including up to six months of follow-up. The enhanced in-person services available for Gold Card holders at local One-Stop Career Centers may include:

- Job readiness assessment, including interviews and testing;
- Development of an Individual Development Plan (IDP);
- Career guidance through group or individual counseling that helps veterans in making training and career decisions;
- Provision of labor market, occupational, and skills transferability information that inform educational, training, and occupational decisions;
- Referral to job banks, job portals, and job openings;
- Referral to employers and registered apprenticeship sponsors;
- Referral to training by WIA-funded or third party service providers; and
- Monthly follow-up by an assigned case manager for up to six months.



As an employer you can contact your local One-Stop Career Centers to provide information on job openings currently available.

## Veterans Skills Translation

Our nation's veterans bring an extraordinary array of skills and training to any position. Effectively understanding how these skills can translate to your hot job categories is a vital step towards effectively hiring veterans in your workplace.

### Find the Skills you Need

COOL (Credentialing Opportunities On-Line) offers two websites to help you determine how military careers, ratings and experience can translate to meet civilian certification and license requirements.

Army	Navy
<a href="http://www.cool.army.mil">www.cool.army.mil</a>	<a href="http://www.cool.navy.mil">www.cool.navy.mil</a>

Mil2FedJobs Crosswalk ([www.mil2fedjobs.com](http://www.mil2fedjobs.com)) helps you identify the military occupations related to a specific federal job. It also provides information about military careers and terminology to help hiring managers and HR professional better understand and assess a veteran's education, skills and experience.

### Speak the Language

Veterans from each branch of the services will be trained in one or more backgrounds throughout their military career. These skills tell part of the story of a veteran's experience in the service and will help you understand how they may be valuable to your organization.

#### Service Specific Terms for Military Occupational Classification

Air Force	Army	Marine Corps	Navy
Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC)	Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)	Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)	Ratings
O*NET OnLine offers a Military to Civilian Crosswalk that may help you improve your Veterans outreach by targeting specific Military Occupational Classification codes that relate to civilian positions. Simply enter the job title you are looking to fill (e.g., accountant, human resources, warehouse, etc.) into the military search section. Most civilian occupations will display a list of the occupational specialty codes used by the different branches of the military. You might consider including a list these codes in your job announcement as a way to help Veterans better understand the correlation between their military training and the civilian career you have available. <a href="http://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC?s=&amp;g=Go">www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC?s=&amp;g=Go</a>			

## How to Hire Veterans

There are multiple resources available to help employers connect their civilian career opportunities to job-seeking Veterans. In fact, that is one of the challenges—there are so many resources that employers can become confused and overwhelmed when determining where to go, whom to talk to and whether resources are reputable. Rather than conduct an Internet search for possible connections, and then wonder if the agency is trustworthy, employers can access the following vetted resources. These resources are not listed in any particular order, nor is it recommended that only one source be used. They are additional sources to add to your company's strategic recruitment plan.

### Official wounded warrior programs

Official Wounded Warrior Programs are sponsored by each of the five military service branches. In general, each provides individualized support, assistance and advocacy for severely wounded, ill and injured Soldiers, Veterans and their families regardless of their military status or location, typically for as long as it takes. Each program can connect companies with wounded Service Members, Veterans or spouses looking for employment. As an employer working through one of the official Wounded Warrior Programs, you designate yourself as truly committed to showing a special interest and concern for our nation's disabled Veterans.

To learn more about hiring a wounded warrior from a specific service branch, please use any or all of the contacts presented below. There are many different programs across the country; by contacting one of the official sites below, you will be directed to local contacts. Simply let them know that you are an employer who is looking to hire!

Branch	Email	Phone
Army	<a href="mailto:AW2careerprogram@conus.army.mil">AW2careerprogram@conus.army.mil</a>	(800) 237-1336
Air Force	<a href="mailto:afwounded.warrior@randolph.af.mil">afwounded.warrior@randolph.af.mil</a>	(800) 581-9437
Coast Guard   Navy	<a href="mailto:safeharbor@navy.mil">safeharbor@navy.mil</a>	(877) 746-8563
Marines	<a href="mailto:wwtransition@usmc.mil">wwtransition@usmc.mil</a>	(877) 4USMCWW (877-487-6299)

### Army Career Alumni Program (ACAP)

<https://www.acap.army.mil/employers.aspx.htm>

ACAP was created by the Army to help soldiers succeed in their transition from federal service. ACAP's Employers path was created to help employers find the experienced and reliable employees they need to support their economic growth.

### Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces

<http://www.employerpartnership.org>

Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces, operated by the Army Reserve, lends assistance not only to those looking for a job, but also to public and private employers who are ready to hire former service members.

### **National Resource Directory**

<http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/employment>

The Departments of Defense, Labor, and Veterans Affairs partnered together to create the National Resource Directory (NRD), a website that connects Wounded Warriors, Service Members, Veterans and their families with those who support them.

The objective of the website is to provide access to services at the national, state, and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation, and community reintegration. In addition to providing information on topics like education and training, health, and homeless assistance, the website also powers the Veterans Job Bank. The Veterans Job Bank is a central location where Veterans can find employment opportunities and employers can find qualified veterans.

### **Service Locator**

<http://www.servicelocator.org>

Service Locator is an online resource that allows you to find workforce-related resources according to your location. Simply enter your zip code, click "go" and you will receive a list of One-Stop Career Centers in your area. All One-Stop Career Centers have Veterans Representatives who work on both the supply and demand side of recruitment. Ask to speak with the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) or the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist at the center nearest you.

### **VetSuccess**

<http://www.vetsuccess.gov/>

VetSuccess.gov is a website sponsored by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. It provides the opportunity for Veterans to post their resumes, and for employers to post job openings, and links directly to Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) national employment resources for employers.

### **Warrior Transition Command - Employment, Education and Internships**

Federal and civilian employers can access information about hiring wounded warriors from the Warrior Transition Command's Employment, Education and Internships website

([http://www.wtc.army.mil/about\\_us/eei\\_for\\_employers.html](http://www.wtc.army.mil/about_us/eei_for_employers.html)). Learn how warriors in transition can intern at federal agencies or how private sector employers can gain access to severely wounded Veterans who have separated from the Army and are ready to transition to the civilian workforce.

## **VA's Homeless Veteran Supported Employment Program**

Homeless Veteran Supported Employment Program (HVSEP) provides veterans who are homeless, formerly homeless, or at-risk of homelessness with vocational assistance, job development and placement, and ongoing employment support in an effort to improve employment outcomes. To inquire about hiring HVSEP participants contact your local VA and ask for either the HVSEP program manager or CWT manager.

## Interviewing Veterans

Many civilian employers have admitted challenges when it comes to evaluating a Veteran during a job interview. This is often because Veterans have difficulty explaining how their military experience relates to the needs of the civilian employer. Additionally, while Veterans will be quick to praise their team or unit, they are typically not self-boastful in interviews, so civilian employers can often feel like Veteran candidates are not "selling themselves."

It is important to keep in mind that the concept of "professional presentation" is often different for former military personnel than for civilians. Military personnel (particularly those recently separated/discharged from military service) will often present themselves with eyes forward, back straight, and using "Sir" and "Ma'am" vocabulary (often without much smiling). This behavior may be misperceived as cold, distant, unapproachable or demonstrating a lack of social skills. While this is generally not the case, these perceptions have caused many Service Members to be discarded early in the interview process. Employers should recognize that former military personnel may need permission to "speak freely" to create a comfort level where they can appear in the most positive light. Hiring managers should be encouraged to be patient with these candidates and to "dig deep" with follow up questions to find qualities that are not apparent at first glance. It is worth remembering that Veteran candidates, unlike many civilian candidates, may not be accustomed to interviewing and may require a little latitude.

## Know What You Can and Should Not Ask During an Interview

First and foremost, interviewing a Veteran or wounded warrior is no different than interviewing any other candidate. It is important to ask all questions of all candidates, without exception. A good interviewing practice is to ask all candidates the following question: "Have you read the job description? Yes or no - can you, with or without a reasonable accommodation, perform the essential functions of the job?" You are not asking the candidate to disclose whether or not they have a disability, but are ensuring they can perform the essential functions of the job. In addition, you make it clear that as an employer you understand this process and are not likely to discriminate due to disability.

Questions relevant to experience or training received while in the military, or to determine eligibility for any Veteran's preference required by law, are acceptable. However, some questions to avoid include:

- "What type of discharge did you receive?" Only federal agencies - or those that assign a Veterans' hiring preference or have requirements related to security clearances, should ask questions related to military discharge (especially in a pre-employment phase).
- "I notice that you're in the National Guard...are you going to be called up for duty anytime soon?" This is similar to asking a woman if she is planning to have a baby anytime in the near future. Remember, it is unlawful to discriminate against someone because of membership in the National Guard or Reserves, a state defense force or another state or Federal Reserve unit.

- "Did you see any action over there?" "Did you lose your arm getting hit by an IED?" "Have you seen a psychiatrist since you've been back?" Questions related to deployments to Iraq or Afghanistan may be interpreted as trying to determine if the Veteran has PTSD or TBI and could be construed as violation of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Most of the standard behavioral interview questions should be no different than those you would typically ask any other candidate (e.g., management style, problem solving, strengths/weaknesses related to teamwork, etc.). Consider phrasing your questions to ensure the interviewee clearly understands that you are referring to both civilian and military work experience. For example:

- "Tell me about the type of training and education you received while in the military."
- "Were you involved in day-to-day management of personnel and/or supplies? How many people did you supervise? If you managed resources such as supplies, inventory and/or equipment, what was the net worth of these resources?"

Additionally, it is perfectly fine to thank the individual for their service to our country - plain and simple.

## Additional Veteran Hiring Benefits & Resources

### VA Benefits

Not only are Veterans transitioning out of the military with an extraordinary set of skills and training under their belt, they may have an array of benefits available from the Department of Veterans Affairs to help them gain the knowledge, experience, and qualifications to enter successful careers.

Many Veterans can use their benefits for:

- Two and four-year college degrees
- Graduate degrees
- On-the-Job Training
- Apprenticeships
- Technical and Vocational programs
- Licensing and Certification Exams.

VA also offers a wide array of vocational and employment services to Veterans with service-connected disabilities to help them obtain suitable employment.

VA can provide:

- Half the Veteran's salary for up to six months, in some instances
- The cost of accommodations, required tools, and equipment
- A VA counselor to work with some Veterans to provide supportive services

### Social Networking

If your company does business using social networking platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, consider joining groups pertaining to Veterans and Veterans' employment. For example, there are currently more than 250 Veteran-related groups on LinkedIn. All will not be appropriate for your company to join, of course, but some will be - if not for posting job descriptions, but for receiving and sharing information.

A few recommended social networking groups to join or follow include the following:

- America's Heroes at Work LinkedIn group (<http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=1842767>)
- The Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and TBI Twitter feed (<http://twitter.com/dcoepage>)
- National Resource Directory Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/NationalResourceDirectory>)

Additionally, nonprofits (such as Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) and the Wounded Warrior Project) have their own social networking sites to support the employment of today's transitioning veterans.

## E-News

Staying connected to issues supporting the employment of Veterans and transitioning Service Members is easy. The following are some suggestions for employers of all sizes and types:

- **America's Heroes at Work**  
[www.AmericasHeroesatWork.gov](http://www.AmericasHeroesatWork.gov)  
Receive updated news, information, tools and resources about the America's Heroes at Work project.
- **Brainline**  
[www.brainline.org](http://www.brainline.org)  
Information on preventing, treating and living with traumatic brain injury (TBI).
- **The Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCOE)**  
[www.dcoe.health.mil/default.aspx](http://www.dcoe.health.mil/default.aspx)  
Receive email updates regarding the promotion of resilience, recovery and reintegration of warriors and their families.
- **Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC)**  
[www.dvbic.org/](http://www.dvbic.org/)  
This electronic newsletter aims to serve active duty military, their beneficiaries, and veterans with traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) through state-of-the-art clinical care, innovative clinical research initiatives and educational programs.
- **Deployment Health News**  
[www.pdhealth.mil/Data/pd\\_signup.asp](http://www.pdhealth.mil/Data/pd_signup.asp)  
This electronic newsletter, offered as a public service, covers health issues related to military service, deployments, homeland security, and the current conflicts overseas.
- **Disability Business Technical Assistance Centers**  
[www.adata.org/Static/Home.aspx](http://www.adata.org/Static/Home.aspx)  
Receive e-mail updates and newsletters pertaining to a specific region or area of the country. Simply choose your regional ADA center from the list presented.
- **National Center for PTSD**  
[www.ptsd.va.gov/about/subscribe.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/about/subscribe.asp)  
Stay informed about the latest news and information on trauma and PTSD by signing up for a mailing list and the Research Quarterly newsletter.
- **U.S. Department of Labor elaws Advisor updates**  
[www.dol.gov/elaws/subscribe.html](http://www.dol.gov/elaws/subscribe.html)  
DOL's elaws Advisors are interactive e-tools that guide you to specific information on DOL employment laws and regulations. You can stay up to date on these important compliance assistance tools by subscribing to receive elaws email Updates.

- **U.S. Department of Labor e-mail alerts**

[www.dol.gov/dol/email.htm](http://www.dol.gov/dol/email.htm)

The Labor Department offers a free electronic subscription service that allows citizens to receive notifications by e-mail alerting them to newly available information. Subscribers get updates on their items of interest automatically without having to return to the website to check for changes.

## Preparing and Educating the Workplace

- **Dispelling myths about traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the workplace**

<http://www.americasheroesatwork.gov/forEmployers/presentations/>

- **A lesson in military cultural competence**

<http://www.essentiallearning.net/student/content/sections/Lectora/MilitaryCultureCompetence/index.html>

- **Top ten reasons to hire veterans and wounded warriors**

<http://www.americasheroesatwork.gov/AHAW/newsroom/TopTen>

- **Work Opportunity Tax Credit - Veterans Brochure**

[http://www.doleta.gov/business/Incentives/opptax/PDF/WOTC\\_Vets\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.doleta.gov/business/Incentives/opptax/PDF/WOTC_Vets_Brochure.pdf)

- **Understanding the military resume**

<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/133601p.pdf>

## Recruiting Veterans and Wounded Warriors

- **Army Career Alumni Program**

[http://www.acap.army.mil/emp/employer\\_info.aspx](http://www.acap.army.mil/emp/employer_info.aspx)

- **Army Reserve Employer Partner Initiative**

<http://www.usar.army.mil/arweb/EPI/Pages/Partners.aspx>

- **Helmets to Hardhats**

<http://www.helmetstohardhats.org>

- **Helmets to Hardhats - Wounded Warrior Program**

<http://info.helmetstohardhats.org/content/wounded-warriors/index>

- **Mentorships**

- **American Corporate Partners**

<http://www.acp-usa.org/>

- **The Mission Continues**

<http://www.missioncontinues.org/fellows/fellowships>

- Operation Warfighter  
[http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/careers/gc\\_1246894993888.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/careers/gc_1246894993888.shtm)
- **One-Stop Career Centers / Local Veterans Employment Representatives**  
<http://www.servicelocator.org>
- **Translating military experience into credentials**
  - Army  
<https://www.cool.army.mil/>
  - Navy  
<https://www.cool.navy.mil/>
- **Official Wounded Warrior Programs (email | phone)**
  - Army | [AW2careerprogram@conus.army.mil](mailto:AW2careerprogram@conus.army.mil) | 800.237.1336
  - Air Force | [afwounded.warrior@randolph.af.mil](mailto:afwounded.warrior@randolph.af.mil) | 800.581.9437
  - Coastguard & Navy | [safeharbor@navy.mil](mailto:safeharbor@navy.mil) | 877.746.8563
  - Marines | [wwrtransition@usmc.mil](mailto:wwrtransition@usmc.mil) | 877.487.6299
- **Understanding the military resume**
  - Proof of military service (DD214)  
<http://www.dd214.us/dd214andjobs.html>
  - Military to civilian crosswalk search  
<http://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC/>
- **VetSuccess**
  - Post Job openings  
<http://www.vetsuccess.gov>
  - Find a local representative  
[http://vetsuccess.gov/assets/VR&E\\_Employment\\_Coordinators\\_list.xls](http://vetsuccess.gov/assets/VR&E_Employment_Coordinators_list.xls)

## Retaining Veterans

- **Accommodations and workplace productivity enhancements**  
<http://askjan.org>
- **Apprenticeship - creating a flexible apprenticeship program for your business**  
<http://www.doleta.gov/oa/employer.cfm>

- **Flexible Work Arrangements**  
<http://www.dol.gov/odep/categories/workforce/fwas.htm>
- **Employer Success Stories (hiring wounded warriors)**  
<http://www.americasheroesatwork.gov/successStories#Employers>

## Employment Laws Pertaining to Veterans and Veterans Hiring

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**  
<http://www.ada.gov/>
- **Compliance Assistance on Hiring Veterans**  
<http://www.dol.gov/compliance/topics/hiring-vets.htm>
- **Employment Law Guide: Laws, Regulations, and Technical Assistance Services**  
<http://www.dol.gov/compliance/guide/index.htm>
- **FAQs About Hiring Service Disabled Veterans and Accommodations**  
<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/veterans-disabilities-employers.html>
- **Jobs for Veterans Act**  
<http://www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-vevraa.htm>
- **Uniformed Service Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) Advisor**  
<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/vets/userra/mainmenu.asp>
- **Veterans with service-connected disabilities and the Americans with Disabilities Act: A guide for employers**  
<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/veterans-disabilities-employers.html>

## Other Important Resources to Have at Your Fingertips

- **America's Heroes at Work**  
<http://www.AmericasHeroesAtWork.gov>
- **Army Reserve Family Programs (including Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program)**  
<http://www.arfp.org/>
- **Childcare Assistance and Support**  
<http://www.naccrra.org/MilitaryPrograms/army/>
- **eBenefits Portal (for Veterans, Service Members, and their families to research, find, access, and manage their benefits and personal information)**  
<http://www.ebenefits.va.gov>
- **Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve**  
<http://esgr.org/site/Home/tabid/55/Default.aspx>

- **National Resource Directory (for wounded, ill and injured Service Members, Veterans, their families and those who support them)**  
<http://www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov>
- **VA for Vets (provides career development services to existing Veterans and coaching/reintegration support for military Service Members)**  
<http://www.vaforvets.com>
- **Veterans Issues - elaws**  
<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/veterans.html>
- **Veterans Service Organizations (Directory)**  
<http://www1.va.gov/vso/>

### Specifically for the Federal Workforce

- **Computer/Electronic Technology Accommodations Program (CAP) for Federal Employers - Wounded Service Member Initiative**  
<http://cap.tricare.mil/wsm/>
- **The Good Faith Initiative (G-FIVE)**  
<http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/faqs/dir282faqs.htm>
- **HR University - Veterans Appointing Authorities - Free, Online Workshop**  
[http://www.hru.gov/course\\_catalog.aspx](http://www.hru.gov/course_catalog.aspx)
- **OFCCP - Federal Contractor Program**  
<http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/fact/vet97-5.htm>
- **OFCCP - Federal Contractor Program - Frequently Asked Questions**  
<http://www.dol.gov/vets/contractor/main.htm>
- **U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Government-wide Veterans Employment Website**  
<http://www.fedshirevets.gov/>
- **Veterans Preference in Appointments**  
<http://www.opm.gov/staffingPortal/Vetguide.asp#intro>

## APPENDIX A: Veteran and Disability Employment

### Answers to Common Questions about Veteran and Disability Employment

The America's Heroes at Work initiative has fielded answers and supplied resources related to some common (and often unspoken) questions employers and HR professionals have with regard to employing Veterans and people with disabilities. This section offers some quick answers and vetted resources related to common questions about: workplace accommodations; cost, liability and return on investment; candidate qualifications and capabilities; stigma and employees with psychological health injuries and mental health concerns; and staff training and disability-friendly workplaces.

#### Workplace Accommodations

- *"How do I determine what types of workplace accommodations a wounded warrior might need?"*
- *"What if I need assistance regarding workplace accommodations?"*

Just as everyone's personality is unique, so is every accommodation. Accommodations are based on a person's needs - typically based on the limitation he/she is experiencing - and are not disability specific.

The most appropriate reasonable accommodation is best determined through a flexible, interactive process that involves both the employer and the individual with a disability. This generally begins with a conversation - and using a problem-solving approach, an employer should:

1. Analyze the particular job involved and determine its purpose and essential functions;
2. Consult with the individual with a disability to ascertain the precise job-related limitations imposed by the individual's disability and how those limitations could be overcome with a reasonable accommodation;
3. In consultation with the individual to be accommodated, identify potential accommodations and assess the effectiveness each would have in enabling the individual to perform the essential functions of the position; and
4. Consider the preference of the individual to be accommodated - and select and implement the accommodation that is most appropriate for both the employee and the employer.

There is probably nothing "special" that you will need to do - for several reasons. First, many people with "hidden" disabilities (including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)) choose not to disclose in the workplace, mainly for fear of discrimination. Many people have learned to self-accommodate, and generally know what they need to do (i.e., take a short break after sitting at the computer for a long period of time, use lists and other electronic devices to keep them organized, etc.). Second, once a person has requested an accommodation, an open discussion can begin, engaging the individual in the decision making and problem solving process.

The best thing you or your company can do is to have a clear accommodations process in place (including procedures for requesting a job-related accommodation). It should be posted and made easily accessible (via the Web, corporate intranet, etc.) for all potential candidates and current employees. The number of employees with acquired disabilities is growing in this country (according to the U.S. Census Bureau, there is a 73.6% chance of acquiring a disability if you live to age 80), and employing such strategies (which are truly just good management techniques) will undoubtedly lead to greater retention.

**Suggested Resources:**

- **America's Heroes at Work**  
<http://www.AmericasHeroesAtWork.gov>
- **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)**  
<http://askjan.org>

### Costs, Liabilities and Return on Investment

- *"Will it cost me extra to hire a wounded warrior? What is the return on investment?"*
- *"Are job accommodations expensive? Are they simple to implement?"*
- *"What are the liabilities and consequences associated with terminating an employee with a disability?"*
- *"Will wounded warriors need more supervision? Will they take more time off work or increase my risk of workers compensation costs?"*

According to a recent accommodations study (9/1/09 from the Job Accommodation Network), 56% of accommodations cost absolutely nothing! Of the remaining 44%, approximately 37% of employers reported a one-time cost, 5% reported an ongoing, annual cost to the company, and 2% required a one-time cost and annual costs. Of those accommodations that did have a cost, the typical one-time expenditure by employers was \$600. When asked how much they paid for an accommodation beyond what they would have paid for an employee without a disability who was in the same position, employers typically answered around \$320.

Regarding liability, the decision to terminate any employee carries with it the risk of possible legal challenges. It is best to have clear procedures and policies in place to ensure all employees are getting the feedback they need in order to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities. The protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act are based on non-discrimination (and ensure equal access in the employment process). It does not mandate companies to hire individuals with disabilities, but hiring the most qualified applicant regardless of disability. Additionally, it does not protect an employee with a disability from being fired due to poor job performance, but from being fired simply because of a disability.

Research studies dating back to 1948 have consistently shown that employees with disabilities have average or better attendance, lower turnover, and average or better job performance, and average or better safety records than their nondisabled counterparts. Additionally, the cost of accommodations for most employers is quite small relative to the benefits gained. Most large- and medium-sized businesses report no significant increase in costs.

Regarding the need for more supervision, military Veterans tend to need less supervision than the average employee. Much of this is based on their military background (stick-to-itiveness, completing duties as assigned and directed, not sitting idle, etc.). All that is needed is what all employees typically need: clear expectations (with an understanding of the chain of command and/or who to report to with questions).

Time loss will only be a factor if this employee (or any other), doesn't disclose a need for a flexible schedule (which is the most frequently requested accommodation for employees both with and without disabilities).

***Suggested Resources:***

- **America's Heroes at Work**  
<http://www.AmericasHeroesAtWork.gov>
- **EARNWorks (Employer Assistance and Resource Network)**  
[http://www.askearn.org/businesscase/roi\\_index.asp](http://www.askearn.org/businesscase/roi_index.asp)
- **U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)**  
<http://www.dol.gov/odep/>
- **Worksupport.com**  
<http://www.worksupport.com>

## **Candidate Qualifications and Capabilities**

- *"Are wounded warrior employees the right fit for my business?"*
- *"Are wounded warriors capable of meeting the demands of the job?"*
- *"What are the advantages of hiring Veterans"*
- *"How can I create a flexible and inclusive workplace for all employees, including those with disabilities?"*

First and foremost, it is important to expect the same level of performance from all employees, regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, etc. Plain and simple, no one, Veteran/wounded warrior included, should be hired for any reason other than the fact they are qualified - and have the skills to do the job. For candidates with invisible disabilities, such as learning or psychological disabilities, PTSD and/or TBI, the employment process can be a very difficult experience. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, one in every five Americans has some sort of disability. In actuality, this number is most likely

underrepresented, because many people with invisible disabilities fail to report such. Interestingly, many in the Deaf community (especially those who share the common language of American Sign Language) do not consider themselves disabled. They consider deafness a culture.

Employees with disabilities should absolutely be held to the same standards as those without disabilities. Though it would be an egregious error to make generalizations about any group of people, military Veterans do tend to come to the table with a set of highly desirable and universal [skills](#). To answer questions regarding necessary skills sets, being able to meet the statement of work, and job performance, good employment and management techniques will generally sort out those who have the technical skills to do the job.

*An idea to consider:* Universal Design is the creation of products and environments meant to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialization. The intent of Universal Design is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications and the built environment more usable by as many people as possible at little or no extra cost. Universal Design benefits people of all ages and abilities.

True Universal Design is unobtrusive, even invisible. If you've ever been through an automatic door, you've experienced a version of Universal Design. A ramp or curb cut is just as welcome to someone with a baby stroller as it is to someone in a wheelchair. In addition to those whose mobility is limited, the design is intuitive to those who cannot read or hear or those who read or speak a foreign language. Ironically, the "conspicuousness" of a person having to deal (often awkwardly and unsuccessfully) with the barriers of most built environments is what brings attention to their dilemma. "We" have created the handicap and disability. The handicap is the structure itself. The disability comes from dealing with it. In addition to access and inclusion, Universal Design brings with it an extra margin of safety. However, Universal Design isn't about ramps and grab bars, although devices such as these remain necessary for assistance. It isn't a clinical or "special" look.

Consider what would happen if businesses applied the theory of Universal Design to the workplace and employment process. Since human resource personnel and hiring managers will only know if a candidate has an invisible disability if he/she has chosen to disclose, why not create a level playing field for everyone? Performance-based or "working" interviews often will do just that. This strategy may even help those who just get plain nervous during the interview process.

Additional "positive management" strategies would include the following:

- Multiple means of representation to give employees various ways of acquiring information and knowledge
- Multiple means of action and expression to provide employees alternatives for demonstrating what they know, and
- Multiple means of engagement to tap into employees' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to succeed

**Suggested Resources:**

- **Universal Design in the Workplace**  
[http://www.dbtacnorthwest.org/public/site/files/ada/documents/UD\\_Workplace\\_Final\\_02.pdf](http://www.dbtacnorthwest.org/public/site/files/ada/documents/UD_Workplace_Final_02.pdf)
- **J.L. Mueller, Inc.**  
<http://home.earthlink.net/~jlminc/index.html>
- **DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology) at the University of Washington**  
<http://www.washington.edu/doi/>
- **Tools for Universal Design for Instruction**  
<http://www.facultyware.uconn.edu/>
- **Universal Design Fact Sheets**  
<http://askjan.org/topics/univdes.htm>

## Stigma and Employees with Psychological Health Injuries and Mental Health Concerns

- *"Should I be nervous about hiring Veterans with psychological health issues such as PTSD?"*
- *"How can I ensure that my employees with mental health impairments are not stigmatized?"*
- *"Why is employment such an important part of a wounded warrior's recovery process?"*
- *"Where can I gain more insights on working with people with disabilities?"*

"Stigma" generally exists when there is a lack of exposure, education and training. Stigma can only be reduced/eliminated when people change deeply held attitudes and stereotypes. People with disabilities want to be treated like any other worker - with dignity and respect, and valued for the talents they bring to the table. Something you may not have previously considered is the fact that those with psychiatric disabilities/mental illness and other acquired disabilities (including Veterans with PTSD and TBI) may often self-stigmatize (believing that they are weak or damaged because of an illness/disability). For our returning Service Members, especially those dealing with the impact of PTSD, employment serves as a source of achievement, satisfaction and a boost to self-esteem, in addition to providing an income. Work is often a critical element of a therapeutic road to recovery and routine.

About one in every four adults has a diagnosable mental health condition in any given year (roughly translating to 57.7 million people in the United States). Employers who provide workshops on Stress Management, Communication Skills, Anger Management, Addictions, etc. offer a proactive approach to common employee problems, and thus are likely to reduce turnover and improve retention. High-pressure jobs leave people vulnerable to overload. It may benefit the employer to work to develop an employee's skills for working with each other and for handling frustration and stress.

**Suggested Resources:**

- **Accommodation Ideas for Mental Health Impairments**  
<http://askjan.org/media/psyc.htm>
- **Disability Business Technical Assistance Centers**  
<http://www.adata.org>
- **Workforce Discovery: Diversity and Disability in the Workplace**  
<http://www.transcen.org/DandD/intro.html>

## Staff Training and Disability-Friendly Workplaces

- *"Do I need a special workplace infrastructure to support wounded warriors - particularly those with TBI/PTSD?"*
- *"Where can I find disability employment training for my company?"*

The infrastructure necessary to support employees with disabilities in general includes clear and consistent policies and procedures, including an accommodations process.

Ongoing staff training is important to the growth, health and wellness of any corporate culture. In today's economy, offering ongoing training in the areas of positive mental health, stress management, etc., go a long way to promoting positive mental health in the workplace (not surprisingly, job stress is a common and often costly problem in the American workplace).

Training assistance is available (at a free or nominal cost) from the local Disability Technical Assistance Centers. The DBTAC National Network of ADA Centers offers training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability-related topics in various formats to meet the needs of diverse learning styles. Each DBTAC/ADA Center offers customized training and many of the training programs provide education credit. Popular training formats include: Audio Conferences, Conferences & Training Events, Courses, Podcasts, Publications/Training Materials, Toolkit /Train-the-Trainer, Videos, and Webcasts.

**Suggested Resources:**

- **TBI, PTSD and Employment - an Online Training Tool for Employers, Supervisors and Hiring Managers**  
<http://www.americasheroesatwork.gov/forEmployers/presentations/>
- **Job Accommodation Network - Accommodation and Compliance Series Employees with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder**  
<http://askjan.org/media/ptsd.html>
- **Job Accommodation Network - Accommodation and Compliance Series Employees with Brain Injuries**  
<http://askjan.org/media/BrainInjury.html>

- **Job Accommodation Network - Fact Sheet Series**  
**Five Practical Tips for Providing and Maintaining Effective Job Accommodations**  
<http://askjan.org/topics/accommo.htm>
- **Disability Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC)**  
<http://www.adata.org/>

## APPENDIX B: Applying for VOW Tax Credits for Hiring Veterans

The VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 made changes to the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). The Act added two new categories to the existing qualified veteran targeted group and made the WOTC available to certain tax-exempt employers as a credit against the employer's share of social security tax. The Act allows employers to claim the WOTC for veterans certified as qualified veterans and who begin work before January 1, 2013.

The credit can be as high as **\$9,600** per qualified veteran for for-profit employers or up to **\$6,240** for qualified tax-exempt organizations, but the amount of the credit will also depend on a number of factors, including the length of the veteran's unemployment before hire, the number of hours the veteran works, and the veteran's first-year wages. The amount of the credit for qualified tax-exempt organizations may not exceed the organization's employer social security tax for the period for which the credit is claimed.

### Pre-screening and Certification

All employers must obtain certification that an individual is a member of the targeted group, before the employer may claim the credit. The process for certifying the veterans for this credit is the same for all employers.

Normally, an eligible employer must file Form 8850, Pre-Screening Notice and Certification Request for the Work Opportunity Credit, with their respective state workforce agency within 28 days after the eligible worker begins work. But under a special rule included in IRS Notice 2012-13, employers have until June 19, 2012, to complete and file this newly-revised form for veterans hired on or after Nov. 22, 2011, and before May 22, 2012. The 28-day rule will again apply to eligible veterans hired on or after May 22, 2012.

IRS Notice 2012-13 also provides additional guidance on submission of Form 8850.

## Claiming the Credit

For-profit Employers	Tax-exempt Employers
<p>For for-profit employers, the law now allows a tax credit for hiring qualified veterans who begin work before January 1, 2013.</p> <p>After the required certification is secured, for-profit employers claim the tax credit as a general business credit against their income tax. The process for for-profit employers claiming the Work Opportunity Tax Credit under the VOW to Hire Heroes Act for qualified veterans remains the same.</p>	<p>Qualified tax-exempt organizations, organizations described in IRC Section 501(c) and exempt from taxation under IRC Section 501(a), may claim the credit for qualified veterans who begin work on or after Nov. 22, 2011, and before January 1, 2013. After the required certification is secured, tax-exempt employers claim the credit against the employer social security tax by separately filing Form 5884-C , Work Opportunity Credit for Qualified Tax-Exempt Organizations Hiring Qualified Veterans.</p> <p>File Form 5884-C after filing the related employment tax return for the employment tax period for which the credit is claimed. It is recommended that qualified tax-exempt employers do not reduce their required deposits in anticipation of any credit as the forms are processed separately.</p> <p>In addition to Form 5884-C and its instructions, tax-exempt employers should see IRS Notice 2012-13 for more details for claiming the credit.</p>
<p>You'll Need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Form 5884 (with instructions) <a href="http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f5884.pdf">http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f5884.pdf</a></li><li>• Form 3800 (with instructions) <a href="http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f3800.pdf">http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f3800.pdf</a></li><li>• Your business's related income tax return and instructions (i.e., Forms 1040, 1041, 1120, etc.)</li></ul>	<p>You'll Need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Form 5884-C , Work Opportunity Credit for Qualified Tax-Exempt Organizations Hiring Qualified Veterans. <a href="http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f5884c.pdf">http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f5884c.pdf</a></li></ul>

For more information on the tax credit process, please visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

Specific guidance on the VOW Act process may be found at <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=253949,00.html>.