

Creating a Veteran Employee Resource Group

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Ohio Department of Veterans Services

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**Department of
Veterans Services**



Section One: Introduction



**Department of
Veterans Services**



Overview



- About Us and the Ohio Department of Veterans Services
- Veteran Demographics
- Hiring Veterans
- The Veteran Hiring Process
- Veteran Employee Resource Groups
- Questions/Feedback



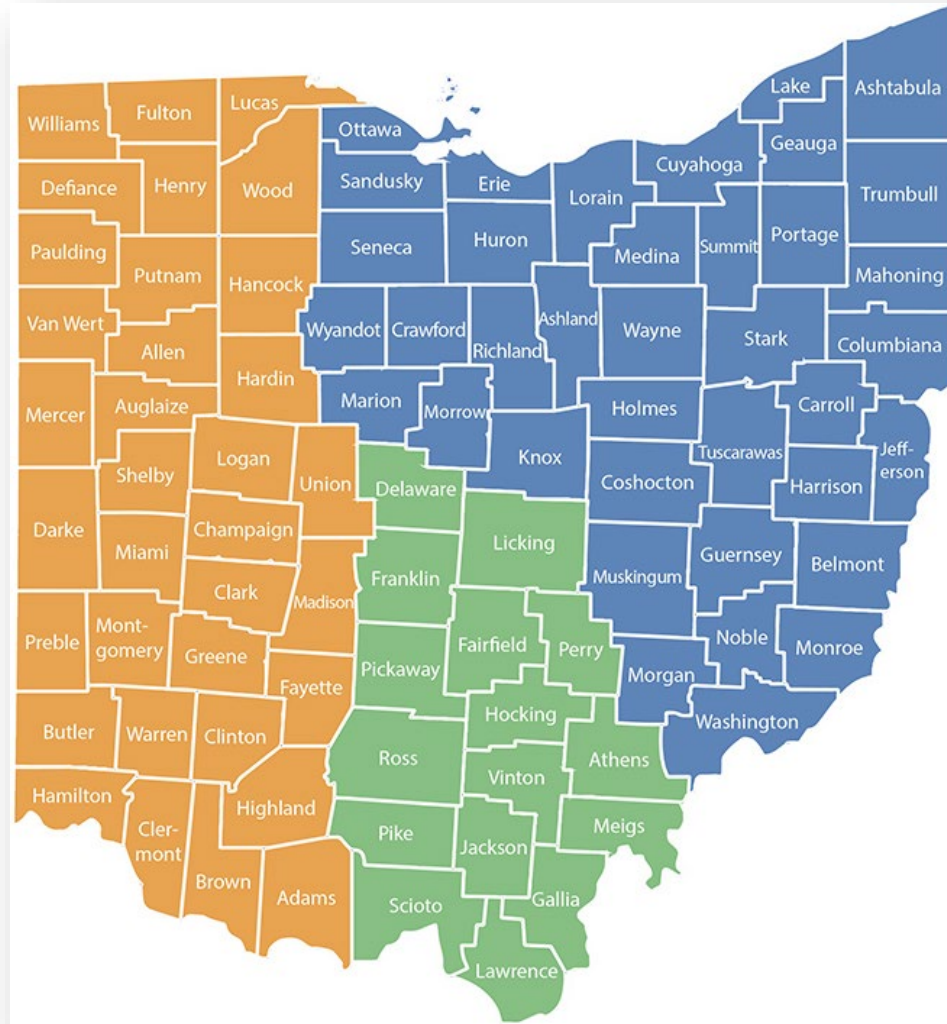
About Me



- Born and raised in a military family
- Army Veteran – Medical Logistics Officer
 - Ohio Troops to Teachers Manager
- M. Ed. OSU – 2003
 - Special Education
- M.P.A. Troy State Univ. – 1987
- O.D.V.S - 2010



ODVS Workforce Consultants



East

- Tyler Emley
- Tyler.Emley@dvs.ohio.gov
- 614-296-8548

Central

- Chris Picha
- Chris.picha@dvs.ohio.gov
- 614-975-6270

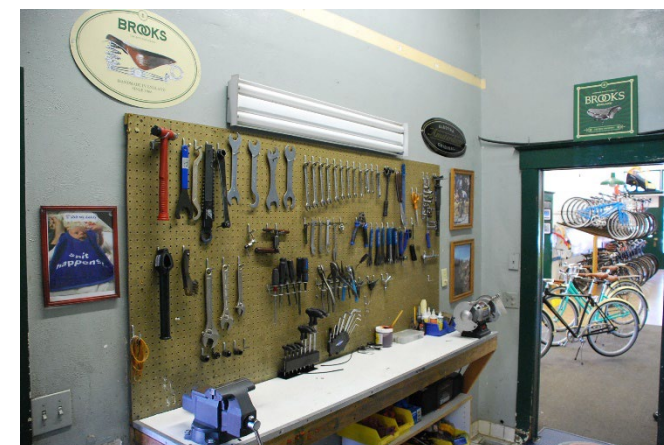
West

- Kennedy Dennard
- Kennedy.Dennard@dvs.ohio.gov
- 614-296-7882



What We Provide

- One-on-one or group training for employer human resources staff and senior management
- Support to veteran employee resource groups
- Connections to veteran applicants via OhioMeansJobs, National Guard Employment Enhancement Program, etc.
- Information for apprenticeship/OJT approval



Training Presentations



- Veteran Hiring Overview
- Military Culture
- Veteran Benefits and Resources
- Stereotypes and Myths
- Interviewing Veterans
- Mental Health
- Veteran Employee Resource Groups
- Managing Veterans
- Military Spouses



ODVS Workforce Website



The screenshot shows the website's navigation bar with the Ohio Department of Veterans Services logo and menu items: JOBS & EDUCATION, VETERAN BENEFITS, RESOURCES FOR VETERANS, VETERANS HOMES, VETERANS BONUS, WHAT WE DO, Help, and Search. The breadcrumb trail reads: DVS / Jobs & Education / Veterans Workforce Team / Training Resources. The main heading is "Training Resources". On the left, a sidebar lists "Jobs & Education", "Veterans Workforce Team", "State Approving Agency", and "Jobs & Education Resources". The main content area features a "SHRM SHRM-CP | SHRM-SCP RECERTIFICATION PROVIDER 2020" badge. Below the badge is a paragraph: "The ODVS Veterans Workforce Team is recognized by the Society for Human Resource Management to offer Professional Development Credits." A "Share this" button with social media icons is to the right. At the bottom, a "Presentations" dropdown menu is open, listing: "Creating a Veteran Employment Process", "Interviewing a Veteran", "Managing Veterans", "Military Culture", "Military Spouses", "Understanding Veteran Mental Health", "Veteran Benefits and Resources", "Veteran Hiring Overview", and "Veteran Stereotypes and Myths".

Section Two: Veteran Demographics

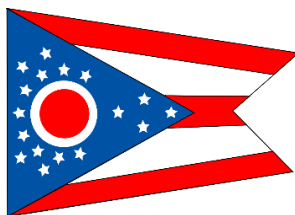


**Department of
Veterans Services**





Ohio Veterans: By the Numbers...



Ohio

- ~733,000 Veterans
- 6th largest in the country

National Veteran Unemployment Rate
2.8%
April 2023

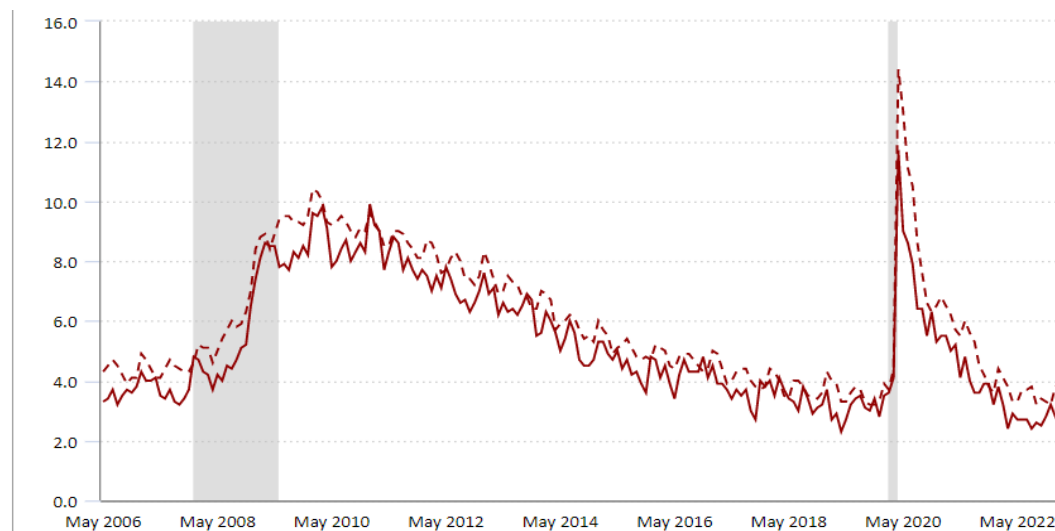
National Veteran Underemployment Rate
31.8%

Top 5 Counties

- Cuyahoga
- Franklin
- Hamilton
- Montgomery
- Summit



Historic National Veteran Unemployment Rate



— Veterans
 - - - Non-Veterans



Where are the Veteran Job-Seekers?



Ohio Means Jobs



Franklin County

9,016

County Veteran Resumes

540+

Uploaded or updated in last 30
days within 50 miles of
Columbus (43215)



Top 3 Skills Listed

Customer Support/Service

Sales

Training/Teaching

Top 3 Education Levels

Some College (2,467)

High School Diploma (2,311)

Bachelor's Degree (1,738)



Higher Education

- Every public university in Ohio has a veteran POC
- Transfer credits and certifications awarded for military service

23,000

Students currently
using the G.I. Bill

4,400

Students using ONG
Scholarship

1,000

Service members
using military TA



Ohio National Guard



- National Guard Employment Enhancement Program
 - Jobs with stability, long term opportunity, consistent employment, and high wages

16,000+

Members of Army/Air Guard

3,700+

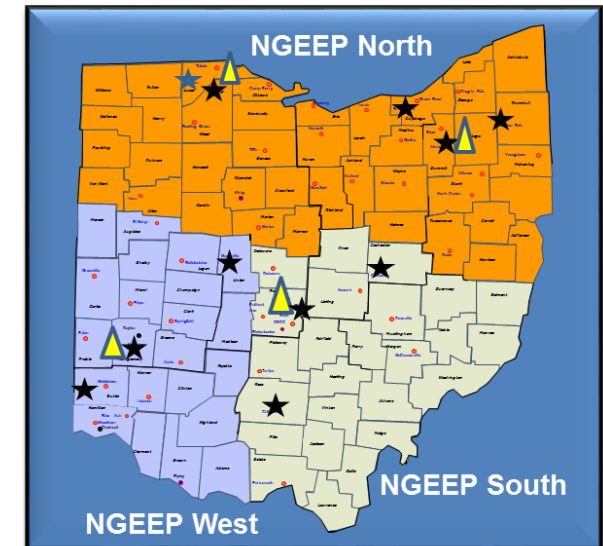
Clients assisted ('17)

2,700+

Employers outreached ('17)

700+

Placements/hires ('17)



Brad Moeller, Program Manager

bmoeller@interactivegov.com

614-336-7366

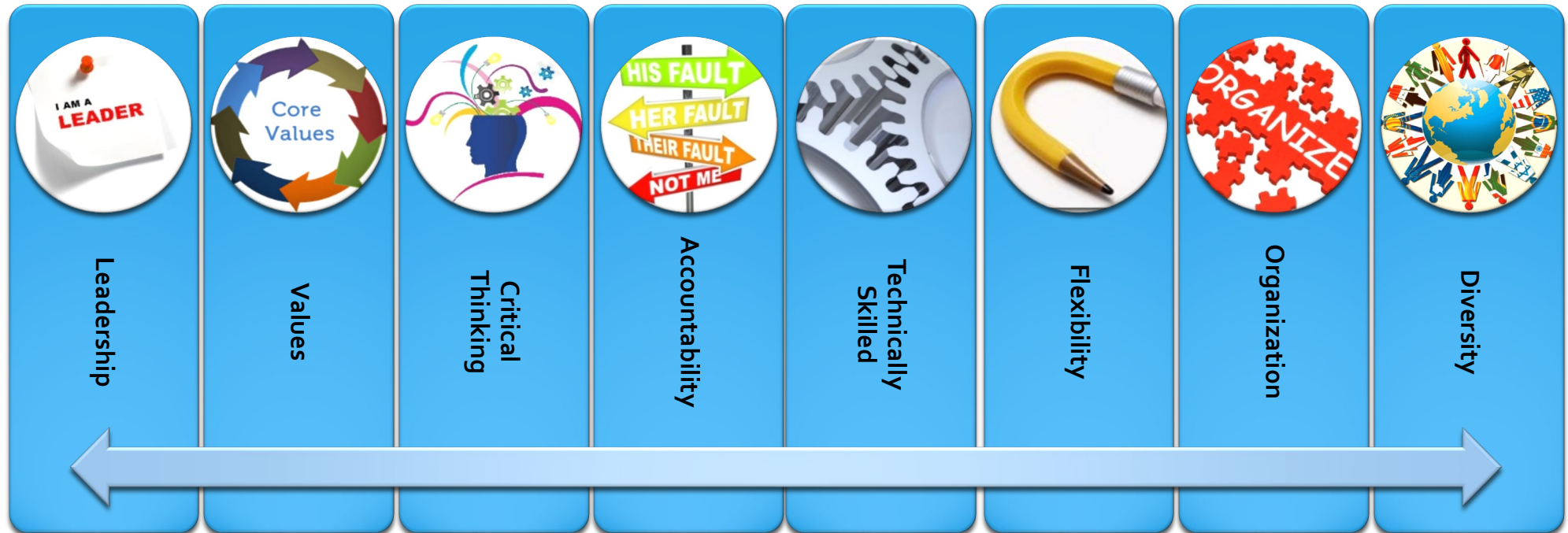
Section Three: Hiring Veterans



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Why Hire a Veteran?





So Many Approaches to Finding Military Talent

(High Cost, Low Cost & Free)

- Military placement firms
- Military job boards
- Military career fairs
- Military publications
- Military professional associations
- Military post/base transition centers
- National Guard & Reserve units
- College campuses
- Government resources
- Non-profit groups
- Social networking sites





Resume Examples – The Good

Highly motivated retired military officer, who has served overseas in combat divisions in critical and demanding command and staff positions. Successfully completed tour of duty as a Tank Company Commander, 2nd Infantry Division, Korea. Performed contract work in Iraq and Kuwait as a Senior/Lead Field Service Representative (FSR) for MAXXPRO and RG-33 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) Vehicle Programs. Vietnam Veteran, (U.S. Navy). Reputation for **attention to detail, integrity**, team building, and mission accomplishment. **Excellent leadership and communication skills.** Solid record of **making correct decisions in high stress and hostile environments.**

Professional Experience

Mission Command Center of Excellence (MC CoE) 2009-2014

Officer (Major)

Lawrenceville, Kansas

Responsible for the daily overall operational and functionality of the MC CoE Headquarters Section and subordinate elements. Served as officer in charge of operational physical security (OPSEC), safety officer, Key Control, and Secure Communications Room. Additional duties include:

- Updated and wrote Standard Operating Procedures for OPSEC, Safety, Key Control, and Secure Communications Room in accordance with higher authority policies.
- Successfully passed all inspection by higher authority.
- Trained and mentored assistant employees in their additional duties.
- Conducted other duties as directed by immediate supervisor.

leadership

communication skills

attention to detail

integrity

decisions in high stress and hostile environments



Resume Examples – The Bad

Field Service Representative (FSR) for MAXXPRO and RG-33 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP)

Responsible for the daily overall operational and functionality of the MC CoE Headquarters Section and

- Conducted other duties as directed by immediate supervisor.

Commander, 2nd Infantry Division, Korea. Performed contract work in Iraq and Kuwait as a Senior/Lead Field Service Representative (FSR) for MAXXPRO and RG-33 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) Vehicle Programs. Vietnam Veteran, (U.S. Navy). Reputation for attention to detail, integrity, team building, and mission accomplishment. Excellent leadership and communication skills. Solid record of making correct decisions in high stress and hostile environments.

Professional Experience

Mission Command Center of Excellence (MC CoE)

2009-2014

Assistant Operations Officer (Major)

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

Responsible for the daily overall operational and functionality of the MC CoE Headquarters Section and subordinate elements. Served as officer in charge of operational physical security (OPSEC), safety officer, Key Control Officer, Secure Communications Room Manager, and Supply Officer, among other additional duties.

- Updated and wrote Standard Operating Procedures for OPSEC, Safety, Key Control, and Secure Communications Room in accordance with higher authority policies.
- Successfully passed all inspection by higher authority.
- Trained and mentored assistant employees in their additional duties.
- Conducted other duties as directed by immediate supervisor.



Resume Examples – The Bad

Field Service Representative (FSR) for MAXXPRO and RG-33 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP)

Responsible for the daily overall operational and functionality of the MC CoE Headquarters Section and

- Conducted other duties as directed by immediate supervisor.

Translation:

Trained personnel on vehicle operation, automotive and electrical system maintenance procedures

Commanded Mission Control center to perform critical daily tasks and issued directives for key staff

Additional duties included Logistics Manager and training/mentoring civilian employees in workspace

Section Four: Creating a Veteran Employment Process



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General Electric



***"Veterans arrive at GE with not only
translatable skills and expertise but with the
intangibles and values that we believe define our
culture and determine our success."***

The Veteran Hiring Process



- Veteran hiring initiatives
- Recruiting strategy
- Job posting
- Interview, assessment and decision process
- Onboarding
- Veteran Employee Resource Group

**WE'RE
HIRING!**

Understanding Veteran Hiring Initiatives



- Hire the best qualified talent to support the business strategy
- Garner VA Special Employer Incentives and tax credits
- Meet compliance requirements

Employers: Want to thank a veteran? Hire one.

Claim a tax credit for hiring a veteran who has a service-connected disability, is unemployed, or is a member of a family receiving SNAP (food stamp) benefits.

- Reduce your federal income tax liability by as much as \$9,600 per veteran hired.
- There is no limit on the number of individuals an employer can hire to qualify to claim the tax credit.
- Certain tax-exempt organizations can take advantage of WOTC by receiving a credit against the employer's share of Social Security taxes.

VETERAN TARGET GROUP	MAX. TAX CREDIT
Receives SNAP (food stamps) benefits	\$2,400
Entitled to compensation for service-connected disability:	
Hired within 1 year of discharge or release from active duty	\$4,800
Unemployed at least 6 months in the year ending on the hiring date	\$9,600
Unemployed:	
At least 4 weeks	\$2,400
At least 6 months	\$5,600

Understanding Veteran Hiring Initiatives



- For more information and direct assistance with the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program Contact:
- The ODJFS Office of Workforce Development at : at wotc_contact@jfs.ohio.gov

BJ Knutson-Cruset

**Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program Administrator,
Office of Workforce Development**

**30 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215**



Create Job Postings



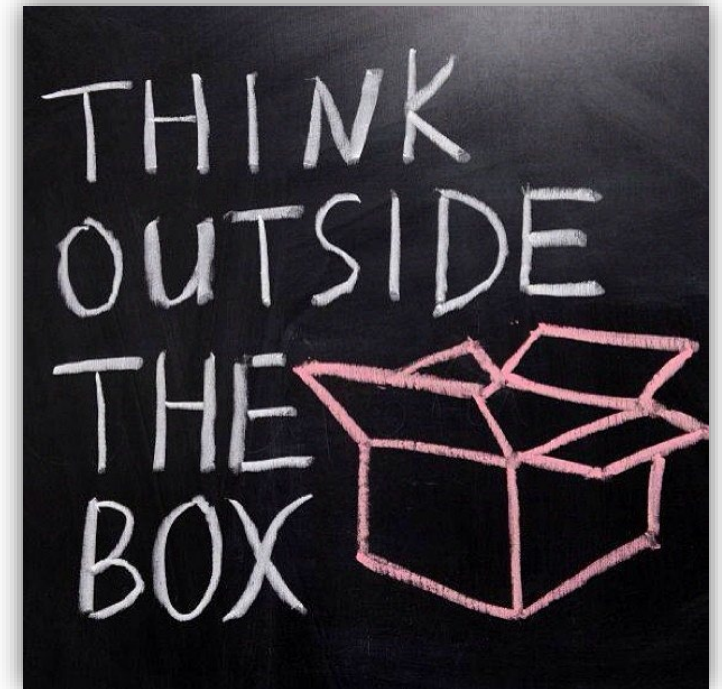
- Focus on required skill sets
- Incorporate military terms where appropriate
 - OMJ skills translator, MOS job descriptions
- Review posting with military veteran employees
- Gain buy in from hiring managers & senior leaders



Develop Veteran Recruiting Strategy



- Identify Veteran recruiting best practices
- One size does not fit all
- Utilization of mainstream recruiting tools
- Think out of the box
 - OJT/Apprenticeship, use current veteran employees, network at local veteran events





The State Approving Agency

Traditional College



On the Job Training



Veteran Educational Benefits can be used for a
Traditional College Degree or approved
On-the-Job Training Programs



Interview, Assessment & Decision

- Train Hiring Team
- Involve military veterans
- Develop military-friendly questions
- Put the Veteran at ease



Interviewing a Veteran Reference Guide

Preparation Phase

- Understand why you are hiring veterans – check your bias and stereotypes
- Research the military experience thoroughly – utilize the military skills translator
- Understand the true job requirements and how military experience could benefit

Interview Phase

- Encourage the veteran to speak freely – veterans are usually more rigid and stiff
- Remember that interviews are not a normal part of the military career experience
- Tailor questions to veteran experience – veterans talk team before they talk self

Assessment Phase

- Ask yourself “did the veteran progress throughout his/her military career?”
- Identify the strengths such as leadership, accountability, and team building
- Look for compatibility – did the veteran match their military skills with the position?

Decision Phase

- Remember veterans have a myriad of soft skills, like leadership and flexibility
- Veterans possess skills that can make them some of your best employees
- Hire a veteran because they’re the best candidate, not because they’re a veteran



Interview, Assessment & Decision

- Consider veteran candidates who have 80% of required skill sets
- Veteran candidates should fit the business culture
- Hiring a veteran is not charity work – select the best qualified candidate

Onboarding for New Veteran Employees



- Senior leadership and hiring manager involvement
- Implement a Mentoring Program
- Consider rotation of newly hired veteran employees
- Involve military spouses
- Establish a Veteran Employee Resource Group





Ask Yourself...

- Do you want to increase Veteran retention or recruitment within your organization?
- Are you looking to bolster your company's community outreach programs and build a military-friendly culture?

If you responded YES, you may want to consider creating a VERG.

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)



Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are popular in companies where employees can form informal or formal networks over common interests and passions. Groups of working moms, HR professionals, baseball fanatics, or those from certain nationalities might naturally form an ERG because of shared experiences, or goals. Sometimes these ERGs are intentionally formed to address specific causes, issues or opportunities for volunteering.

Berkeley Lab



- Berkeley Lab currently has seven ERGs:
 - African-American ERG (AAERG) to support African-American employees and members of the ERG
 - All Access ERG for disability inclusion
 - “gLoBaL” ERG to provide support Berkeley Lab employees who have moved to the US.. from another country
 - Latinx and Native Americans Association (LANA) ERG to advance an inclusive work environment for Latinx and Native American employees
 - Lambda Alliance ERG for LGBTQ employees and allies



Berkeley Lab (cont.)

- Veteran ERG (VERG) for veterans and supporters
- Women Scientists and Engineers Council (WSEC) with appointed members from Divisions, as well as volunteer members.
- All of these groups are open to any Berkeley Lab employee who wish to participate as a volunteer (an employee does not need to identify as a member of these groups to join)

Berkeley Lab Veterans ERG (VERG)



- The purpose of the VERG is to enhance the work environment at Berkeley Lab for veteran employees and job seekers. Our goal is to promote an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere, identify and address emerging issues or challenges such as veteran recruitment and retention, increase the visibility and value of veterans' skills in the workplace among management and staff, provide guidance for institutional processes and programs, enhance policies of non-discrimination, and recognize achievements impacting our community. The group is open to all employees, including veterans and civilians. VERG is currently working on a self-identification campaign for veterans at the Lab.
- Sponsor: TBD



Tips For Job Hunters



- You can best leverage a company's ERG during the hiring process with these steps:
 - 1) Work with a "military translator" during your interview
 - 2) Ask ERG members about the workplace culture
 - 3) Look for military-friendly clues



Tips For Job Hunters

- There are different ways you can engage with your ERG, but any or all of them will contribute to your vocation:
 - 1) Connect for support and career guidance
 - 2) Empower yourself with leadership roles
 - 3) Mingle with top corporate executives
 - 4) Continue the mission with your local military community

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)



When military service members transition to the civilian workforce, they often miss the camaraderie and closeness of the military culture. During their service, there is a shared purpose, focus on mission, and bond that often remains between veterans for a lifetime.

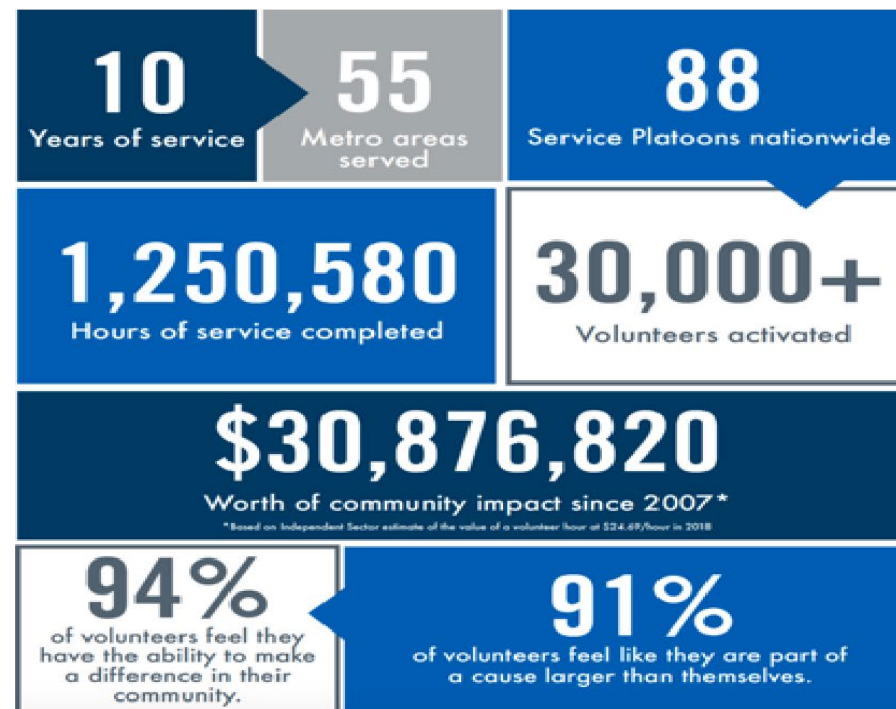


The Mission Continues

THE MISSION CONTINUES

The Mission Continues is a non-profit veteran service organization that:

1. **Connects veterans** with under-resourced communities
2. **Empowers veterans** to continue their service
3. **Infuses communities** with veteran talent to **generate visible impact**





The Mission Continues



THE MISSION CONTINUES

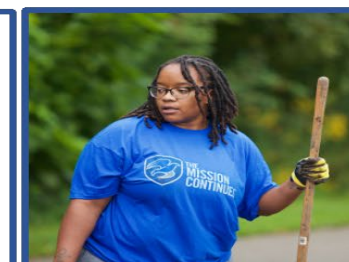


Monthly Events In Columbus & Cleveland

Join Us: <https://missioncontinues.org/service-platoons/>

Learn More: <https://missioncontinues.org>

Ian Haynes, City Impact Manager ihaynes@missioncontinues.org



Xcel Energy



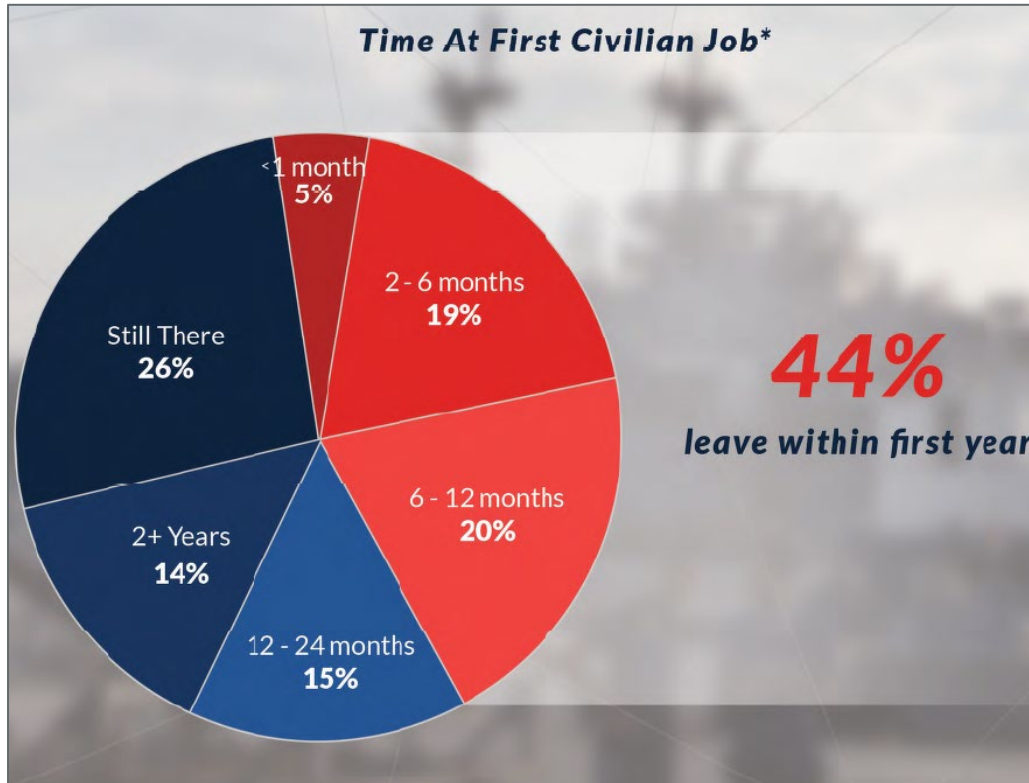
- Kynnie Martin is the senior foundation representative at Xcel Energy, where she launched a veterans' recruiting program in 2013. Now she oversees Xcel Energy's national veterans' BRG. As a former Army captain and intelligence officer, she understands the benefit of giving veterans a platform to connect and network. Her advice to job-seeking veterans? "Don't be shy about asking recruiters if their company has [an ERG] for veterans. Get connected to [the ERG members] so you can ask them about their experience" she said.

Xcel Energy



- When checking out an employer on LinkedIn or their web site, look for the presence of an ERG. It is often as simple as searching a company's "diversity" page, or keying "resource group" on their web site.
- "Any company can submit hiring numbers to say they're 'veteran-friendly,'" Martin said, "but if they have an ERG, it shows veterans are supported by veterans in the company."

Retention



Reasons for Leaving within First Year

I accepted a job offer to make ends meet following my transition from the military, but wanted something else	31%
I found a better job	30%
Job was not what I thought	19%
Difficulty relating to civilian colleagues	16%
Difficulty relating to company	14%
Position was terminated/laid off	12%

Retention



Huntington



"Our Military Business Resource Group understands the needs of a military family and that drives our plans. Our commitment is to positively impact the lives of our colleagues and the military community at large and our MBRG is the "boots on the ground" that Huntington relies on to be current and impactful."

Nationwide



"Nationwide and The Military Associate Resource Group (MARG) continually foster a sense of community for our military, veteran and service connected family member associates. The MARG provides company support in the form of group membership, personal & professional development & networking, business growth and community & brand support."

Section Five:

10 Reasons to Create a VERG

10 Steps to Create a VERG



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Top 10 Reasons to Create a “VERG”



1. Improve Veteran recruitment efforts by providing a comfort zone for new Veteran hires to meet up, collaborate, and learn
2. Increase camaraderie by offering Veterans opportunities to network with each other and find out what's going on within the organization
3. Provide a resource of knowledge and experience for product/service development and marketing through workplace discussions

Top 10 Reasons to Create a “VERG”



4. Educate non-veterans in the company about the valuable assets veterans bring to the work and help dispel myths around the military experience
5. Elevate the company's brand as a Veteran Friendly Employer
6. Increase morale and retention by engaging Veteran employees and providing support and career development opportunities
7. Communicate offers, discounts, and opportunities unique to veterans and military families

Top 10 Reasons to Create a “VERG”



8. Help define diversity and inclusion issues that negatively impact their membership and require action. They then determine ideas and solutions to address concerns
9. Facilitate a mentoring platform to help veteran employees learn how to build a career and navigate their professional life
10. Help build the company's external reputation through community involvement in Veteran organizations



Ten Steps to Creating a VERG

1. Identify the need
2. Propose to senior execs
3. Identify veteran leaders
4. Train execs and VERG staff
5. Recruit veteran employees
6. Train VERG members
7. Create mission/structure
8. Implementation
9. Measure success
10. Capitalize on momentum



1. Identify the Need

- How many vets/spouses?
- Examine best practices of other internal ERGs
- Research other external VERGs



2. Propose to Senior Execs

- Find executive sponsor
- Create the business case
 - Recruitment/Retention
 - Brand elevation
 - Product development
- Identify key objectives
- Funding?



3. Identify Veteran Leaders

- Who can take and handle key leadership positions in the VERG?
- Understand the workload
 - Gain supervisor approval for time commitments



4. Train Executives and VERG Staff

- Develop resources and templates
- Mentor training
- Internal marketing strategy





5. Recruit Veteran Employees

- Identify outreach strategies
- Advertise internally
- Promote using executive leadership (ex. A letter from the CEO)
- Invite ALL employees!



6. Train VERG Members

- Identify structure of the VERG
- Teach roles/responsibilities
- Communicate meeting schedule
- Develop actionable items





7. Create Mission Statement/Structure

- Name the VERG
 - Make this a fun event
 - Contest, bracket, etc.
- Charter/mission statement
 - Ties into business case
- Principal activities/events
- Budget



8. Implementation

- Meet on a regular basis
- Follow up on action items
- Attend events and gatherings
- Be flexible



9. Measure Success

- Track and report progress
- Cost/benefit analysis
- Return on investment



10. Capitalize on Momentum

- Ensure regular meetings
 - Virtual/webinar participation
- Monthly newsletter
- Community engagement
- Continue to recruit new members
- Annual recognition/awards



Section Six: Closing



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Review



- Remember the reasons why you hire a veteran
- The veteran hiring process includes recruiting, interviewing and onboarding
 - Utilize veteran employees
 - Think outside of the box
- Remember the advantages of a VERG
- The 10-step process to VERG creation
- Find what works best for YOUR company!



Helpful Tips



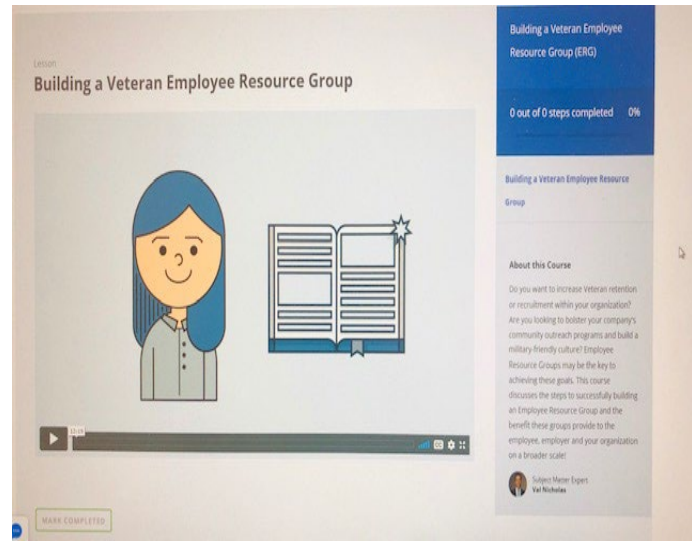
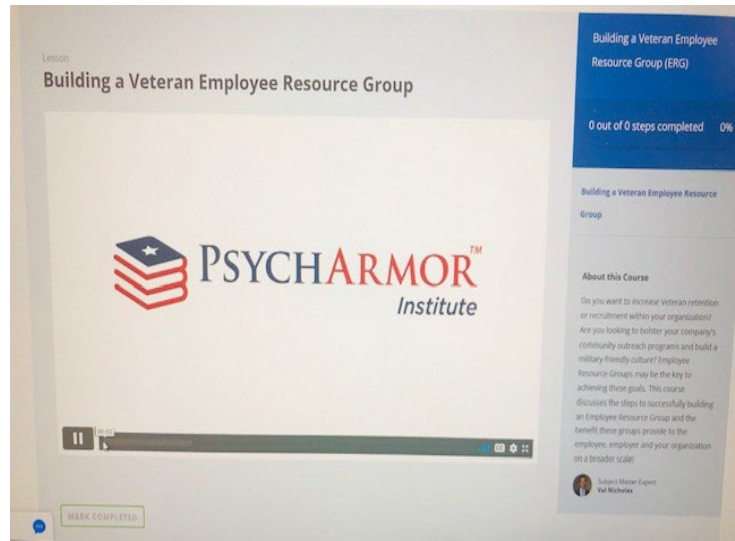
- Start your VERG small and let it build
- There are no cookie-cutter templates for successful VERGs
- Consider the culture of your company, nuances of your industry, the dynamics of your leadership team, and the strength of your brand when building and growing your program
- Over time, your program may morph into an outward-facing effort that brings your company and your brand into the national conversation on veteran hiring and retention
 - (Ex. Amazon, JP Morgan Chase, Gartner, Comcast NBC, Merrill Lynch & Barclays)



Define Goals

- Culture
 - Focus on the shared beliefs of the Veteran and Military Spouse community to help reinforce the company's values.
- Mentorship
 - Identify how our civilian and military workforce can unite to provide mentorship opportunities
- Awareness and Outreach
 - Build brand awareness by supporting Veteran-specific causes and attending events within Veteran and Military Spouse communities that focus on employment opportunities, Military recognition and community service.

Free Online Resource



Veteran Local Support



- Every county has a Veterans Service Office
 - Certified/accredited service officer
 - Assistance in applying for federal, state, and local benefits
 - VA claims support – medical, financial, and death/burials
 - Local support dependent on county policy



Outreach



- Veterans Benefits Resource Guide:
<http://www.ohiovet.gov/BENEFITS>
- Veterans Crisis Line - national program at 1-800-273-8255
 - 24/7/365 counseling capability for veterans and their families
- Ohio Department of Veterans Services website:
www.ohiovet.gov

"Hiring a veteran brings so much to your company: experience, leadership skills, and a great work ethic for starters."

– Ohio Governor Mike DeWine



**Department of
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SHRM Recertification

20-5DV92



Questions?

workforce@dvs.ohio.gov



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