

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT



Governmentwide Veterans Recruitment and Employment Strategic Plan FY 2014 – FY 2017

FEDSHIREVETS

America's Veteran - Valued ★ Experienced ★ Trained

April 2014

a New Day for Federal Service

Introduction

On November 9, 2009, President Barack Obama launched the Veterans Employment Initiative (VEI) with Executive Order 13518. The order established the Council on Veterans Employment (hereafter called the Council) to advise and assist the President and the Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in coordinating a Government-wide effort to increase the number of Veterans employed by the Federal Government. Additionally, the Council would serve as a national forum to promote Veterans' employment opportunities in the executive branch. The Council is Co-Chaired by the Secretaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor with the Director of OPM serving as the Vice Chair. Twenty-four agencies are represented on the Council.

Over four years ago, the Council published the first Government-wide Veterans Recruitment and Employment Strategic Plan. This Plan, which covered the period FY 2010 through FY 2012, provided a comprehensive approach to tackle barriers affecting Veteran employment by focusing on four key areas: leadership commitment, skills development and employment, marketing; and information dissemination on Federal employment for Veterans.

Through the implementation of this Plan, the Council:

- Adopted a Hiring Percentage Model for Veteran hiring among Federal agencies. This tiered model helped an agency set a future hiring goal based on the current percentage of Veterans hired;
- Created the Vets to Feds (V2F) Career Development Program for student Veteran trainees in mission critical occupations such as Contracting and IT;
- Developed and launched the Feds Hire Vets Website and associated social media sites to serve as the principal portal on Federal employment information for Veterans, transitioning service members and their families, hiring managers, and HR practitioners;
- Devised a Government-wide marketing campaign on the value of our Veterans and provided marketing toolkits to Federal agencies;
- Provided web-based training modules on Veteran Employment for agencies to train their HR professionals and hiring managers.

Since the inception of the VEI, the Federal Government has seen a steady increase in the percentage of Veterans hired.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2012, we were extremely pleased to announce that the Executive Branch of Government hired the highest percentage of veterans in over 20 years, surpassing the previous high set in FY 2011.

The Government hired approximately 195,000 new employees in FY 2012 as compared to approximately 230,000 new employees in FY 2011 -- a reduction of over 34,000 total hires. Of those 195,000 FY 2012 hires, approximately 56,000 were veterans, equaling 28.9 percent of total hires. This is a 4.9 percentage point increase over the FY 2009 baseline of 24.0 percent and approximately 0.6 percentage points higher than the 28.3 percent realized in FY 2011.

The FY 2014 – FY 2017 Government-wide Veterans Recruitment and Employment Strategic Plan continues to build upon the foundation established by the first Plan. Besides advancing actions to improve employment opportunities for Veterans, this Plan introduces an emphasis on the retention of Veterans which is reflected in the modified mission statement. The Council will also focus on the reintegration of our Federal colleagues who are deployable Reservists or National Guardsmen. To help shape this document and its thrust, valuable input was incorporated from senior Federal leadership from across Government, Veterans, transitioning service members, Veteran Service Organizations, and other activities.

Key actions highlight the need to:

- Increase the collaborative effort between agencies to better leverage tools, processes, and activities to recruit, hire, and retain Veterans in order to optimally use their leadership, skills, training, and experience;
- Improve the awareness of the VEI, its goals, and associated activities among Federal agencies and their components outside the Washington DC area;
- Better align the VEI with other efforts such as diversity and inclusion, the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP), and Joining Forces to leverage limited resources while benefitting from an integrated approach to assist Veterans and their family members seeking employment;
- Perform better workforce data analysis to strengthen Federal agency workforce planning in support of agency efforts to hire and retain Veterans;

- Oversee the creation and implementation of a Reintegration Framework for agency use to provide smooth and seamless support to Federal employees who are reservists and National Guardsmen before, during, and post deployment; and
- Expand Council governance structure to create standing, task oriented sub-committees to review and assess current and emerging issues such as strategic alliances, Veteran hiring models, Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) guidance, retention strategies, and Transition Assistance Program (TAP) connectivity.

In the original plan, there were four focus areas: Leadership Commitment, Skills Development and Employment, Marketing Veterans Employment, and Information Gateway. Based on a new emphasis associated with the retention and reintegration of Veterans, the new Strategic Plan emphasizes five focus areas by separating Skills Development and Employment into two separate entities. Therefore, the five focus areas are: 1) Leadership Commitment; 2) Skills Development; 3) Employment; 4) Marketing, and 5) Information Gateway.

The Council on Veterans Employment reaffirms its commitment to the employment of our Nation's Veterans through this strategic plan. Council members will continue to ensure Federal agencies honor the intent of EO 13518, the VOW To Hire Heroes ACT, and the Presidential Memorandum on USERRA Protections.

Interagency Council on Veterans Employment
April 2014

Vision

The Federal Government will strive to be America's Model Employer of Veterans

As the Model Employer of Veterans, we must:

- Value Veterans for their leadership, experience, skills, dedication, and commitment to public service;
- Ensure government-wide support of the VEI with special emphasis on Federal leadership advocacy and commitment to Veterans recruitment, employment, development, reintegration and retention;
- Eliminate or reduce barriers to Veterans' employment;
- Administer Veterans' Preference while acknowledging the sacrifices of Veterans and their families;
- Provide special assistance for any Veteran especially those who are disabled that may have difficulty during the Federal employment process;
- Offer assistance to military spouses and Veteran family members seeking Federal employment.

Mission

**Increase the Employment and Retention
of Veterans in the Federal Government**

Leadership Commitment

Strategic Goal: Ensure Federal leaders advocate the value and importance of hiring Veterans in the Federal Government

Federal leaders continue to boldly advocate for Veteran employment while acknowledging the sacrifices our Veterans have made to protect our country and freedoms. The leadership, skills, and work ethic America's Veterans bring to the Federal workforce are essential to helping agencies successfully achieve their mission.

I. Actions:

a. Align the VEI with other similar initiatives by:

1. Creating a collaborative process to better leverage operations, processes, and activities across program lines for improved VEI execution
2. Ensuring that the execution of VEI is smartly integrated into agency workforce and succession planning
3. Establishing active and collaborative relationships with other Government-wide efforts to hire Veterans, transitioning military service members, and spouses

b. Expand the governance structure of the Council by:

1. Establishing standing task oriented Council sub-committees led by senior officials to tackle emerging and complex issues related to Veteran employment

c. Highlight Agency leadership commitment to Veteran recruitment, employment, development, retention, and reintegration by:

1. Adhering to Council approved Veteran employment performance models
2. Executing aggressive actions to attract, develop, promote, and retain disabled Veterans through the DVAAP
3. Ensuring all Agency practices and policies promote a zero tolerance of violations of the USERRA

4. Analyzing workforce demographics to ensure a diverse pool of Veteran talent is being recruited, hired, developed, and retained
5. Ensuring all field and component operations are aware and held accountable for this strategic plan

II. Desired Outcomes:

- a. Agency workforce planning, recruitment, and employment initiatives incorporate the purpose and goals of the VEI and DVAAP in their Human Capital framework
- b. Council collaboration through the establishment of active engagement mechanisms with:
 1. The White House on Joining Forces
 2. The Department of Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program, , and programs for minority, women, and homeless veterans
 3. The Department of Labor's TAP Employment Workshops, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, and USERRA Enforcement
 4. The Department of Defense's Operation Warfighter; Hiring Heroes Career Fairs, the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, and the TAP redesign
- c. Council establishes sub-committees to lead emerging and ongoing issues related to Veteran employment
- d. The number of substantiated USERRA claims is significantly reduced

Skills Development

Strategic Goal: Assist Veterans to better align and translate their competencies and skills with Federal employment opportunities

The Federal government will always need to recruit, employ, and develop people with competencies and skills for every Federal occupation and career field. In addition, the government continues to aggressively recruit Veterans for a number of critical occupations to meet agency mission objectives. Through skills developed during their military Service and from additional training and education received through the GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Veterans Employment and Training Services, Veterans and transitioning service members are excellent candidates for high-demand occupations in Federal agencies.

I. Actions:

- a. Provide training and educational opportunities geared toward employing and retaining Veterans by:
 1. Expanding use of the Vets 2 Feds (V2F) Career Development Program to meet individual agency staffing and succession needs
 2. Increasing agency use of Federal work experience programs for Veterans
- b. Leverage available government-wide Veteran recruitment and employment resources by:
 1. Promoting and endorsing available tools that assess Veteran candidates, translate military skills, and ease the application process
 2. Ensure transitioning service members and deactivating Guard and Reserve members are well informed on the competencies and skills needed for positions in the Federal government

II. Desired Outcomes:

- a. Better Federal agency collaboration on employment programs to recruit and develop Veterans to meet critical staffing needs

- b. Agencies utilize the V2F Program to recruit, employ, and build careers for Veterans in mission critical occupations
- c. Veterans, transitioning service members, and spouses are able to easily translate their military, career, and volunteer skills to Federal careers

Employment

Strategic Goal: Improve the opportunity for Veterans to successfully find Federal employment

Since the creation of the VEI, the Federal Government has witnessed a significant increase in the percentage of Veterans hired. Effective recruitment, Veterans' Preference, and the use of special Veteran appointing authorities are instrumental in assisting Veterans and transitioning service members find Federal employment and build post military service careers while providing agencies the skills needed to close skill gaps and fill mission critical occupations.

- I. Actions:
 - a. Provide Federal employment opportunities for Veterans by:
 1. Creating Federal and individual agency career development opportunities for Veterans to acquire the competencies, skills, knowledge, and experience in critical occupations
 2. Educating the student Veteran population to align education and training pursuits to career opportunities with Federal agencies
 - b. Partner with DOD, DOL and VA to promote Federal Employment among Veterans and transitioning service members by:
 1. Providing Federal Employment Training to transitioning military service members through TAP
 2. Actively promoting VA's Non-Paid Work Experience and On-The-Job Training Programs along with the DoD's Wounded Warrior internships to Federal hiring officials as paths to Federal employment
 - c. Implement programs to successfully develop, reintegrate and retain Veterans and disabled Veterans within Federal agencies by:
 1. Ensuring DVAAP strategies are integrated in the agency's human capital framework and communicated to field and component operations

2. Utilizing a Government-wide Veteran Reintegration Framework to address the deployment life-cycle and ease the transition for Federal employees returning from military service

II. Desired Outcomes:

- a. Increase in the number of student Veterans employed through the Pathways Program and other programs aimed at preparing individuals for Federal careers in critical occupations such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- b. Significant numbers of Veterans and transitioning service members are educated on Veterans' Preference, special Veteran appointing authorities and the Federal employment process
- c. Federal data demonstrates Veteran retention rates across the Federal Executive Branch is comparable to non-Veteran retention rates
- d. Government-wide Veterans Reintegration Framework is a significant factor in reducing the number of substantiated USERRA related claims
- d. Agencies collaborate and align their Veteran recruitment efforts

Marketing

Strategic Goal: Ensure Federal hiring officials view Veteran skills and dedication as essential to meet mission objectives and Veterans view the Federal Government as an employer of choice

Each year the Federal Government spends millions of dollars training our military service members in the defense of this nation. These servicemen and women have become effective leaders while developing highly valued competencies and skills in both peacetime and war. In order to recruit this critical talent pool, we will aggressively market the Federal civil service as a place Veterans and transitioning service members can continue serving America while realizing their career aspirations. Conversely, we must ensure hiring officials are keenly aware of the value Veterans bring in meeting mission objectives.

I. Actions:

- a. Ensure agency components and field offices outside the Washington DC area are aware of the intent and purpose of the VEI by:
 1. Expanding agency Veterans Employment Program Office activities and outreach efforts to field components
 2. Providing guidance, strategic direction, and marketing materials to components and field offices on the variety of programs, authorities, and flexibilities to attract and hire Veterans
 3. Establishing relationships with colleges and universities with a large Veteran population to better align Veteran educational pursuits with Federal employment opportunities and priorities
- b. Ensure Feds Hire Vets branding is used in all agency Veteran marketing materials by:
 1. Branding agency-specific Veteran recruitment efforts with the Veterans Employment Initiative and Feds Hire Vets website and social media sites
 2. Increase agency use of Feds Hire Vets social media sites to promote mission critical occupations and careers to Veterans

3. Sharing agency Veteran success stories, best practices, and Veteran recruitment strategies throughout government

II. Desired Outcomes:

- a. Hiring officials understand the value proposition of hiring Veterans
- b. Agencies market themselves and the Federal Government as a place Veterans and transitioning service members can continue serving America while realizing their career aspirations
- c. Component and field activities are well aware of the goals, activities, and desired outcomes of the VEI
- d. Veterans and transitioning service members continue to view the Federal Government as an employer of choice

Information Gateway

Strategic Goal: Ensure Veterans, transitioning service members and their families, current veteran employees, HR professionals, and hiring managers receive accurate and consistent information regarding the Federal employment of Veterans

In partnership with the Departments of Defense, Labor, Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security, and other Federal agencies, OPM created the Feds Hire Vets website to serve as the principal source for Federal employment information to assist our Veterans, transitioning service members, their families, Federal HR professionals, and hiring managers. The purpose of this website is to provide consistent and accurate Federal employment information, useful training, and other resources to better inform the applicant, the employee, and the hiring agency. This website is a critical component of the Federal Government's strategy for the recruitment, employment, and retention of Veterans.

I. Actions:

- a. Modify the Feds Hire Vets website to improve its effectiveness and audience reach by:
 1. Providing information for current Federal employees who are Veterans
 2. Offering a Federal employment training module on the Feds Hire Vets website
 3. Monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating site effectiveness through user satisfaction feedback
- b. Increase the use of social media to expand the dissemination of Federal employment information by:
 1. Extending agency use of Feds Hire Vets social media to its component and field operations
 2. Increasing agency use of Feds Hire Vets social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to target and recruit Veterans for noncompetitive appointments

II. Desired Outcomes:

- a. Visitors to Feds Hire Vets and its associated social media sites have a very beneficial experience and consider this as their one-stop source for Federal Employment information
- b. Veterans, reservists, and guardsmen without access to the Transition Assistance Program utilize the Federal Employment Training Module to sharpen their knowledge of Federal employment
- c. Federal agencies find the Feds Hire Vets website to be an invaluable tool for recruiting Veterans
- d. Feds Hire Vets user satisfaction ratings continue to rise.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

All Federal agencies have responsibility for implementing this Strategic Plan. The Council on Veterans Employment Steering Committee (consisting of OPM and the Departments of Defense, Labor, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security) will champion specific strategies as well as work together to implement others. In addition, other Federal agencies will be involved in achieving specific objectives where they have core competence or direct influence over the outcome.

This strategic plan is designed to help agencies develop workforce management strategies that advance specific mission goals of the President's Veterans Employment Initiative and should be incorporated into each agency's workforce and succession planning efforts.

Acknowledgements

Revision of the Government-wide Veterans' Recruitment and Employment Strategic Plan for FY 2014 – FY 2017 was a collaborative effort that could not have been accomplished without our partners. For their leadership and support as the Co-Chairs and Vice Chair of the Council on Veterans Employment, we would like to thank the following individuals:

Thomas E. Perez, Secretary, Department of Labor

Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs

Katherine Archuleta, Director, U.S. Office of Personnel Management

We also want to recognize the twenty-four agencies represented on the Council for allowing their Chief Human Capital Officers, Veterans Employment Program Offices, human resources practitioners, and hiring officials to provide input on Federal employment of Veterans:

Department of State

Department of the Treasury

Department of Defense

Department of Justice

Department of the Interior

Department of Agriculture

Department of Commerce

Department of Labor

Department of Health and Human Services

Department of Housing and Urban
Development

Department of Transportation

Department of Energy

Department of Education

Department of Veterans Affairs

Department of Homeland Security

Environmental Protection Agency

National Aeronautics and Space

Administration

Agency for International Development

General Services Administration

National Science Foundation

Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Office of Personnel Management

Small Business Administration

Social Security Administration

To help shape this document, valuable input was incorporated from senior leadership across Federal Government, Veterans, Veteran Service Organizations, and other activities. For their leadership, hard work and commitment; we want to thank the following:

Steering Committee Members

Keith Kelly, Department of Labor
Samuel Retherford, Department of Veterans Affairs
Paige Hinkle-Bowles, Department of Defense
Catherine Emerson, Department of Homeland Security
Jennifer Mason, U.S. Office of Personnel Management

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From the Department of the Interior

Kenneth Lane Pam Malam

From the Department of the Treasury

Nichole Johnson Star Smith

Additional thanks go out to those Veteran Service Organizations that were kind enough to share their views on Veteran employment in the Federal Government:

- American Legion
- Disabled American Veterans
- Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
- Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Student Veterans of America
- Veterans of Foreign Wars

Finally, we wish to thank the transitioning wounded warriors and service members at Fort Carson, CO and Joint-Base San Antonio, TX for their invaluable input on the Federal hiring process.



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