

Chapter 3 – Employment Assistance

Since most of us are not independently wealthy, we will have to find jobs or return to jobs we had prior to mobilization/activation after we are released from active duty.

Reemployment and job rights are a very important aspect of the transition process for members of the Guard and Reserves of the Armed Forces. If you were activated for more than 180 days, these rights protect you from being terminated by your employer without cause within one year after the date of reemployment. If you were activated for more than 30 days but less than 181 days, you will be protected from termination for 180 after being reemployed. The following section will help you understand your rights and where to turn for employment assistance and other career resources.

A. Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act

The **Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)** provides reemployment protection and other benefits for veterans and employees who perform military service. Under USERRA, if a leave leaves your civilian job for service in the uniformed services, you are entitled to return to the job, with accrued seniority, provided you meet the law's eligibility criteria. USERRA applies to voluntary as well as involuntary service and in peacetime as well as wartime. The law applies to virtually all civilian employers, including the federal government, state and local governments, and private employers, regardless of size.

USERRA Eligibility

You are eligible for protections under these reemployment rights if you have been absent from your position of employment because of "service in the uniformed services." "Service in the uniformed services" means the performance of duty on a voluntary or involuntary basis in a uniformed service, including:

- Active duty (Including activated Guard and Reserve members)
- Active duty for training
- Initial active duty for training
- Inactive duty training
- Full-time National Guard duty.
- Absence from work for an examination to determine fitness for duty.
- Funeral honors duty performed by National Guard or reserve members

In order to have reemployment rights following a period of service in the uniformed services, a military member must meet five eligibility criteria (discussed separately below):

1. You must have held a civilian job.
2. You must have informed your employer that you were leaving the job for service in the uniformed services.
3. The period of service must not have exceeded five years. (Many types of duty, such as training and contingency operations, are exempted from the five year limitation)
4. You must have been released from service under "honorable conditions."
5. You must have reported back to your civilian employer in a timely manner or have submitted a timely application for reemployment. Timely is defined as:
 - a. 1-30 days of service, report the next scheduled work day
 - b. 31-180 days of service, apply within 14 days after completion of service
 - c. 181+ days of service, apply within 90 days after completion of service

Contact the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), for assistance under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994. A complete list of VETS state directors is available on the Internet at <http://www.dol.gov/vets/>.

To learn more about your reemployment rights visit the Department of Labor's USERRA Advisor website at <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/userra.htm>.

B. Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)

The Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is a Department of Defense organization. ESGR's mission is to gain and maintain active support from all public and private employers for the men and women of the National Guard and Reserve. ESGR works both nationally and locally to support the following functions:

- Operate a proactive program directed at U.S. employers, employees, and communities that ensures understanding and appreciation of the role of the National Guard and Reserve in the context of the DoD Total Force Policy.
- Enable employee participation in National Guard and Reserve training programs and on military duty without civilian job impediments of any kind, to include encouraging voluntary compliance with federal and state statutes governing employment and reemployment rights of Reserve component members.
- Encourage interaction between National Guard and Reserve units and their communities to promote public understanding of the National Guard and Reserve and encourage partnerships between civilian organizations and military units in the community.
- Assist in preventing, resolving, or reducing employer and/or employee problems and misunderstandings that result from National Guard or Reserve membership, training, or duty requirements through information services and informal mediation.
- Assist in educating National Guard and Reserve members regarding their obligations and responsibilities to employers.
- Use the military chain of command to promote better understanding of the importance of maintaining positive working relations between employers and their Reserve component employees, in order to sustain National Guard and Reserve participation.
- Solicit the assistance of military agencies, military training schools, and military and civilian associations in educating the Reserve forces about their rights and responsibilities regarding terms and conditions of civilian employment, as stipulated in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).
- Recruit and develop volunteer leaders at the national and local levels to promote the development of employer personnel policies and practices that accommodate and facilitate employee participation in National Guard and Reserve activities.

ESGR conducts services in support of the organization's strategic goals.

The primary emphasis for a comprehensive employer outreach program is directed towards known employers of the Guard and Reserve, as identified by the Civilian Employment Information (CEI) initiative through the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness. To that end, ESGR conducts the 5-Star Employer Program, which seeks to inform and educate employers about their rights and responsibilities with regard to their National Guard and Reserve employees, and to recognize and reward those employers who go "above and beyond" the requirements of the law.

To learn more about ESGR and the 5 Star Employer program visit their website at <http://www.esgr.mil/>.

C. Skilled Veterans Will Meet Labor Needs in the 21st Century

Today's job market demands increasingly sophisticated and technological skills – skills that are well suited for those leaving military service. American veterans are superbly qualified and capable of meeting the needs of the current and future civilian labor force. Today's defense occupations are diverse and numerous: senior management, executives, civil engineers, medical specialists, auditors, caseworkers, nuclear engineers, food service managers, mechanics, heavy equipment operators, qualified and skilled people in information technology and telecommunications, to name a few.

Most positions correspond closely to private sector occupations. It is true that a few military specialties have no direct application. However, the training and discipline required to master those specialties clearly demonstrate the potential to learn and master other skills required in the private sector. Look at it from an employer's point of view:

- Today's Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsman are the highest quality military personnel in our nation's history.
- The men and women serving the Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Homeland Security are competent, positive, selfless, and oriented toward mission accomplishment.
- They perform skillfully using today's sophisticated military equipment: computers, electronics, avionics, etc.
- They demonstrate their ability to learn sophisticated skills on short notice.

Look at yourself. You have several things going for you. You are well trained, healthy, disciplined, and team oriented. What employer wouldn't want an employee like you?

Check out the *"21st Century Workforce Initiative"* sponsored by the Department of Labor at <http://www.dol.gov/21cw/>.

D. Where to Look for Great Jobs

Several places offer you the help you will need to find the job that's right for you. Check out these websites for more information:

www.careeronestop.org

www.bla.gov

www.hirevetsfirst.gov

www.doleta.gov/programs

www.doleta.gov/jobseekers/building_your_career.cfm

The following program and services are available to all transitioning Service members.

Transition Assistance Offices

You might be reluctant to start looking for a job or making a career change once you have returned home. Career changes are, however, a common part of American life. Most people change careers at least three times in their lives.

Career One-Stop Centers have programs and counselors to assist you and your family members in seeking employment in government and the private sector. Those who have access to or live near a major military installation can also get transition and employment assistance from the Transition/Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) Office or a Navy Command Career Counselor. Examples of some employment assistance services available at your Career One-Stop Centers and Transition/ACAP Offices are listed below:

- **Counseling:** The Career One-Stop Center or Transition staff provides individual career development counseling, comprehensive assessment of employment skills, and identification of employment opportunities.
- **Services:** Career One-Stop Centers and Transition Assistance Offices offer computerized listings of jobs, career workshops, and training opportunities, as well as automated resume writing. Many Career One-Stop Centers and Transition Assistance Offices also provide access to a mini-reference library, word processing, and copying equipment to assist in job search preparation.
- **Job banks:** Job banks provide information and referrals on temporary, permanent, part-time, and full-time positions in the federal, State, and private sectors. Separating service members are strongly encouraged to start their job search by using the following websites:
 - <http://www.TurboTAP.gov> – look for job banks/boards under the employment assistance section.
 - DoD Transportal at <http://www.dodtransportal.org/>
 - Transition Bulletin Board at <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/ot>.
 - <http://www.usajobs.com>
 - <http://www.go-defense.com/>

Whatever you do, start by putting your resume online in the Department of Labor's job bank under the DoD Job Search website.

Employers who are registered with the Department of Labor's job bank and are would like to hire former military personnel, can go to this website to search for resumes.

You can also visit these websites for more employment assistance: <http://www.careeronestop.org>

Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) website <http://www.acap.army.mil>

The DoD offers Service members the opportunity to take free "Career Assessment" questionnaires designed to help you determine the career that best fits your skills and interests. Contact your unit Education Service Officer or Navy College Representative to learn how you can take advantage of this great opportunity.

- **Workshops and seminars:** A variety of workshops and seminars are available through your Career One-Stop Centers and Transition Assistance Office to help you and your spouse become more competitive in the job market. Topics include enhancing job search skills, goal setting, and preparation of standard and optional forms for federal civil service employment, resumes, and interviewing techniques.
- **Training:** Some Career One-Stop Centers and Transition Assistance Offices may offer occupational skills training for those seeking entry-level classes in typing, word processing, and data entry. In addition you'll find helpful articles about writing resumes, dressing for success, interviewing techniques, and how to work a job fair at <http://www.military.com/careers>

Employment Assistance and Credentialing Programs:

Army and Navy COOL: The Army and Navy both offer Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL). These programs give you the opportunity to find civilian credentials related to your rating, or military occupational specialty. You can learn what it takes to get the credentials and learn about programs that will help pay credentialing fees. Check out the Army COOL website at: <https://www.cool.army.mil/> or Navy COOL website at: <https://www.cool.navy.mil/> to learn more.

Helmets to Hardhats: The Helmets to Hardhats (H2H) program lets your military service speak for itself. The program will help you find career opportunities that match your military background. Congressionally funded, H2H is the fastest, easiest way for transitioning military, Reservists, and Guardsmen to find a rewarding career in the construction industry. Visit: <http://helmetstohardhats.org/> to learn more.

Library Resources

Your local public and military libraries can be an excellent source of job search information. Most information of interest to job seekers is located in the reference section. Most public and military libraries offer access to the Internet. Helpful library resources include the following:

- **Occupational Information Network the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (O*NET):** This provides detailed descriptions of most occupations. Available online at: <http://online.onetcenter.org/>
- **The Encyclopedia of Associations:** This lists the addresses of professional and industry associations. <http://library.dialog.com/bluesheets/html/bl0114.html>
- **National Trade and Professional Associations of the United States:** This provides information on professional and industry associations. For more information visit <http://www.associationsexecs.com>
- **Dun and Bradstreet and Standard and Poor's Register of Corporations:** Both documents offer information on individual companies and organizations. No website available for this resource. Check the reference section of your local library.
- **The Occupational Outlook Handbook:** This book addresses the projected needs for various occupations. It may help you choose a career or open the door to a new one. You can also view the handbook online at: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm>.

Libraries also offer newspapers, trade journals, magazines, audio and video cassettes, and computer software packages that aid in career identification and planning. You may also find information on state training, employment, and apprenticeship programs as well as statistics regarding employment availability, economic climate, and cost of living. Your librarian can show you where to find these resources and how to use them.

Networking with others, especially other veterans, is one of the best ways to begin your search for a job.

Fraternal Military Associations and Veterans' Services Organizations

Fraternal military associations and veterans' services organizations are good sources of employment information, assistance, and services. Many provide their own job referral and registration services; others sponsor events such as job fairs to expose you to prospective employers. All provide networking opportunities to help you learn about job requirements and opportunities.

Your Transition Counselor can help you locate local Veteran Service Organization offices. In addition, lists of Military and Veteran Service Organizations can be found at: <http://www.military.com/Community/Subpage/1,14746,GENERAL,00.html>

Industry Associations

Industry associations are a source of industry-specific information that can help you learn about salary ranges, qualification requirements, locations of jobs, and the names and addresses of individual companies through these associations. You can also learn the jargon and get insight into how people in the industry think.

The "Hidden" Job Market

More than 70 percent of the jobs in the United States are never advertised or listed with employment agencies. They are simply announced [and filled] by word-of-mouth. This is the "hidden" job market. Following are some steps you can take to tap this market.

Step 1. Make a list: List everyone you know who might have a job lead for you—friends of the family, people you went to school or church with, clubs you belong to, etc. Your friends who have recently left the military are likely to be a step ahead in the job-hunting process and may know who's hiring. Your colleagues may even have leads on job openings that would suit you perfectly.

Step 2. Send your resume: Send your resume to each person on your list and attach a cover letter explaining that you are looking for a job in your area of interest. Ask them to keep their eyes and ears open. They will help you; they are your friends.

Step 3. Make calls: Call each person to whom you send a resume and ask for his or her suggestions and guidance.

Some experts believe Step 3 should be done before Step 2. Your Transition staff can assist you in making the best decision. But the final decision is yours.

Step 4. Follow up: After you call, send each person a letter thanking him or her for their help. Call them periodically to see if they have heard of anything. Using this approach, you will have dozens of people helping you find the right job.

Step 5. Develop and maintain a network: The preceding steps have helped you develop a network. Networking is the most effective way to land the job you want.

E. Assessing Your Skills

To find a good civilian job, you need to clarify your skills. Skills assessment helps you answer the question "What do I do best?" A skills assessment can also:

- Help you determine the types of jobs in which you are likely to excel (manager, mechanic, nurse, salesperson, teacher, etc.)
- Help you prepare a focused resume (one that only includes the aspects of your background that specifically relate to the job or career you are looking for)
- Help you answer job interview questions such as, "What do you like to do in your spare time?"

Hint: Relate your spare-time activities to the job for which you are interviewing.

Translating military experience into civilian language is one of the most common stumbling blocks in the skills assessment process. One way to tackle this problem is to talk to friends who have already left the

service. Ask them about what civilian employers want do and don't want to hear. You should also consider attending workshops and seminars. Here's a good approach to assessing skills:

Step 1. Assignments: List the projects you have worked on, problems you have solved, situations you have helped clarify, and challenges you have met.

Step 2. Actions: List the actions you have taken to carry out these tasks.

Step 3. Results: List the results that your actions helped to achieve.

The skills that appear on these three lists should be incorporated into your resume and job interviews.

Skill assessment for many service members and their families requires assistance. The staffs at the Transition Assistance Office and Education Center can provide that assistance.

For more assistance in skills assessment, go to <http://www.hirevetsfirst.gov> and <http://www.Military.com/careers>.

F. Resume Writing for the New Millennium

In the current job market, managers receive dozens of resumes. They do not have time to read lengthy listings of skills and complete life histories. For them, "less is more." Here are some tips on creating the most effective resumes:

- **Know the goal:** The goal of your resume should be to motivate employers to call you in for an interview. *Then* during your interview, you can discuss your background in as much detail as the employer desires.

Begin With a Career Objective or a Summary?

There are pros and cons to placing a career objective at the top of your resume. For example, a career objective statement clearly and unambiguously tells potential employers what you are looking for; on the other hand, it limits your flexibility by locking you into a specific position. After you visit a Career One-Stop Center or attended a DOL Employment or Service equivalent employment workshop, you will be able to decide what is best for you.

If you decide not to write an objective, consider using a three- to five-line summary of qualifications that concentrates on the skills and past experience you have that the employer wants. This summary can show an employer your efforts to assess your background and match it as closely as possible to his or her needs. "Targeting" your resume to the employer's current needs will increase your rate of success in getting an interview. A "one-size-fits-all" resume will not work in today's job market.

- **Focus on skills:** Employers are more interested in what you *can* do, not what you want to do. Today's resume emphasizes skills, allowing the employer to compare your skills to those required for the job. (Remember, volunteering is considered real work experience, so don't forget to include appropriate volunteer work when preparing your resume.) Writing a skills-oriented resume is easier after you have completed your skills assessment.
- **Don't fuss over format:** Don't get hung up on which type of resume to use; most employers appreciate a job history that tells them what you did and when. You should also state your accomplishments. Again, performing a skills assessment will help you do this.

- **Create a "scan-able" resume:** More and more, companies are scanning—rather than reading—resumes, especially if they get a great number of them. There are many books available to help you design a "scan-able" resume. Research the company. Use their language where you can.

There is no "perfect" resume, but you have to feel comfortable with the format you choose and be familiar with what you have written. The employer will use your resume as the basis for asking detailed questions during your interview.

Create a one-minute verbal resume that quickly highlights your experience and skills. Then, practice delivering your one-minute resume aloud until you're comfortable. This will give you the confidence to answer the "Tell me something about yourself..." interview question.

G. Workshops Help Guard and Reserves "TAP" Into Good Jobs

The Department of Labor (DOL)-sponsored Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Employment Workshops are sponsored in conjunction with the installation Transition Assistance staffs. The DOL Employment Workshops normally run 2 ½ days. These are conducted at major military installations. For Guard and Reserve Service members who are not located in close proximity to an installation that offers this workshop, you can receive the services from your local Career One-Stop Center. Talk with unit Commander and ask him/her to invite the local Department of Labor Representative to provide employment assistance to your unit and spouses.

Note: Not all installations and bases offer the Department of Labor TAP Employment Workshop. If the workshops are not available at your installation or base, the Transition Counselor will refer you to other sources where similar information is available.

DOL Employment and Military Service equivalent workshops address such useful subjects as the following:

- Employment and training opportunities
- Labor market information
- Civilian workplace requirements
- Resume, application, and standard forms preparation
- Job analysis, job search, and interviewing techniques
- Assistance programs offered by federal, state, local, military, and veterans' groups
- Procedures for obtaining verification of job skills and experience
- Obtaining loans and assistance for starting a small business
- Analysis of the area where you wish to relocate, including local employment opportunities, the local labor market, and the cost of living (housing, child care, education, medical and dental care, etc.)

If you are able to attend a DOL Employment Workshop on a military installation, you will receive a participant manual. Among other valuable information, this manual contains points of contact around the nation for many of the services you will need after your separation.

Job-Hunting Workshops Provide Fresh Perspective

Besides the Department of Labor Career One-Stop Centers and the **DOL Employment Workshop**, you will find other job-hunting programs sponsored by organizations in and out of your Guard or Reserve Component. Use them! By taking advantage of workshops and seminars, you will gain information about the same subject from different points of view. Different workshops emphasize different things. There are many good methods for finding a job and many good programs to teach you how.

H. Military Experience and Training Can Help You Win That Job

Verification of your military experience and training is useful in preparing your resume and establishing your capabilities with prospective employers. Verification is also helpful if you are applying to a college or vocational institution. These institutions want information on your military training and experience, as well as how this might relate to the civilian world.

As a Service member, you have had numerous training and job experiences, perhaps too many to recall easily and include on a job or college application. Fortunately, the military has made your life a little easier in this regard. The DD Form 2586, "Verification of Military Experience and Training" document is created from your automated records on file. It lists your military job experience and training history, recommended college credit information, and civilian equivalent job titles. This document is designed to help you, but it is not a resume!

To Obtain Your Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET) Document

To get your verification document, go to the VMET website at <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/vmet>. All demobilizing/deactivating members of the Guard and Reserves can electronically download and print their VMET document and personal cover letter from your military service from the VMET website. Simply click the "Request Document" and "Request Cover Letter," tabs and print each of these documents after their downloaded.

You can get your verification document online as long as you have a current DoD Common Access Card (CAC) or have a current DFAS myPay PIN; however, you should retrieve it within 120 days prior to your separation. If you have problems getting your VMET and need assistance, check with closest military installation that has a Transition or Navy Command Career Counselor. This can be done by phone or via e-mail; therefore, how far you live from a military installation should not present a problem for you to access this assistance. .

Once You Receive Your Verification Document

Identify the items that relate to the type of work or education you are pursuing and include them in your resume. If there are problems with information listed on the form, follow the guidance indicated below for your respective service:

- **Army:** Review and follow the guidance provided by the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) listed on the VMET On-line Website.
- **Air Force:** Follow the instructions in the verification document cover letter or contact your Transition Counselor.
- **Navy:** Contact your Command Career Counselor or review and follow the guidance provided by the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) listed on the VMET On-line Website.
- **Marine Corps:** Follow the instructions in the verification document cover letter. If you need further assistance, contact your administrative office.

I. DoD Job Search

The Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Labor offer a website veterans and Service members called DoD Job Search. This website features job announcements, resume writing, and referral systems geared to transitioning military personnel and their spouses, DoD federal civilian employees and their spouses, and the spouses of relocating active-duty members. There are over 1 million jobs available on this website. Check out the website at <http://www.dod.jobsearch.org> for additional information and assistance.

J. DoD Online Transition Assistance Programs

DoD has created an online portal for eligible members of the Guard and Reserves being released from active duty. This website, called TurboTAP, contains valuable information and resources, which are designed to assist members of the Guard and Reserves and their spouses. You should use this site as part of a comprehensive program of transition, employment assistance, veteran benefit, and disabled veteran benefit information and services. You can access this website at <http://www.TurboTAP.org>.

In addition the DoD has another website called the DoD TRANSPORTAL at <http://www.dodtransportal.org>. This website has three features that can be accessed using the buttons on the left of the web page:

- **Transition Assistance:** This feature is a brief overview of the DoD Transition Assistance Program.
- **At your Service:** This feature provides the locations and phone numbers of all Transition Assistance Offices as well as links to transition assistance related websites.
- **Your Next Career:** This feature provides:
 - Getting ready: A mini-course on conducting a successful job search campaign including instructions on creating winning resumes.
 - Tips on Using the Internet: A mini-course on using the Internet to find a job including instructions on creating electronic resumes and avoiding Internet scams.
 - Internet Career Links: Links to the best job search websites on the net.
 - Websites with up to 1.5 million job listings
 - Websites where you can post your resumes for employers to view
 - Links to state job search websites
 - Corporate Recruiting Websites: Links to 100 recruiting websites operated by Fortune 500 companies.
 - Suggested Reading: A list of books that you can use as job search resources.

K. Public and Community Service (PACS) Registry Program

The 1993 National Defense Authorization Act, P L. 102-484, [10 USC, 1143 a(c)] requires the Secretary of Defense to maintain a registry of public and community service organizations. Service members selecting early retirement under the Temporary Early Retirement Act (TERA) are registered on the Public and Community Service Personnel Registry prior to release from active duty. Service members looking for employment in the public and community service arena to include those retiring under TERA, can access the PACS Organization Registry to see which organizations have registered for the purpose of hiring separating military personnel in public and community service jobs. In addition, Service members with approved retirement under TERA may earn additional credit towards full retirement at age 62 by working in a public or community service job.

Employers who wish to advertise job openings in the public and community service arena on the DoD Operation Transition Bulletin Board (TBB) at <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/ot> will complete the DD Form 2581, "Operation Transition Employer Registration" and the DD Form 2581-1, "Public and Community Service Organization Validation." Then, the organization will be included in the Operation Transition employer

database and also be listed on the PACS organization registry. Completing the DD Forms is a requirement for posting employment opportunities (want ads) on the TBB.

PACS employers hiring Service members who retired under the TERA program are required to complete both DD Forms 2581 and 2581-1. TERA retirees who are employed by approved PACS organizations during their enhanced retirement qualification period (ERQP) enables them to earn additional retirement credit and enhanced retirement pay beginning at age 62. Retirees interested in gaining the additional credit towards full retirement can go to the TBB to look for PACS employment opportunities as well as see a list of approved PACS organizations. Please refer to the website at <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/ot>.

The Public and Community Service organizational registry program is just another tool separating service members can use to get their names in front of nonprofit, public and community service organizations such as schools, hospitals, law enforcement agencies, social service agencies and many more for employment opportunities.

L. Transition Bulletin Board (TBB) Makes Job Hunting Easier

Searching through the employment section of the newspaper is not the only way to find work. Internet websites provide a quick and easy way to find the latest job openings and up-to-the-minute information useful to your job search. DoD's Transition Bulletin Board lists jobs, as well as registered Public and Community Service (PACS) organizations, and a list of business opportunities. Search ads are listed by job type and/or location; jobs are located both stateside and overseas. In addition, individuals retiring under the Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA) can fulfill the mandatory requirement to register for Public and Community Service (PACS) online at the TBB. Simply log onto the Operation Transition/TBB website, and click "TERA Individual Registration for PACS."

Accessing the TBB

Your access to this resource is through any PC having Internet access. Access TBB from home, office, library, or your unit. You can perform your own automated job search, tailored to your individual needs.

The TBB can be accessed via the Internet at <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/ot>.

How to Use the TBB

Once you find a position that interests you, pursue the opportunity by following the employer's instructions listed in the TBB ad. Call or write the employer directly and send a copy of your full resume.

To access the TBB, go to <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/ot>. Click "Login as a Job Seeker." Enter your SSN, last name, and date of birth and click "Login." At the moment you click "Login," the information entered is encrypted so it is protected as it is transmitted over the Internet. Your information is matched against up-to-date personnel information at the Department of Defense

M. Troops-to-Teachers Program

Background: Troops to Teachers (TTT) was established in 1994 as a Department of Defense program. The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2000 transferred the responsibility for program oversight and funding to the U.S. Department of Education but continued operation by the Department of Defense. The No Child Left Behind Act provides for the continuation of TTT as a teacher recruitment program. Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) manages the TTT program. You can access the TTT website at: <http://www.proudtoserveagain.com>.

Goals and objectives: Reflecting the focus of the No Child Left Behind Act, the primary objective of TTT is to help recruit quality teachers for schools that serve students from low-income families throughout America. TTT helps relieve teacher shortages, especially in math, science, special education and other critical subject areas, and assists military personnel in making successful transitions to second careers in teaching.

Troops to Teachers Adds New Program

The Troops to Teachers' new **Hire in Advance Program**, which has launched in Las Vegas, Denver, and Newark, N.J., guarantees teaching jobs for eligible military up to three years before they retire or separate from active duty. Troops who qualify for the Hire in Advance program can send in applications and interview with school officials, who can officially hire them up to three years before they leave active duty. The Troops to Teachers and the Hire in Advance Program are both open to military spouses as well. For more information, visit <http://www.proudtoserveagain.com/>

Function: TTT assists eligible military personnel to transition to a new career as public school teachers in targeted schools. A network of State TTT Offices has been established to provide participants with counseling and assistance regarding certification requirements, routes to state certification, and employment leads. Pending annual appropriation of funds, financial assistance is available to eligible individuals as stipends up to \$5,000 to help pay for teacher certification costs or as bonuses of \$10,000 to teach in schools serving a high percentage of students from low-income families. Participants who accept the Stipend or Bonus must agree to teach for three years in targeted schools in accordance with the authorizing legislation. The TTT link (<http://www.proudtoserveagain.com/>) leads to the home page, which provides information, and resource links, including links to state Departments of Education, state certification offices, model resumes, programs leading to teacher certification and job listing sites in public education. An Internet Referral System has been established to enable participants to search for job vacancies online and post resumes for view by school districts searching for teachers. A "Mentor Connection" site provides access to TTT participants who have made the transition to teaching and are available to respond to questions from prospective teachers.

Eligibility: Military personnel within several years of retirement are encouraged to register with Troops to Teachers. Counseling and guidance is available to help individuals assess academic background, identify programs that will lead to state teacher certification and identify potential employment opportunities.

Financial Assistance: Individuals eligible for immediate financial assistance are:

- Retired military personnel, active and reserve
- Personnel within one year of retirement
- Active duty personnel separating with six years active duty and join a Selected Reserve component unit
- Current reserve component members with 10+ years of active and/or Selected Reserve service creditable toward retirement
- Veterans separated due to service-connected disability

Educational Requirements: Those interested in elementary or secondary-teaching positions must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college. Individuals who do not have a baccalaureate degree, but have experience in a vocational/technical field may also submit an application. There is also a growing need for teachers with backgrounds in areas such as electronics, construction trades, computer technology, health services, food services and other vocational/technical fields.

Self-Determination Eligibility Guide: A guide to determining eligibility is available at:
<http://www.proudtoserveagain.com>

Registration: Registration forms may be downloaded from the Troops to Teachers link at:
<http://www.proudtoserveagain.com>

Current Information: The Troops to Teachers website is updated as new or revised information becomes available. The website also provides a standard Power Point briefing and other promotional materials.

N. Private Employment Agencies

Overall, private employment agencies are responsible for approximately 3 to 5 percent of all hires nationally. If your skills and experience match those fields in which the agency specializes, you can expect some assistance. For example, a searatee with computing skills should seek an agency specializing in computer-related placements.

Most private employment agencies are reputable. They possess an extensive list of employers, and they charge those employers a fee for their services. Before registering with a private agency, confirm that all fees will be paid by the employer, and not by you.

O. Finding Out About Federal Employment Opportunities

Opportunities for employment with the U.S. Government are available in all parts of the nation as well as overseas. Here are some ways to find out about different types of federal job listings.

- **Government jobs near you:** Openings may be available at the installation from which you are separating. You can find out about these from your local civilian personnel office.
- **Opportunities overseas:** To assist you in finding out about federal job opportunities elsewhere in the world, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) maintains federal job information/testing offices in each state. A listing of these offices is located on the Transition Bulletin Board (**see page 23**); look for it in "Other Employment Sources" under the "Employment" menu.
- You can view federal employment opportunities on the Internet at <http://www.usajobs.com>. You can also:

Call OPM at 912-757-3000.

Call the OPM Computer Bulletin Board at 912-757-3100.

- **Unique positions:** OPM maintains an automated job referral system for hard-to-fill jobs. This system, to be expanded in the future, presently focuses on those positions requiring special skills. You may register directly with the OPM computer center in Macon, Georgia. Write to:

Office of Personnel Management
Staffing Service Center
Macon, Georgia 31297

Other Federal Employment Websites:

- Fed World: <http://www.fedworld.gov>
- Federal Employment Portal: <http://www.opm.gov>
- DoD Civilian Employment: <http://www.go-defense.com>
- Army Civilian Personnel Onlnt: <http://www.cpol.army.mil/>

Applying for Federal Jobs

You apply for most federal jobs by preparing and submitting the documents requested in the federal job announcement. If you have any questions, contact the civilian personnel office and/or the point of contact listed on the job announcement. If you believe our veterans' preference rights have been violated when applying for federal jobs, contact the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service for assistance under the Veterans' Employment Opportunities Act of 1998. A complete list of VETS state directors is available on the Internet at <http://www.dol.gov/dol.vets>.

P. Employment Preferences

Involuntarily & Certain Voluntarily Separated Members: Under chapter 58, Section 1143 (d) of title 10, U.S. Code, eligibility applies to members of the Armed Forces, and their dependents, who were on active duty on Sept. 30, 1990 and who were involuntarily separated under honorable conditions on or after Oct. 1, 1990. Preference eligible veterans shall be identified by possession of a DD Form 1173, "*Uniformed Services Identification And Privilege Card*," stamped with "TA."

Preference applies to jobs graded at NF-3 and below, and to positions paid at hourly rates. Preference applies to any job that is open to competition in accordance with merit staffing practices.

Military Spouses: Under DoD Instruction 1404.12, "Employment of Spouses of Active Duty Military Members Stationed Worldwide," eligibility applies to spouses of active duty military members of the Armed Forces. Under this basic policy, preferences for military spouses are the same as the involuntarily and certain voluntarily separated members, except that military spouse preference has priority.

Spouse preference may be used only once for each permanent change of station (PCS) transfer. To qualify you must be married prior to the PCS relocation. Visit the DoD's Spouse Career center at <http://www.military.com/spouse> to learn more about military spouse employment preferences.

Family Members in Foreign Areas: In accordance with DoD Instruction 1400.23 and DoD 1402.2-M, Chapter VII, family members of active duty military members and civilian employees stationed in foreign areas eligible. Basic policy allows preference for all NAF jobs. Preferences apply when not at variance with the Status of Forces Agreements, country-to-country agreements, treaties, or as prescribed by DoD Instruction 1400.23.

Q. Federal Jobs Through the Non-Appropriated Fund and the Veterans Readjustment Act

Because of your military service, you may have an advantage over others when applying for federal employment. Congress provided this advantage by enacting veterans' hiring preference laws.

These laws do *not* imply guaranteed placement of a veteran in every federal job. The veterans' hiring preference laws are not applicable to Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF) employment. Veterans applying for NAF jobs may be given preference at time of hire only.

Veterans' Recruitment Appointment (VRA): The VRA is a special authority by which agencies may, if they wish, appoint an eligible veteran without competition. The candidate does not have to be on an eligibility list, but must meet the basic qualification requirements for the position. The VRA is a convenient method of appointment for both the agency and the veteran. However, use of the authority is entirely discretionary and no one is entitled to a VRA appointment.

VRA appointees initially are hired for a 2-year period. Successful completion of the 2-year VRA appointment leads to a permanent civil service appointment. (Please note, however, that a veteran may be employed without competition on a temporary or term appointment based on VRA eligibility. Such an appointment is not a VRA appointment and does not lead to conversion to a permanent position.)

Eligibility Requirements

The following individuals are eligible for a VRA appointment:

- Disabled veterans;
- Veterans who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during a war declared by Congress, or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized.
- Veterans who, while serving on active duty in the Armed Forces, participated in a military operation for which the Armed Forces Service Medal was awarded; and
- Veterans separated from active duty within the past 3 years.

There is no minimum service requirement, but the individual must have served on *active duty*, not active duty for training.

The Veterans' Preference Point System

A "point system" is used to determine veterans' hiring preference:

- **Five-point preference:** Basically, five points are given to honorably separated veterans who have served more than 180 consecutive days of active duty before October 14, 1976 (including service during training under the six-month Reserve or National Guard programs), or during any war or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized (such as Desert Shield/Storm) and served continuously for 24 months or the full period called or ordered to active duty (including for training). Retired members of the Armed Forces above the rank of Major or Lt. Commander are no longer eligible for the five-point preference. Their preference is contingent upon a disability.
- **Ten-point preference:** Ten points are given to disabled veterans and veterans who are awarded the Purple Heart and honorably separated.

The point system program is administered by OPM. The VA issues letters to OPM indicating the degree of disability for veterans' preference purposes. The more points you have, the closer you get to the front of the line for possible job consideration with the federal government.

Hiring preference is not limited to veterans alone. It is also granted to the spouse of an unemployable disabled veteran, the unmarried widow or widower of a veteran, or the mother of a deceased or disabled veteran. Any federal agency personnel officer can give you more information on the point system.

Visit the USAJOBS website at: <http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/veteranscenter/> to learn more about Veteran Employment opportunities.

R. Veterans Get Priority at State Employment Offices

As a veteran, you receive special consideration and priority for referral, testing, and counseling from your state employment office. Your state employment office can provide many additional services, as noted below.

Veterans Employment and Training Service Office: There is at least one Veterans Employment and Training Service Office in every state (<http://www.dol.gov/vets/aboutvets/contacts/main.htm>). Veterans' employment representatives may also be found at local employment offices with large numbers of veteran job applicants. These offices monitor and oversee veterans' employment services, administer veterans' training programs, and protect the reemployment rights of veterans. They will assist you with any employment problem you may have.

Make sure you take a certified copy of your DD Form 214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty," with you for your first appointment with the state employment office. You should receive your DD Form 214 before being released from active duty. Your DD Form 214 and your DD Form 2648-1, "Transition Assistance Counseling Checklist" are two very important documents you protect, and put in a place at home where you can readily access them, when the need arises.

DoD Job Search: This job bank, sponsored by the Department of Defense and the Department of Labor, lists millions of jobs across the nation that are not readily filled. Check out the website at <http://www.dod.jobsearch.org> for further detail and assistance.

Training opportunities: State employment offices can offer you seminars on subjects such as resume writing, interviewing skills, and career changes; information on vocational training opportunities; and proficiency tests in typing and shorthand for positions requiring such certification.

Information: At your state employment office, you will find data on state training, employment, and apprenticeship programs; and statistics regarding employment availability, economic climate, and cost of living. Some offices even have extensive information about the things you should know before moving to the state.

To locate State Employment Offices visit: <http://www.naswa.org/links.cfm>

To locate the local Career One-Stop Center visit: http://www.hirevetsfirst.gov/onestop_vet.asp.

S. Family Members Get Job Assistance Too

Family members can take advantage of many of the outplacement services offered to members of the Guard and Reserves. Most of these services are provided at the Career One-Stop Center or State Employment Offices. They are also offered and coordinated through the Transition Assistance and ACAP Offices at most major military installations. Family members can get help in developing their own Individual Transition Plans; they also have access to the following employment services:

Department of Labor (DOL) TAP Employment Workshops: These 2 ½ day workshops are coordinated through the Transition Assistance and ACAP Offices. These workshops can help you with your employment objectives while the military member is deployed. Members of the Guard and Reserves, as well as their spouses, can access the same services at the Career One-Stop Centers. Contact your Career One-Stop Center or a local military installation Transition/ACAP Office or Command Career Counselor (Navy) immediately to get scheduled for an appointment.

Spouses of activated and deployed Guard and Reserves are highly encouraged to attend the DOL Transition Assistance Employment Workshop if you are located near a major military installation that offers the workshop. If not located near a military installation, spouses should take full advantage of the services available at their local Career One-Stop Center.

BOTTOM LINE: Demobilizing/deactivating Guard and Reserves and spouses need to make an appointment with a qualified professional who can help prepare them for the transition from an active duty life style back to their civilian life.

TBB: The Transition Bulletin Board is an electronic listing of job vacancies and transition information. The Transition Bulletin Board is an electronic listing of job vacancies and transition information located at <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/ot>.

Career counseling: The Transition Assistance Office will provide individual job/career development counseling, assist in assessing employment skills, and identify employment opportunities.

Job training: These services include workshops and seminars on enhancing job search skills; goal setting; preparing federal employment applications, resumes, interviewing techniques, and occupational skills training for family members.

Job banks: National job banks and local job banks provide information and referral on temporary, permanent, part-time, full-time, and volunteer positions in both the federal and private sectors.

In addition, family members of separating personnel can receive a one-time priority for Non-Appropriated Funds jobs in the federal government. Ask your local civilian personnel office for details.