

Chapter 3 – Employment Assistance

Many Service members have never written a resume, filled out a job application, or attended a job interview. Fortunately, these skills can be learned. The following section will give you the resources and information you need to launch your new civilian career.

A. 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/>.

B. 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:

<http://www.bls.gov>

<http://www.hirevetsfirst.gov>

<http://www.doleta.gov/programs>

http://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 your transition because you dread the thought of finding a job. Career changes are, however, a common part of American life. Most people change careers at least three times in their lives.

Transition Assistance Offices have programs and counselors to assist you and your family members in seeking employment in government and the private sector. Examples of some employment assistance services available at your Transition Assistance Office are listed below:

- **Counseling:** The Transition staff provides individual career development counseling, comprehensive assessment of employment skills, and identification of employment opportunities.
- **Services:** Transition Assistance Offices offer computerized listings of jobs, career workshops, and training opportunities, as well as automated resume writing. Many 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.org> – look for job banks/boards under the employment hub
 - 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 looking to hire former military personnel 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 Education Service Office or Navy College to learn how you can take advantage of this great opportunity.

- **Workshops and seminars:** A variety of workshops and seminars are available through your 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. One of the most popular job-hunting workshops is sponsored by the Department of Labor. Their 2 ½ day Transition Assistance Employment Workshop is one component of the overall Transition Assistance Program (TAP). You can sign up for this important workshop through your Transition/ACAP Office, or through your Command Career Counselor.
- **Training:** Some locations 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.

USMAP. USMAP (United Services Military Apprenticeship Program) is available to members of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard who participated in this program are eligible to receive a Department of Labor (DOL) Certificate of Completion, which gives them a definite advantage in getting better civilian jobs since employers know the value of apprenticeships. Visit <https://usmap.cnet.navy.mil> to learn more.

Library

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. <http://www.associationexecs.com>
- **Dun and Bradstreet and Standard and Poor's Register of Corporations:** Both documents offer information on individual companies and organizations. No Website is available. Check the reference section of your local public 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 also may 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 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. You can learn what an industry is all about from material provided by these associations. You can also learn the jargon and get insight into how people in the industry think. You also may find salary ranges, qualification requirements, locations of jobs, and the names and addresses of individual companies through these associations. [More information can be found at <http://www.BLS.GOV>.](#)

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 the 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.

C. 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:

- 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 to tell you the do's and don'ts of what civilian employers 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>.

D. 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 have attended a Transition Assistance Program 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 than in 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—functional, chronological, or whatever. 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.

E. Workshops Help Separatees "TAP" Into Good Jobs

The Department of Labor-sponsored Transition Assistance Program Employment Workshops are sponsored in conjunction with the installation Transition Assistance staffs. The DOL TAP Employment Workshops normally run 2 ½ days. However, some local installations may combine this workshop with other specialty workshops. During your first visit to the Transition Assistance Office, or with your Command Career Counselor, you should ask to be scheduled to attend the next available workshop (your spouse should attend if space is available). You should plan to attend employment workshops at least 180 days prior to separation.

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.

TAP addresses 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.)

At the TAP workshops, 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 **TAP Employment Workshop**, you will find other job-hunting programs sponsored by organizations in and out of your service. 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.

F. Military Experience and Training 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," 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 Document

To get your verification document, go to the VMET website at <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/vmet>. All separating military personnel 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 your local Transition Counselor.

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.

G. DoD Job Search

The Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Labor activated a new veterans and service member Website 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.

H. DoD Transportal

DoD has created a web portal for military transitioners. This Website is sponsored by the Department of Defense and is designed specifically to assist Service members and their spouses leaving active duty. While DoD TRANSPORTAL contains valuable information and resources, you should use this site as part of a comprehensive program of transition and employment assistance. The best place to start is your installation Transition Assistance Office. The DoD Transportal is another tool to assist you in your transition back into the civilian community. You can access this Website at <http://www.dodtransportal.org>.

This Website has three features that can be accessed using the buttons on the left of the Web page screen:

- **Transition Assistance:** This feature is a brief overview of the DoD Transition Assistance Program. Here you will find a general discussion of all benefits and services available to you.
- **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 recruiting websites operated by Fortune 500 companies.
 - Links to 100 corporate recruiting sites selected among the Fortune 500 companies.
 - Suggested Reading: A list of books that you can use as job search resources.

I. 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 to 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 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.

J. 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 Transition Assistance Office. 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

K. 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. TTT is managed by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), Pensacola, Florida.

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.

L. Reemployment Rights Can Get You Your Old Job Back

Under certain circumstances, veterans have the right to return to their pre-service jobs after discharge or release from active duty. Your former employer must rehire you if you meet all of the following requirements:

- You must have left other-than-temporary employment to enter military service.

AND

- You must have served in the Armed Forces (either voluntarily or involuntarily) no more than five years, unless at the request of and for the convenience of the government.

AND

- You must have been discharged or released under honorable conditions.

AND

- You must still be qualified to perform the duties of the job. If you became disabled while in military service, you must be able to perform some other job in your employer's organization (with comparable seniority, status, and pay).

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/>.

Your reemployment rights also protect you against being discharged by your employer without cause for one year (six months in the case of a Reservist or National Guard member returning from training).

M. 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 separatee 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.

N. Finding 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 Section J**).
- You can view federal employment opportunities on the Internet at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/>. 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. Applicants 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:**

- <http://www.fedworld.gov>
- <http://www.goDefense.com>
- Federal Employment Portal at: <http://www.opm.gov>
- Army Civilian Personnel Online at: <http://www.cpol.army.mil/>

O. Working for the DoD

The Department of Defense (DoD) welcomes veterans to join the DoD civilian workforce and continue serving the Defense mission! The DoD is the nation's number one employer of veterans, offering nearly 700 challenging occupations.

As a DoD civilian, you can serve with the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or any one of the many other Defense agencies. Career opportunities exist in research laboratories, manufacturing facilities, office complexes, hospitals, military bases, and schools in almost every major population center in the United States and in numerous countries throughout the world.

The Department offers preference in employment to eligible veterans, along with world-class benefits, and many opportunities for personal and professional growth, travel, and advancement.

You have served our nation with honor and distinction. Now, the Department of Defense invites you to become part of the Department's rich and proud tradition of civilian service.

goDefense.com

The Department of Defense (DoD) website, <http://www.goDefense.com>, offers veteran job seekers assistance with pursuing DoD civilian careers by providing online career opportunity information and resources. In addition, Recruitment Assistance Division (RAD) career counselors are available Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST to provide assistance with completing required forms and advisory guidance on how to respond to vacancy announcements.

For more information visit <http://www.goDefense.com> or call toll-free: 1-888-DOD4USA (1-888-363-4872); TTY for Deaf/Hard of Hearing: 703-696-5436 or send request by e-mail to dao@cpms.osd.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," over 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. Spouse preference may be used once for each permanent relocation of the military sponsor. The spouse must have been married to the military sponsor before relocation to the duty station.

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 over that preference.

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.

If you are a Vietnam or post-Vietnam-era veteran: The Veterans Readjustment Appointment (VRA) program provides special employment opportunities and job training to veterans who were honorably discharged and who served for more than 180 days on active duty.

- If you are an eligible involuntary separatee: You and your family members are authorized a one-time employment preference for NAF positions you are qualified to perform. For details, ask your installation's Transition Office to refer you to the local NAF personnel office.
- Eligible Vietnam-era veterans qualify for appointments under Veterans Readjustment Appointment (VRA) until 10 years after their last discharge or separation from active duty or until December 31, 1995, whichever is later.
- Eligible post-Vietnam-era veterans qualify for 10 years after the date of discharge or release from active duty or until December 31, 1999, whichever is later.
- Eligible veterans with a service-connected disability of 30 percent or more have no time limit.

For information about specific VRA job opportunities, contact the personnel office at the federal agency where you would like to work.

The Veterans' Preference Point System for Federal Employment

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. Veterans' employment representatives may also be found at local employment offices with large numbers of veteran job applicants. Their job is to 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 your Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, DD Form 214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty" (certified copy) with you for your first appointment with the state employment office.

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> and 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 transitioning Service members. Most of these services are coordinated from the Transition Assistance Office at your installation. Family members can get help in developing their own Individual Transition Plans; they also have access to the following employment services:

Department of Labor TAP Employment Workshops: These 2 ½ day, Department of Labor sponsored workshops, are coordinated through the Transition Assistance and ACAP Offices can help you with your employment objectives before you leave the military. Contact your Transition/ACAP Office or Command Career Counselor immediately to get scheduled for an appointment.

Spouses are highly encouraged to attend the DoL Employment Workshop in order to prepare themselves for the transition from an active duty life style to a civilian one.

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.