



# **RECRUITING, HIRING & RETAINING VETERANS**



American Water Works  
Association



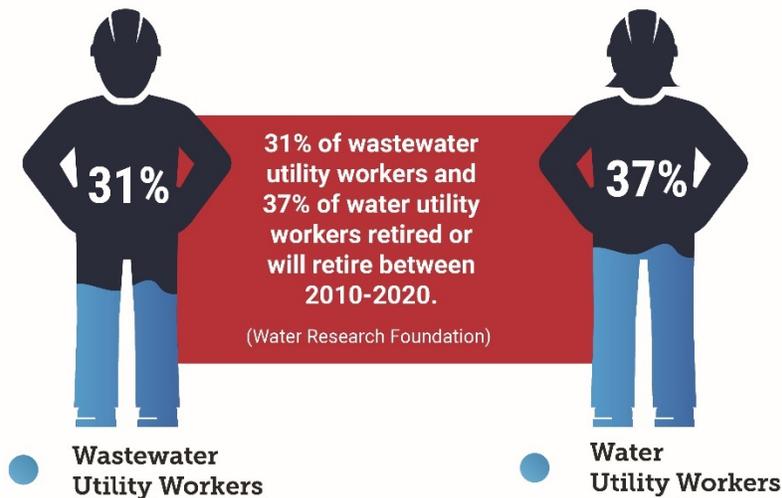
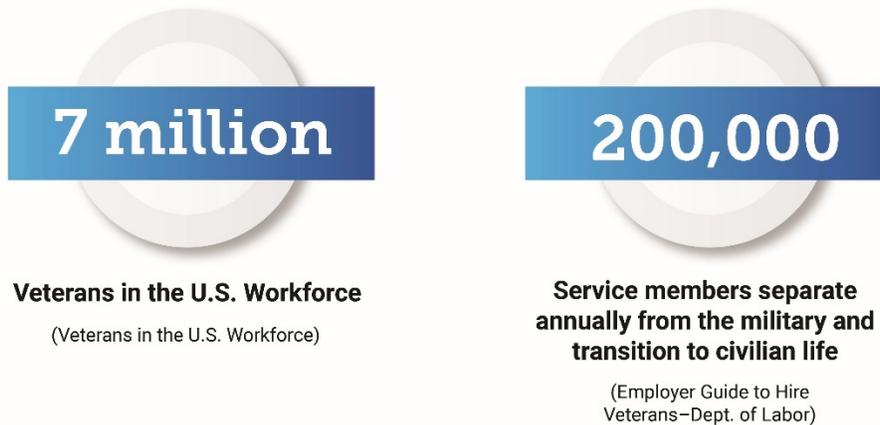
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## WHY SHOULD I HIRE A VETERAN?

Veterans have many skills necessary to thrive in the water sector. They have experience working in a highly regulated environment, they have shown a commitment to public service, and they handle stress well in crisis situations. Veterans are returning to homes in rural and urban locations and looking for employment.

**You need skilled employees and Veterans need jobs. It's a perfect fit.**



## WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP ME HIRE VETERANS?

The following guides will be beneficial to your utility when hiring Veterans. These documents will be referenced throughout this toolkit.



[Employer Guide to Hire Veterans – U.S. Department of Labor: Concise document detailing the benefits of hiring Veterans, Veteran demographics, and all-encompassing employer resource guide.](#)



[Guide to Recruiting and Hiring Veterans, National Guard Members and Reservist, Small & Large Employer Guide – Center for America: In-depth detailed guide for making small and large workplaces more open to Veterans, tips for recruiting Veterans and educating staff about military.](#)



[Guide to Hiring Veterans – Dept. of Veterans Affairs and Hiring Our Heroes – In-depth detailed guide to the ins and outs of hiring Veterans.](#)

## HOW CAN I EFFECTIVELY RECRUIT VETERANS?

Though Veterans often make excellent employees, many employers have difficulty recruiting and supporting them. This section will provide you with tools for recruitment and interviewing Veterans.

[Checklist for Recruiting Veterans](#) – Employer Roadmap – USAA, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

### What Organizations Can Help Me Connect to Veterans?

Knowing where to find eligible Veterans can be difficult. This section highlights multiple job search sites for both employers and Veterans.

[Career One Stop](#) – U.S. Dept. of Labor - Veteran and Military Transition website aids Veterans in finding jobs and utilities and organizations in posting jobs fitting for Veterans.

[Hiring Our Heroes](#) – U.S. Chamber Foundation - Hiring our Heroes website aids Veterans and employers in finding jobs or employees.

[Hire a Veteran](#) - Dept. of Labor - Website aids Veterans and employers in finding jobs or employees.

[Veteran's Hiring Guide](#) – U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs – PDF version of the 2014 Hiring Guide.

[VA for Vets](#) – Dept. of Veterans Affairs – Website of resources for employers when hiring Veterans.



## How Do I Appeal to Veterans?

- Veterans are often **driven by purpose** and having a **mission** – highlighting key components of your utility or organization will appeal to this mindset of Veterans.
- HR Staff, recruiters and hiring managers should be trained on how to **recruit, select, and on-board Veterans**. Without training, good intentions fail because the HR team may continue to follow past procedures and systems that might unintentionally screen out qualified Veterans. ([Soldier for Life](#))
- **Including a Veteran** in your HR team can greatly aid in the translation of military jargon on resumes. Veterans in HR could also assist in interviews. ([Soldier for Life](#))
- Market Veteran recruitment – on website, social media, etc. This will **make it easier** for Veterans seeking a job to better understand how they would fit in to your utility. ([Soldier for Life](#))
- Create a **Veteran Affinity** or **Employee Resource Group (ERG)** - A voluntary, employee-led group that fosters a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with organizational mission, values, goals, business practices, and objectives. ([Employer Guide to Hire Veterans – Dept of Labor, page 13](#))

For in-depth details on appealing and recruiting, visit Section 2 of [Guide to Recruiting and Hiring Veterans, National Guard Members and Reservist, Small Employer Guide](#) or Section 2 of [Guide to Recruiting and Hiring Veterans, National Guard Members and Reservist, Large Employer Guide](#)

## How Do I Draft a Veteran-Friendly Job Description?

- Make your job descriptions **competency based** versus listing required years of experience. ([Employer Guide to Hire Veterans – Dept. of Labor](#))
- Recruit Veteran employees to assist in the writing or review of job descriptions and skills required.

For in-depth details on drafting Veteran-friendly job descriptions, visit Section 1 of [Guide to Recruiting and Hiring Veterans, National Guard Members and Reservist, Small Employer Guide](#) or Section 1 of [Guide to Recruiting and Hiring Veterans, National Guard Members and Reservist, Large Employer Guide](#)

## How Do I Successfully Interview Veterans?

[The Do's and Don'ts of Interviewing Veterans](#) – Employer Roadmap – USAA, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

### General Tips for Interviewing

- The most effective interview styles for Veterans are **behavioral** and **situational**
- **Clearly describe** the job role and its responsibilities, defining expectations upfront
- **Avoid closed-ended questions** by asking about an individual's service experience and responsibilities.
- Focus on **transferrable skills**.
- **Ask** – it is okay to ask Veterans what military terms mean.

For in-depth details on interviewing, visit Section 2 of the [Guide to Recruiting and Hiring Veterans, National Guard Members and Reservist, Small Employer Guide](#) or Section 2 of the [Guide to Recruiting and Hiring Veterans, National Guard Members and Reservist, Large Employer Guide](#)



## WHAT ARE MILITARY RANK STRUCTURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES?

Because many Veterans have trouble writing resumes and relating their military responsibilities to civilian job responsibilities, knowing what an M.O.S (Military Occupational Specialty) is and its associated duties can aid your utility in understanding the skills of each Veteran.



[From M.O.S to J-O-B – United States EPA – Details of Military Occupational Specialties that translate to Water and Wastewater Operations.](#)

[Civilian-to-Military Occupation Translator](#) : Career One Stop, U.S. Department of Labor

[Military-to-Civilian Occupation Translator](#) : O\*NET



Below are general skill sets, experience, and education for different military populations.

Enlisted: E3-E4 3–6 years of service	Enlisted: E5-E9 5–20 years of service	Officers: O1-O3 Lieutenants & Captains 4–10 years of service	Major to Flag/General Officers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core set of military experiences, education and training</li> <li>• Adhere to core set of values               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Duty</li> <li>- Honesty</li> <li>- Loyalty</li> <li>- Teamwork</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Follow Instructions</li> <li>• Meet standards/ deadlines</li> <li>• Perform under pressure</li> <li>• Think and act independently in the absence of their leader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership, management, and team-building skills in an operations environment</li> <li>• Operations and problem-solving experience</li> <li>• Technology, logistics and fiscal/ finance expertise</li> <li>• Some have college degrees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operations and strategic planning experience</li> <li>• Superior communication skills</li> <li>• Decision-making</li> <li>• Public Affairs</li> <li>• Technology, logistics and fiscal/ financial savvy</li> <li>• College degrees from highly competitive programs (Service Academies, ROTC Scholarships)</li> <li>• MBSs and other advanced degrees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Making</li> <li>• Defense Sector</li> <li>• Large Scale Organization Expertise</li> </ul>

## HOW DO I ESTABLISH A VETERAN-FRIENDLY APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM?

Military apprenticeship programs can train and build Veteran’s skills in specific job duties making them skilled workers for your utility and organization! The following resources can assist you in establishing an apprenticeship program that can meet Veterans’ needs.

[On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeships](#) - Dept. of Veterans Affairs resource outlining the process of approval for employers wishing to establish on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs for Veterans

[Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors](#) - Dept. of Labor resource on how to receive GI Bill® approval for registered apprenticeship programs.

## HOW DO I MAINTAIN A VETERAN-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE?

Before hiring new Veteran employees, consider surveying current employees and asking Veterans to voluntarily self-identify. Current Veteran employees could serve as mentors to new Veteran employees and help with Veteran recruitment.

Examine these aspects of your organization to determine if it is a Veteran-friendly environment:

- Culture of company
- Engaging opportunities
- Clearly-stated expectations
- Known pathway for advancement
- Availability of Veteran mentors
- Clear and open communication
- Encouraging self-direction
- Employees are given increasing levels of responsibility
- The impact the Veteran will have on the organization

For more details on Veteran retention, visit [Employer Guide to Hire Veterans – Dept. of Labor](#) – page 15



Center for a  
New American  
Security

[Understanding Veteran Retention and Performance in the Workforce – Center for a New American Security: In-depth document that details the data of hiring and retention of Veterans and provides recommendations for retention of Veterans.](#)

## What About Employees in the Reserve and National Guard?



[Supporting Your Employees in the Reserve & National Guard - This employment toolkit from the Dept. of Veterans Affairs provides resources for supporting reserve and national guard members.](#)

[Planning for Military Leave for Employees in the Reserve or National Guard Guidelines on creating company policies regarding military leaves and understanding employer rights and responsibilities.](#)



## How Can I Make Accommodations for Veterans with Disabilities?

Below are links that will provide tips for assisting and supporting Veterans with Disabilities

[Veterans Hiring Toolkit](#) – Step-by-step guide to hiring qualified Veterans and **accommodating Veterans with disabilities**.

[Job Accommodation Network](#) – Free consulting services about all aspects of job accommodations processes.

[Veterans Employment Toolkit](#) – Dept. of Veterans Affairs – Challenges **and ways to help your Veteran** through the accommodation process.

[Education and Employment Initiative \(E2I\)](#) -- Department of Defense -- Program that assists wounded, ill and injured Service members early in their recovery process to **identify their skills and match them** with education and career opportunities.

[Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Coordinators](#) – Dept. of Veterans Affairs - Local representatives who work with disabled Veterans to find employment. These contacts can also assist employers to help identify financial incentives for hiring disabled Veterans.



## LOCAL RESOURCES?

AWWA sections are developing guides with local resources that will assist in connecting employers with Veterans. Please check with your AWWA section for available resources.

### Job Fairs?

The following are resources that will connect you to local resources.

Many Veterans use Military Placement Firms (aka Headhunters) to find a position. Consider connecting with national or local firms that fit with your organization's needs.

[Service Academy Career Conference](#) – National job fair exclusively for service academy alumni

[Hire and Recruit - Career One Stop](#) – Multiple resources for posting jobs, job fairs and training programs at a local level.

[Local Hiring Fairs](#) – Hire Our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation – List of hiring fairs by location.

[Local Job Fairs](#) – Recruit Military – List of Veterans-only career fairs by location.

### Local Contacts?

The AWWA Volunteer liaison network is made of volunteers from each AWWA section who serve as the critical connector between local water industry employers and separating military members interested in the water industry.

To reach your local section contact, Email [Veterans@awwa.org](mailto:Veterans@awwa.org)