

Journey to Success: Employment Tools for Veterans with Disabilities

Part 3: Finding Your Employment Destination



Securing today
and tomorrow



PART 3: FINDING YOUR EMPLOYMENT DESTINATION

Are you, or is someone you know, a United States military Veteran who acquired a disability during or after your service?

Military Veterans bring experience and skills of great value to the workforce. This document is part of a 5-part series called Journey to Success, which describes services that help Veterans with a disability enter the workforce and find fulfilling employment. Some of the services are open only to Veterans, but many of them are available to any American with a disability. You can find other information in this series, as well as a comprehensive document including all five parts, on our website at www.socialsecurity.gov/people/veterans/.

Note: The following list of resources includes federal and federally funded entities, as well as nonfederal or privately funded entities. Social Security does not endorse any of the nonfederal resources, nor does it guarantee any of the services advertised by those resources. Social Security is not responsible for the content or accessibility of third-party websites.

Below are resources for finding employment. These resources include programs for internships, job placement, and job search, and services that help people with disabilities connect with the right employer.

FINDING EMPLOYMENT

Vets.gov provides quick access to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Labor (DOL). These agencies partnered to create a strong starting point for VA and DOL resources that can aid your career and employment search. For more information, go to: www.vets.gov/employment/.

Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) is run by the VA. VR&E offers services for Veterans with disabilities. These services help transitioning service members and Veterans with service-connected disabilities and employment challenges to prepare for, find, and keep suitable employment. Services may include employment assistance, short and long-term training, purchase of required supplies and equipment, and on-the-job training. VA VR&E includes programs such as the **Compensated Work Therapy (CWT)** that helps by supporting and matching work-ready Veterans to competitive jobs, and consulting with businesses and industries regarding Veterans' specific employment needs. For more information on VR&E generally, go to: www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp; for more information about Compensated Work Therapy, visit www.va.gov/health/cwt/.

DOL American Job Centers and the **Careeronestop** program provide local centers for job search and employment training programs, as well as unemployment insurance services across the nation. Veterans can take advantage of priority of service access at American Job Centers to DOL Programs such as skills training, job search assistance, and resume writing. The American Job Centers provide access to career guidance, employment, and training opportunities, and Veterans can use the

Careeronestop tools to assist with searching careers, finding training, and with job searches. If you want to further explore careers, DOL has also provided Veterans with the My Next Move tool at www.mynextmove.org/vets/. For more information go to: www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/AmericanJobCenters/american-job-centers.aspx.

Hire Heroes is a service offered by the USO Transition 360 Alliance to provide job counseling, networking opportunities, career planning, and training to transitioning Veterans and their family members. For more information go to: www.uso.org/programs/hire-heroes-usa.

Veteran Recruiting (VR), in partnership with Disabled American Veterans (DAV), allows military friendly employers, service members, Veterans, and military spouses to connect and conduct job searches by putting the Veteran first. In addition, employers may recruit talented Veterans in the VR virtual recruitment center. For more information go to: <http://veteranrecruiting.com/jobs/>.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Veterans have some specific benefits when applying for jobs with the Federal Government, such as:

- **Veterans' Preference** - Veterans' preference gives eligible Veterans preference in hiring. Preference applies to competitive appointments as well as special noncompetitive appointments. Only Veterans discharged or released from active duty in the armed forces under honorable conditions are eligible for Veterans' preference.
- **Veterans Recruitment Act (VRA)** - VRA allows for the appointment of eligible Veterans, without competition from non-Veterans. Agencies may use this hiring authority for positions up to GS-11 or equivalent. Agencies hire Veterans under excepted appointments to positions also found in competitive service. After the individual satisfactorily completes 2 years of service, the agency may change the Veteran's status to a career appointment.
- **30 percent or more Disabled Veterans** - The 30 Percent or More Disabled Veterans authority enables the appointment of an eligible candidate to any position for which he or she is qualified without competition. Initial appointments are time-limited, lasting more than 60 days; however, Veterans can be non-competitively converted to a permanent status at any time during the time-limited appointment.
- **Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 (VEOA)** - This act allows agencies the flexibility to give certain eligible Veterans access to jobs that would have been available only to status employees. In VEOA appointments, eligible Veterans may compete for job opportunities not offered to other external candidates. A VEOA eligible Veteran who is selected will be given a career or career-conditional appointment.
- **Disabled Veterans Enrolled in a VA Training Program** - Veterans with a disability eligible for training under the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) vocational rehabilitation program may enroll for training or work experience at an agency under the terms of an agreement between the agency and VA. The Veteran is a beneficiary of the VA, not a Federal employee, while enrolled in the program. The program tailors training to the individual's needs and goals.

USAJOBS is the website that connects job seekers to employment opportunities in the Federal Government. The website www.usajobs.gov provides information on Veterans' preference and other Veteran-specific hiring options in the I'm a Veteran section at www.usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/veterans/. You can also find a host of Veterans' employment information at OPM's FedshHireVets webpage at www.fedshirevets.gov. Additionally, you may want to explore individual federal agency and department websites, as most have Veterans outreach programs.

PROGRAMS THAT ASSIST WITH GETTING A FELLOWSHIP OR AN INTERNSHIP

If you are a Veteran with a disability looking to gain exposure and job experience, an internship or fellowship is an excellent option. Requirements vary depending on the program, career level, and field. There are a host of federal and non-federal fellowships and internships; these are a few examples:

Non-Paid Work Experience (NPWE) Program is run by the VA. NPWE provides eligible Veterans and service members the opportunity to obtain training and practical job experience concurrently. This program is ideal for Veterans or service members who have a clearly established career goal, and who learn easily in a hands-on environment. This program is also well suited to Veterans or service members who are having difficulties obtaining employment due to lack of work experience. For more information go to: www.benefits.va.gov/VOCREHAB/employers.asp.

Operation Warfighter (OWF) is a Department of Defense internship program that matches qualified wounded, ill, and injured service members with non-funded federal internships in order for them to gain valuable work experience during their recovery and rehabilitation. This process assists with the service members' reintegration to duty, or transition into the civilian work environment where they are able to employ their newly acquired skills in a non-military work setting. For more information go to: <http://warriorcare.dodlive.mil/wounded-warrior-resources/operation-warfighter/>.

The Intelligence Community Wounded Warrior Internship Program (ICWWP) is a unique community-wide initiative that aligns with the Department of Defense's Operation War Fighter (OWF) Program. ICWWP provides injured, ill, and wounded service members with meaningful work experiences intended to assist with their recuperation and transition into the workforce through internship opportunities within the Intelligence Community (IC). IC internships provide recovering service members the opportunity to build their resumes with valuable federal government work experience, explore employment interests, and develop additional job skills. For more information go to: <http://www.dia.mil/Careers/Wounded-Warrior-Internship-Programs/Defense-Intelligence-Agency-Wounded-Warrior-Internship-Program/>.

The Veterans Congressional Internship Program (Washington Scholars) is for Veterans interested in being able to qualify for employment on Congressional Staff (employees of the United States Congress or individual members of Congress). The program is a 10-week paid internship on a Congress member's staff, learning the Congressional Legislative and Budget process, and obtaining the qualifications, experience, training, and credentialing necessary to be a potential candidate for employment on Congressional Staff. Be sure to denote that you are applying as a "Veteran Intern." For more information go to: www.washingtonscholars.org.

AmeriCorps is a program that places thousands of young adults into intensive service positions where they learn valuable work skills, earn money for education, and develop an appreciation for citizenship. AmeriCorps has three main programs: AmeriCorps NCCC, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps State and National. Each has different eligibility requirements, so visit their site for more information: www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps.

Other notable internships and fellowships are:

- The Department of State's English Language Teaching Fellow Program at <https://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/english-language-fellow-program>;
- The White House Internships at www.whitehouse.gov/participate/internships; and
- The Presidential Innovation Fellows at www.whitehouse.gov/participate/fellows.

SOCIAL SECURITY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS

If you are interested in working for Social Security, go to the Careers at SSA: Veterans page at www.socialsecurity.gov/careers/Veterans.html. You can review the many options for Veterans, explore career paths, and link to open Social Security jobs.

Social Security participates in two transitional programs for Veterans, the Non-Paid Work Experience Internship (NPWE) and Operation Warfighter. For more detail on these two internship programs, **see page 3**. To learn more about these internship opportunities at Social Security, email DCHR.OPE.veterans.Employment@ssa.gov. If you would like to be considered for one of these programs, please include your resume, a copy of your DD214 (discharge document), and a copy of your VA Disability Certification Letter or Schedule A Letter.

In addition, Social Security has Selective Placement Program Coordinators (SPPC) who assist with recruiting and hiring of people with disabilities. Through the Selective Placement Program, Social Security maintains a database of eligible people seeking employment through the Schedule A authority. The disability does not need to be connected to active military service to be eligible for this program. SPPCs also help people with disabilities get information about current job opportunities and reasonable accommodations. You can find additional information on the Careers at SSA: Individuals with Disabilities page at www.ssa.gov/careers/individualsWithDisabilities.html.

Veteran applicants who have questions about hiring at Social Security may also call our Veteran Customer Service hotline at 410-966-5400 during business hours Monday through Friday.

Thank You

Social Security thanks you for your service and sacrifice. We hope these resources are helpful to you on your employment adventure!



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