

More work needed to improve employment of military veterans, study finds

November 10 2014

Businesses report that U.S. military veterans make excellent employees, but companies still experience challenges locating and hiring them, according to a new RAND Corporation report.

Studying a group of companies that have made a major commitment to hire veterans, researchers concluded that challenges remain for veterans seeking civilian jobs and employers hoping to hire them, including continuing difficulty understanding the match between military skills and civilian job requirements.

Too often veterans believe their talents apply only in the security or defense arenas and employers struggle to understand how military experience translates to the skills needed for civilian jobs, according to researchers.

"Military members need to know that defense contractors and similar businesses are not the only place they should look for work," said Kimberly Hall, lead author of the study and a senior project associate at RAND, a nonprofit research organization. "Veterans should consider the financial sector and other types of businesses. They contribute valuable skills and experience across the spectrum of American industry."

The RAND study presents lessons learned from the 100,000 Jobs Mission, a coalition launched by JPMorgan Chase & Co. and 10 other businesses in 2011 to kick-start job opportunities for people leaving the U.S. military. The effort now has 176 members that have hired 190,046

veterans.

RAND researchers interviewed representatives from 26 member companies, reflecting a range of size and industry in order to collect diverse experiences, portray veteran employment lessons, and identify recommendations for employers and federal agencies.

RAND researchers found the coalition has helped member companies spread information about best-practices in recruiting veterans, share details about strong job candidates and discuss challenges to placing veterans in jobs. They note that such collaboration is rare between companies that otherwise are competitors.

Despite the hiring success, RAND researchers express concern that as public attention for veteran employment begins to wane, member companies need to turn attention to collecting performance and retention metrics that will prove the perceived value of veteran employees, in order to justify continued investment.

While the federal government has instituted programs to help veterans gain civilian employment, the RAND report suggests several improvements.

"Although we acknowledge the considerable effort by federal agencies to improve the transition from military service to the civilian workforce, and especially to improve the Transition Assistance Program, opportunities remain for improvement," said Margaret Harrell, co-author of the study and a senior social scientist at RAND.

The RAND report suggests that the Transition Assistance Program, which helps military members prepare for civilian life, should include the participation of civilian employers. The U.S. Department of Defense should continue to facilitate on-base access to recruiting events with

civilian employers.

The Department of Defense also should extend SkillBridge, which helps [military](#) members train and intern with private employers, to include more participants, according to the report. Military members who are leaving service should be encouraged to enroll early with the Veterans Employment Center, an online employment tool with a registry of [veterans](#) and employers. Likewise, employers should consider participating in both SkillBridge and the Veterans Employment Center.

More information: The report, "Connecting Veterans and Employers: Lessons from the 100,000 Jobs Mission," is available at www.rand.org .

Provided by RAND Corporation

Citation: More work needed to improve employment of military veterans, study finds (2014, November 10) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-11-employment-military-veterans.html>

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