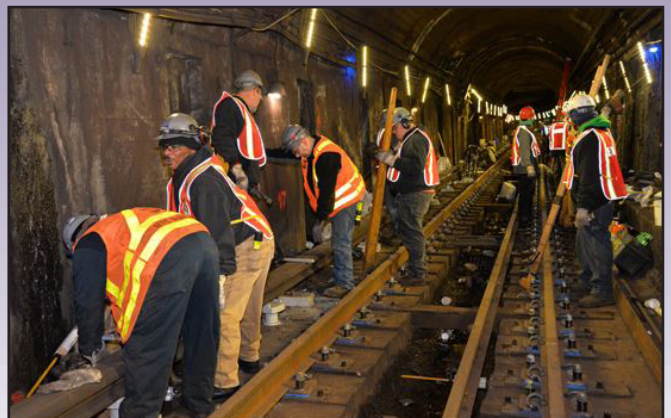
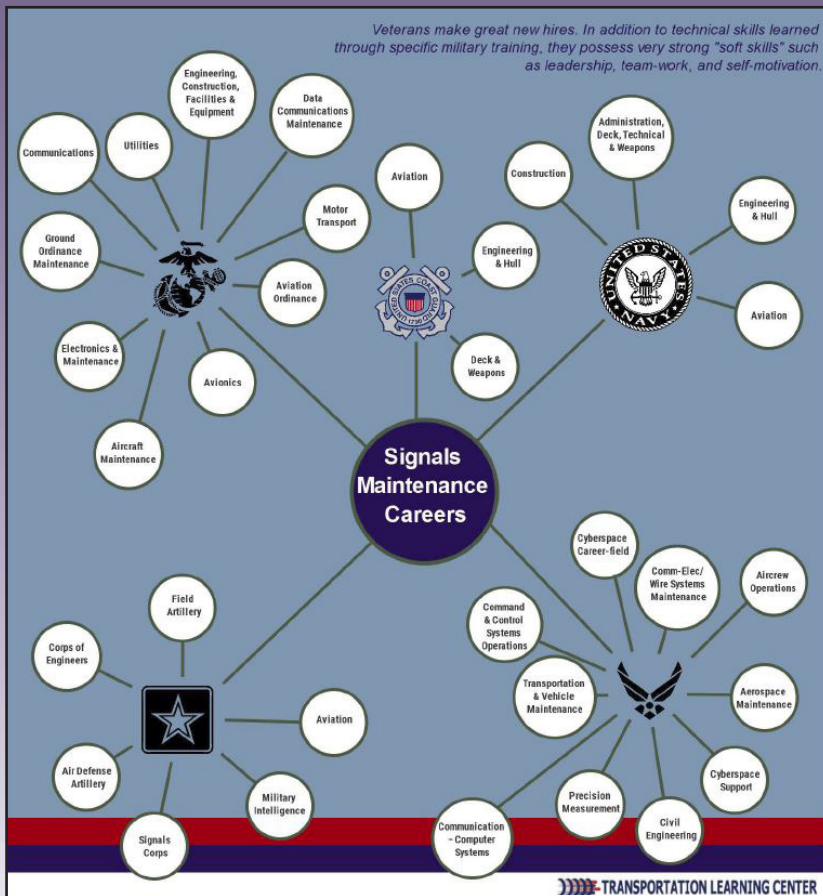


Troops to Transit: A Resource for Recruiting and Developing Veterans for Public Transportation Careers



Cover image credits:
Ernesto Ho / MTA NYC Transit
U.S. Air Force, Staff Sgt. Natasha Stannard
Transportation Learning Center

This manual was produced with funding from the Federal Transit Administration.

This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, in the interest of information exchange. The United States government assumes no liability for the contents or use thereof.



The United States government does not endorse products or manufacturers. Any trade or manufacturers' names appear herein solely because they are considered essential to the contents of the report.

The Transportation Learning Center wishes to extend its thanks to the veterans and active duty military personnel who volunteered their time and expertise for this project.

The Transportation Learning Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving public transportation at the national level and within communities. To accomplish this mission, the Center builds labor-management training partnerships that improve organizational performance, expand workforce knowledge, skills and abilities, and promote career advancement. The Center is the only national organization that focuses on the frontline workforce development in public transportation and transportation in general.

Overview

Public transportation like many industries is experiencing a sharp decline in qualified workers as retirements and growth place a strain on current workforce needs. Military veterans and transitioning service persons are an ideal cohort for public transportation agencies to recruit from. However it has been reported by several HR practitioners from the industry that obstacles often make recruiting from this group difficult. This collection of resources will attempt to clarify some of these issues and

provide the reader with recommended practices that can ease the recruiting process. There are many resources available to employers that offer valuable advice and best practices. This resource manual will describe the basic issues and obstacles to matching veterans to employers and rely extensively on taking advantage of the aforementioned resources through citations and weblinks.



Image: hirepatriots.com

The Need

The needs of the public transportation industry for more effective workforce development systems are now generally acknowledged as urgent. Over the next ten years the public transportation industry will need to hire and train the equivalent of 126 percent of today's total employment to meet the demands of industry growth, retirements and employees switching jobs. Of that projected demand for hiring and training approximately 500,000 employees¹, over 90 percent will be in frontline operations and maintenance occupations that do not require a 4-year degree but do require extensive technical training before and after hiring.

Public transportation jobs can be a ladder of opportunity for separating military personnel in need of job security and family sustaining wages. Most high-demand public transportation jobs pay well above the economic security wage of \$30,492 and provide excellent benefits and long-term career opportunities. Wages for public transportation jobs vary from \$32,000 per year to \$68,000 per year depending on the occupation and location. Some are much higher when overtime is available.

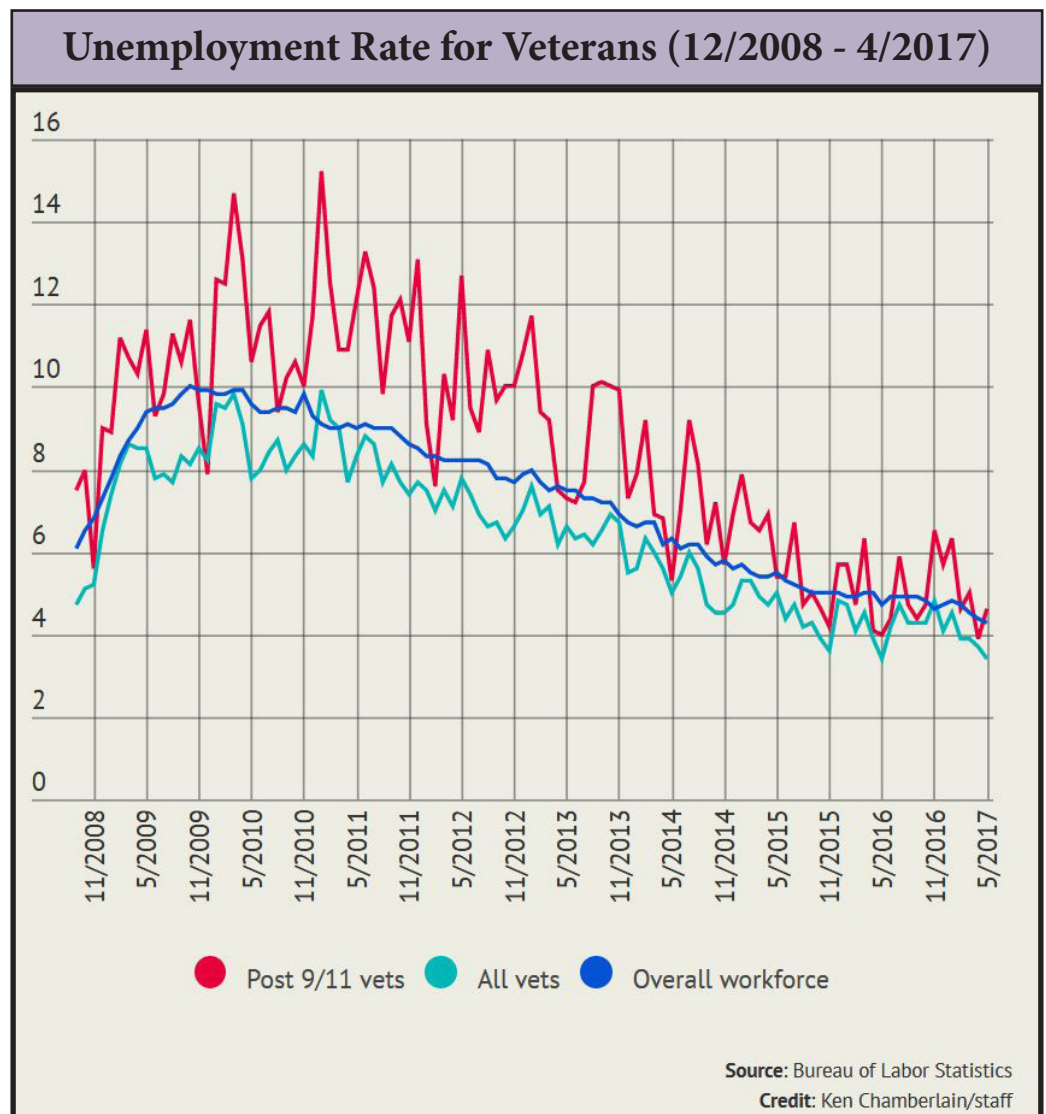
¹ Transportation Learning Center



an estimated 250,000+ service members separating each year for the next few years, there is still a need to continue focusing on hiring veterans. Also, the youngest generation of veterans (post-9/11 veterans) are susceptible to higher unemployment rates than the overall veteran population. Public transportation can provide substantial employment opportunities.

The public transportation industry exists throughout the country in urban, suburban and rural areas. For military veterans returning to large cities where numerous transportation jobs will be available, the industry offers an opportunity for family sustaining occupations with high wages and good benefits. It also offers upward mobility through career pathways and ladders.

Great strides have been made over the past several years in reducing the unemployment rate of veterans. Public transportation can provide substantial employment opportunities. The January 2017 unemployment rate for all veterans was 4.5 percent, under 5 percent for the 20th consecutive month (see chart on the right). However with



Veterans are a highly desirable cadre of potential applicants for these jobs. However, research in public transportation and other industries show that there are obstacles to recruiting and retaining veterans and that these obstacles are common to most industries. The purpose of this manual is to provide public transportation human resource departments with tools for successfully recruiting veterans and soon-to-separated service members. It contains an explanation of the value veterans can bring to an organization, how to overcome obstacles to recruiting from this cohort and other useful hints for filling positions with qualified, responsible individuals that will enhance the public transportation enterprise. A great deal of material already exists on the internet and in the public

domain addressing veteran hiring from recruiting to obstacles to making your enterprise veteran friendly. For instance, HR practitioners are often unable to understand codes on separation papers (Form DD-214) or even the jargon used by the various military branches. Rather than trying to reinvent the wheel this resource offers helpful hints and briefly describes the major topics to be addressed and then points the reader to more detailed resources through the use of web links. A great place to start is with the Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) publications of which this "Resources" link is a part; <http://www.dol.gov/vets/ahaw/Resources.htm>. This web "tool-kit" will provide the reader with an enormous amount of advice, best practices and contact information.



Image: US Army

Why Hire Veterans?

The U.S. Military spends billions of dollars each year training Service members and developing competent and highly-motivated leaders. Historically, Veterans have a strong pattern of positive employment outcomes. Veterans have a proven record of performance and are often celebrated for their Leadership, Teambuilding, Organizational Commitment, Decision-Making, Working in Diverse - Cross-Cultural Work-Settings, and Advanced Technical Training.²

Veterans have a host of positive attributes they can bring to your organization. The list is nearly endless. A few of the most significant ones are included on the following page.

² U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 2014



Image: pixabay.com

Work ethic - Most jobs that veterans will be leaving are both physically and mentally rigorous. They are trained to work until the mission is completed, have often experienced shifts far longer than the average 8 hour work day, and have a “can do” attitude towards assignments.

Quality training - Many veterans have been trained to operate and repair sophisticated equipment in challenging environments. To prepare for this veterans have completed technical and operations schools. The technical schools in the military are comparable to junior college vocational programs.

Team oriented - Veterans are taught that to survive they must work as a team. They are effective communicators, support corporate goals and think collectively, while able to work independently.

Safety conscious - In the military safety culture is central to survival. Veterans are taught to follow standard operating procedures and address safety issues immediately.

Solutions oriented - In the military veterans are taught to adapt and overcome obstacles in the

accomplishment of objectives. Veterans often succeed with limited resources.

Federal regulations - Understand and follow rules and regulations. Will be able to understand OSHA, 608, hazmat, data sheets, hazmat lockers and what they contain, lock out tag out, because military has its own regs. Military members are NOT experienced with civilian workplace law. They have been following the rules laid out in the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). They don't have the protection of fair labor standards, overtime or rest periods. Service personnel work however long it takes to complete a job and only get their monthly pay plus hazardous duty pay if in certain areas.

Leadership skills - Military members are provided leadership training as they advance in their careers. Many have been placed in critical leadership positions at early points in their lives, and will often have polished human interaction skills from these experiences. Additionally, veterans will have been exposed to a great many leaders in their career, and will have had the opportunity to choose the best attributes for themselves from many different examples.



Image: US Airforce

Flexibility in stressful situations - Veterans are purposefully placed in stressful situations and are taught coping skills, strategies, and understand the importance of preparation as a key to eliminating those stressors. They have been exposed to a culturally diverse environment.

Technically savvy - Veterans are experienced with sophisticated equipment and will be prepared as transit technologies evolve.

Security and Terrorism - Military members are often vetted for security clearances and have been trained to recognize suspicious activity.

Physically fit - There are regular physical requirements in the military that service personnel must exceed.

Communications skills - Group communication is taught in the classroom and is practiced on the job. Veterans will be able to bring this training forward into the workplace and onto the team.

24/7 Operational Environments - Veterans have experience with 24 hour a day operations, to include conditions and environments similar to those found in many transit agencies.



Image: US Airforce

Recruiting Veterans

Learning how to find the answers you need as an HR professional recruiting veterans is easy. Several resources will be listed below and in the appendix to help you find what you need. An especially useful source that defines some of the soft training is available from the [Rand Corporation](#). While this document addresses soft skills training in the Army and Marine Corps only, other services have similar programs. [What Veterans Bring to Civilian Workplaces: A Prototype Toolkit for Helping Private-Sector Employers Understand the Nontechnical Skills Taught in the Military](#) presents a pilot toolkit that civilian employers can use to understand the full value veterans can bring to their organizations, by describing in nonmilitary language the nontechnical skills that are developed in formal military training. The Rand Corporation publication [Connecting Veterans and Employers](#) summarizes a report on lessons from experiences of businesses

that attract, employ, and retain veterans. It provides recommendations to help employers and federal agencies increase veteran employment opportunities. [Essential Skills Veterans Gain During Professional Military Training: A Resource for Leaders and Hiring Managers](#) is a companion reference card to the above mentioned What Veterans Bring to Civilian Workplace. All the Rand Corporation studies can be found at: <http://www.rand.org/research/veterans.html>.

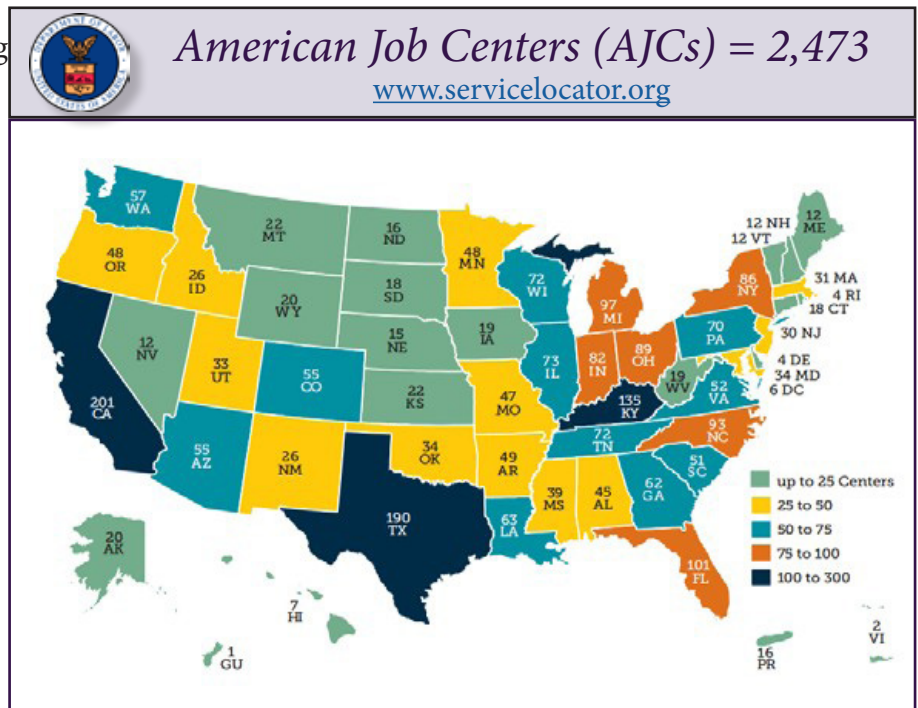
In addition to the Rand Corporation series of studies there is a Department of Labor list of the [Top Ten Reasons To Hire Veterans And Wounded Warriors](#).

Yet another highly useful document is the [Guide to Hiring Veterans](#) from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Finding Veterans

One of the first places recruiters should investigate for advertising jobs directly to veterans are Veterans Job Centers: <https://www.vets.gov/veterans-employment-center>. An abundance of outlets are available to recruiters for advertising jobs that will reach veterans and soon-to-be-separated service members. Among the most widespread with elements specifically designed to help employers and veterans are the American Job Centers (See map to the right).

There is dedicated staff at these Centers and at the national offices of the Department of Labor who specialize in veteran's employment. Employers should take advantage of their expertise for assistance on job advertising, veterans outreach and other useful programs. The national and regional VETS managers are shown below.



Another useful source of information is the employment site Monster.com. Several articles with sound advice are available here: <http://hiring.monster.com/solutions/hire-veterans.aspx> and here: <http://hiring.monster.com/hr/hr-best-practices/recruiting-hiring-advice/acquiring-job-candidates/veteran-job-skills.aspx>. Advertising your jobs on the various websites and at the Job Centers will help you reach the largest number of potential candidates. Job fairs are held across the country by the Recruit Military firm. Their website can be found at <https://recruitmilitary.com/>.



Image: apta.com

Other resources are local and national organizations dedicated to supporting veterans and soon-to-be-separated members of the armed forces. An

exhaustive list of these organizations can be found at: http://www1.va.gov/vso/VSO-Directory_2013-2014.pdf.

Veterans Skills Crosswalk

As part of the Troops to Transit project, the Center has produced a Veterans Crosswalk tool which matches skill-sets learned during military service with the kinds of skills that public transportation agencies look for when hiring signals maintainers. It is also designed to drill down into

military job classifications so that transit agencies have a user-friendly, quick reference for hiring veterans with the right basic knowledge to get started in signals maintenance. The list of matching military job titles can be used in job advertisements for transit maintenance personnel. Veterans

interested in transit careers should also find it useful in understanding how their military-learned skills can give them an edge while searching for a signals career. This product

About This Tool		Using This Tool	
Signals Maintenance			
Transit Job Title Examples	Overview of O*Net & FTA Occupational Titles		Military Jobs by branch
Signals Maintainer	Railroad Signal Maintainer	Signals and Track Switch Repairers	Airforce (AFSC)
Signalman	Closely monitors the signals used within the Public Transportation rail system. Requiring electric skills, Signal Maintainers install signals, diagnose problems, repair, clean, and maintain all traffic/rail signals and electrical switches. These workers can be	Install, inspect, test, maintain, or repair electric gate crossings, signals, signal equipment, track switches, section lines, or intercommunications systems within a railroad system.	Army (MOS)
Signal Inspector			Marine Corps (MOS)
Positive Train Control Technician			Navy (Ratings)
			Coast Guard (Ratings)

interested in transi
careers should
also find it useful
in understanding
how their military-
learned skills can
give them an edge
while searching
for a signals career.
This product

Job Title: Signal & Track Switch Repairers/Railroad Signal Maintainer				
Airforce	Army	Marine Corps	Navy	Coast Guard
1A131 Flight Engineer Enlisted	12Q Power Line Distribution Specialist Enlisted	0612 Field Wireman Enlisted	AA Airman Apprentice Enlisted	AET Avionics Electrical Technician Enlisted
1A131B Flight Engineer Apprentice, Helicopter Enlisted	12R Interior Electrician Enlisted	0613 Construction Wireman Enlisted	AE Aviation Electrician	AMT Aviation Maintenance Technician Enlisted
1A131B Flight Engineer Helper, Helicopter Enlisted	12T Technical Engineer Enlisted	0614 Unit Level Circuit Switch (ULCS) Operator/Maintainer Enlisted	AM Aviation Structural Mechanic Enlisted	AVT Avionics Technician Enlisted
1A131C Flight Engineer Apprentice, Performance Qualified Enlisted	12X General Engineering Supervisor Enlisted	0619 Wire Chief Enlisted	AMCS Aviation Structural Mechanic, Senior Chief Enlisted	DP Data Processing Technician Enlisted
1A131C Flight Engineer Helper, Performance Qualified Enlisted	12X General Engineering Supervisor Enlisted	0627 SHF Satellite Communications Operator-Maintainer Enlisted	AME Aviation Structural Mechanic, Safety Equipment Enlisted	IT Information Systems Technician Enlisted
1A151 Flight Engineer Enlisted	12Z Engineering Senior Sergeant Enlisted	0628 EHF Satellite Communications Operator-Maintainer Enlisted	AMH Aviation Structural Mechanic Enlisted	MAT Material Maintenance Enlisted
1A151B Flight Engineer Apprentice, Helicopter Enlisted	12Z Combat Engineering Senior Sergeant Enlisted	0629 Radio Chief Enlisted	AMS Aviation Structural Mechanic Enlisted	MK Machinery Technician Enlisted
1A151B Flight Engineer Helper, Helicopter Enlisted	13D Field Artillery Automated tactical Data Systems Specialist Enlisted	0651 Data Network Specialist Enlisted	AN Airman Enlisted	ST Sonar Technician Enlisted

(screen shot shown here) was produced in cooperation with a Veterans Taskforce made up of veterans who are also Subject Matter Experts in the field of Signals Maintenance. The full database can be downloaded here: http://www.transportcenter.org/images/uploads/publications/Signals_Maintenance_Crosswalk_-_Final.xlsx.

This detailed matrix has been distilled down into a user-friendly Veteran's Factsheet which provides at-a-glance information for both veterans interested in a signals career and for agencies looking to hire skilled veterans. The fact sheet can be found here: https://www.transportcenter.org/images/uploads/publications/vets_one_pager.pdf.

DoD SkillBridge

The DoD SkillBridge initiative promotes the civilian job training authority available for transitioning military Service members. Service members meeting certain qualifications can participate in civilian job and employment training, including apprenticeships and internships. –DoD Skillbridge website: <http://www.dodskillbridge.com/index.html>.

SkillBridge allows active duty service persons to participate in a training program during the last few months of their enlistment. Certified employers can place service personnel into training without the need to pay a wage. The idea is to provide an



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Natasha Stannard

incentive to employers for providing training while smoothing the transition from military to civilian employment for the service member. Since public transportation agencies exist in nearly every city of any size there is a good chance that there will be a military base nearby where a SkillBridge program exists or can be started.

Interviewing Veterans

One of the greatest challenges to hiring veterans (for both the employer and veteran) is the interview. Many interviewers do not have a background that includes military service and have also not been trained in the subtleties of interviewing veterans. Military jargon for job descriptions and other information differs from civilian word use and differs from military branch to branch. One way to counteract this is to have military veterans as part of the HR team that can consult with colleagues on jargon and presentation issues. A good resource

from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation is a series of webinars that address some of these hurdles. <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/employer-webinars>.

An example of these webinars can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjLMrkfgZfg&feature=youtu.be>.

Veterans sometimes do not present themselves well. They have spent years working on teams with very strong ties and are often quite reluctant to talk about themselves. Combat veterans in particular have a strong team commitment because they have placed their lives in the hands of their teammates. It's not

always easy to get them to talk about themselves but there are several good resources that provide suggested questions for getting them to open up.

For specific tips on preparing to interview a veteran, see the following links: <http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2015/09/30/how-to-prepare-to-interview-a-veteran>, <http://www.employerroadmap.org>.

“There are 7,000 job titles across more than 100 functional areas, the majority of which have a direct civilian job equivalent.” – Sherrill Curtis, Curtis Consulting Group, LLC from U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation webinar.

Registered Apprenticeship

Employers with a registered apprenticeship gain several advantages over employers that do not. Companies with registered apprenticeships allow veterans to access their GI Bill® benefits providing the veteran with up to an additional \$16,000 per year for various expenses. Some veterans enrolled in college courses associated with the apprenticeship can receive tuition assistance. Those enrolled in apprenticeships not requiring college will receive a housing allowance to help with living expenses. This helps employers be more competitive when recruiting. Most employers with a registered apprenticeship can be certified within 30 days. Additionally, employers can be approved to receive a Special Employer Incentive that reimburses the company for 50 percent of the Veteran's salary for

six months. There are also services and funding opportunities available for eligible veterans under the Veterans Administration Vocational Rehabilitation and Reemployment program. <http://www.va.gov/vetsinworkplace/resources.asp>. More information about apprenticeship benefits can be found at: http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/onthejob_apprenticeship.asp.

For a comprehensive discussion of the advantages of having a registered apprenticeship see The Federal Resources Playbook for Registered Apprenticeship by the Employment And Training Administration USDOL: <https://www.doleta.gov/oa/federalresources/playbook.pdf>.

Additional Resources

General

http://www1.va.gov/vso/VSO-Directory_2013-2014.pdf
<http://www.rand.org/research/veterans.html>
<http://unionveterans.org/>
<http://www.callofdutyendowment.org/>
<https://www.cebglobal.com/blogs/the-undeniable-business-case-for-military-hiring/>

Government

<http://veterans.gov/>
<https://doleta.gov/oa/veterans.cfm>
<https://www.doleta.gov/oa/stateoffices.cfm>
<https://doleta.gov/oa/federalresources/playbook.pdf>
<http://www.dol.gov/vets/ahaw/Recruit.htm>
<https://veteranspriority.workforcegps.org/>
<http://www.mynextmove.org/vets/profile/summary/49-9097.00>
<https://www.nrd.gov/>
<https://www.transportation.gov/careers/veterans/about-featured-job-sites>
<https://www.careeronestop.org/>
<http://www.benefits.va.gov/veci/veci.asp>
http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/onthejob_apprenticeship.asp

Private employers supporting veteran hiring

<https://www.aar.org/Pages/Careers.aspx>
<https://www.aar.org/Documents/Jobs%20Documents/Military%20Skills%20Translator.pdf>
<https://up.jobs/military.html>
<https://jobs.bnsf.com/go/Transitioning-Military/400926/>
<http://jobs.cn.ca/en/WhyWorkatCN.sn#.Vt3a-fkrLb1>
<https://www.csx.com/index.cfm/working-at-csx/learn-more-about-csx/military-friendly-employer/>
<http://www.nscorp.com/content/nscorp/en/work-at-ns/veteran-employment.html>
<http://www.apta.com/resources/hottopics/veterans-and-military-family/Pages/default.aspx>

Skill Translators

www.transportcenter.org/images/uploads/publications/vets_one_pager.pdf
www.transportcenter.org/images/uploads/publications/Signals_Maintenance_Crosswalk_-_Final.xlsx
<https://www.mynextmove.org/vets/>
<http://www.taonline.com/mosdot>
<http://www.military.com/veteran-jobs/skills-translator/>
<http://veteranjobs.stripes.com/resources/militaryskillstranslatorform.asp>
<http://beta.militaryonesource.mil/separation-transition>
<http://www.dodskillbridge.com/>
<https://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC?s=transportation>

Tools for Advertising your jobs

<https://vetjobs.com/>
<https://usmilitarypipeline.com>

Why hire Veterans?

<http://hiring.monster.com/hr/hr-best-practices/recruiting-hiring-advice/strategic-workforce-planning/hire-veterans.aspx>

<http://hiring.monster.com/hr/hr-best-practices/recruiting-hiring-advice/acquiring-job-candidates/hire-a-vet.aspx>

Women

<https://www.dol.gov/vets/womenveterans/>

<http://casy.msccn.org/JobSeekers/FemaleVetProg.html>

Interviewing Veterans

<https://news.clearancejobs.com/2013/08/30/cant-ask-veteran-interview-can/>

Money.usnews.com

<http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2014/11/10/what-it-takes-for-a-veteran-to-land-a-job>

<http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2015/09/30/how-to-prepare-to-interview-a-veteran>

<http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2015/10/01/how-to-assess-a-veteran-job-candidate>



Image: www.pacaf.af.mil



Photo credit: Ernesto Ho / MTA NYC Transit

Recruit Military.com

<https://recruitmilitary.com/>

<https://recruitmilitary.com/employers/resource/388-understanding-military-skillsets-part-i>

<https://recruitmilitary.com/employers/resource/391-understanding-military-skillsets-part-iv>

<https://recruitmilitary.com/employers/resource/336-how-to-assess-and-hire-a-veteran-job-candidate>

Monster.com

<http://hiring.monster.com/hr/hr-best-practices/recruiting-hiring-advice/acquiring-job-candidates/veteran-job-skills.aspx>

<http://hiring.monster.com/hr/hr-best-practices/recruiting-hiring-advice/acquiring-job-candidates/how-to-hire-a-veteran.aspx>

<http://hiring.monster.com/hr/hr-best-practices/recruiting-hiring-advice/interviewing-candidates/interview-tips-hire-a-vet.aspx>

<http://hiring.monster.com/hr/hr-best-practices/recruiting-hiring-advice/strategic-workforce-planning/veteran-talent-index-may-2012.aspx>

<http://hiring.monster.com/hr/hr-best-practices/recruiting-hiring-advice/strategic-workforce-planning/hire-veterans.aspx>

<http://hiring.monster.com/hr/hr-best-practices/recruiting-hiring-advice/attracting-job-candidates/hiring-veterans.aspx>

<http://www.military.com/veteran-jobs/career-advice/job-hunting/upcoming-job-fairs.html>

Apprenticeship

<https://www.vets.gov/education/work-learn/job-and-apprenticeship/>

http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/job_aids/OJT_APPInfoGuide.pdf

Military In-service Apprenticeship

<https://usmap.cnet.navy.mil/usmapss/static/usmap.jsp>

[http://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/The_United_Services_Military_Apprenticeship_Program_\(USMAP\).pdf](http://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/The_United_Services_Military_Apprenticeship_Program_(USMAP).pdf)

For Additional Copies and Information:
Transportation Learning Center
8403 Colesville Road, Suite 825
P: 301.565.4713 | F: 301.565.4712
info@transportcenter.org
www.transportcenter.org | www.transittraining.net

