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Minnesota State Government Efforts to Employ and Support Veterans

**Submitted to the Minnesota Legislature by
Minnesota Management & Budget**

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Introduction

Minnesota's workforce includes veterans in both the public and private sectors. To assess Minnesota state government's efforts as an employer of veterans, the 2009 Legislature directed the Commissioner of Minnesota Management & Budget to annually collect veteran employment data from each cabinet-level state agency. In addition, Executive Order 10-13 instructs state agencies to report their veteran-focused recruitment and retention activities which demonstrate their support and commitment to making Minnesota a more military and veteran-friendly state. This report provides information pertaining to the state government's efforts during fiscal year 2016 to recruit and employ veterans.

Minnesota Management & Budget would like to acknowledge and thank the executive branch agencies for their support and for providing information on their recruitment and retention activities to be included in this report.

Executive Summary

The Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) is required by Article 3, Section 22 of Chapter 94 of the Session Laws of 2009 to annually collect data on the number of veterans in cabinet-level state agencies and veteran information at various points in the state recruitment and selection process. This data is collected from each cabinet level agency. In addition, Executive Order 10-13 instructs state agencies to submit to MMB their veteran focused recruitment and retention efforts demonstrating their support and commitment to making Minnesota a more military and veteran-friendly state.

According to fiscal year 2016 data, approximately 6.6% of the state government full time employees in cabinet-level agencies self-identified as veterans. By comparison, 4.1% of Minnesota's civilian labor force between the ages of 18 and 64 are veterans (US Census, 2015 American Community Survey).

Cabinet-level agencies hired 374 (9%) veterans into full-time unlimited positions in fiscal year 2016, the highest percentage since 2012 (9.3%). This number also represents the highest number of individual veterans hired in the last 6 fiscal years.

State law requires that the number of veterans among the state government cabinet-level agency workforce be reported to the legislature every year. Self-identification of veteran status is voluntary and employees are not legally required to provide this information. A self-service page is available on the MMB website for state employees to update their veteran status at any time.

To promote the state as a veteran-friendly employer and to increase opportunities for veterans in state government during fiscal year 2016, state agencies conducted veteran focused recruitment and retention activities; provided reintegration education and guidance; built partnerships with veteran organizations and advocates; provided support to their deployed military employees; and retained job classifications whose sole purpose is supporting veterans and in some cases must be filled by veterans. The Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs provides services to ensure that Minnesota's veterans, their dependents and survivors receive the full measure of benefits and services to which they are entitled. In addition, the Minnesota Department of Military Affairs provides support to the Minnesota National Guard members.

Veteran Focused Legislation

Amended 2016 Legislation

MS 197.46 was amended to change the time period for a veteran to request a termination hearing from 60 to 30 days. It also provides for an arbitrator to preside over the hearing rather than a three person panel. Finally, it clarifies the situations in which the veteran may be entitled to attorney fees.

New Legislation 2016

MS 290.0132: Subd. 21. **Military service pension; retirement pay.**

To the extent included in federal taxable income, compensation received from a pension or other retirement pay from the federal government for service in the military, as computed under United States Code, title 10, sections 1401 to 1414, 1447 to 1455, and 12733, is a subtraction. The subtraction must not include any amount used to claim the credit allowed under section [290.0677](#).

Existing State Legislation That Supports Veterans

M.S. 1.05 Waiver of Immunity for Violations of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights (USERRA)

Subd. 5. Summary: Allows a current, former or prospective state employee who is a veteran to file a civil suit against the state for alleged violations of USERRA.

M.S. 43A.09 Recruitment

Summary: Requires MMB, in cooperation with appointing authorities of all state agencies, to emphasize recruitment of veterans in addition to protected group members to “assist state agencies in meeting affirmative action goals to achieve a balanced workforce.”

M.S. 43A.11 Veteran’s Preference

Summary: Requires notification to State applicants that they may elect to use veteran’s preference. It requires that applicants who meet the minimum qualifications for a vacant position and claim disabled veteran’s preference be listed in the applicant pool ahead of all other applicants, and those claiming non-disabled veteran’s preference be listed ahead of non-veterans. It also provides this preference to spouses of deceased veterans or of disabled veterans who because of disability are unable to qualify. It also requires that each recently separated veteran who meets minimum qualifications for a vacant position and has claimed a veteran’s or disabled veteran’s preference must be considered for the position, and requires that the top five recently separated veterans must be granted an interview for the position. Finally, it requires appointing authorities who reject a finalist who has claimed veteran’s preference to notify the finalist of the reasons for rejection.

M.S.43A.111 Noncompetitive Appointment of Certain Disabled Veterans

Summary: Allows State agencies to make noncompetitive appointments to classified positions for qualified disabled veterans with a verified service connected disability rating of at least 30%.

M.S. 43A.183 Military Pay Differential

Summary: Entitles eligible state employees in the reserve forces who report for active service to receive pay in the amount of the difference between their state salary and their military pay for up to four years, plus any additional time the employee may be legally required to serve.

M.S. 192.26 Paid Military Leave

Summary: Public employees are permitted to take a paid leave of absence for up to 15 days per calendar year for military duty. Public employers must allow employees called to active duty to choose when during the calendar year to take their 15 days of paid military leave.

M.S. 192.261 Military Leave of Absence

Subd. 1. Summary: Requires public employers to allow an employee to take a military leave of absence of up to four years without pay, plus any additional time the employee is legally required to serve, with rights to employment reinstatement. The provision applies to employees who take leave to engage in active military service during war or other declared emergency, “during convalescence for an injury or disease incurred during active service”, to engage in an initial period of active duty for training of not less than three consecutive months, or to perform active duty for training or inactive duty training.

M.S. 197.455 and 197.46 Veteran’s Preference Hearings

Summary: Eligible veterans may not be involuntarily terminated from employment, except as permitted by statute. Employers must notify the veteran of their proposed termination and inform the veteran of their right to contest the termination in a formal hearing before an arbitrator. The veteran has 30 days to petition for a hearing. Terminations may not be effected until after the veteran has exercised their right to a hearing or the 30 day timeline to petition has expired. Veterans remain in payroll status during the 30 day period. If the veteran chooses to appeal the termination decision, compensation continues until a final determination is made.

M.S. 364.03 Relation of Conviction to Employment or Occupation

Subd. 3. Summary: Persons cannot be disqualified from employment or pursuing, practicing, or engaging in occupations requiring licensure solely due to prior criminal convictions, unless the crime or crimes directly relate to the employment position or occupation licensure area. If the crime directly relates to the employment position or occupational licensure area, the person cannot be disqualified if he or she can show evidence of rehabilitation and present fitness to perform the duties. Evidence of rehabilitation includes United States Department of Defense form DD-214, a document indicating honorable discharge or separation under honorable conditions from military service.

M.S. 626.8517

Summary: Makes persons with relevant military experience eligible to take the peace officer licensure reciprocity examination. Persons in active duty service may take the peace officer exam, but are not eligible to become licensed peace officers until honorably discharged from military service.

Executive Order 10-13 - Supporting the Selection and Employment of Veterans

Summary: Directs state departments and associated agencies, boards, and commissions to continuously review and revise policies and procedures, and conduct increased outreach in order to engage and employ veterans as part of their hiring or selection process.

Veteran Employment Data

The state employee data in Tables 1 and 5 is collected from the state's personnel and payroll system. These represent a snapshot of state employee data as of June 30, 2016. The veteran information in Tables 2, 3, and 4 is collected from the state's applicant tracking system and is applicant data from fiscal year 2016 (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016).

The numerical data in this report is from the cabinet-level agencies in the executive branch as required by statute. The cabinet-level agencies account for over 95% of state employees. The data in Tables 1-5 do not include the legislative branch, judicial branch, Minnesota State, or the retirement agencies.

State Employee Veteran Status and Voluntary Disclosure

State law requires that the number of veterans among the state government cabinet-level agency workforce be reported to the legislature every year. Identification of veteran status is voluntary and employees are not legally required to provide this information. To obtain veteran status from state employees, a self-service webpage is available for state employees to update their veteran status at any time.

Employees are encouraged, but are not required to disclose their veteran status. As a result, some employees who are veterans may have opted not to self-identify, impacting the accuracy of this data.

Veterans in State of Minnesota Government Workforce – Table 1

Table 1 shows the distribution of veterans in executive branch cabinet-level agencies. Key points:

- Approximately 6.6% of State of Minnesota government cabinet-level agency employees self-identified as veterans.
- 4.1% of Minnesota’s civilian labor force between the ages of 18 and 64 are veterans. Labor force means employed or available and actively seeking employment. *Source: US Census, 2015 American Community Survey.*

Table 1
Veterans in the State of Minnesota Government Workforce
FY 2016– State Personnel and Payroll System

Cabinet Level Agency	Column 1 Number of Employees in Full Time Positions	Column 2 Number of Employees Who Self-Identified as Veterans	Column 3 Number of Full Time Positions Hired in FY 2016
Administration	471	27	97
Agriculture	431	15	121
Bureau of Mediation Services	10	1	1
Commerce	326	15	95
Corrections	4,192	435	938
Education	363	5	61
Employment & Economic Development	1,305	38	218
Health	1,374	29	349
Housing Finance Agency	240	7	56
Human Rights	38	1	9
Human Services	4,847	206	1,300
Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation	55	2	5
Labor & Industry	420	35	58
Military Affairs	339	118	104
MN Management & Budget	221	4	74
Natural Resources	2,344	70	564
Office of Higher Education	64	1	24
Office of MN.IT Services	2,142	127	375
Pollution Control Agency	827	25	91
Public Safety	1,866	216	454
Revenue	1,340	36	333
Transportation	4,557	394	905
Veterans Affairs	675	83	157
Total	28,444	1,890	6,389

Column 1 - the total number of persons employed in full-time positions listed by the state agency.
Rule 3900.400 definition of full-time employee is an employee who is normally scheduled to work 80 hours in a biweekly period. November 5, 2014.

Column 2 - the total number of employees identified in Column 1 who self-identified as veterans.
Disclosure of an employee's veteran status is voluntary and based on self-identification. Employees are encouraged, but are not required to disclose their veteran status. November 5, 2014.

Column 3 - the total number of vacant full-time positions in the agency filled by hiring or appointment for fiscal year 2016. Includes Unlimited (an appointment for which there is no specified maximum duration) and Limited (*e.g.* temporary, emergency, seasonal, trainee, and provisional).

Veteran Applicants for State Government Employment – Table 2

Table 2 shows a summary of veteran job applicants, interviewing and hiring in fiscal year 2016. Key points:

- Approximately 7.2% of applicants for state employment are veterans.
- About 51% of veteran applicants were considered to meet the minimum qualifications for the positions for which they applied.
- About 9% of the full time jobs filled in FY 2016 were filled by veterans. 97% of veterans who were offered a job accepted the offer.

Table 2
Veteran Applicants for State Government Employment
Fiscal Year 2016 – Recruiting Solutions

Cabinet Level Agency	Column 1 FT Positions Filled	Column 2 Total Apps Received	Column 3 Veteran Apps Received	Column 4 Veterans Meeting MQ's	Column 5 Veterans Received Interview	Column 6 Veterans Offered Jobs	Column 7 Veterans Hired	Column 8 Veteran Letter
Administration	51	1,790	155	78	54	3	3	70
Agriculture	69	2,915	120	64	36	6	3	30
Bureau of Mediation Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Commerce	72	3,969	279	226	175	6	6	120
Corrections	464	9,927	867	527	404	55	51	97
Education	49	2,857	132	56	45	1	1	5
Employment & Economic Development	137	4,679	315	130	79	13	9	0
Health	330	16,792	796	427	327	12	12	457
Housing Finance Agency	45	2,971	222	194	39	2	2	0
Human Rights	4	228	9	3	3	0	-	6
Human Services	869	35,640	2002	849	497	52	52	1148
Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation	4	144	3	1	1	0	-	0
Labor & Industry	39	2,199	179	69	51	3	4	13
Military Affairs	83	1,375	408	320	244	21	28	0
Minnesota Management & Budget	51	4,059	254	125	39	2	2	33
Natural Resources	419	10,756	597	250	154	15	17	57

Cabinet Level Agency	Column 1 FT Positions Filled	Column 2 Total Apps Received	Column 3 Veteran Apps Received	Column 4 Veterans Meeting MQ's	Column 5 Veterans Received Interview	Column 6 Veterans Offered Jobs	Column 7 Veterans Hired	Column 8 Veteran Letter
Office of Higher Education	2	209	15	8	1	0	-	0
Office of MN.IT Services	254	7,325	836	449	294	34	32	286
Pollution Control Agency	69	3,390	177	111	60	5	4	24
Public Safety	286	14,857	1,080	495	316	49	43	589
Revenue	184	4,266	233	118	58	10	10	21
Transportation	617	11,921	1,181	580	422	78	73	182
Veterans Affairs	79	3,109	608	301	266	21	22	366
Total	4,177	145,378	10,468	5,381	3,565	388	374	3,504

Column 1 - the total number of vacant full-time positions in the agency filled during fiscal year 2016. This is only unlimited positions (an appointment for which there is no specified maximum duration).

Column 2 - the total number of applications received for positions identified in Column 1.

Column 3 - the total number of applicants identified in Column 2 who indicated veteran's preference status.

Column 4 - the total number of veteran applications identified in Column 3 who met the minimum qualifications (MQ's).

Column 5 - the total number of veteran applicants identified in Column 4 who were interviewed.

Column 6 - the total number of veteran applicants identified in Column 5 who were offered employment.

Column 7 - the total number of veteran applicants identified in Column 6 who were hired into open positions of employment in the agency.

Column 8 - the total number of veteran applicants who were sent a rejection letter.

*43A.11 Subd. 9, if a member of the finalist pool who claimed veteran's preference is rejected, the agency must notify the finalist in writing of the reasons for the rejection. **Important Note:** If the agency generated the rejection letter from a system other than the state's application tracking system (e.g. word processing or email system), the letter would not be tracked in the state's applicant tracking system and would not be counted in Column 8.*

Veterans Hired in State Government – Table 3 and 4

Tables 3 and 4 show a summary of veterans hired for positions in state government cabinet-level agencies between fiscal year 2010-16. Key points:

- Since fiscal year 2010 the cabinet-level agencies have hired 2,167 veterans into unlimited positions.
- About 9% of new hires are veterans as of fiscal year 2016. This is the highest percentage of veterans since 2012.
- 374 hires is the most veteran hires the state has had in the last 6 years.

Table 3

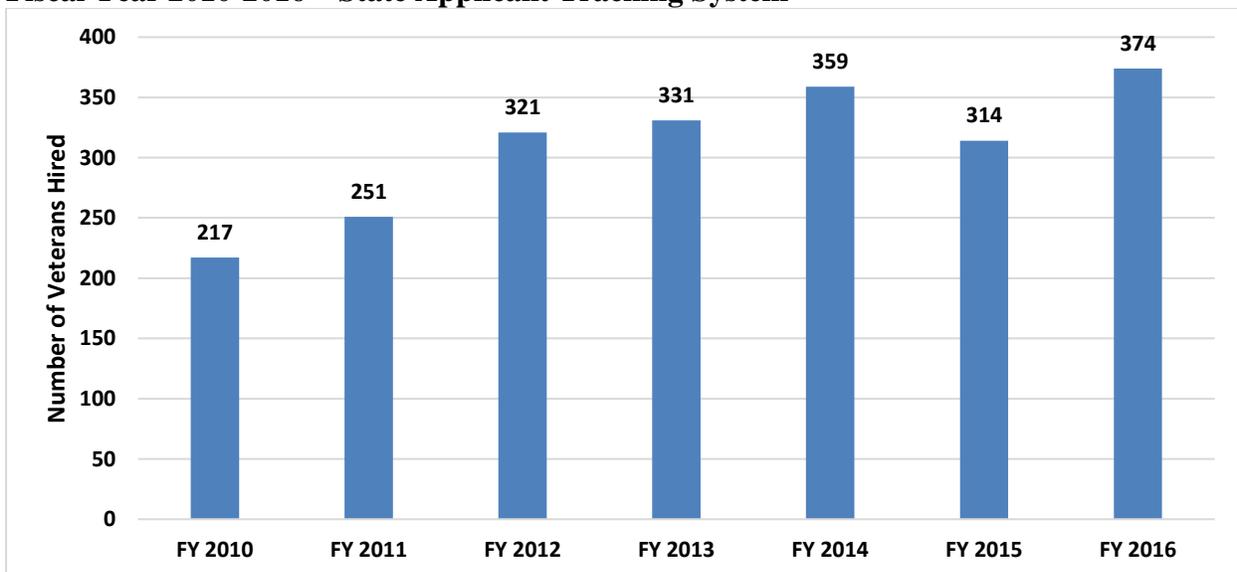
Veterans Hired in State of Minnesota Government at Cabinet-level Agencies Fiscal Year 2010-16 – State Applicant Tracking System

Fiscal Year	Number of FT Vacancies Filled	Number of Veterans Hired	Percentage of FT Vacancies Filled By Veterans
FY 2016	4,177	374	9.0%
FY 2015	3,807	314	8.2%
FY 2014	4,402	359	8.2%
FY 2013	3,741	331	8.8%
FY 2012	3,458	321	9.3%
FY 2011	2,500	251	10.0%
FY 2010	2,440	217	8.8%

Figure 1

Number of Veterans Hired

Fiscal Year 2010-2016 – State Applicant Tracking System



Veteran Focused Initiatives, Programs, and Services

Statewide Veteran Programs and Services

The following section includes programs available to Minnesota veterans. Many of the services listed involve collaboration between state or federal agencies and the legislature, veteran advocacy organizations, and private companies.

[Commanders Task Force](#)

The Minnesota Commanders Task Force is comprised of elected Commanders and Adjutants of nine congressionally-chartered Veterans Service Organizations in the state of Minnesota. The key functions of this group include developing a united veterans legislative agenda and actively advocating for it before the state and elected officials, serving as a non-partisan advisory group to the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, the Governor and Legislators on Veterans issues in the state, and working to form Veteran Service Organization partnerships in program development.

[Department of Natural Resources Licensing](#)

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources provides special privileges to veterans for hunting licenses, firearms safety training, fishing licenses, state park vehicle permits, and the Minnesota Conservation Volunteer magazine. For example: free deer hunting licenses; hunt small game without license privileges; and free annual Minnesota State Park permits.

[Military Service pension; retirement pay](#)

To the extent included in federal taxable income, compensation received from a pension or other retirement pay from the federal government for service in the military, as computed under United States Code, title 10, sections 1401 to 1414, 1447 to 1455, and 12733, is a subtraction. The subtraction must not include any amount used to claim the credit allowed under section [290.0677](#).

[Military Tax Related Benefits](#)

The Minnesota Department of Revenue provides tax credits and tax relief for current, retired and disabled military service members. Credit and tax relief includes the Active-duty military pay subtraction, Military Spouses Residency Relief Act, credit for military service in a combat zone, tax credit for past military service, tax debt relief for deceased active duty military, and market value exclusion on homesteads of disabled veterans.

[Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers](#)

The Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers works collaboratively with the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs and nationally chartered veterans service organizations in promoting the interests and welfare of veterans who have service in the Armed Forces of the United States, their families, and survivors. Their focus is to enhance the quality of their lives through advising, counseling, claims assistance, education, advocacy, and special programs. All services aim to ensure that veterans, their families, and survivors receive all of the benefits and services so well deserve for the hardships they have endured.

[Minnesota GI Bill](#)

The Minnesota GI Bill program provides postsecondary educational assistance to eligible Minnesota Veterans, non-veterans who served in the military and eligible spouses and children. Full-time undergraduate or graduate students may be eligible to receive up to \$1,000 per semester and part-time students can receive up to \$500 per semester (up to \$3,000 per academic year and \$10,000 per lifetime). Eligible veterans may also receive [OJT and Apprenticeship](#) funds up to \$2,000 per fiscal year for either program.

On Your feet!

On your feet! Provides support to veterans after completing a prison sentence. The goal is to see that veterans make a smooth transition into their community after incarceration. Small groups of volunteers provide intensive support and accountability to veterans.

StandDown Minnesota

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans holds StandDown events that serve homeless and near-homeless veterans by providing services to help these former soldiers get their lives back on track. Hundreds of volunteers work at the events to provide services such as medical, dental, eye and psychological exams and treatments, job training, legal aid, federal and state tax counseling, social security eligibility information, substance abuse counseling, and food and shelter. The goal is to bring many services to one location and make them more accessible to all veterans who otherwise may not seek out services.

Veterans Employment Services

Veterans Employment Representatives are located at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's Workforce Centers around the state and are available to work one-on-one with service members in their job search. The individualized assistance includes help with resumes, interviewing skills, networking techniques, referrals to other veteran services, and assistance connecting with employers.

Veterans Business Program

Minnesota Department of Transportation's Veterans Business Program provides verified veteran-owned small businesses with increased access to state contracting opportunities.

Veteran Business Loan Program

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's Minnesota Reservist and Veteran Business Loan Program provides business loans to individual veterans who have returned from active duty and want to start their own business. The program provides outreach to Minnesota veterans returning from active deployment and encouraged use of small business assistance to start or stabilize a business.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

The Minnesota Department of Revenue provides free assistance with filing their state income and property tax returns. Veterans (and other selected groups) can access this service from over 300 sites across Minnesota.

Waiver of Commercial Driver's License

Veterans may be eligible for a waiver of a commercial driver's license road test based on their military experience. This service is offered through the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

State Resources Dedicated to Veteran Support

The state also has veteran focused positions responsible for supporting veterans as they reintegrate back into civilian life and the workforce. These positions are typically employed at the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, Minnesota Department of Military Affairs, and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. In addition, all state agencies have personnel that assist veterans, many agencies also have websites dedicated to veteran information, resources, and services.

[Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Staff](#)

The mission of this entire agency's workforce is charged with assisting Minnesota's veterans and their families to obtain their rightful benefits and services. Some of the veteran specific classifications include: Veterans Assistance Coordinators and Veterans Claims Representatives.

The agency also has employees who conduct outreach activities and assist veterans in need. This is accomplished by going to the homes of the veteran, relatives, and friends. In addition, there is a division whose mission is to serve American Indians who are part of native tribes and are eligible for veteran's benefits. Division staff assists them with the application process to obtain these benefits.

[Minnesota Department of Military Affairs](#)

The Minnesota Department of Military Affairs is also known as the Minnesota National Guard. The agency provides leadership, resources, and support to the Nation Guard. The department's customer base is the 13,172 members of the Minnesota Army and Air National Guard (as listed in the 2016 Minnesota National Guard Annual Report), and the citizens of the state and nation during emergencies.

[Attorney General's Veterans Assistance Unit](#)

The Minnesota Attorney General's Office provides assistance to veterans and service members. If a veteran, service member, or a member of their family is experiencing difficulty with veteran's benefits, TRICARE benefits, credit issues, home mortgage, identity theft, or another consumer related matter, this can help. Contact 651.296.3353 or 1.800.657.3787 for free information about voluntary mediation services to help resolve problems.

Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Representatives

The responsibilities of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Representative positions include:

- Identify veterans interested in working for state agencies.
- Recruit veterans for all state jobs and promote the state at various job fairs.
- Promote Minnesota as a veteran friendly employer at state and national conferences.
- Coach veterans on the state hiring process and online employment tools.
- Outreach to veteran organizations and advocates such as the County Veteran Service Officer, VFW, American Legions, and Disabled American Veterans to promote state employment.
- Outreach to veteran-focused minority and disability organizations.
- Assist veterans and their families with any housing, health or other issues.

Higher Education Veteran Program Coordinators

Help connect veterans with educational benefits and resources to be successful in college.

Onsite assistance is given to military members and their families at colleges and universities. The idea is to assist veterans in removing barriers to enrollment and access to benefits.

Coordinators work with the Minnesota State campuses to:

- Provide a welcoming environment for students to interact with other students who are veterans or family members of veterans.
- Facilitate communication between departments and staff who regularly interact with veterans.
- Provide information about veteran services, military education benefits and financial resources, scholarships, and veteran and family support activities.
- Provide training for campus staff related to veteran issues and concerns.
- Obtain feedback from veterans and work to remove barriers to services.
- Provide veteran-friendly policies and procedures.
- Organize and provide training on veterans issues.
- Meet with guard units and their families prior to deployment and provide information about education benefits they earn while deployed.

State Agency Human Resource and Labor Relations Staff

State agency human resources and labor relations staff must be knowledgeable about applicable veteran laws to ensure agency compliance. This includes laws related to veteran's preference, veteran interview law, noncompetitive appointments of certain disabled veterans, veteran's preference hearings, FMLA and military personnel, and USERRA.

Recruitment, Partnerships, and Outreach Activities

State agencies and Minnesota State are proactive in their veteran focused recruitment, partnerships, and outreach activities. Representatives of state agencies attend key veteran job fairs and conferences, and build relationships with veteran organizations and advocates who in turn, promote state employment to their veteran clients. The goal of these efforts is to promote the state as a veteran friendly employer and increase employment opportunities for veterans in state government.

Building Partnerships and Conducting Outreach

Examples of organizations that state agencies work with to support veterans:

- American Gulf War Veterans Association
- American Legion
- Army National Guard
- Beyond the Yellow Ribbon
- County Serves Veteran Officers (CSVO)
- DEED Disabled Veterans Outreach Representatives
- DEED Veterans Employment Representatives
- Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
- Employment Action Centers
- Goodwill Easter Seals Military Services
- Higher Education Veterans Programs Campus Coordinators
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Lions Club
- MN Assistance Council for Veterans (MAVC)
- MN Attorney General's Veterans Assistance Unit
- MN Community Advisors on Recruitment and Retention Solutions (MnCARRS)
- MN Department of Military Affairs
- MN Department of Veterans Affairs
- MN Rotary Clubs
- MN VA Hospitals
- Serviceman's Club
- Student Veterans of America (SVA)
- US Department of Veteran Affairs
- Vietnam Veterans of America
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
- VITAL Program

Leaders in Veteran Employment Seminars

These Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development sponsored seminars are held for public and private sector human resources professionals, hiring managers, admissions/career counselors, front line supervisors, and others who have direct interaction with veterans. The focus is the skills veterans offer and the obstacles and barriers they face. The goal is to recruit, hire, and retrain veteran employees. The seminars are held through partnerships between the Department of Employment and Economic Development, Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs, Minnesota Department of Military Affairs, and the Minnesota Office of Secretary of State Steve Simon.

Director of Military Outreach / Yellow Ribbon Company Best Practice Seminar

The Director of Military Outreach facilitated a seminar with Yellow Ribbon Companies to share best practices for recruiting, hiring and retaining veterans.

Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) is a non-profit organization that assists veterans experiencing homelessness or other life crises with transitional and permanent housing. They work with the Department of Corrections' Sentencing to Serve Program, a program that allows carefully selected non-violent offenders to work on community improvement projects. The Sentencing to serve crews assists with lawn care and snow shoveling at resident housing for veterans and their families in both the Twin Cities and Duluth areas.

Minnesota Department of Military Affairs

The Director of Military Outreach from Military Affairs and the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Deployment Cycle Support Team partner on the following initiatives:

- Identify and track unemployed veterans and connect them with local, state and federal resources to assist the veteran with employment.
- Share best practices of veteran recruitment strategies with employers.
- Connect veterans with higher education resources.
- Provide training to veterans in resume writing, interviewing and networking.
- Promote the use of Workforce Centers and Veteran Employment Representatives.
- Conduct outreach to local Rotary Clubs, Chamber of Commerce, and other business organizations to promote veteran employment.

Recruitment

State agencies engaged in the following veteran-focused recruitment activities:

Hire our Heroes Job Fair

Event includes job seeker workshops on interview skills, resume writing, and prepping short introductions. Also workshops, training and seminars for HR staff and Military personnel. The primary targets are service members, veterans, reservists, guardsmen, military spouses and RSV's.

Veteran Networking Job Club

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development hosts seven Veteran Networking Job Clubs at their Workforce Centers. These groups meet regularly to discuss veteran employment efforts, provide support, share job leads and improve job seeking skills.

Statewide "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" Community Events

State agencies recruit at various yellow ribbon community and reintegration events around the state. This comprehensive program connects service members and their families with community support, training, services and resources.

Veterans' Support Group presentations

Employee-veterans and recruiters from the Minnesota Department of Corrections gave presentations at Workforce Centers in the metro area about their careers in Corrections.

Interview Accommodations

State agencies follow the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Right Act (USERRA) guidelines to provide job interviews to deployed soldiers using a variety of telecommunication tools.

State agencies attended the following veteran-focused recruitment events:

Northern Minnesota Veterans Job Fair in Detroit Lakes

Focusing on veterans actively looking for a job, currently employed, or interested in exploring new careers. Veterans of all eras were encouraged to attend this event.

“Hire Vets First” Veterans Career Fair

This annual career fair is the largest single day recruiting event in the Midwest with 140 businesses and over 1,000 veterans participating. Numerous state agencies attend the event to promote their agency and the state as a veteran-friendly employer. This event is sponsored by the Department of Employment and Economic Development.

The Military.com Career Expo

Military.com hosts a large job board for veterans and military-friendly employers and sponsors numerous career expos across the country giving employers and veterans an opportunity to meet face to face to discuss job opportunities.

Targeted Veteran Advertising

Helmets to Hardhats

This online resource allows employers to both post opportunities and also to view the resumes of veterans registered with the site.

Veteran Specific Posters

The Minnesota Department of Correction created recruitment posters which target veterans for employment. These posters are placed at Workforce Centers and locations where the National Guard conduct drills.

State agencies advertise their job announcements at the following events and venues including, but not limited to:

- AbilityLinks
- Army ROTC
- BeyondTheYellowRibbon.org
- County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO)
- Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
- DEED Veterans Employment Office
- Disabled Veterans Rest Camp
- DOC Veterans Specific Posters
- Duluth Veteran Center
- Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces
- Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve
- Employment Action Center (EAC)
- GI Jobs Magazine
- Goodwill Easter Seals Military Services
- HealthcareJobsForVeterans.com
- Helmets to Hardhats
- Higher Education Veteran Resource Centers
- Jobs for Veterans
- JobsinMinneapolis.com
- Military.com
- MilitaryVetJobs.com
- MinnesotaDiversity.com
- MinnesotaJobs.com
- MinnesotaWorks.net
- MN Assistance Council for Veterans
- MN Army and Air National Guard
- MN Department of Veteran Affairs (MDVA)
- MN DFL Veterans Caucus
- MN Military Resources Website
- MN National Guard
- MN Veterans Homes
- Navy and Marine Reserves
- National Association of Veterans Upward Bound (NAVUB)
- National Veterans Foundation
- Northland College Military Veteran Services
- St. Paul Veterans Resource Center
- TalentLEAD
- Veteran Journal Magazine
- Veterans for Peace, MN Chapters
- VeteransInHealthcare.com
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
- US Department of Veteran Affairs
- Wounded Warriors

Retention, Reintegration Support, and Training

Reintegration guidance and support is a key factor in successfully returning veterans to work. Comprehensive reintegration programs provide a supportive environment which encourages the veteran to remain within state employment. It is also important for deployed employees to know they are remembered and supported while on active duty.

Typical agency support activities include the following:

- Pre-deployment:
 - Meet with the employees to discuss how the agency can best stay connected with them and their families.
 - Ask the employee to designate a representative who can legally interact with the state agency on their behalf.
 - Discussion on benefits, HR policies, leave time, etc.
 - FMLA Training
- During deployment:
 - Hold positions for deployed employees.
 - Encourage employees to return to their positions after deployment.
 - Keep agency employees informed about their deployed co-workers using agency newsletter and intranet sites; when given privacy authorization.
- Post-deployment:
 - Conduct Welcome Back recognition events for deployed employees upon return.
 - Give appreciation awards for special recognition to veteran employees.
 - Develop individualized soldier return to work plans or supplementary training for smooth transition back to work.
 - Grant additional time off for reintegration, if requested.
 - Provide information and resources about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and other related programs such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to both supervisors and returning veterans.

State agencies shared accounts of their support for their deployed employee and their families. The following are examples of those state agencies' support efforts:

- Provide lawn mowing and snow removal at supportive housing for veterans.
- Collect donations of food, gifts, and gift cards for the families of deployed employees to assist with living expenses and to provide for them during the holiday season.
- Send deployed employees care packages including holiday gifts, homemade knitted caps, personal products, and letters with photos.
- DNR Licensing – special privileges for veterans.
- Agency HR staff serve as a resource for deployed employees and their families to answer questions pertaining to payroll, benefits, insurance, while the family is separated.
- The Minnesota Zoo hosts an annual Military Family Week event providing special discounts for military personnel and their families.

Training

Many agencies provide or participate in training for managers, supervisors, and state employees regarding the reintegration of deployed employees. Agency human resources staff both conduct and attend training to ensure the appropriate state employees are knowledgeable and in compliance with applicable veteran laws. Training sessions took place in various agencies across the state.

Training included:

- Reintegration training for leadership staff and the returning deployed employees regarding smooth transitions back into the civilian workforce.
- Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act (USERRA) training to outline the responsibilities of the employer and the rights and benefits awarded to veteran employees.
- Specific applications of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to deployed state employees and military family members.
- Post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and suicide prevention sessions for veteran counselors and coordinators at Minnesota State campuses.
- Recently separated veteran interview law training.
- Minnesota Veterans Preference Act (VPA)
- Recently Separated Veteran Interview Law
- Noncompetitive Appointment of Certain Disabled veterans and Veteran Preference Act Training.
- Emotional Effects of Deployment Cycles
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder/Traumatic Brain Injury
- Suicide prevention training for veterans counselors and coordinators
- Resilience, Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention (R3SP)