



# State of Minnesota's Efforts to Employ and Support Veterans

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## Introduction

The State of Minnesota seeks and values the unique skills of those who have served or are serving in the military. We actively recruit, hire, and develop veterans and service members because we know the important contributions they bring to the workplace. This report provides the state's efforts to recruit and employ veterans during fiscal year 2019.

The data reported here is collected as required by the Minnesota Legislature. In addition, [Executive Order 19-20](#) instructs state agencies to report their veteran-focused recruitment and retention activities. Self-identification of veteran status is voluntary, and employees are not legally required to provide this information.

Minnesota Management and Budget would like to acknowledge and thank the executive branch agencies for their support and for providing information on their recruitment and retention activities included in this report. Through our joint efforts we are better positioned to serve Minnesota's veterans.

## Executive Summary

The Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) is required by Minnesota law (Article 3, Section 22 of Chapter 94) 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. In addition, Executive Order 19-20 instructs state agencies to submit to MMB their veteran-focused recruitment and retention efforts demonstrating their support, commitment, and actions to making Minnesota a more military- and veteran-friendly state.

### Workforce Representation – Cabinet Level Agencies

According to fiscal year 2019 data, approximately 7.9 percent of the state government full-time employees in cabinet-level agencies self-identified as veterans. By comparison, 4.5 percent of Minnesota’s labor force over the ages of 18 are veterans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey). Cabinet-level agencies hired 7.3% veterans into full-time unlimited positions in fiscal year 2019. Note, employees are not required to self-identify their veteran status, so the number reported may not fully reflect veterans working for the State of Minnesota. While veterans are not a protected group under Minnesota law, the State of Minnesota monitors and actively recruits this group.

#### *Two-Year Snapshot*

	FY18	FY19
% of all applicants that identify as veterans	7.8%	7.9 %
% of all hires that identify as veterans	7.9%	7.3 %
% of all state employees that identify as veterans	7.6%	7.5%

To promote the state as a veteran-friendly employer and to increase employment opportunities for veterans in state government during fiscal year 2019, state agencies:

- Conducted veteran-focused recruitment and retention activities to increase the numbers of veterans and retain them.
- Provided reintegration education and training to agency staff.
- Developed partnerships with veteran organizations and advocates.
- Provided support to deployed military employees.
- Retained job classifications whose sole purpose is supporting veterans and in some cases must be filled by veterans.

### Agency Outreach and Recruitment Efforts

One part of the state’s recruitment strategy is participating in networking, outreach, and recruitment events. State agencies participates in various events throughout the year to raise awareness of employment opportunities with the state. Here we highlight a few events which took place during this reporting period.

### *Veterans Career Fair (July 2019 in Brooklyn Center)*

This career fair was sponsored by the Department of Military Affairs, the Department of Education & Economic Development, and Minnesota Management and Budget. MMB partnered to ensure enterprise wide participation. Approximately 84 former and current military members attended. Approximately 25 State of Minnesota Recruiters representing 16 agencies provided information to job seekers about open positions. Commissioners Grove and Herke kicked-off the event with opening remarks.

### *Veterans Job Fair (October 2019 in Minneapolis)*

This career event featured approximately 40 employers. Resources included on-site resume review and interview preparation. The event was open to veterans and their spouses. It was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and was presented by VHA Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

### *Hiring Our Heroes Career Event (February 2020 in St. Paul)*

In partnership with the Minnesota Wild, this professional development event provided hands-on career planning designed to connect members of the local military community with military-ready employers. The event was open to active duty service members, National Guard members, military reservists, veterans, military spouses and military caregivers. Over 100 jobseekers attended. State agencies in attendance included: the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Revenue, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Corrections, and Minnesota Management, and Budget. The effort was launched in 2011 as a nationwide effort to connect veterans, service members, and military spouses to meaningful employment.

Visit the *Recruitment, Partnership, and Outreach Activities* section of this report for a more comprehensive list of agency outreach efforts to recruit veterans into the State of Minnesota's workforce.

## **Dedicated Staff**

The State of Minnesota has dedicated staff at various agencies to support veterans. The Minnesota Department of Veterans 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. Additional information on dedicated agency staff serving veterans is in *State Resources Dedicated to Veteran Support* section of the report.

## **Executive Order 19-20 Taskforce**

In September 2019, a Taskforce convened to ensure collaboration among state agencies to implement Executive Order 19-20 *Supporting the Selection and Employment of Veterans*. Participating agencies include: the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs, the Minnesota Department of Military Affairs, the Department of Employment and Economic Development, and Minnesota Management and Budget. This group meets monthly to discuss successes, challenges, and opportunities to support current and future state employees. A work plan has been developed to guide the work of the taskforce. A variety of goals and actions items have been identified, some priorities include: 1) Recruiting veterans, 2) Providing training for Human Resource personnel, Hiring Managers, and Recruiters, and 3) Adding resources to MMB's HR Toolbox.

## **State Spending with Veterans**

An important part of the economic vitality of the state are thriving businesses. The state has been intentional in its outreach efforts to include veteran businesses as registered vendors. The Department of Administration's

Office of Equity in Procurement was established to improve the state’s spending with targeted business to make Minnesota state government more accessible to all Minnesota businesses.

Fiscal Year	# of Veteran Owned Businesses	State Spend
2016	96	\$3,266,856
2017	126	\$6,839,966
2018	131	\$6,285,889
2019	135	\$19,393,932

Overall, the number of veteran owned businesses and state spending has increased. There was a significant increase in spending from FY18 to FY19. However, from FY17 to FY18 there was a slight decrease of 8% in spending. The department continues to recruit veteran businesses and works with veterans in the program to ensure their success.

## Statewide Veteran-Focused Programs

### Veterans Business Program

Minnesota Department of Transportation’s [Veterans Business Program](#) provides verified veteran-owned small businesses with increased access to state contracting opportunities. This program is for Minnesota-based businesses that are at least 51 percent own by veterans.

### Veterans Business Loan Program (DEED)

For veterans interested in starting a new business in Minnesota or reestablishing a business left behind after deployment to active duty, there are several sources of expert business guidance and some targeted business financing options.

### Veteran Focused Legislation

The State of Minnesota recognizes the training and experience of military services of the government. Below we highlight three benefits designed to assist veterans attain jobs with the State of Minnesota.

#### M.S. 43A.09 Recruitment

[State Personnel Management: Recruitment statute](#) 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 Veterans’ Preference

The [Minnesota Veterans’ Preference statute](#) requires notification to state applicants that they may elect to use veterans’ preference. It requires that applicants who meet the minimum qualifications for a vacant position and claim disabled veterans’ preference be listed in the applicant pool ahead of all other applicants, and those claiming non-disabled veterans’ 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 veterans' or disabled veterans' 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 veterans' preference to notify the finalist of the reasons for rejection.

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

The [Noncompetitive Appointment of Certain Disabled Veterans statute](#) 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 percent.

### **Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Company Recognition**

The Department of Natural Resources was featured as an exemplary Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Company when Soldiers for Life program representatives visited Minnesota to learn more about Yellow Ribbon Company best practices.

## **Veteran Employment Data**

The state employee data in the following tables are collected from the state's personnel and payroll system. These tables represent a snapshot of state employee data as of June 30, 2019. The veteran data is collected from the job applicant tracking system and the state's HR system (SEMA4) representing applicant data from fiscal year 2019 (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019).

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 94 percent 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, we offer a "Self Service" webpage where state employees can update their demographics, including 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.

Currently, 7.5% of all State of Minnesota employees self- identify as veterans.

## Veterans in State of Minnesota Government Workforce – Table 1

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

- 7.9 percent of State of Minnesota government cabinet-level agency full-time employees self-identified as veterans.
- 4.5 percent 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: U.S. Census, 2018 American Community Survey.*

Table 1 Veterans in the State of Minnesota Government Workforce Cabinet-Level Agencies FY2019

Cabinet-Level Agency	Number of Employees in Full Time Positions	Number of Full-Time Employees Who Self-Identified as Veterans	Number of Full-Time Positions Hired in FY 2019	Number of Veterans Hired into Full-time Positions FY 2019
Administration	521	32	90	5
Agriculture	460	18	54	1
Bureau of Mediation Services	11	1	5	0
Commerce	337	22	37	2
Corrections	4162	532	457	59
Education	373	9	43	0
Employment & Economic Develop	1282	83	123	7
Health	1416	45	135	7
Housing Finance Agency	250	5	28	1
Human Rights	43	3	9	0
Human Services	5668	283	741	32
Iron Range Resources & Rehab.	42	4	4	0
Labor & Industry	419	35	35	3
Military Affairs	386	134	75	23
MN Management & Budget	254	9	45	1
Natural Resources	2339	118	280	18
Office of Higher Education	65	2	14	0
Office of MN.IT Services	2352	206	223	26
Pollution Control Agency	859	30	101	3
Public Safety	2006	260	247	21
Revenue	1464	57	268	10
Transportation	4996	442	539	36
Veterans Affairs	788	102	115	11

<b>Total</b>	<b>30,493</b>	<b>2,432</b>	<b>3,668</b>	<b>266</b>
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**Column 2** - 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.

**Column 3** - total number of employees identified in Column 2 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.

**Column 4** - total number of vacant full-time positions in the agency filled by hiring or appointment for fiscal year 2019. Includes Unlimited (an appointment for which there is no specified maximum duration) and Limited (e.g. temporary, emergency, seasonal, trainee, and provisional).

**Column 5**- total number of full-time hires who indicated veteran status in FY 2019.

## Veteran Applicants for State Government Employment – Table 2

Table 2 shows a summary of veteran job applicants, interviewing, and hiring in fiscal year 2019.

- Approximately 7.9 percent of applicants for state employment are veterans.
- Approximately 4 percent of the full-time jobs filled in FY 2019 were filled by veterans.

**Table 2 Veteran Applicants for State Government Employment in Cabinet-Level Agencies, FY 2019**

Cabinet-Level Agency	Full-Time Positions Filled	Total Applications Received	Veteran Applications	Veterans Hired
Administration	97	2,394	248	5
Agriculture	63	1,847	105	1
Bureau of Mediation Services	4	185	19	0
Commerce	36	1,133	112	2
Corrections	578	8,436	533	59
Education	55	2,059	224	0
Employment & Economic Develop	243	4,370	434	7
Health	273	8,260	595	7
Housing Finance Agency	37	1,276	99	1
Human Rights	12	756	90	0
Human Services	1698	39,899	2984	32
Iron Range Resources & Rehab.	5	148	8	0
Labor & Industry	66	1,627	143	3
Military Affairs	60	1039	118	23
MN Management & Budget	72	2,727	294	1
Natural Resources	726	10,343	399	0
Office of Higher Education	17	699	57	26
Office of MN.IT Services	470	13828	1716	18
Pollution Control Agency	179	6,142	212	3
Public Safety	391	11,826	962	21
Revenue	364	6,360	573	10
Transportation	1114	12,259	799	36
Veterans Affairs	250	2,316	285	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,810</b>	<b>139,929</b>	<b>11,009</b>	<b>266</b>

**Column 2** - the total number of vacant full-time positions in the agency filled during fiscal year 2019. Only unlimited positions (an appointment for which there is no specified max duration) in cabinet agencies.

**Column 3** - the total number of applications received for positions identified in Column 2.

**Column 4** - the total number of applicants identified in Column 3 who indicated veterans' preference status.

**Column 5** - the total number of veterans hired under veterans' preference in cabinet agencies.

## Historical Veteran Hiring in State Government—Table 3

Table 3 shows a summary of veterans hired for positions in state government cabinet-level agencies between fiscal years 2010-2019. Key points:

- Since fiscal year 2010 the cabinet-level agencies have hired about 2700 veterans into unlimited positions (an unlimited employee is an employee who is appointed with no definite ending date).
- About 7.9 percent of new hires are veterans as of fiscal year 2019.

**Table 3 Veterans Hired in State of Minnesota Government at Cabinet-level Agencies Fiscal Year 2010-19**

Fiscal Year	Number of Full-Time Vacancies Filled	Number of Veterans Hired	% Veterans in State Workforce
2010	2,271	203	8.9%
2011	2,242	250	11.2%
2012	2,879	273	9.5%
2013	3,257	324	9.9%
2014	3,259	299	9.2%
2015	3,060	258	8.4%
2016	3,532	274	7.8%
2017	3,878	307	7.9%
2018	3,961	298	7.5%
2019	3,668	266	7.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,007</b>	<b>2,752</b>	<b>8.8%</b>

# Statewide Veteran-Focused Initiatives, Programs, and Services

The following section includes statewide initiatives, programs, and services 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 veteran 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, firearm 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.

## Department of Natural Resources-Specific Programs

The Department of Natural Resources created "[Nature, it's good for you](#)" an outdoor treatment/therapy program for veterans returning from active duty. Activities include veteran hunting, fishing appreciation, mentorship event, and Veterans Day at Minnesota state parks.

The Department of Natural Resources also provided cell phones for employees who are deployed and their family members to stay in contact during deployment.

## Military Service; Retirement Pension and Pay

(<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=290.0677>)

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 Veterans Affairs and nationally chartered veterans service organizations in promoting the interests and welfare of veterans, 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 deserved 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 on-job-training and Apprenticeship funds up to \$2,000 per fiscal year for either program.

## Transition Resource Fairs

The Minnesota Department of Corrections hosts onsite [facility transition fairs](#) for veteran offenders. The transition fair presents opportunities for offenders with 18 months or less to serve. The goal is to provide contacts and resources for offenders in housing, family support, personal finance, transportation, employment, and mental health. Hundreds of offenders at the host facility are invited to attend. These events are designed to provide veteran offenders who are transitioning back into the community with as many valuable resources to assist them with successful reentry. Resources are provided in conjunction with other state agencies Exhibitors are government such as Department of Human Services who advertises a three-week work readiness training for people with criminal histories. Additional exhibitors include trade unions, faith-based groups, community nonprofits, and volunteer groups.

## Transition Coalition

The Minnesota Department of Corrections partners with nonprofit agencies to provide [support for veteran offenders re-entering the community](#) after incarceration and treatment. The coalition produces an electronic newsletter which contains information related to facility transition fairs, training announcements, grants and contract requests for proposals and other reentry program networking opportunities.

## 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. This program is for Minnesota-based businesses that are at least 51 percent own by veterans.

## 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 200 sites across Minnesota.

## **Veterans Business Loan Program (DEED)**

For veterans interested in starting a new business in Minnesota or reestablishing a business left behind after deployment to active duty, there are several sources of expert business guidance and some targeted business financing options.

## **Commercial Driver's License**

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety offers a waiver for qualified service members for commercial drivers to apply without skills steps. This waiver can be used by service members who are currently licensed, who are or were employed within the past year (12 months) in military positions requiring the operation of a military motor vehicle equivalent to a Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV). Commercial Driver's License knowledge written tests cannot be waived.

## State Resources Dedicated to Veteran Support

The state 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 Veterans 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

(<https://mn.gov/mdva/resources/employment/ojtapprenticeship.jsp>)

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 work is conducted across many divisions. One division serves American Indians who are part of native tribes and eligible for veterans' benefits. Division staff assist them with the application process to obtain these benefits. Another division conducts outreach to homeless veterans living on state lands.

### 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 Minnesota National Guard has more than 11,000 soldiers and over 2,000 airmen. More than 400 National Guard soldiers and Airmen are deployed to multiple locations.

### 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 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 housing, health, or other issues.

## Higher Education Veteran Program Coordinators

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 veterans' preference, noncompetitive appointments of certain disabled veterans, veterans' preference hearings, FMLA and military personnel, and Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (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 to build relationships with veteran organizations and advocates. In turn, they 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.

### **1. Recruitment**

In fiscal year 2019, state agencies engaged in some of following veteran-focused recruitment activities. Please note that this is not a complete list.

#### **Hire our Heroes Job Fair**

Event includes job seeker workshops on interview skills, resume writing, and prepping short introductions. They also include workshops, training, and seminars for human resources staff and military personnel. The primary targets are service members, veterans, reservists, guardsmen, military spouses, and Recently Separated Veterans.

#### **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.

#### **Yellow Ribbon Company Seminars**

The Department of Military Affairs hosts bi-annual Yellow Ribbon Company Seminars to bring together human resource and hiring managers to: 1) Build relationships; 2) Share best practices; and 3) Receive updates on military support initiatives focused on veteran recruiting, hiring, and retention to provide military connected employee support. Additionally, Yellow Ribbon Community Networks (in 219 cities and 26 counties) to coordinate with local business communities on veteran hiring.

As of November 1, 2019, 67 companies have been proclaimed as “Yellow Ribbon Companies”. These companies must maintain minimum requirements in recruiting, hiring, and retaining veteran employees.

#### **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.

## **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.

## **Minnesota Veterans Career Fair**

This career fair was sponsored by the Department of Military Affairs, the Department of Education & Economic Development, and Minnesota Management and Budget. MMB partnered to ensure enterprise wide participation Approximately 84 former and current military members attended. Approximately 25 State of Minnesota Recruiters representing 16 agencies provided information to job seekers about open positions. Commissioners Grove and Herke kicked-off the event with opening remarks.

## **Outstate Recruitment Efforts**

Various state agencies are participating in recruitment events out state. Some locations include St. Cloud, Rochester, and Mankato.

## **2. Partnerships**

### **Examples of organizations 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 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 Veterans Affairs
- Vietnam Veterans of America
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

## **3. Outreach**

### **Helping Women Veterans Find Careers**

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Veterans Employment Representative at the Ramsey County-Work Force Center is a networking program to help female veterans in the metro area get back on their feet. The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and the Minneapolis American Indian Center are working together to assist female veterans in navigating programs and services available to them.

## **Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans**

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) is a nonprofit 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.

## Targeted Veteran Advertising

Agencies report advertising job vacancies in a variety of different job boards, websites, and organizations. Below you will find a list of approximately forty resources. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development is the most cited resource to assist Minnesota veterans with employment needs. Veteran-specific posters is one strategy the Minnesota Department of Corrections is using to recruit veterans.

### Veteran-Specific Recruitment Posters

The Minnesota Department of Corrections created recruitment posters to target veterans for employment. These posters are placed at workforce centers and locations where the National Guard conduct drills.

### Job Promotion

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

- [AbillityLinks](#)
- [County Veteran Service Officer \(CVSO\)](#)
- [Career One Stop](#)
- [Disabled American Veterans \(DAV\)](#)
- [Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development](#)
- [Disabled Veterans Rest Camp](#)
- [Duluth Veteran Center](#)
- [Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve](#)
- [Employment Action Center \(EAC\)](#)
- [GI Jobs Magazine](#)
- [Goodwill Easter Seals Military Services](#)
- [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 Veterans Affairs \(MDVA\)\\*](#)
- [Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Higher Education Resource Centers](#)
- [Minnesota State CAREERwise Education](#)
- [Navy and Marine Reserves](#)
- [National Association of Veterans Upward Bound \(NAVUB\)](#)
- [Northland College Military Veteran Services](#)
- [TalentLEAD](#)
- [Veteran Journal Magazine](#)
- [Veterans of Foreign Wars \(VFW\)](#)
- [US Department of Veterans Affairs](#)
- [Wounded Warriors](#)
- [Indeed](#)
- [Minnesota Department of Education Veteran Resources for Military Families](#)
- [Minnesota Board of AELSLAGID](#)

# Retention, Reintegration Support, and Training

## Retention

The Department of Human Services has an active veterans Employee Resource Group (ERG) comprised of over fifty members. This veterans ERG is a group of employed veterans who meet with the purpose of supporting one another and advancing the mission, values, and goals of DHS. Currently, this group is partnering with the Veterans Administration to help develop and implement training, resources, and benefits.

The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

## Reintegration Support

Reintegration 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, human resources policies, leave time, etc.
  - FMLA training.
- During deployment:
  - Agency HR staff guide deployed employees throughout the reintegration process.
  - Hold positions for deployed employees.
  - Encourage employees to return to their positions after deployment.
  - Ensure 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.

## Training

Many agencies provide and participate in training to ensure managers, supervisors, and state employees are knowledgeable, in compliance with applicable veteran laws, and using best practices for supporting veterans in the workplace. Oftentimes, agency human resource staff coordinate training efforts. In this section, we highlight fourteen trainings opportunities provided by agencies throughout the state.

*Some of the training offered 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. For this reporting period, the Department of Natural Resources and Department of Transportation partnered to host a series of trainings for hiring managers and supervisors.
- Specific applications of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to deployed state employees and military family members.
- Minnesota Veterans' Preference Act (VPA).
- Recently Separated Veteran Interview Law.
- Noncompetitive Appointment of Certain Disabled veterans and Veteran Preference Act Training.
- DNR supervisor training resources available on the agency's intranet. Topics range from sensitivity to matters related to the combat zone, family adjustment, crisis intervention, and substance abuse.
- MnDOT's "We all Serve Fort Minnesota" training video.
- Emotional Effects of Deployment Cycles.
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder/Traumatic Brain Injury. The Minnesota Department of Health has staff dedicated to suicide prevention and traumatic brain injury for Minnesota residents.
- Resilience, Risk Reduction, and Suicide Prevention (R3SP)
- Post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and suicide prevention sessions for veteran counselors and coordinators at Minnesota State campuses.
- Resilience, Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention
- Military Discharge Upgrades training.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and the Department of Military Affairs, and the Department of Labor updated the *Leaders in Veterans Employment* seminar curriculum. This training is for HR directors, staff, and hiring managers on the value of hiring veterans. This curriculum will be presented to State Agencies and the MN Chamber of Commerce in 2020.
- Agency Recruiters who are responsible for finding talent to fill state positions, have dedicated *Statewide Recruiters Meetings* to discuss veteran hiring strategies.

## **Veteran-Focused Legislation**

Each year MMB works to ensure state agencies are informed of and practice Minnesota's veteran-focused state laws. MMB communicates new or updated legislation and agencies are expected to adjust agency policies and practices to support the legislation. Reviewing these policies annually provides an opportunity to check in on the progress of our veteran-focused initiatives. Following are the changes we monitored in fiscal year 2019.

### **New State Legislation 2019**

#### **Omnibus State Government Finance Bill (S.F. 10)**

This comprehensive bill continued funding for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal years 2020-2021. It included an operating budget for the Program and Services and Health Care Divisions

#### **Armed Forces Service Center (AFSC)**

This center serves military personnel and their families, long with Purple Heart and Medal of Honor recipients. It is located in Terminal 1 of the Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport. Legislation included special funding. One-time funding to provide new furniture and improvements as well as funding for the Minnesota Medal of Honor Memorial on the State Capital grounds.

#### **POW/MIA Recognition Day**

The third Friday of September each year will be Minnesota's recognition of the courage and sacrifices of the state's POW/MIA and their families.

#### **Veterans Suicide Awareness Day**

Minnesota will observe Veterans Suicide Awareness Day the first Saturday of October annually to increase visibility and awareness of suicide among our veteran population.

#### **American Allies Day**

This day (June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year) honors foreign-born individuals who have fought alongside the United States Armed forces in military conflicts around the world.

#### **Hmong Special Guerilla Units Remembrance Day**

May 14 of each year will honor Southeast Asians, Americans and their allies who served, suffered, scarified, or died in the Secret War in Laos during the Vietnam War from 1961-1985.

#### **Omnibus Tax Bill**

This tax bill will provide relief for the spouses and survivors of Veterans by eliminating the eight-year expiration of the surviving spousal benefit of the disabled Veteran Homestead Market Value Exclusion and permits sharing of information between CVSOs and Assessors.

#### **Legacy Bill**

Provides funding for the Minnesota Military Museum at Camp Ripley to document post-9/11 Veterans in anticipation of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2021.

## **Jobs Bill**

Provides a grant to the Construction Careers Foundation for the Helmets to Hard Hats initiative. It assists Veterans participate in apprentice programs in the building and construction industry.

***For additional information visit:***

[https://mn.gov/mdva/assets/2019-08-mdva-end-of-session-summary\\_tcm1066-396941.pdf](https://mn.gov/mdva/assets/2019-08-mdva-end-of-session-summary_tcm1066-396941.pdf)