



EMPLOYERS' GUIDE  
TO HIRING  
VETERANS &  
MILITARY SPOUSES



RISE



# BUILDING YOUR VETERAN AND MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

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Before making your first veteran or military spouse hire, take the necessary steps to ensure you're prepared to support their success from day one. By putting a structured program in place, veterans and military spouses will have clear guidance, resources and a strong foundation when they join your company.

This guide is divided up into short, midrange and long term goals, though all could be tackled concurrently.

## **Short Term Goals**

**1. Identify the advantages of hiring military populations and develop a proposal for company leadership to pursue hiring these individuals more intentionally.**

**2. Identify a designated contact for veterans and military spouses.**

This could be a star employee who is a veteran or military spouse that can attend hiring events. It could also involve creating a position for a dedicated veteran sourcing specialist to pursue hiring veterans, transitioning service members and military spouses.

**3. Update job descriptions & postings to be more veteran-friendly.**

Work toward translating some of the skill sets for jobs to align with the competencies veterans obtain in the military. Something as simple as adding "or equivalent military experience/specialized training" to the required experience section of a job posting would be a great first step.

*"I try to hire every veteran that I can get. Veterans know what it means to go to work every day, you don't have to worry if they will be on time, they follow instructions and complete their job assignments and they are committed to their employer."*

**Ja Stephens**  
**Corporate Director of Human Resources**  
**Claxton Poultry Farms**



#### **4. Identify barriers to advancement in terms of metrics.**

Are the criteria for career advancement within your company the same for military populations as they are for non-military employees? Should they be? Many veterans and military spouses will come with years of leadership experience and may be suited to move into supervisory roles faster than other new hires, if the proper framework is in place.

#### **5. Reverse networking.**

If an employer attends a military hiring event and accepts a veteran's résumé, they should follow up—even if the candidate isn't a fit. A brief call explaining why, and offering alternative suggestions, creates a positive experience that veterans will share with others.



**68** percent of HR professionals surveyed say veterans work ethic is better or much better than civilians

#### **6. Utilize military skill translation tools, such as O\*Net ([ononline.org/crosswalk/MOC](https://ononline.org/crosswalk/MOC)).**

Utilizing these tools is critical to success when hiring military populations. In a 2024 Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) survey, of the HR professionals who use skills translation tools, 46 percent said these tools helped them hire candidates who would otherwise have been deemed unqualified.

#### **7. Work backward with potential military and military spouses hires to gain an understanding of the potential employees' skill sets and determine if there is a job that would be a good fit.**

#### **8. Identify "battle buddies," which is a mentor for the onboarding process for military hires.**

This system could be used for military spouses and dependents as well as for veterans.



## 9. Connect with resource providers. Below are some of the resource providers in our region:

Combat Boots 2 the Boardroom

[cb2tb.com](http://cb2tb.com)

Lynnetta Smith

404.465.1735

[info@cb2tb.com](mailto:info@cb2tb.com)

Heroes Make America

[themanufacturinginstitute.org/heroes-make-america/](http://themanufacturinginstitute.org/heroes-make-america/)

Toniette Sumpter

443.869.1172

[tsumpter@nam.org](mailto:tsumpter@nam.org)

Ogeechee Technical College

[ogeecheetech.edu](http://ogeecheetech.edu)

Elise Boyett

912.871.8529

[eboyett@ogeecheetech.edu](mailto:eboyett@ogeecheetech.edu)

Savannah State University

[savannahstate.edu](http://savannahstate.edu)

Baron Jenkins

912.358.4155

[jenkinsb@savannahstate.edu](mailto:jenkinsb@savannahstate.edu)

Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

[home.army.mil/stewart/index.php/about/Garrison/DHR/tap](http://home.army.mil/stewart/index.php/about/Garrison/DHR/tap)

Patrick Bean

912.767.2381

[patrick.w.bean.civ@army.mil](mailto:patrick.w.bean.civ@army.mil)

Hiring Our Heroes

[hiringourheroes.org](http://hiringourheroes.org)

Tim Dekryger

202.313.8684

[tdekryger@uschamber.com](mailto:tdekryger@uschamber.com)

Savannah Technical College

[savannahtech.edu](http://savannahtech.edu)

Terry Braiser

912.443.5707

[tbraiser@savannahtech.edu](mailto:tbraiser@savannahtech.edu)

USO Transition Program

[uso.org/programs/uso-transition-program](http://uso.org/programs/uso-transition-program)

Nick Hyde

912.616.6278

[nhyde@uso.org](mailto:nhyde@uso.org)

Work for Warriors Georgia

[workforwarriorsga.org](http://workforwarriorsga.org)

Sam Middleton Jr.

678.818.5831

[sam@w4wga.org](mailto:sam@w4wga.org)

Georgia Southern University

[georgiasouthern.edu](http://georgiasouthern.edu)

Bill Gammon

912.344.3600

[wgammon@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:wgammon@georgiasouthern.edu)

Army Community Service (ACS)

[home.army.mil/stewart/about/garrison/acs](http://home.army.mil/stewart/about/garrison/acs)

Emeline Hastings

571.801.6954

[emeline.a.hastings.civ@army.mil](mailto:emeline.a.hastings.civ@army.mil)

Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP)

[msepjobs.militaryonesource.mil/msep/](http://msepjobs.militaryonesource.mil/msep/)

Megan Paone

771.216.2646

[megan.m.paone.civ@mail.mil](mailto:megan.m.paone.civ@mail.mil)



## **Midrange Goals**

**1. Offer referral bonuses to encourage word-of-mouth recruiting through military networks.**

**2. Geofence for advertising specific to military populations.**

**3. Arrange facility tours where Transition Assistance Program (TAP) office personnel, transitioning service members and spouses can visit and tour your company.**

**4. Create a dedicated veteran job/resource board tailored to military populations, making it easier for them to find jobs that align with their skill sets.**

*“Within our organization, veterans exemplify dedication, integrity and leadership - qualities that strengthen our culture and drive success at Cardinal LG Statesboro.”*

**Brittany Barnes**  
**Human Resources Manager**  
**Cardinal LG Statesboro**



**61** percent of HR professionals surveyed say veterans teamwork abilities are better or much better than civilians

**5. Develop a plan to retain veterans and military spouses once they are hired.**

For active-duty military spouses who receive permanent change of station orders, transitioning roles to remote status when appropriate can make a huge difference.

**6. Develop a specialized military onboarding program to support new hires and introduce them to the culture and expectations of your company.**

Many veterans experience a loss of community, culture and purpose when they exit the military. Showing them how your company can fill those gaps can be crucial to ensuring the person is successful in the position. Also consider recognizing their military service on day one of employment (for veterans and spouses), like challenge coins, “battle buddies” and other similar initiatives.



## Long Term Goals

### **1. Adjust corporate culture/develop internal support structures to be more supportive of military populations.**

An example is coordinating with the local VA and not requiring employees to use PTO for mandatory VA appointments.

### **2. Develop an Employee Resource Group (ERG) to create an internal support system for military populations.**

More information on how to create an ERG can be found at:

[drakovindustries.com/blog/creating-veteran-employee-resource-groups-in-the-workplace-a-complete-2025-guide-to-building-inclusive-communities](https://drakovindustries.com/blog/creating-veteran-employee-resource-groups-in-the-workplace-a-complete-2025-guide-to-building-inclusive-communities).

### **3. Develop branding that emphasizes being military-friendly to promote awareness of other outline initiatives.**

There are several places where companies may apply for formal recognition as a company committed to veteran employment and support, including:

- HIRE Vets Medallion, [hirevets.gov](https://hirevets.gov)
- Military Times: Best for Vets employer rankings, [bestforvets.militarytimes.com](https://bestforvets.militarytimes.com)
- VETS Indexes, [vetsindexes.com](https://vetsindexes.com)

### **4. Train managers on the benefits of having veterans and military spouses on the team.**

### **5. Add HR systems to hiring process that will allow your company to track veteran and military spouse hiring and retention.**



**58** percent of HR professionals surveyed say veterans leadership skills are better or much better than civilians

# THE RISE TEAM



**Anna Chafin**  
President and CEO  
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President and CEO Anna Chafin is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the 2023 workforce study, which led to the formation of RISE. She has more than 20 years of economic development expertise, serving 10 years as the CEO of the Development Authority of Bryan County.



**Justin Farquhar**  
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As Vice President of RISE, Justin Farquhar is focused on implementing RISE's efforts on housing, higher education, childcare and military. Before joining RISE, he was Senior Vice President for the Development Authority of Bryan County.



**Maria Whitfield**  
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Maria Whitfield works day to day with existing industries in the eight-county region including coordination of the Employer Forums. She also oversees the Industry Insiders program. Maria has more than 20 years of experience in human resources, specializing in working with manufacturers.



**Jennifer Collins**  
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Program Manager Jennifer Collins oversees RISE's transportation, underrepresented and K-12 education initiatives. She previously worked in economic development for Savannah Economic Development Authority as a project manager.