

Veteran Employment

**Lessons from the
100,000 Jobs Mission**



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Summary

Eleven companies cofounded the 100,000 Jobs Mission in 2011 to promote veteran employment, with a goal of hiring 100,000 veterans by 2020. The coalition has exceeded beyond the founders' foresight: As of September 2014, the member companies had hired more than 190,000 veterans, and the coalition now expects to hire 200,000 veterans by the end of 2014. These companies represent nearly every U.S. industry and vary in size, in their experiences hiring veterans, and in their tenure with the coalition. Reflecting on the first three years of operation, JPMorgan Chase & Co. asked the RAND Corporation to capture the lessons and experiences from the 100,000 Jobs Mission to identify further improvements to veteran employment opportunities.

Qualitative interviews, conducted individually with representatives from a sample of coalition companies, indicate that member companies receive great value from hiring veterans, and many of the interviewees provided specific reasons for veterans being good for business. Veterans are most recognized for their leadership skills and teamwork; for their flexibility and ability to work in a fast-paced, changing environment without undue stress; for their dependability, integrity, and loyalty; and for their experience working in a culturally diverse or global environment.

Even so, the transition from uniformed service member to veteran employee involves challenges for individuals and for employers. Perhaps the most significant challenge is the ability of both veterans and employers to match military skills to civilian job requirements. Companies committed to hiring veterans need managers that can recognize talented veterans with relevant skills. In some cases, companies encounter a mismatch between their education and experience requirements and the education and skills of veteran applicants. Some companies also struggle to make themselves known to veteran job candidates. And the veterans themselves need a better understanding of the civilian job market and those positions for which they are qualified.

Companies use a variety of recruitment activities and vehicles to attract, select, and hire veterans, such as veteran-specific job fairs, on-base recruiting, veteran-specific employment websites, veteran-specific pages on company websites, specially trained recruiters, employee referrals, and general outreach to the veteran community. New programs within the federal government, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs' Veterans Employment Center (VEC), which is intended to serve as a clearinghouse for all manner of employment information and resources, are also emerging to help connect employers and veterans.

The coalition has exceeded beyond the founders' foresight: As of September 2014, the member companies had hired more than 190,000 veterans, and the coalition now expects to hire 200,000 veterans by the end of 2014.

Veteran employment efforts among coalition members have focused primarily on recruitment, with less effort committed to managing or retaining veteran employees once they are hired. Additionally, few companies track the relative performance of their veteran employees. Many companies respect that their veteran employees want to be treated the same as nonveteran employees, but these organizations are investing resources in veteran hiring and could benefit from information about the return from that investment. Although companies perceive their veteran employees to perform well, they do not tend to collect metrics about veteran performance and veteran retention.

The 100,000 Jobs Mission has actively and successfully promoted veteran employment. The successes and challenges of member companies provide insights for other proponents of veteran employment, including the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Labor, employers, and individual veterans. The experiences of these companies also provide the basis for recommendations to address the identified challenges and promote effective veteran employment practices. We offer recommendations for several audiences: companies, federal agencies, and the 100,000 Jobs Mission.

For companies. Many coalition companies have developed robust veteran programs that demonstrate best practices for veteran recruitment efforts. Given recruiting success thus far, companies should broaden their efforts to include veteran performance, career development, and retention. The recommendations we offer are appropriate to coalition and nonmember companies alike who are interested in improving their veteran employment outcomes:

- **Continue to educate managers on the value of veteran employees.** This remains a critical challenge to successful veteran employment programs.
- **Allocate recruitment resources more strategically.** Companies should evaluate their current recruitment activities and direct their resources to activities showing the greatest results. A more-strategic examination of hiring activities may prompt companies to limit job fair participation to the fairs that feature advance screening and virtual interviews, which tend to have more-productive outcomes.
- **Consider participating in federal resources, such as the Veterans Employment Center and SkillBridge.** These resources address many of the veteran employment challenges member companies identified and can increase company visibility within the veteran community.
- **Expand veteran employment efforts beyond recruitment.** Now that coalition companies have successfully hired veterans, companies must

ensure that veteran efforts also include adequate support for veteran employees in such areas as onboarding, career development, and retention.

- **Establish and track relevant recruitment, performance, and retention metrics.** The assessment of such metrics can support the business case for hiring veterans, provide input to tailor veteran-specific employee programs, and shore up continued endorsement of veteran hiring programs.

For the DoD, Department of Labor, and Department of Veterans Affairs.

Federal agencies have undertaken many efforts to support veteran employment. Some of these programs can be further leveraged or expanded to improve veteran employment opportunities.

- **DoD should continue to facilitate on-base access for private-sector recruiting events.** The experience of coalition members suggests that private-sector recruiting on base is productive, especially combined with advance registration and prescreening.
- **DoD should encourage transitioning service members to register early in the Veterans Employment Center** to engage with potential civilian employers and take advantage of the many available resources.
- **DoD should consider expanding training and internship programs, such as SkillBridge,** which allows service members to participate in employment training or internships in the civilian workplace, at little or no cost to the service member.
- **DoD, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Veterans Affairs should continue to improve and evaluate the Transition Assistance Program (TAP).** These agencies should take full advantage of private-sector organizations willing to participate in TAP sessions so that transitioning service members can benefit from the perspectives and guidance of civilian employers.

For the 100,000 Jobs Mission. The coalition has grown considerably in three years, becoming more prominent and achieving a presence that is recognizable to veterans, government, and other private-sector companies. But along with growth has come the need for a clear process for establishing longer-term goals and objectives and managing growth in coalition membership. Our recommendations are directed at resolving these issues:

- **Institute an advisory board of coalition members.** The board should reflect the diversity of the membership and should advise on the future goals and direction of the coalition.

- **Consider industry-based coalition subgroups** that will permit more-intimate and collaborative interactions and that will acknowledge and facilitate industry-focused activities that the coalition companies find valuable.
- **Provide a formal orientation and guidance session for new members**, which often have less knowledge and experience in veteran employment. New-member orientation sessions would provide foundational information and focus on the most immediate veteran employment challenges.
- **Consider providing veteran employment information and resources to nonmember companies** as a way of increasing the coalition's national contribution to veteran employment.

CHAPTER ONE

Companies with a Common Goal

No veteran who fought for our nation should have to fight for a job when they come home.

—President Barack Obama, November 2011

More than 2.8 million veterans have served our nation since September 11, 2001,¹ and now represent a skilled workforce for America's employers. However, the transition from uniformed service member to civilian employee includes challenges for individuals and employers. It can be difficult for companies to locate veterans and for veterans to identify companies with positions suitable to their skills. It can be difficult to match military skills and experiences with those civilian employers need. Companies also have concerns about future deployments when hiring members of the National Guard and Reserve.²

In the mid-2000s, veterans seeking to find employment in the civilian workforce faced an additional challenge—a U.S. economy in the midst of a deepening recession. And with the recession came rising unemployment for civilians and veterans alike. The plight of veterans, who had served their nation honorably, captured national attention: America had a responsibility to help returning veterans find employment.

A handful of prominent business leaders stepped to the forefront of this issue, forming a coalition with a seemingly challenging goal: Hire 100,000 veterans by 2020. In March 2011, JPMorgan Chase & Co. coordinated with ten other companies to establish the 100,000 Jobs Mission.³ These 11 founding companies signed memoranda of understanding between June 2011 and September 2011, and CEO-level representatives of these organizations pledged to collaboratively increase employment opportunities for recent veterans in the civilian workplace. The coalition has kept its membership requirements simple.⁴ Companies make a commitment to hire veterans, report the number

100,000 JOBS MISSION

Established: March 2011

FOUNDING COMPANIES

AT&T Inc.

Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc.

Cisco Systems

Cushman & Wakefield

EMC Corporation

Iron Mountain Incorporated

JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Modis

NCR Corporation

Universal Health Services, Inc.

Verizon

Initial Goal: Hire 100,000 veterans by 2020

Veterans Hired: 190,046 as of September 30, 2014

SOURCE: JPMorgan Chase & Co.

of veterans hired on a quarterly basis, attend quarterly meetings, and share best practices. Companies are also expected to attend regular in-person meetings to share their experiences and lessons about veteran employment. The original and ambitious coalition hiring goal has been surpassed, in part due to tremendous growth of coalition members. The coalition now numbers over 175 participating companies, and they have doubled their collective hiring goal to 200,000 veterans.

The federal government also took action. The President and each cabinet secretary signed a statement of support to prioritize the well-being of veterans, service members, and military families.⁵ In April 2011, the White House formally launched the Joining Forces initiative and specifically underscored the need to address veterans' employment, education, and wellness. In November 2011, Congress passed the Veterans Opportunity to Work to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, which provided tax credits to help put veterans back to work,⁶ and agencies across the government have put in place numerous employment-related programs for veterans.

After three years of operation and recognizing the changes that have taken place in the coalition during that time, JPMorgan Chase & Co. asked the RAND Corporation to examine the experiences of the 100,000 Jobs Mission coalition companies, in an effort to (1) identify ways to enhance veteran employment opportunities, (2) identify ways to improve opportunities for employers to hire veterans, (3) highlight coalition and member company successes and challenges, and (4) recommend policy changes to support employers in enhancing veteran employment opportunities. RAND based its assessment on interviews with representatives of a sample of coalition companies.⁷ These interviews focused on several key areas, including veterans programs and initiatives, attracting and recruiting veterans, managing and retaining veterans, veteran employee performance, coalition membership motivations and benefits, and challenges and recommended policy changes to support veteran employment opportunities.⁸

Who We Interviewed

Twenty-six member companies participated in interviews. The sample of companies ensured representation across a number of company characteristics, such as industry, company size, and length of coalition membership (Figure 1). These companies represent a diverse set of industries, ranging from retail trade to health care to finance and insurance. Company size varies as well. Almost 60 percent of the companies have more than 100,000 employees; 12 percent have over 250,000; and 19 percent have fewer than 10,000. One-half of the sample companies have been members of the coalition for two to three years; more than one-third have been members for one to two

Figure 1. Sample Company Characteristics



NUMBER OF COMPANIES IN EACH OF THESE FIELDS

5	Management of companies and enterprises
4	Finance and insurance Professional, scientific, and technical services
3	Manufacturing
2	Information
1	Accommodation and food services Admin, support, waste mgmt, and remediation services Health care and social assistance Other services (excluding public administration) Real estate rental and leasing Retail trade Utilities Wholesale trade



COMPANIES BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

3	250,000+
8	100,000 to 250,000
7	25,000 to 100,000
3	12,000 to 25,000
5	Less than 10,000



NUMBER OF COMPANIES BY LENGTH OF TIME IN COALITION

5	3+ years
13	2 to 3 years
8	1 to 2 years

years; and the remainder have been members for more than three years. Five of the sample companies are founding members of the coalition. The sample also includes some geographic diversity: Almost one-half the company headquarters are located in the Northeast; the others represent the Midwest, South, and West.

Veteran Employment Programs

All but five of the 26 coalition companies interviewed for this study have formal veteran programs; those five engage in less-formal veteran employment efforts.⁹ For the companies without formal programs, veteran employment efforts tend to be a component of overall diversity efforts and are primarily focused on recruiting.

Most of the formal veteran employment programs are aligned with talent acquisition divisions and located organizationally under human resources. Only a small number of companies have staffs dedicated to working on veteran employment issues full time. In most companies, personnel work on veteran issues as only one aspect of their job. For instance, several companies explained that veteran hiring is just one form of recruiting that recruiters are responsible for. However, whether companies have full-time staff devoted to veteran issues does not appear to be linked to size or level of development of the veteran program. For example, one company without a formal veteran program is one of the few companies with a dedicated staff member. Conversely, of two companies with very developed veteran programs, meaning that they have an extensive number of initiatives to support veteran employment beyond just recruiting, one has a very large full-time dedicated staff, and one has no full-time staff and runs its program through volunteers.

Organization of This Report

Chapter Two discusses the value of veteran employees and the companies' hiring practices and challenges. Chapter Three explores how companies manage veteran employees, and the extent to which companies measure performance and retention, and Chapter Four discusses companies' experiences as members of the 100,000 Jobs Mission. Chapter Five provides recommendations for companies, federal agencies, and the coalition.

PRIMARY VETERAN EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
GENERAL PROGRAMS, BENEFITS, AND SERVICES FOR VETERANS	
Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and Transition Goals Plans Success (Transition GPS)	TAP provides services to exiting service members related to obtaining civilian employment and otherwise transitioning to civilian life. The Transition GPS curriculum is currently being implemented within TAP. Transition GPS is mandatory for nearly all exiting service members with expanded services over a five-day curriculum.
Educational benefits (GI Bill)	GI Bill programs generally provide funds for educational costs as well as living expenses while enrolled in educational programs. The most-used program for recent veterans is the post-9/11 GI Bill.
Veterans Retraining Assistance Program^a	Provides educational benefits for unemployed veterans between the ages of 35 and 60 who are not eligible for a GI Bill or other Department of Veterans Affairs educational program. Program benefits are limited to 12 months.
Local Veterans Employment Representatives	Funds state personnel positions that assist veterans in securing employment in their local areas. Activities include outreach to local employers and referral to training or education benefits. Funding comes from the Jobs for Veterans State Grant.
Federal hiring preferences and special hiring authorities	Veterans receive preference when applying for nearly all competitively hired federal employment. Special hiring authorities allow direct appointment of qualified veterans to positions that would otherwise be competitively hired.
Priority of service in Department of Labor training programs	Veterans receive priority service for any Department of Labor–funded training or employment service program that they would be eligible for as a member of the general public.
Small Business Administration programs	The administration has a variety of programs to assist veterans with developing and managing a small business, financing a small business, and acquiring federal contracts.
PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES	
Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment	Provides funding for training, subsistence, and other expenses to support veterans with service-connected disabilities to pursue an employment outcome or independent living course.
Disabled Veterans Outreach Program	Funds state personnel positions that provide intensive employment services to disabled and other high-need veterans.
Specialized versions of other programs	TAP, federal hiring preference, and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit have specialized components that target veterans with service-connected disabilities.
COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES	
Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program	Provides competitive grants to organizations that provide employment assistance and other supportive services to homeless veterans.
Veterans Upward Bound	Provides services such as tutoring and application assistance to aid veterans in preparing for a program of postsecondary education.
Veterans Workforce Investment Program	Provides competitive grants to public and nonprofit organizations to provide training and/or employment services to veterans.

SOURCE: This material was adapted from Benjamin Collins, Robert Jay Dilger, Cassandra Dortch, Lawrence Kapp, Sean Lowry, and Libby Perl, *Employment for Veterans: Trends and Programs*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, February 20, 2014, pp. 5–6. As of September 21, 2014: <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42790.pdf>

^aThis program is no longer accepting applications.



CHAPTER TWO

Hiring Veterans

The coalition founders agreed that the primary goal of the coalition is to hire veterans, and the veteran recruitment and hiring practices are relatively well developed in established member companies. The research team was especially interested in learning how companies valued veteran employees, what kinds of veterans companies are hiring, how companies recruit and hire veterans, and how member companies are tracking and evaluating their success.

Value of Veteran Employees

The coalition companies, which have all made a commitment to hiring veteran employees by joining the 100,000 Jobs Mission, identified great value in veteran employees. When asked about the overall value of veteran employees to their companies, every interviewee described how veteran employees are valuable or which qualities made veterans good employees. Leadership skills and teamwork were cited most frequently as valuable veteran qualities. Interviewees felt that the military prepared veterans to be leaders in their companies and to work extremely well in teams with other employees. Veteran qualities mentioned include

- experience working in and leading teams

The biggest impact that sells and sells [the case for hiring veterans] is when we talk about teamwork. When they talk about teamwork in general terms, we say take that and put it on steroids. There's no other training in the world better on teamwork than what the military provides.

Coalition companies identified great value in veteran employees. Leadership skills and teamwork were cited most frequently as valuable veteran qualities.

- flexibility and ability to work in a fast-paced, changing environment without stress

Vets are dependable, used to handling pressure, and there's pressure involved in our business. They can multitask.

- dependability, work ethic, commitment to getting the job done

The can-do attitude . . . Veterans don't know how to fail. They don't know how to not achieve their mission.

- integrity and loyalty

What we would love to get from anyone is a hard-working, dedicated individual who can function in a team and has integrity. That's what you find in most veterans. . . . If you look at those core values of each [military service], integrity is always there. These kinds of intangibles, I think, are the key reason to target veterans. It's the right thing to do, and it's good for business.

- experience working in a culturally diverse or global environment

They're used to working in a diverse environment. Being able to harness the energy of a diverse team is an important skill set. They know how to deal with issues and people who have issues.

Few companies, just under a quarter of interview participants, cited a downside or risk to having veteran employees when asked. Companies mentioned concerns about veteran employees failing to perform well or leaving because they do not acclimate to the culture of the organization. Having the right culture for veterans to grow and develop in promotes successful performance and retention. Companies also expressed concern about hiring too many guardsmen or reservists who might be called up for service at the same time.

When asked directly about veteran risks or downsides, some companies volunteered that posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was not an issue for veteran employees, even though interviewers did not ask specifically about PTSD. Concerns about PTSD were not salient for most of our interviewees; they did not raise this issue. It is important to note that this finding contrasts with that of an earlier study of veteran employment, in which more than one-half of the companies interviewed reported concerns about negative

stereotypes of veterans and PTSD.¹ This may suggest that employers' initial concerns have been allayed by their experiences.

Which Veterans Are Hired?

Companies are hiring veterans from all services and ranks—officers, noncommissioned officers (NCOs), and enlisted personnel—dictated generally by their requirements for education, skills, and salary levels, much the same as with nonveteran hires. In our interviews with coalition companies, we did not find a bias toward or preference for a particular rank or level of military experience, beyond the different needs of the companies. Some companies hire predominantly entry-level personnel; others hire individuals at all levels of the organization. Of those that hire entry-level personnel, companies differ in whether they require a college degree or are seeking high school graduates. Often, the education required and the permissible salary range determine whether companies recruit primarily officers, NCOs, or enlisted personnel. For example, one company noted that, while it requires a college degree for employment, it has little room to negotiate salary. Thus, this company tends to recruit former NCOs who have college degrees but generally have lower salary demands than do former officers.

The interviewed companies represent a variety of industries, and their employees possess a wide range of skills. These companies described a variety of job-specific skills that veterans bring to the workplace from their military experience: information technology, engineering, logistics, human resources, financial management, and security. Companies also mentioned veterans' analytical abilities, their leadership and communication skills, their proven success in customer service, and the ease with which companies can send veterans into customer homes.

Regardless of their hiring focus, most companies noted that they are hiring veterans for the same mix of internal positions as they hire nonveterans, based largely upon their education. For example, a company may be seeking almost exclusively entry-level employees with college degrees, and this focus may limit the veteran candidates to former NCOs and officers, but the company hires veterans and civilians for the same types of positions. Likewise, another organization may have a range of education requirements, but the proportion of new veteran hires placed in entry- and midlevel positions appears similar to the mix of new civilian hires placed in such positions. Only a small number of companies typically hire veterans for a certain level of job and were equally likely to focus on recruiting veterans for entry-level, midlevel, or senior positions.

Companies described a variety of job-specific skills that veterans bring to the workplace from their military experience: information technology, engineering, logistics, human resources, financial management, and security.

Common Recruitment Practices

The companies interviewed reported a range of recruitment activities to attract, select, and hire veterans. Recruiting activities include veteran-specific job fairs, on-base recruiting or participating in Army Career and Alumni Program events, engaging in veteran-specific employment websites, revising the company website to attract veterans, specially training recruiters or using veterans to recruit, employee referrals, and general outreach to the veteran community. On average, the companies tend to engage actively in three to four of these recruitment activities.

By far the most common practice was participating in military-specific job fairs. All the interviewed companies participate in job fairs, such as those sponsored by the coalition, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, national non-profit organizations, and local organizations. Several organizations specifically mentioned the merit of participating in the Service Academy Career Conference, which includes only academy graduates who are seeking jobs. Although all the companies do participate in military-friendly job fairs, some noted that they receive the most productive hiring outcomes from job fairs that include advance preparation and coordination and often feature a virtual element:

We're active 45 days before the event. We say these 30 employers are going to be at Ft. Bragg on such and such a date, these are the job openings, these are where they are, if you're interested apply online, submit your resume. So the day of the event, the candidate walks into the hiring event, and he or she is given a road map saying these four to five employers have selected you for an interview today. In some cases the hiring manager may be 3,000 miles away. . . . The person is taken to a room, given a laptop or headset, and he or she interviews with the hiring manager. Greater than 50 percent of the people that have interviewed have gotten jobs either that day or within a 48-hour period.

Although companies still participate in them, job fairs that do not involve virtual technology or provide employers an opportunity to filter resumes in advance appear less useful to companies, either because the locations of the job fairs do not align with the locations of job openings or because the number of resulting hires is inconsistent with the investment required to travel and participate. Even so, at least one company noted a perceived pressure to participate in veteran hiring events:



[I]t's almost like we can't find a reasonable excuse not to go. At any point [we have] 4,000 jobs open in the country. If we go to a job fair, we end up having very general questions. It's like going to the shoe store when you know exactly what you want, and they tell you to sit down for six hours and try on every type of shoe. It's very frustrating for the recruiters and the veterans.

After job fairs, companies most frequently engage in on-base recruiting, veteran-specific job websites, and outreach—with about one-half of the companies participating in each of these activities. Companies that recruit transitioning service members on military installations explained that they often worked with existing Army or DoD programs, such as TAP, the Army Career and Alumni Program, and the Army Partnership for Youth Success.² These programs generally provide prospective employers with access to transitioning service members who are located near the prospective employment opportunities. Some of the military-specific job websites included military.com, gijobs.com, and the veteran page on careerbuilder.com. One company specifically mentioned using the recently launched the Veterans Employment Center (VEC) as a single source for virtually connecting veterans with employers.³ Three other companies cited using Hero2Hired (H2H. jobs), which has since transitioned its online capabilities to the VEC.

The companies that described some form of veteran-focused outreach were generally hosting veterans at their organization to discuss employment opportunities broadly, supporting philanthropic events for veterans, and participating in events hosted by local veteran nonprofits. While such activities might not be considered strictly recruiting activities, these activities were salient to the interviewees when we asked specifically about recruitment activities; perhaps even more important, these are all ways that companies can brand themselves as veteran-friendly organizations.

Roughly one-fourth of the companies interviewed mentioned each of another set of activities: tailoring the company's own website to attract veteran candidates, referrals from other veteran employees, and selecting recruiters who are veterans or training recruiters to understand more about veteran skills. Only larger companies mentioned revising their company's webpage to appeal to veterans, such as by adding veteran-friendly information to the website or creating a skill-conversion tool specific to the employment opportunities in that company. Some companies expressed the value of employee referrals, primarily from other veterans, in hiring more veterans. And finally, some companies expressed the importance of veteran-savvy recruiters and have either developed recruiter teams of veterans or have actively trained their recruiters to understand better how veterans' skills benefit their organization.

WHAT IS THE VETERANS EMPLOYMENT CENTER?

The VEC is an online tool that aims to connect transitioning service members, veterans, and their spouses with prospective civilian employers from both the public and private sectors. Launched on April 23, 2014, VEC includes a database of profiles and resumes of transitioning service members, veterans, and spouses seeking employment, as well as postings of job opportunities from civilian employers. Transitioning service members and veterans can search for job opportunities that match their skill sets and experience, and employers can access profiles of transitioning service members. The VEC is intended to serve as a one-stop shop for all veteran employment needs and also offers such resources as military skills translators and resume-building tools.

Metrics and Outcomes

While the original goal for the 100,000 Jobs Mission was to hire 100,000 veterans by 2020, coalition members have collectively surpassed that objective and set a new goal of 200,000. Within individual member organizations, however, the extent to which companies empirically evaluate their veteran employment effort and the metrics they use varies. When interviewees were asked to evaluate their own veteran recruitment efforts, they referred to such metrics as the number of veterans hired, the percentage of all hires that were veterans, outside recognition of a company or veteran employment program, the number of veterans that reach later-round interviews, the range of business levels to which veterans are hired, and the extent to which hiring has led a company to be branded as veteran-friendly. This range of metrics indicates the challenge of evaluating veteran recruitment programs and raises questions about what metrics are appropriate for evaluating success.

Within organizations, there is utility in knowing the percentage of hires and the absolute number of hires, but this type of metric is not a sufficient basis for evaluating the merit and effectiveness of veteran recruitment efforts. Other measures are needed and should consider the level of effort and investment the company has dedicated to veteran employment, outcomes in terms of hires and the steps beyond recruitment, and the long-term impact on the company. Some companies have set internal goals for the number of newly recruited veteran employees. However, it is not clear how the goals were derived and whether the goals are easy or challenging to accomplish. Companies that have committed to veteran employment and the coalition for such reasons as patriotism and social responsibility are likely less concerned about the return on investment of their veteran employment programs. As companies turn to focus on the business benefit of veteran employment, however, recruitment and other veteran employment metrics, as discussed later, will become increasingly important.

Challenges

Coalition members are committed to recruiting veterans, although the process is not without challenge. The types of challenges the companies interviewed cited most often include reaching veterans, skill translation, branding and name recognition, educating managers, education and experience requirements, and noise in the veteran employment space.

Reaching Veterans

Some companies observed that it is difficult for veterans to know where to go to connect with companies that have relevant jobs. Similarly, many companies

struggle to connect with veterans with the skill sets that match their employment demands:

I think one of the biggest challenges is [knowing] where to connect with veterans and where they're going to connect with employers.

VEC now offers a resource for employers and veterans to engage one another effectively. Companies also mentioned that they would like earlier access to transitioning service members. One company specifically talked about DoD's SkillBridge program as a mechanism to engage transitioning service members earlier in the process.⁴ SkillBridge allows service members who are six months from military service separation to participate in employment training or internships in the civilian workplace, at little or no cost to the service member. To date, nearly 1,000 service members have participated in this program:

[SkillBridge permits service members] to complete an internship while still on active duty. The program is in its infancy . . . , but we're looking at engaging the program. For example, our cyber security new hires have to undergo two months of training when they start; it'd be good if they could hit the ground running, having already been trained.

Skill Translation

Skill translation is still difficult for many recruiters. Many companies have their own military skill translator tool, and others are using third-party translators. But the degree of satisfaction with the skill translators varies, and companies generally recognize the importance of an informed recruiter. Furthermore, veterans do not always present themselves and their skills and abilities in the most effective way—they do not consistently portray themselves as customer-service experts and do not portray the level of their past responsibilities or the value of the equipment they managed, for example.

In some cases, companies urge their recruiters without military experience to understand the experience of individual candidates more deeply:

We encourage them to pick up the phone and call [the veteran] and say, "what did you do, what did you accomplish," and really get a better understanding so that we don't pass someone up because [the recruiter] does not understand what they did.

Skill translation is likely a big challenge for companies outside the coalition as well. The companies who participate in the 100,000 Jobs Mission have taken proactive measures to translate veteran skills into the skill sets desired for hire. However, the difficulties that these companies cite, despite their active focus, indicate that this likely remains a challenge to veteran employment in other companies.

Branding and Name Recognition

Just over one-third of companies have struggled to be recognized as veteran-friendly companies that would have jobs suited to veterans' skill sets. Companies that have only been in the coalition one to two years were more likely to note this challenge than companies that have been in the coalition longer, so members may benefit over time from their efforts to brand themselves as veteran-friendly:

[I]f you're a company that [service members] don't come in contact with in the service, [the challenge is] getting known. You absolutely have to get recognized in that community. There's only so much you can do if you're not an attractive opportunity for them. That's the number one.

Veterans tend to target companies that are either defense contractors or in some way related to the military already. So, often times, they're not aware that, if you were a systems engineer in the military, you can do that for any company; it doesn't have to be a [large defense contractor]. They may not be aware that careers in finance are open to them. One of the challenges is getting veterans more exposure to various companies and careers that are open to them vice what they typically target as their next career with those brand name companies.

Educating Managers

Over one-half of interviewed companies experienced challenges educating managers on the value of veteran employees and described barriers this presented for hiring veterans. While veteran program recruiters are often veterans themselves or have received training in veteran recruitment and recognize a talented veteran applicant with relevant skill sets, the next stage of review for this applicant may be with a manager who is not aware of what veteran employees bring to the table or how their skills are relevant to the company:

It's not the recruiters. Although we have a commitment to hire [veterans] from our very top executive leadership, and many recruiters are very passionate about it, there are thousands of midlevel managers at [company], who are responsible for filling positions on time. And because of the civilian-military culture gap, they're not necessarily looking for a veteran, and they may not understand. Even though we have training and try to dispel myths and misconceptions, sometimes it's like, "oh wow, I don't know how this guy fits into our team. This civilian has done this job for three years in another company and the service member hasn't. Tell me why should I hire him?" That's where we get stuck sometimes.

Education or Experience Requirements

Roughly one-third of the companies interviewed have education or experience requirements for positions in their company that make it difficult to hire a veteran. Some companies require narrow technical skill sets and cannot hire broadly from the veteran talent pool:

In the military there's areas of highest unemployment like 11B, which is infantry. Those don't match at all with the job openings we have. Lower-level positions like that are offshored somewhere or we use contractors. . . . We just don't have those kinds of jobs here. We have the IT-related jobs here, and there are a lot of IT in the military, but that's still a small piece of the pie, and the IT people leaving the military, for this group unemployment is low, whereas you look at combat arms, that is where the unemployment is. That's where the supply is, and I don't have any demand for that.

In addition, companies sometimes have degree requirements that do not match up well with veteran applicant supply. For example, more than one company said that they generally hire new college graduates for entry-level positions. Many veterans with college degrees will not want to take an entry-level position with a lower salary, and veterans without degrees will not meet the requirements for the position:

Ninety-nine percent of the roles we hire for are entry level. Many are hourly roles. But for the management



training program, we do require a bachelor's degree. So sometimes the challenge is veterans not having the degree. Not that NCOs don't have them, but officers, they either have more experience and they are not going to take an entry-level job and compensation. We don't negotiate compensation, and that's a challenge for us.

Noise in the Veteran Employment Space

A small number of companies expressed challenges connecting with veterans because of the multitude of organizations related to veteran employment. These companies feel lost in this vast array of activity. It is also difficult for veterans to distinguish between organizations that have genuine opportunities and those that are out to make a profit from the public enthusiasm for supporting veterans:

It's really just a lot of noise in the veterans' employment landscape, with so many different job boards and veteran employment sites that it's confusing for the employer and the veteran.

There are so many companies trying to do the same thing. So, right now, it's trendy to hire veterans. It's a good thing, but there are a lot of small companies saying I can source all these veterans for you, or I can work as an agency almost, and they are all lobbying for your money and time and I think the marketing is almost getting saturated in that space, which is a disservice to the candidate.

CHAPTER THREE

Managing and Retaining Veteran Employees

Interviews with coalition companies revealed that, overall, veteran employment efforts focus primarily on recruitment, with less effort committed to managing or retaining veteran employees. Many companies explained that, while they do not have management programs specifically for veteran employees, veterans have access to company management or career development programs available to all employees. Within some companies, this strategy is intentional; they believe veterans should be treated or managed the same as nonveteran employees and should not have special programs. In some cases, they asserted that the absence of special programs reflects the veterans' preferences. For example,

What we've been hearing from a lot of veterans is that they want to be just like everyone else and figure things out on their own. They want to be mainstream, so we've taken that approach.

They [veteran employees] don't want to be treated differently. They don't want people to think they need a special onboarding program and that they can't do it on their own. So it's a double-edged sword, and I know a lot of companies that have formalized mentorship programs or battle buddies, but at the end of the day, they have to perform like anyone else.

Existing Management Practices

Many companies identified programs or practices to manage and develop veteran employees, although these are not as robust as veteran efforts focused on recruiting. The two most frequently cited were veteran employee resource

Veteran employment efforts focus primarily on recruitment, with less effort committed to managing or retaining veteran employees.

groups (ERGs), also referred to as affinity groups,¹ and mentoring programs specific to veteran employees.

ERGs are generally employee-run groups in which employees (typically with shared characteristics or experiences) voluntarily form an informal network within an organization. Roughly three-quarters of the companies interviewed noted that they have a veteran ERG. Eight companies considered the veteran ERG the core of the formal veteran program. For these companies, personnel facilitating veteran employment initiatives have volunteered to be part of the veteran ERG and take on this work in addition to their regular full-time jobs, which are not related to veteran issues and often not even related to recruitment or human resources.

Company ERGs vary in size, level of formality, and goals. Many ERGs are informal organizations that offer a forum for veteran employees to connect voluntarily and support one another. Some company ERGs are more established, with formal missions and goals. Several companies explained that their veteran ERGs are open to both veteran and nonveteran employees, and many reported having philanthropic efforts to support veterans and families in the local community. Examples of these types of efforts include supporting the USO, providing skill workshops to help homeless veterans, and supporting families of deployed service members in the community. In some cases, a senior leader in the company sponsors, or is otherwise involved in, the ERG veteran program.

More than one-half of the companies interviewed also use veteran mentors as a tool to manage or develop veteran employees. Many of the mentoring programs are formal, although some companies also noted informal mentoring efforts. In some companies, the veteran ERG coordinates mentoring efforts, with ERG members partnering with new veteran employees as mentors. In other companies, veterans receive mentoring from larger mentoring programs that are available to all employees; however, efforts are made to match veteran employees with veteran new hires.

Beyond ERGs and mentoring, a few companies mentioned onboarding or orientation programs that are typically open to all employees, but veteran-specific programs were sometimes available. Three companies also mentioned training or educational programs that are specifically geared toward acclimating veteran employees. These programs are generally online resources intended to help veterans as they transition to their new civilian positions and help them learn to navigate the organization's corporate culture.

Veteran Performance

When asked how veteran employees tend to perform, or how well they meet job expectations compared to nonveteran employees at their companies, two-

thirds of the interviewees ventured a response, but only two were able to cite actual data as the basis of their assessment. Both of these companies reported that veterans perform better than their nonveteran employee counterparts and based this assessment on performance reviews (conducted by both managers and peers) and the percentage of veteran employees being promoted. These two companies noted,

We did a study on performance rating, and it was about 0.5 point higher [for veterans].

*Last year there was a [management] survey. . . .
When there was a veteran on the team, that veteran rated higher, especially out of a group.*

The remaining companies that provided assessments of veteran performance based them on perceptions, informal feedback, or other anecdotal data, rather than on an established measure. Of these companies, only two believed there was little or no difference between the performance of veterans and nonveterans. The others perceived veteran performance to exceed that of nonveteran employees:

In general, veterans perform better with stress and ambiguity. These are key parts of the dynamic in a company such as ours.

They [veteran employees] tend to perform very well, especially the early career veterans—those folks that may go into a junior level role—they were four years active duty, went to college and switched fields. They have more discipline than a recent college grad. . . . Part of it is maturity, but part of it is that military experience. Generally speaking they tend to be more successful [than nonveteran employees].

Veteran Retention

Two-thirds of the interviewees provided some assessment of veteran employee retention relative to that of nonveteran employees. Of these, one-half referred to an empirical retention measure, and one-half based their assessments on perceptions or other anecdotal evidence. For the nine companies that based this assessment on data, the outcomes were divided. Four companies saw little or no difference between veteran and nonveteran retention. Four companies reported higher retention, and one company reported lower retention for veterans. Of the companies that provided assessments of veteran retention based solely on perceptions or other anecdotal evidence,

seven saw little or no difference between veteran and nonveteran retention, and two reported higher retention of veteran employees. Companies that have been members of the coalition longer were slightly more likely to offer assessments of veteran retention, either anecdotally or formally.

Many companies indicated that they are planning efforts to track veteran retention or hope to track veteran retention in the future, although current data collection efforts remain focused on recruitment-related data. Some companies described new efforts to collect retention data and anticipate being able to provide better assessments once more data are available. While other companies are struggling with how to capture retention data, a few pointed out a disconnect between veteran employment efforts and human resources personnel data, meaning that the individuals leading veteran programs did not have access to company retention data.

Consistent with management practices for veterans overall, companies reported only a few programs or practices for retaining veteran employees. Most companies do not have retention programs that are specifically geared toward veteran employees. However, in addition to participation in veteran ERGs and engagement through mentoring programs, some companies cited the following practices as supporting veteran employee retention:

- company communication and veteran appreciation events to promote a welcoming environment to veterans

We try to take our internal [veteran] employees and have them network with the leadership. We have a really nice breakfast and lunch on Veteran's Day with our top leadership, and we want to do that outside of Veteran's Day as well. Giving [leadership] an opportunity for us to say thank you for your service and having [veteran employees] network with our leadership chain.

- onboarding to support veterans as they acclimate to the company environment

We believe that if a person's onboarding experience is successful, he is more likely to have a smooth transition to [company] and have a higher retention rate.

A few companies said that they would like to conduct exit interviews, or if they already conduct them, would like to link results to veteran status to understand better why some veterans might be leaving. In addition, a small number of companies use employee surveys to gauge employee satisfaction and examine data by veteran status. One company stated,



We have an annual employee opinion survey, and we do a specific sort of that for our veterans' population, and what it tells us is [that], among veterans, they're more engaged, their retention is higher, and their turnover is lower. So we feel very positive about that.

Challenges

The challenges to managing veterans centered on a few key areas.

Corporate Environment

Veterans are accustomed to the military environment, in which the hierarchy and chain of command are clearly understood and in which most soldiers understand the skills and job opportunities required to succeed. Some interviewees felt that veteran employees have some difficulty operating in companies with less-hierarchical structures (e.g., matrix organizations) or within companies that lack a clearly defined career path:

You have some corporations that are modeled after the military, but you know [at our company], it's pretty free-wheeling, and I would say that would be a challenge to make sure that person, the veteran coming out of the service, doesn't fall through the cracks.

Self-Identification

Some interviewees were unsure of the total number of veteran employees in their organizations. In some instances, this was because the company depends on long-standing employees to self-identify as veterans, especially if they served many years before they joined the company. In other instances, the managers were aware that a new employee was a veteran, but the company did not consistently retain that information and track that characteristic, especially for the veterans hired before the company joined the coalition:

Self-identification is voluntary. As a result, we don't have accurate estimates. We keep track of the ones we hire that have identified, but we don't know the total number of veterans here.

Reduced Responsibility

Some veterans have difficulty adjusting to an environment with less day-to-day urgency, fewer responsibilities, and less authority than they experienced

during their military service. Mentioned examples included adapting to the role of a federal contractor supporting government personnel rather than making government decisions, as well as issues with having to work their way up in a new organization:

Transitioning can be a dramatic thing. I went from managing groups of 100 people. I had the keys to launch missiles defending a ship in a war zone. I was 26 years old when I had that responsibility, and all of a sudden, I'm going to a meeting and someone is asking me to take notes . . . I said "these are going to be the best notes you ever saw." Not everyone can adapt that way, and it can be hard. We try to help those folks out. We don't want to lose them. We're paying them well, but still, it can feel like a step back.

We recognize the difficulty that companies may have measuring performance, although such measures could provide the most compelling basis to continue investing resources in hiring veterans.

Lack of Performance Metrics

Companies generally do not collect or analyze veterans' performance data because they have difficulty correlating performance data with veteran identity and do not have established metrics. With few exceptions, we did not see companies using either direct performance measures, such as production or sales numbers, or indirect performance measures, such as time to promotion or advancement. We recognize the difficulty that companies may have measuring performance, although such measures could provide the most compelling basis to continue investing resources in hiring veterans:

[Performance assessment is] more anecdotal. We don't have a workforce strategy report that shows, if you're a veteran, what is your annual performance score versus others. We don't have that.

When you try to get into that kind of comparison, when you start talking about individual performance . . . , it's very hard to get access to that kind of data. We've been trying to get at it as we build our case for other ways to measure that [veteran performance]. It is very hard . . . We don't have access to that kind of data.

Lack of Retention Metrics

Retention metrics are easier to implement and track than are performance metrics. If veterans stay longer with the company than do other employees

with similar characteristics (e.g., education, years of experience, salary level), such data could help justify the resources spent on veteran employment. Understanding why employees leave a company could suggest actions that could help reduce attrition for all employees, but companies mentioned challenges to collecting such measurements:

*I'm not the person at HR that does all the tracking.
It's possible someone does [track employee retention],
but they don't share a lot.*

When we do our exit interviews, we aren't segregating or flagging if they're veterans or not. So we're not hearing that feedback.



CHAPTER FOUR

A Growing Coalition: Future Direction

The founding members designed the 100,000 Jobs Mission to address the challenges that recent veterans face when trying to attain civilian employment. The founding companies wanted to improve veterans' chances of employment in the private sector. To do this, they needed to address challenges both among potential employers and employees. For example, managers and recruiters in the civilian workforce were often not familiar with the contributions veterans could make, and veterans had difficulties articulating their experiences in ways that were relevant to job opportunities in the civilian world.

While each of the founders was independently committed to addressing veteran employment issues, they also felt there was inherent benefit to forming a coalition. Besides providing an opportunity to share best practices, founding members felt that the coalition could also have a larger public voice to address veterans' issues and have a truly significant impact on veteran employment. As members of a coalition, companies could have a stronger platform from which to raise relevant issues to the government. They could more successfully reach veterans and transitioning service members and be identified as veteran-friendly companies, actively seeking veteran employees. As one founding company representative said,

We all realized that, with one-and-a-half-million veterans coming back from Afghanistan and Iraq over the next few years, through the power of a coalition, we could firm up our processes so more of those veterans could get hired.

While each of the founders was independently committed to addressing veteran employment issues, they also felt there was inherent benefit to forming a coalition.

Benefits of Membership

Companies that subsequently joined the coalition provided four general reasons for joining: cohesion with existing veteran hiring efforts, collaboration opportunities, the reputation and integrity of companies in the coalition, and branding. Many of the companies we interviewed already had some ongoing effort focused on hiring veterans or had actively contemplated increasing their veteran employment efforts. They shared with founding members a commitment to help veterans and recognition of the win-win nature of having a collective impact on the societal issue while gaining valuable employees:

We [had] been searching. We wanted to get involved with other companies. We were calling other . . . companies [in the same industry], and no one was really doing anything. I saw something come across my desk one day. It was the 100,000 Jobs Mission.

Coalition members recognize that this type of collaboration is a rare practice among competing companies.

For companies trying to understand how to improve veteran employment, the coalition provides an opportunity to collaborate. Interviewees who were working on veteran employment prior to affiliating with the coalition knew few counterparts in other companies with whom they could discuss veteran employment challenges. The coalition offers an opportunity to learn from companies that are further along and more accomplished in addressing veteran employment challenges. The coalition provides a space for sharing best practices, be it the latest in human resource practices; website development; ideas on shared challenges; or innovative strategies, such as including veterans' families and spouses in veteran initiatives.

The coalition also offers a forum where companies addressing internal veteran employment issues can network and form connections within their industry, which has been a benefit for many companies. The type of challenges that companies face when hiring, retaining, and managing veteran employees can vary based on the demands and skill sets required for a particular industry. Member companies have benefitted from the relationships they have formed with similar companies that are responsive and eager to help address challenges in the veteran employment arena.

Interviewees cited participation in the Veteran Talent Exchange as another benefit of joining the coalition. The Veteran Talent Exchange is a web-based tool that allows members of the 100,000 Jobs Mission to share veteran talent with other members of the coalition.¹ If a recruiter interviews a veteran who may not be a good fit for his or her company, the recruiter can refer the veteran to others in the coalition and help the veteran find a job better suited to his or her skills and experience. Coalition members recognize that this type of collaboration is a rare practice among competing companies.

One thing interesting for me is that recruiting is a very competitive function. . . . It is very, very competitive. Yet in this space, we collaborate. In this space, we collaborate and share.

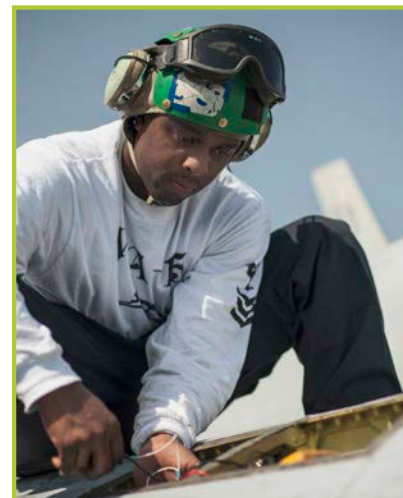
Coalition membership offers access to other resources as well. For example, interviewees discussed meetings hosted by the coalition with the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University that offered access to veteran employment tools and provided a forum for discussing strategies to address veteran employment challenges.² Some companies have used the Military 101 course that JPMorgan Chase & Co. created as a resource to train civilian recruiters, managers, and others company employees less familiar with military culture.³ Hiring events sponsored by the coalition have been a source of veteran recruitment. Interviewees also mentioned that webinars and in-person interactions during the regularly scheduled coalition meetings have been a tremendous knowledge resource.

The 100,000 Jobs Mission also provided some clarity to companies that were struggling to identify the organizations acting effectively and efficaciously on behalf of veterans among the more than 40,000 nonprofits proclaiming missions to support veterans.⁴ The 100,000 Jobs Mission had, and still retains, a reputation for integrity. As a result, joining the coalition is an opportunity both to align with legitimate counterparts and to improve a company's brand within a population of potential employees the company wanted to reach. Joining the coalition helps raise awareness of member companies in the veteran community as organizations that are serious about hiring veterans, and many interviewees felt that it was good for recruitment.

The 100,000 Jobs Mission has built greater awareness among its member companies of the benefits of hiring veterans and successful approaches to integrating veterans into the private-sector workforce. Individual companies are more cognizant of the role that each company can play in tackling a major societal issue. Recruiters and managers appear to have learned more about veteran employment since joining the coalition. The opportunity to learn from organizations more experienced in this field, to share best practices, be part of something bigger, and be able to collaborate with other companies, even competitors, was an alluring opportunity to companies deciding to join the coalition.

Future Direction

The rapid growth in the coalition's membership and the ability of member companies to so quickly meet and exceed the initial goal of hiring 100,000 veterans are evidence of the success of the 100,000 Jobs Mission. The coalition has evolved from a small group of founding companies into an energized



collective of over 175 companies representing a broad range of American industry, all committed to hiring veterans. This growth has benefits beyond simply increasing the number of veterans hired. The coalition now has a larger identity and a more prominent presence that is recognizable to veterans, to government, and to other private-sector companies. The larger number of coalition members also enables more similar companies to share best practices and permits companies from the same industry to share the resumes of individual veterans, further increasing employment opportunities.

However, the growth of the coalition also has consequences and thus presents opportunities for improvement. Coalition interactions were more personal and direct among the founding 11 companies, which shared a more-common identity. Our interviews revealed that some member companies feel that the coalition has grown too large for the personal collaboration that characterized the initial years. Interviews also indicated that experienced members can be frustrated by coalition meeting discussions that reiterate lessons and guidance provided during prior meetings and that meeting discussions sometimes appear to gravitate toward addressing the challenges of the least experienced members.

Today's members also represent a range of industries; experience different pressures and challenges when seeking veteran employees; and, perhaps most notably, have a considerable range of experience and accomplishments in veteran employment. The large and diverse membership of the coalition provides an opportunity to tailor some engagements by industry or by other member characteristics.

As the coalition membership continues to grow, it may become time to establish a collective process for setting longer-term goals and objectives and managing further growth in coalition membership. As the 100,000 Jobs Mission looks to the future, setting a more-strategic direction for the organization should be among its top priorities. The next chapter offers recommendations for achieving these goals.

CHAPTER FIVE

Recommendations

The 100,000 Jobs Mission has actively promoted veteran employment. The successes and challenges of member companies provide valuable insights for other proponents of veteran employment, including the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Labor, employers, and individual veterans. These experiences provide the basis for recommendations to address the identified challenges and promote effective veteran employment practices. We offer recommendations for companies, for federal agencies, and for the 100,000 Jobs Mission.

For Companies

The coalition's accomplishments reflect the success of the veteran recruitment efforts of its member companies. To build on this success, we recommend several actions that could further improve companies' veteran employment programs. While directed toward coalition members, these recommendations have applicability to any company interested in employing more veterans:

- **Continue to educate managers on the value of veteran employees.** Not only do recruiters need to understand the value of veteran employees, it is important for managers throughout a company to recognize that veterans can be a beneficial addition to the workforce. The challenge often lies in the ability of veteran program representatives to communicate the business case for hiring veteran employees. Even for companies that have made progress in this area, turnover among managers indicates a continuing need for this type of education.
- **Allocate recruitment resources more strategically.** Although coalition companies support military-specific job fairs, and all companies interviewed participate in these events, many companies indicated the

lack of return on investment from many job fairs. Coalition companies should evaluate their current recruitment activities and direct their resources toward the activities that show the greatest results. When selecting job fairs, coalition companies should participate in those that have the highest benefits, particularly those that offer advance screening and engage with veterans beforehand to set up appointments or virtual interviews with hiring managers back at the company's offices.

- **Consider participating in federal resources, such as the VEC and SkillBridge.** Coalition companies should take advantage of newly developed federal resources that address many of the veteran employment challenges these companies experience. Companies should consider using the VEC to gain information about transitioning service members looking for employment and submit company profiles to connect with service members earlier in the transition process. Coalition companies should also explore participation in the SkillBridge program, where they can select and sponsor transitioning service members as interns or trainees.
- **Expand veteran employment efforts beyond recruitment.** The 100,000 Jobs Mission was founded on the goal of hiring more veterans. Coalition members' efforts thus far have emphasized recruitment and getting veterans in the door. However, most companies have not focused the same level of effort on supporting veteran employees once they have been hired. Now that coalition companies have successfully hired veterans, companies should expand veteran efforts to such areas as onboarding, career development, and retention.
- **Establish and track relevant recruitment, performance, and retention metrics.** Such metrics can indicate outcomes that support the business case for hiring veterans and shore up continued endorsement of the program. If veterans display high performance and retention, veteran program personnel can communicate this information to managers, illustrating the value of veteran employees. Additionally, veterans will be more likely to self-identify in company surveys and for company-sponsored programs, such as ERGs, if there are robust metrics that demonstrate the business case for hiring veterans. Tracking such metrics will also permit companies to revisit the effectiveness of their veteran-specific employee programs, when appropriate.

For Federal Agencies

We acknowledge the current DoD, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Veterans Affairs efforts to support veteran employment, but some



challenges persist. We have identified existing federal programs or practices that can be further leveraged or expanded to improve veteran employment opportunities:

- **DoD should continue to facilitate on-base access for private-sector recruiting events.** Interviewees said that on-base recruiting events were one of their most productive sources of veteran employees. We acknowledge that prioritizing individual companies for on-base access has some legal and ethical constraints and that hosting large private-sector events on installations presents logistical challenges. Nonetheless, the experience of coalition members suggests that acting within these constraints for such recruiting events is productive, especially combined with advance registration and prescreening.
- **DoD should encourage transitioning service members to register early in the VEC.** While service members can opt into this system at any point during their transition out of military service, DoD should encourage transitioning service members to register as early as possible to engage with potential civilian employers. DoD should also ensure that transitioning service members who are focused on education opportunities rather than employment are aware of VEC for future job searches.
- **DoD should consider expanding training and internship programs, such as SkillBridge.** DoD should evaluate SkillBridge and seek reasonable expansions to benefit transitioning service members. For example, the current restrictions of eligible employers based on proximity to the installation could be reconsidered.
- **DoD, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Veterans Affairs should continue to improve and evaluate TAP.** We heard from employers that transitioning service members struggle to translate military skills to market themselves successfully in the civilian job market, but it is unclear whether the companies were referring to graduates of the newly enhanced and expanded TAP. These agencies should also engage the private sector in TAP sessions, such that transitioning service members can benefit from the input and guidance of actual employers.

For the 100,000 Jobs Mission

The 100,000 Jobs Mission has surpassed the initial goals for hiring veterans and grown exponentially in size. Member companies interviewed value their

involvement in the coalition but also acknowledge that with growth has come a change in the overall character of the organization. The growth offers opportunities to focus activities and share best practices in new and different ways—or even to formalize activities of high value to the members that have, until now, been ad hoc. The time has come for the coalition to plan strategically and consider how best to focus its collective resources for continued success. Our recommendations are directed at achieving this aim:

- **Institute an advisory board of coalition members.** The advisors should represent different industries, company sizes, and amounts of veteran employment experience. The process to select such leaders should be transparent, and the board should strive to obtain, include, and reflect the perspectives of the other member companies. The board should advise on the future direction of the coalition, with structured input from member companies. Issues for the board’s consideration include future goals of the coalition and managing coalition membership.
- **Consider industry-based coalition subgroups.** Dividing coalition members by industry for some events will permit more-intimate and collaborative interactions and will acknowledge and facilitate the industry-focused lessons-learned and resume-sharing activities that coalition companies find valuable. These subgroups could meet off cycle from the regular coalition meetings, in place of one annual coalition meeting, or as part of a regularly scheduled coalition meeting.
- **Provide a formal orientation and guidance session for new members.** A new member orientation session would permit new members to focus on initial veteran employment challenges and could immediately precede the coalition meeting. Such a focused session would directly benefit new members and would also address their largest and most immediate challenges before the entire coalition gathers.
- **Consider providing veteran employment information and resources to nonmember companies.** By providing veteran employment guidelines and resources on the coalition website, albeit without sharing protected information, the coalition could increase its national contribution to veteran employment. Should the coalition institute a formal orientation for new members, a subset of those materials could be made publicly available without much additional investment or effort.

APPENDIX A

Participating Companies

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

AT&T Inc.	IBM Corporation
Amazon	JPMorgan Chase & Co.
Brinker International, Inc.	Johnson & Johnson
Charles Schwab & Co., Inc.	Kaiser Permanente ^a
Cisco Systems	Lockheed Martin Corporation
Comcast Corporation	ManTech International Corporation
Cushman & Wakefield	Navient ^b
Depository Trust & Clearing Corporation	Nielsen
Enterprise Holdings, Inc.	Orbis Inc.
Ernst & Young LLP	Sanofi US
Exelon Corporation	UPMC
Expert Global Solutions, Inc	UnitedHealth Group
Hewlett-Packard	Verizon

NOTE: While 26 companies participated in complete interviews, RAND also reached out to coalition founding companies that were not included in this group to solicit additional input on the background of the founding of the coalition. Universal Health Services responded to this request.

^a The interview participant from Kaiser Permanente represented only the Northwest region of the company; thus, company characteristics are for Kaiser Permanente Northwest only, rather than the larger company.

^b Formerly Sallie Mae, Inc.

Study Methodology

This section describes RAND’s approach to selecting a sample of 100,000 Jobs Mission coalition companies and individuals within those companies, collecting data through semistructured interviews, and coding and analyzing the data.

Selecting the Sample

We recruited representatives from 100,000 Jobs Mission companies for semistructured interviews. Our goal was to select a diverse cross section of coalition companies and thus obtain a range of perspectives on veteran employment issues and practices. Companies were purposively chosen based on four characteristics: number of employees, industry classification, length of time in the coalition, and approximate level of involvement in the coalition. We created a sample with a range of company sizes, as measured by the number of employees, that reflected the industry distribution of all coalition companies (based on the North American Industry Classification System). Our sample included both newer and long-term or founding companies; however, we omitted companies with less than one year of coalition membership because of their limited experience. Finally, we sought to include several companies that were highly active in the 100,000 Jobs Mission, as well as some companies that maintained average or less-engaged involvement. We estimated level of involvement with the coalition through input from the project sponsor, which provided contact information for each company’s coalition point of contact.

RAND researchers contacted 50 member companies to request interviews. Potential interviewees held positions responsible for veteran employment programs or initiatives within their companies. Many served as directors of departments, such as human resources or talent acquisition, or as managers within these departments. The research team contacted these individuals via email and/or telephone using a standardized recruiting script. When a poten-

tial interviewee did not respond to the initial contact, RAND made three additional contact attempts over several weeks' time to request an interview. When a company did not respond or declined to participate in an interview, we replaced the company in our sample with another, similar company, based on the characteristics described above.

Of the 50 companies contacted for an interview, 13 did not respond, and 11 declined to participate. Twenty-six individuals, each representing a different coalition company, participated in interviews (see Appendix A).

Collecting the Data

RAND researchers conducted 26 confidential semistructured interviews between June and August 2014. Interviews lasted between 30 and 75 minutes and averaged approximately one hour. The interviews included both closed- and open-ended questions. These questions centered on five key themes: the company's veteran employment program or initiatives; strategies for attracting and recruiting veteran employees; strategies for managing, retaining, ensuring, and measuring the performance of veteran employees; coalition membership; and desired changes to external practices, programs, or policies to support veteran employment. The full interview guide appears in Appendix C. We also requested company information prior to interviews, including the number of employees and data on veteran hires and retention. When interviewing a founding member of the 100,000 Jobs Mission, the project team asked additional questions about the coalition's inception. One founding company provided additional information via email.

Coding and Analyzing the Data

The research team uploaded the detailed interview notes into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software program. In NVivo, the RAND team coded interview responses according to key themes and analyzed data according to company characteristics. From this analysis, RAND researchers identified themes of responses and assessed whether companies with certain characteristics were more likely to offer one response over another. Study findings and recommendations emerged from this analysis.

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol

Advance Questions (sent by email)

- A1. Is the headquarters for [COMPANY] located in [LOCATION]?
- A2. Is the primary North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) industry code for [COMPANY] [NAICS code]?
- A3. Is it correct that [COMPANY] currently has [NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES]?
- A4. How many veterans does [COMPANY] currently employ?
 - A4a. Of those, how many currently serve in the Guard and Reserve?
- A5. We understand that [COMPANY] joined the 100,000 Jobs Mission coalition in [DATE JOINED COALITION]. Is this correct?
- A6. If [COMPANY] has a formal veterans program, when was the veterans' program started?
- A7. Does the program have an official mission statement? If so, please share this with us.
- A8. How many employees did [COMPANY] hire overall in the last 2 years?
- A9. How many veterans did [COMPANY] hire overall in the last 2 years?
- A10. Please provide the number of employee losses for the past 2 years.
- A11. Please provide the number of veteran employee losses for the past 2 years.

Interview Questions

Veterans Program

VP1. What is your job title?

VP2. Are you responsible for veteran employment at [COMPANY]?

VP2a. If not, what is the position or job title of the person who is? Do you report directly to this position?

VP3. Who do you [or the position mentioned above, if interviewee is not responsible for veteran employment] report to in [COMPANY] leadership structure?

VP3a. What department oversees veteran employment? [Or if mentioned above, confirm—example: So the veterans program is part of HR?]

VP4. Does [COMPANY] have a formal veterans program?

VP4a. If so, what does the program do? What are its goals?

VP5. How many staff support the veterans program [or veteran employment if no formal program]?

VP5a. Do these personnel work full time on veterans' issues?

Attracting and Recruiting

AR1. How do you target veterans for hire? What practices does [COMPANY] use to attract and recruit veterans?

AR2. How successful have [COMPANY] recruitment practices been?

AR2a. How do you know that? How does [COMPANY] measure success?

AR3. What types of skills sets does [COMPANY] generally recruit for? Does the company look for the same skill set when recruiting veterans? If the skill set differs for veterans, how does it differ?

AR3a. What types of positions does [COMPANY] generally recruit for? If the types of positions differ for veterans, how do they differ?

AR4. How does your company translate military background and experience into terms relevant to your company's needs—how do you know which skill sets to recruit?

AR5. What level of education do [COMPANY] new hires typically have? Does this differ for new hires who are veterans? If so, how?

AR5a. Do [COMPANY] new hires who are veterans tend to be former enlisted or former officers? Can you estimate the breakdown of former officers versus former enlisted?

AR6. Compared to overall hires, do veterans tend to be recruited for positions at certain levels of the company? For example, are veterans hired more into management/senior level positions or into entry level/junior positions?

AR7. What challenges has [COMPANY] faced in attracting and recruiting veterans?

AR7a. What could be done to address these challenges?

Managing, Retaining, and Performance

MRP1. What practices or programs does [COMPANY] use to manage and develop its veteran employees?

MRP1a. Are these programs only available to veteran employees?

MRP2. How successful have these practices or programs been?

MRP2a. How do you know that? How does [COMPANY] measure success?

MRP3. How do veteran employees tend to perform at [COMPANY] compared to nonveteran employees?

MRP3a. How do you know that? How is performance measured at [COMPANY]?

MRP4. Are veteran employees retained at the same rates as nonveteran employees?

MRP4a. How do you know that? How does [COMPANY] measure retention?

MRP5. What practices or programs does [COMPANY] use to retain its veteran employees?

MRP5a. Are these programs only available to veteran employees?

MRP6. How successful have these practices or programs been?

MRP6a. How do you know that? How does [COMPANY] measure this success?

MRP7. What challenges has [COMPANY] faced in managing and retaining veteran employees including addressing any veteran employee performance issues?

MRP7a. What could be done to address these challenges?

Coalition Membership

CM1. Why did [COMPANY] decide to join the 100,000 Jobs Mission coalition?

CM2. Are the recruiting, management, and retention practices we have discussed new? If so, are they a result of joining the coalition? [Adjust question as needed based on information provided earlier in the interview. It may already be clear that practices have changed since joining the coalition.]

CM3. How has it benefitted [COMPANY] to join the coalition?

CM4. How could the coalition be improved to benefit [COMPANY] more?

CM5. Why do you think some companies choose not to join the coalition?

CM6. Overall, what is the value to [COMPANY] of hiring veterans?

CM6a. What qualities make veterans good employees?

CM7. Are there any downsides or risks to having veterans as employees?

CM8. Do veteran employees have unique needs you must address? Please describe.

Changes to External Practices, Programs, or Policies

C1. In addition to the things we've discussed, what would you like to see changed to address veteran employment challenges and improve veteran employment opportunities?

C1a. What internal corporate practices would you modify?

C1b. What laws or policies would you modify?

C1c. How can the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs and other government programs most effectively support employer efforts regarding veteran employment?

C2. Is there anything that I should have asked that I did not, or any additional thoughts you'd like to offer?

Notes

Chapter One

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table 1. Employment status of persons 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 2013 annual averages, March 24, 2014. As of September 19, 2014: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/vet.t01.htm>

² Margaret C. Harrell and Nancy Berglass, *Employing America's Veterans: Perspectives from Businesses*, Washington, D.C.: Center for a New American Security, June 2012. As of September 12, 2014: http://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/employing-america-s-veterans-perspectives-from-businesses#.VBM_B_ldV8E

³ 100,000 Jobs Mission, “About the Mission,” webpage, 2014. As of September 10, 2014: <https://www.veteranjobsmission.com/about-the-mission>

⁴ 100,000 Jobs Mission, “How to Join the Coalition,” webpage, 2014. As of September 10, 2014: <https://www.veteranjobsmission.com/employer-how-to-join>

⁵ The White House, “Strengthening Our Military Families: Meeting America’s Commitment,” January 2011. As of September 22, 2014: http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2011/0111_initiative/strengthening_our_military_january_2011.pdf

⁶ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, “President Obama’s Commitment to Employing America’s Veterans,” fact sheet, August 5, 2011. As of September 11, 2014: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/05/fact-sheet-president-obama-s-commitment-employing-america-s-veterans>

⁷ Appendix A lists the member companies interviewed.

⁸ Appendix B describes the study methodology, and Appendix C contains the interview protocol.

⁹ The research team asked interviewees whether their company had a formal veteran program. We categorized companies based on the responses. For the purposes of this report, formal veteran programs are considered those with established leadership, clear mission and goals, and a structure to support sustainment.

Chapter Two

¹ Harrell and Berglass, 2012, pp. 22 and 24.

² TAP is the result of a partnership between DoD, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Labor. See “Army Career and Alumni Program: The Army’s Official Transition,” web page, 2014. As of September 10, 2014:

<https://www.acap.army.mil/program.aspx>

For the Partnership for Youth Success program, see U.S. Army, “Benefits: U.S. Army Partnership for Youth Success,” web page. As of September 10, 2014: <http://www.goarmy.com/benefits/additional-incentives/partnership-for-youth-success.html>

³ Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense, “Veteran Employment Center for Job Seekers,” webpage, undated. As of September 22, 2014:

<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs>

⁴ SkillBridge, “About DoD SkillBridge,” webpage, undated. As of September 12, 2014:

<http://www.dodskillbridge.com/>

Chapter Three

¹ This report will refer to these groups as “ERGs,” although we recognize that many of the companies use different names for these types of groups.

Chapter Four

¹ Carrie Bay, “JPMorgan-Led Effort to Employ Military Veterans Nears Goal,” *DSNews*, November 5, 2013. As of September 12, 2014:

<http://dsnews.com/news/government/11-05-2013/jpmorgan-led-effort-to-employ-military-veterans-nears-goal-2013-11-05>

² JPMorgan Chase & Co. partnered with Syracuse University to found the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, the first institute of its kind in higher education. Its mission is to “fully leverage the intellectual, human and social capital of higher education, in service to America’s veterans and their families.” Syracuse University Institute for Veterans and Military Families, website, undated. As of September 12, 2014:

<http://vets.syr.edu/>

³ Military 101 is a training course designed to educate employers on the structure and culture of the U.S. military.

⁴ Nancy Berglass and Margaret C. Harrell, *Well After Service: Veteran Reintegration and American Communities*, Washington, D.C.: Center for a New American Security, April 2012. As of September 12, 2014:
http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_WellAfterService_BerglassHarrell.pdf

About This Report

In 2011, JPMorgan Chase & Co. spearheaded the establishment of the 100,000 Jobs Mission with ten cofounding companies to increase veteran employment opportunities in the civilian job market. This report aims to learn from the experiences of this coalition, highlighting successes and challenges in recruiting, hiring, managing, and retaining veteran employees, and to leverage coalition members' perspectives into recommendations to support veteran employment. These recommendations are intended to guide future efforts of the coalition and its members and to improve veteran employment efforts more broadly, beyond the coalition. This research was sponsored by JPMorgan Chase & Co. and conducted within RAND Labor and Population.

The authors are grateful to the 100,000 Jobs Mission member companies for their candid participation in the interviews, which were the basis of this research. We thank Molly Bolli of JPMorgan Chase & Co. for her assistance facilitating our access to coalition members. We also thank LTC Christopher Paone and LTC Paula Smith from the U.S. Army Soldier for Life office for providing feedback on our study recommendations. Finally, we appreciate the comprehensive review and suggested improvements from our RAND peer reviewers.

Eleven companies cofounded the 100,000 Jobs Mission in 2011 to promote veteran employment, with a goal of hiring 100,000 veterans by 2020. The coalition has grown to over 175 companies, which have exceeded the initial goal and are now on track to hire 200,000 veterans by the end of 2014. These companies represent nearly every U.S. industry and vary in size, geographic location, and in the types of veterans they hire. Reflecting on the first three years of operation, JPMorgan Chase & Co. asked the RAND Corporation to capture the lessons and experiences from the 100,000 Jobs Mission to identify further improvements to veteran employment opportunities. RAND researchers conducted qualitative interviews with representatives of a sample of member companies, delving into the ways they recruit and hire veterans, help veterans transition into their new jobs, and manage and develop veteran employees and the value veterans bring as employees. Interviewees pointed out that veterans are most noted for their leadership skills and teamwork; for their flexibility and ability to work in a fast-paced, changing environment without undue stress; for their dependability, integrity, and loyalty; and for their experience working in a culturally diverse or global environment. This research also explored the challenges to hiring and employing veterans and provides recommendations to assist employers and promote veteran employment opportunities more broadly.



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