



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



“ This landmark legislation takes a huge step forward in rethinking the way we treat our men and women in uniform after they leave the military by helping them to translate the skills they learned in their service into careers and by giving employers even more incentive to hire Veterans. ”

– Senator Patty Murray, Chairman,
Senate Committee on
Veterans’ Affairs



Finding a good job in a tough economy is challenging for everyone, but it can be even more difficult for Veterans because employers may not realize how military skills translate to civilian jobs. The VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 aims to help create employment opportunities for Veterans by expanding existing programs and encouraging greater collaboration among the Departments of Labor (DOL), Defense (DoD), and Veterans Affairs (VA).

VocRehab and the VOW to Hire Heroes

New Law. New Skills. New Opportunities.



VOCREHAB: PUTTING AMERICA'S HEROES BACK TO WORK

At VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VocRehab) program, we know how important it is for Veterans to have the job skills and education they need to be competitive in the job market. Our goal is to assist Veterans in exploring the career and educational options available to them through counseling and support services such as Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment and Vocational Educational Counseling. VocRehab is a key partner in implementing many of the provisions of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, including:

Translating military skills to civilian jobs

Members of the armed forces gain valuable skills and experience while in service to our nation. The DOL, in partnership with DoD and VA, will conduct a study within a year to better quantify and explain the relationships between military occupational specialties and other military experiences, and civilian job qualifications. Using the findings, DoD will enhance the Transition Assistance Program by providing separating Servicemembers with individual assessments of private sector jobs for which they are qualified. VA and DOL will use the assessments to help Servicemembers reach their educational and employment goals.

Expediting access to VocRehab for Servicemembers in transition

The VOW to Hire Heroes Act extends legislation that presumes severely injured and ill Servicemembers are eligible for and entitled to VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment benefits. Through the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES), VA and DoD coordinate efforts to simplify the disability evaluation process, ease the transition to Veteran status, and help these injured men and women get the benefits they deserve and get back on track to a post-service career.

Expanding opportunities for Veterans' employment and training

VA can pay an incentive to encourage employers to hire or provide on-the-job training for Veterans with a service-connected disability who are currently using VA vocational rehabilitation benefits. Employers can be reimbursed as much as 50 percent of an employee's wages for a specific period of time. This can help Veterans with a VA disability rating gain a competitive advantage with potential employers. The VOW to Hire Heroes Act expands this Special Employer Incentive program, enabling Veterans to receive the benefit who were not previously eligible.

Extending training and rehabilitation benefits for Veterans with service-connected disabilities

Between June 1, 2012, and March 31, 2014, the VOW to Hire Heroes Act will extend up to 12 months of additional training and rehabilitation benefits to eligible Veterans. Veterans with a service-connected disability who previously completed a VA vocational rehabilitation plan and have exhausted their initial claim for unemployment benefits may qualify for these additional 12 months of VA vocational rehabilitation benefits.

Reengaging With Veterans of Past Eras

Veterans who have been separated from military service for several years may think they have exhausted their benefits. The VOW to Hire Heroes Act recognizes that Veterans between ages 35 and 60 have a great deal to contribute to the workforce, the economy, and society in general.

Included in this new law is the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP). VRAP offers up to 12 months of training assistance to unemployed Veterans.



TAP INTO EMPLOYMENT

The VRAP is available to Veterans who:

- Are at least 35 but no more than 60 years old
- Are unemployed on the date of application
- Received an other than dishonorable discharge
- Are not eligible for any other VA education benefit program (e.g.: the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment)
- Are not in receipt of VA compensation due to unemployability
- Are not enrolled in a federal or state job training program

The program is limited to 45,000 participants from July 1, 2012, through September 30, 2012, and 54,000 participants from October 1, 2012, through March 31, 2014. Participants must attend full-time in order to receive up to 12 months of assistance equal to the monthly full-time payment rate under the Montgomery GI Bill–Active Duty program (currently \$1,473 per month). DOL will offer employment assistance to every Veteran who participates upon completion of the program.

Participants must be enrolled in a VA approved program of education offered by a community college or technical school. The program must lead to an Associate Degree, Non-College Degree, or a Certificate, and train the Veteran for a high demand occupation.

The VOW to Hire Heroes Act requires Servicemembers transitioning to civilian status to participate in the DoD's Transition Assistance Program (TAP). This program has upgraded its career counseling options and job-hunting assistance to better help transitioning Servicemembers navigate the job market.

From Combat to Career

You served your country. Now we're here to serve you. The VOW to Hire Heroes Act allows Servicemembers to begin the federal employment process by acquiring Veteran preference status 120 days prior to separation from military service. This will allow a more seamless transition to civil service jobs at VA or the many other federal agencies that benefit from hiring Veterans.

Employer Incentives and Tax Credits

Employers who hire Veterans will not only benefit from adding reliable, motivated, disciplined workers to their teams—they may also be eligible for a tax break under the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. The VOW to Hire Heroes Act authorizes a tax credit of up to:

- \$2,400 to employers who hire Veterans who have been unemployed for four weeks to six months.
- \$4,800 credit for hiring Veterans with service-connected disabilities within one year of discharge.
- \$5,600 to employers who hire Veterans who have been unemployed for more than six months.
- \$9,600 to employers who hire Veterans with service-connected disabilities who have been out of work for more than six months.



For more information about the VOW to Hire Heroes Act visit: www.benefits.va.gov/VOW

Counseling • Training • Education • Job Placement



VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT



Preparing for Your Next Mission



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