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Employing America's Veterans
Perspectives from Businesses

By Margaret C. Harrell and Nancy Berglass

Center for a New American Security
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About the Report

"Employing America's Veterans" is a product of the Military, Veterans and Society Program at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS). Through research, analysis, dialogue and outreach, this program explores the effect of military service upon current and former service members and their families, and the ways in which the nation can best support those who serve.

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EMPLOYING AMERICA'S VETERANS: PERSPECTIVES FROM BUSINESSES

By Margaret C. Harrell and Nancy Berglass

Employing America's Veterans

Perspectives from Businesses

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Hiring veterans is good business, according to detailed and lengthy interviews with 87 individuals representing 69 companies. The companies reported 11 reasons they hire veterans, with an emphasis on veterans' leadership and teamwork skills, character and discipline. Companies also reported challenges associated with hiring veterans, particularly regarding veterans' difficulty in translating their military experience to the civilian workplace and concerns about future deployments by National Guard members and reservists. Changes to government policy could alleviate some of these challenges. The deployment concerns warrant a change in law, while others require the participation of companies, nonprofit organizations or veterans themselves.

Veterans continue to experience unemployment at a rate higher than their civilian counterparts. Many companies are eager to help and agree that hiring veterans is patriotic and "the right thing to do." However, most companies are usually only able to hire veterans when there is also a business-related motivation. This report provides perspectives from American businesses about why they hire veterans, as well as the risks, challenges and disadvantages of doing so.

The interviewed businesses noted several reasons for hiring veterans:

- **Leadership and teamwork skills.** Veterans typically have led colleagues, accepted direction from others and operated as part of a small team.
- **Character.** Veterans are perceived as being trustworthy, dependable, drug-free and having a strong work ethic.
- **Structure and discipline.** Companies, especially those that emphasize safety, appreciate veterans' experience following established procedures.
- **Expertise.** Companies value veterans' occupational skills, job-specific experiences and understanding of the military community.

- **Dynamic environment.** Veterans are accustomed to performing and making decisions in dynamic and rapidly changing circumstances.
- **Effectiveness.** Interviewees report that veterans "get it done."
- **Proven success.** Some organizations hire veterans largely because other veterans have already been successful in their organization. Veterans demonstrate that they share company values and fit the organizational culture.
- **Resiliency.** Veterans are accustomed to working in difficult environments, and to traveling and relocating.
- **Loyalty.** Veterans are committed to the organizations they work for, which can translate into longer tenure.
- **Public relations value.** Some companies have found marketing benefits to hiring veterans.

The majority of companies in this study, even those that proactively seek to hire veterans, also report challenges or risks in doing so. The firms identified reasons why some veterans remain unemployed:

- **Skill translation.** Civilians often have difficulty understanding what veterans did in the military and how those skills and experiences can benefit a company.
- **Negative stereotypes.** Some employers report concerns about the effects of combat stress, including post-traumatic stress issues, anger management and tendencies toward violence. Additionally, whereas some companies intentionally recruit veterans because of their perceived comfort with structure and discipline, other companies speak negatively of veterans' "rigidity."
- **Skill mismatch.** Not all veterans possess the skills or experience that employers seek.
- **Concern about future deployments.** Some employers are concerned that veterans will leave their civilian employment for long or repeated deployments. This is particularly true of employees who serve in the National Guard or Reserves. However, because employers are not always able to discern which of their employees are still serving, this concern may have broader implications for veteran employment.
- **Acclimation.** Some companies perceive that veterans require time after military service to acclimate to the civilian world and, thus, that veterans either require additional assistance from the company or should not be hired immediately after returning from service.
- **Finding veterans.** It can be difficult for some companies to locate veterans, and the landscape of Internet resources and organizations meant to facilitate or broker relationships between veterans and employers is confusing.

In addition to presenting the business case for hiring veterans, this report recommends several steps to increase veteran employment:

- Employers, veteran advocates and policymakers should recognize and act on the business case for hiring veterans, rather than relying on reasons based on social responsibility or patriotism and pride.
- Companies should track veteran hires, veteran performance and veteran tenure, in order to gather evidence for their internal business reasons to hire veterans.
- The Department of Defense (DOD), the Department of Labor (DOL) and individual veterans must become more adept at translating military experience for civilian employers. This translation should include qualitative skills and characteristics (e.g., integrity and respect for authority), as well as technical, vocational or professional qualifications and experience gained from a veteran's military occupation and specific jobs.

Who is a Veteran?

38 U.S.C. § 101 defines a veteran as "a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable." For the purposes of this report, a veteran is defined as anyone who served on active duty in any job capacity while a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or Coast Guard active components, or of the National Guard or Reserves, and was not discharged dishonorably. The authors recognize that the changing nature of U.S. military operations indicates an increasing reliance on private contractors but do not include them as veterans for the purposes of this report.

- To aid in translating military skills and facilitate the transition process, DOD and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) should seek public-private partnerships with American companies and qualified nonprofit organizations that specialize in employment and supporting veterans.
- Congress should revise the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) to protect the rights and interests of men and women in uniform while ensuring that members of the Reserve and Guard remain attractive to American employers. For example, Congress should reconsider the USERRA rules pertaining to prolonged and repeated voluntary overseas deployments.
- In hand with that revision, DOD's reserve component should ensure that mobilizations are not inappropriately certified "involuntary," and DOD needs to have the capability to mobilize personnel to satisfy its missions.
- DOD and DOL should provide guidance for companies to help them interpret which veteran candidates were successful, or even highly successful, in performing their duties while in uniform.
- To help companies identify service members who are leaving military service, DOD should create a resume bank in which separating service members could choose to participate.
- Consistent with current plans to improve the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) for separating service members, DOD should ensure that all separating military personnel receive high-quality TAP services.
- DOD should work to understand better the complex needs of veterans during the process of transition and acclimation to civilian society and should assess the extent to which veterans' need for and use of military unemployment compensation is efficient, helpful and necessary.

II. INTRODUCTION

Although the vast majority of veterans are employed, veterans who served after September 11, 2001 are currently unemployed at a higher rate than veterans from prior wars or their civilian peers. The unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans is typically at least one full percentage point higher than that for nonveterans.[1] When rates are sorted by age, the difference is starker. The unemployment rates for 22- to 24-year-old veterans are, on average, 3 percent higher than those for nonveterans of the same age, and unemployment for veterans in that age group reached a high of almost 22 percent in 2009.[2]

After 10 years of war, America's military service members and their families have endured high operational tempos and multiple deployments. The health of the all-volunteer force depends, in part, upon the public perception that veterans benefit from their military experience, and that civilian employers appreciate both their sacrifice and their expertise. As the United States concludes large operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and confronts an impending and considerable military downsizing, the number of veterans on the job market will grow, exacerbating any existing challenges of employing them.[3] Yet, veteran employment is fundamentally important to veteran wellness, not only to address veterans' financial and material needs, but also to fulfill their need for purpose and vocation.[4]

Based on our research, companies across the country actively support veterans and believe in the principle that businesses should prioritize the hiring of veterans. Yet in practice, most individual American businesses will hire veterans only when they perceive that it is good for business to do so. Company leaders are responsible for the health and profitability of their companies, and patriotic sentiment will rarely override the bottom line. Thus, there must be a business case to hire veterans, and managers must believe that doing so helps them to accomplish their business goals.

Hiring veterans is good business, according to in-depth interviews with individuals representing 69 companies across the United States.[5] Although many employers reported challenges associated with employing veterans, the majority of companies underscored specific business reasons to hire veterans. Indeed, the majority of interviewed companies emphasized the value of veterans' leadership experience.

Hiring veterans is good business, according to in-depth interviews with individuals representing 69 companies across the United States.

Our research also uncovered some challenges associated with hiring veterans, and knowledge of these issues is key to increasing veteran employment. Understanding the perspectives of business leaders can help policymakers and businesses to further enhance the business case for hiring veterans and also inform federal efforts to increase veteran employment. The most frequently reported challenge to veteran employment is the translation of military skills to the civilian workplace. Concern about deployments is also noteworthy: It was mentioned by roughly one-third of all companies and was the only issue mentioned that pertains entirely to those who still serve with the Guard and Reserve. The civilian employment of Guard and Reserve members is a national security imperative; their civilian income permits them to serve in the reserve component, which provides the operational expertise and

Prior Research

This report complements prior research efforts, including:

- *The Business Case for Hiring a Veteran: Beyond the Clichés*, from the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, which articulates clearly and comprehensively the academic evidence suggesting a business case to hire veterans;[6]
- The Society for Human Resource Management's poll of approximately 290 companies regarding their experiences hiring veterans;[7] and
- *Well After Service: Veteran Reintegration and American Communities*, which establishes the importance of employment in the context of veterans' overall wellness.[8]

strategic depth required for the U.S. military to meet its current global commitments and hedge against unpredictable future challenges.[9] The U.S. military will have difficulty retaining these reservists if their continued military service causes their civilian careers and their families' well-being to suffer intolerably.

Method and Approach

This research is based largely on confidential qualitative interviews with 87 representatives from 69 companies. Each interview lasted from 40 minutes to over three hours, and most averaged 60 to 90 minutes. The data portray the perspectives of company representatives, from human resource officers to chief executive officers. The companies included in the sample varied in size, location, industry and the extent to which they target veterans for hire or support veteran employees with tailored programs. These interviews included both closed- and open-ended questions. Detailed notes were coded and analyzed with qualitative coding software to identify interview themes. Illustrative excerpts from those interviews are included throughout this report. Each excerpt is followed by a unique identifier for that organization, noted in brackets, which is included to demonstrate the variety of companies that commented on each issue. This research was also informed by interviews with, and input from, representatives of DOD and DOL throughout the course of the work, as well as by interactions with Chamber of Commerce and business representatives and individual veterans. The contributions of the two working groups on veteran employment at the Center for a New American Security were also instrumental.[10]

III. CURRENT EFFORTS ADDRESSING VETERAN EMPLOYMENT

Numerous initiatives seek to increase veteran employment. These include government efforts to incentivize and facilitate veteran employment, many nonprofit efforts to provide services and guidance, collaborative efforts among companies and efforts within individual companies to hire veterans and support veteran employees. This section provides an overview of selected federal government efforts, mentions illustrative private collaborative efforts and also describes the efforts taken within the companies who participated in this research to target veterans for hire, track veteran employees, and support those employees.[11]

Government Efforts to Support Veteran Employment

Bipartisan cooperation between Congress and the executive branch led to the enactment of the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act in November 2011.[12] A key section of this legislation established and funded incentives for companies to hire veterans. The Returning Heroes Tax Credit provides companies with up to $5,600 for hiring a veteran, and the Wounded Warrior Tax Credit provides companies with up to $9,600 for hiring a veteran with a service-connected disability; the exact amount of either credit depends on how long the veteran has been out of work.[13] Although it is too early to determine decisively whether or not these recent employer tax credits (available since November 2011 and scheduled to last through January 2013) will lead to meaningful changes in the hiring of veterans, past employer tax credits have succeeded in improving the employment situation for disabled veterans.[14] The VOW to Hire Heroes Act also established the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program, a collaborative effort between DOL and VA, which will provide retraining assistance to 99,000 unemployed veterans from July 2012 through March 2014.[15]

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) facilitates veteran employment and veteran reintegration more generally; those services are delivered through a partnership among DOD, DOL, VA and the Department of Homeland Security. TAP consists of five components:

- Pre-separation counseling. The military services provide a mandatory three-hour session for all transitioning service members.
- TAP employment workshops. These 2.5-day workshops are voluntary for transitioning service members and are administered through DOL and partners in individual states. The workshops are currently being revised, with a new version to be implemented by fall 2012.
- VA benefits briefing. These voluntary half-day briefings are administered by VA.
- Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP). This is a two-hour voluntary program administered by VA.
- One-on-one transition and employment coaching. These services are provided by the military services to transitioning service members who seek them.

In place since 1990, TAP has been criticized by the government, the military and individual veterans as serving too few service members, occurring too late in their transition process and varying in effectiveness across installations and the services. For example, President Barack Obama explicitly criticized TAP when he asserted that "we spend months preparing our men and women for a life in the military, but we spend much less time preparing them for life after they get out."[16] Agency leaders recognize the need for reform and launched a joint DOD-VA taskforce, which is currently assessing the TAP program.

In addition to this taskforce, the VOW to Hire Heroes Act legislated significant alterations to the TAP program, which will be implemented

incrementally over the next two years.[17] These include the following changes:

- By November 2012, TAP will be mandatory for virtually all transitioning service members.[18]
- By November 2012, all TAP participants will receive individualized assessments on translating military skills to civilian qualifications. DOD, DOL and VA will commission an external study that will serve as the foundation for this skills translation assessment.
- By November 2013, only private contractors with military and private sector backgrounds will lead the TAP employment workshops.[19]
- Transitioning service members will gain increased access to apprenticeship programs.

To augment TAP, DOL offers six months of career service counseling through the Gold Card program and two online job databases, My Next Move for Veterans and O*Net OnLine.[20] Additionally, the Jobs for Veterans State Grants program provides staff from the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program and the Local Veterans' Employment Representative to provide local individualized career counseling, outreach and local advocacy. These resources are located at DOL One-Stop Career Centers and other locations throughout the country.[21]

The military services also provide programs to support their separating service members and facilitate their transition to civilian employment. For example, The Marine for Life Program, founded in 2002, connects Marine veterans and reservists through a network intended to ease transition to civilian life with a focus on employment opportunities.[22] The Army also offers transition services for 180 days beyond an individual's final service date through the Army Career & Alumni Program.[23]

Online job boards, some of which include Military Occupation Specialties (MOS) translators, are commonly available tools used to facilitate veteran employment.[24] According to one recent survey by the Society for Human Resource Management, job boards are the most effective method for recruiting veterans, yet the majority of human resource managers surveyed do not use military-specific job boards.[25]

Some companies report that the cost of listing positions on online resources deters them from using those resources more frequently.[26] However, some job boards that focus on veterans are free to the employer. The Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces and Hero 2 Hired are both job boards focused specifically on veteran candidates, especially those from the reserve component of the armed forces, and are offered to employers without charge.[27] The Employer Partnership facilitates connections between over 3,000 interested companies and veterans that have been vetted, screened and trained by the military.[28]

The Veterans Job Bank of the National Resource Directory (a collaboration between DOD, DOL and VA) offers a slightly different model from other job boards. Employers can post position notices to their own company website or other job boards. If they tag the position as veteran-specific with a special "Veterans Job Bank Widget" created by Google, the Veterans Job Bank can pull that position notice from the company website or other job boards.[29] This aggregating resource is also free of charge to employers, and is a central resource for veterans seeking employment.

Other online resources help separating service members address credentialing and licensing challenges as they attempt to apply their military training to civilian opportunities.[30]

Various agencies and the military services also provide programs addressing the specific needs, including employment assistance, of veterans with service-connected disabilities. Specifically, through VetSuccess, VA offers the Vocational

In addition to its efforts facilitating and incentivizing veteran employment in the private sector, the federal government gives eligible veterans preference in its own hiring processes.

Rehabilitation & Employment Program, which provides career services including skills training, help with job searches, and internship and apprenticeship opportunities to veterans with a disability rating of at least 10 percent.[31] VetSuccess also offers monetary incentives to employers to offset training costs when hiring veterans with service-connected disabilities.[32] In addition to VA's efforts, there are also programs within DOD to assist wounded, ill and injured transitioning service members, and qualifying veterans, obtain employment.[33] DOL also manages an interagency collaboration, America's Heroes at Work, to educate employers on traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress.[34]

In addition to its efforts facilitating and incentivizing veteran employment in the private sector, the federal government gives eligible veterans preference in its own hiring processes.[35] Led by the Office of Personnel Management, FedsHireVets is a government-wide effort to link veterans with government human resource professionals and hiring managers.[36] Some agencies also manage internal efforts to recruit veteran talent, such as the VA for Vets program that offers career services to veterans interested in job opportunities with the department.[37]

Other Efforts Addressing Veteran Employment

Notable initiatives designed to facilitate veteran employment also exist outside of government. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Hiring Our Heroes program has leveraged partnerships with chambers of commerce and thousands of businesses across the country to facilitate veteran hiring, with 120 job fairs held within the first year of the effort. The goal of the program is to facilitate 500,000 new hires by 2014 by using the Chamber's grassroots network and seeking commitments of small businesses across America.[38] To date, Hiring Our Heroes job fairs have resulted in the hiring of more than 9,000 veterans.[39]

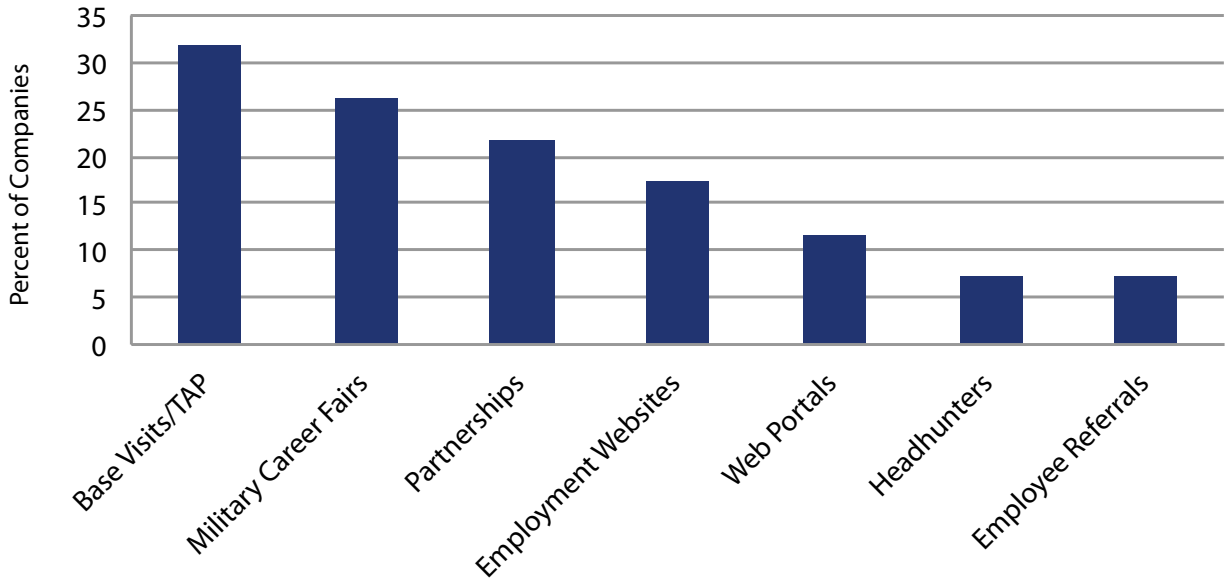
Additionally, there are collaborative efforts within private industry to focus on veteran employment. For example, the 100,000 Jobs Mission is a commitment by a group of 44 companies to hire collectively at least 100,000 transitioning service members and veterans by 2020.[40] As of March 31, 2012, the collaborating companies have hired 12,179 veterans.[41] Companies that participate in this collaboration also commit to sharing data and best practices to attract, retain and support their veteran employees. Veterans on Wall Street (VOWS) is an example of another collaboration, in this case of financial industry organizations, that offers mentorship, education opportunities and other career assistance programs to veterans in the financial sector.[42]

Corporate Efforts Regarding Veteran Employment

HIRING VETERAN EMPLOYEES

Forty-three, or almost two-thirds, of the companies in our sample actively seek to hire veterans. Another nine companies said that they did not formally seek to hire veterans but would likely prioritize a veteran over a similar nonveteran candidate. All of these companies prioritized hiring the best-qualified candidate, but they

FIGURE 1: HOW COMPANIES RECRUIT VETERANS



Source: Veteran employment interviews, Center for a New American Security.

tended to agree, as one participant said, that in the instance of multiple qualified candidates, "The tie goes to the vet."

Among companies seeking to hire veterans, the most commonly mentioned recruiting method was visiting military bases and attending TAP classes (Figure 1). Approximately one-third of the companies interviewed indicated that they had visited bases to recruit veterans, and one-fourth had participated in military job fairs. Others partnered with veteran employment advocacy groups or used employment websites to search for veterans. Additional methods included the use of veteran web portals connected to the company career page, employee referrals and the use of independent headhunters.

TRACKING VETERAN EMPLOYEES

Companies that count and track employees who are veterans are better positioned to analyze performance and provide metrics supporting a business case for hiring veterans than are companies that do not track hiring and performance.

Collecting data on employees who are veterans is a challenge for many employers. Just over half of the 69 employers interviewed provided data on the number of veterans they employ. A few employers confirmed that they possess this data but declined to share the information, but many are unaware of the number of veterans they employ. Of the companies that shared data, only a few know how many of their veterans are still serving in the Guard or Reserve. Many employers say that a reliance on self-identification restricts their ability to count their veteran employees. Alluding to this problem, one employer interviewed said, "Corporate America cannot require that veterans declare that they are veterans – their identification is voluntary." [21][43]

It is important for employers and hiring managers to be aware of what the law permits them to ask their employees. Employers can legally ask an applicant about their military status, but employees are only legally bound to inform employers of their military status if they are in the Guard or Reserves

and are mobilized for active duty. Companies that ask a prospective candidate about veteran status, but subsequently do not hire the candidate, may be subject to allegations of discrimination. According to DOL:

> It is not unlawful in itself for a prospective employer to ask an applicant about military service or obligations. Indeed, in many instances a prospective employee's military experience may enhance his or her potential value to the employer. However, if information elicited in response to such questions forms the basis of the employer's decision not to hire the applicant, or to take other adverse action against the person once hired, the inquiries may constitute evidence of unlawful discrimination.[44]

SUPPORTING VETERAN EMPLOYEES

To leverage the talent of employees who are veterans, some companies not only create initiatives to hire veterans but also develop programs to meet the specific needs of these employees. Roughly half of the companies that formally seek to hire veterans also provide support programs specifically for their veteran employees.[45] The programs are designed to ensure that veterans have the resources and opportunities necessary to succeed at their jobs. Some companies offer mentoring programs, whereas others have large affinity groups that offer both networking and support. Almost half of these support programs are less than two years old, indicating the recent increased focus on veteran employment.

IV. WHY COMPANIES HIRE VETERANS

Promoting and increasing veteran employment requires an understanding of why companies hire veterans. During our interviews, those companies that currently target veterans for hire identified 11 reasons for doing so (Figure 2).[46] Even those companies that do not actively seek to hire veterans identified advantages to hiring veterans. Employers provided some of the reasons in response to broad open-ended questions, whereas other reasons emerged from direct questions. Some of the motivations pertain to specific experience, expertise or skill sets resulting from military service, such as leadership and team skills.

Other reasons are related to the inherent characteristics of those individuals likely to serve, such as loyalty and aptitude to learn. One reason, the public relations value of hiring veterans, pertains to business revenues more broadly. One-fourth of the companies hire veterans partly because of patriotism, pride or a sense of social responsibility. Yet even these companies emphasized the business value of hiring veterans: Veterans were perceived to have strong leadership and teamwork skills; to be reliable, trustworthy, dependable and drug-free; to bring discipline and safe processes to the workplace; and to have the right expertise for companies. Additionally, employers praised veterans' effectiveness, resiliency, loyalty and ability to make decisions in dynamic circumstances.

Companies mentioned multiple reasons to hire veterans, and more than three-fourths of the companies provided three or more reasons to do so (Figure 3). Not surprisingly, those companies that do not target veterans for hiring were slightly less likely to mention multiple reasons, but even most of those companies listed multiple reasons why they thought that other companies hire veterans.

Companies Value Veterans' Leadership and Teamwork Skills

Leadership and teamwork skills were the most commonly cited reasons for hiring veterans according to our interviewees. Military service members have shown that they can work in a hierarchical team-based organization as leaders, followers and team members. They have experience working in task-oriented teams that have required them to design work plans that capitalize on the strengths of team members, accommodate team member weaknesses and adjust as team members are added or lost. These skill sets were highly prized by the companies we interviewed. They were mentioned by the majority of organizations, and these comments occurred consistently across organizations of all sizes and in organizations that target veterans in hiring as well as those that do not. Typical comments reflecting the importance of leadership and teamwork included the following statements:

> *We look for people with leadership skills. If someone can lead a team of soldiers around the world, they can lead our large stores. [67]*

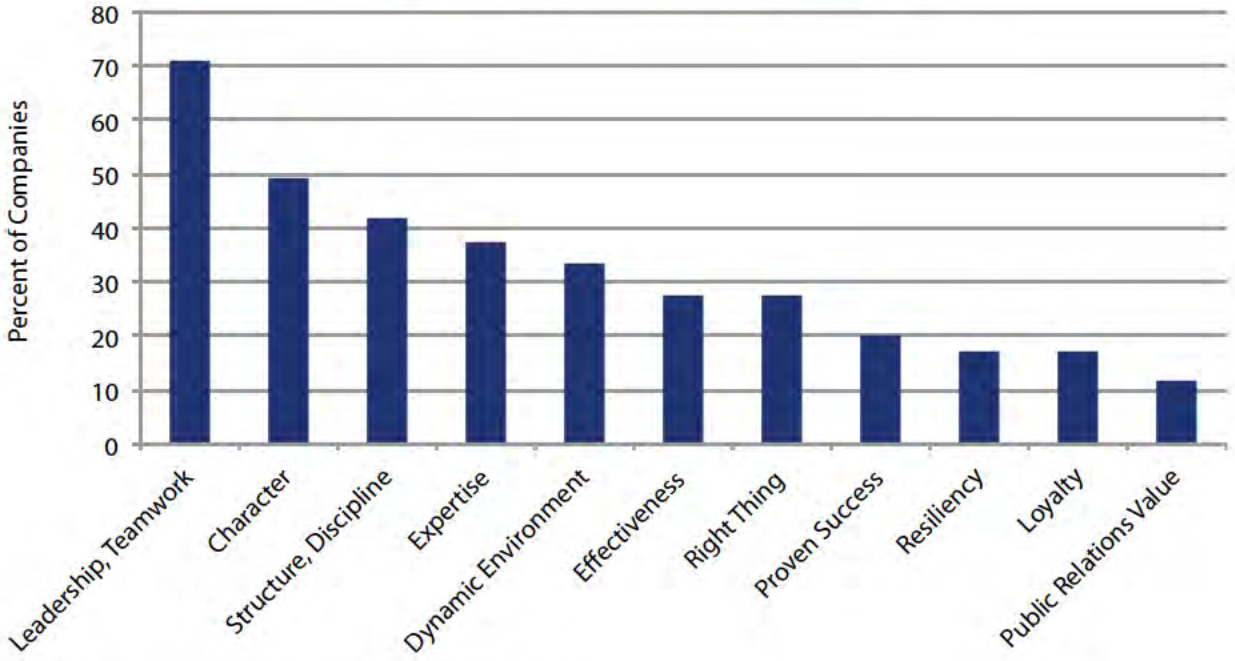
> *You get down to NCO and officer level, a lot of what you do is providing purpose, direction and motivation. When you equate that to the civilian workforce, it's great for sales. [7]*

> *Ninety-five percent of the kids coming out of college have never managed before. They may be very smart, but they have no leadership experience. To find someone that is very smart and also has real leadership experience is huge for our business. [66]*

> *Lots of younger officers and senior enlisted personnel get more leadership and management experience than civilians with similar years of experience. So they can come in and understand [our core business areas] but also have good skill sets leading teams and working in a team. [4]*

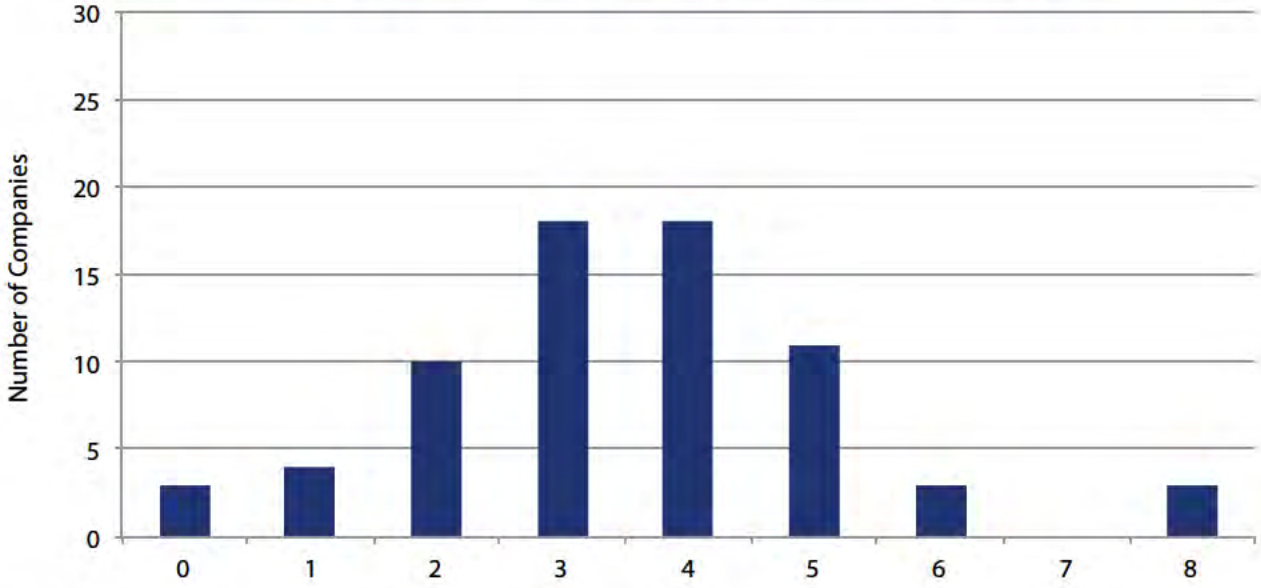
When asked specifically whether veterans' leadership skills affected hiring decisions, all but one respondent agreed that they did.

FIGURE 2: WHY COMPANIES HIRE VETERANS



Source: Veteran employment interviews, Center for a New American Security.

FIGURE 3: NUMBER OF REASONS EACH COMPANY MENTIONED FOR HIRING VETERANS



Source: Veteran employment interviews, Center for a New American Security.

Veterans' Character Makes Them Good Employees

Roughly half of the organizations observed that the character of veterans – including their trustworthy and dependable nature, their integrity and their maturity – increases their appeal as employees.[47] For example, one interviewee asserted that veterans are "dependable, more mature for their age, [with] better than average attitudes." [51] Companies also perceive veterans as less likely to use drugs. Others spoke in greater detail about veterans' character:

> *[T]here is great value in life in experiencing strife and struggle. It makes people stronger and more capable. To me that is the foundation of character. I do not have a problem trusting vets to handle the job. We have military guys that work very hard for us. They pull all-nighters, and they are very dedicated. [55]*

Twenty of the organizations specifically mentioned the work ethic of veterans, including the following comments:

> *I think veterans work harder, have a better work ethic, and they work until the job is done. It is very rare for a military guy to fail. [17]*

> *Vets have the work ethic to get the job done. I work hard to make sure everyone knows this. Veterans do things differently, but they get the job done. [43]*

> *With the military, what we get is a person who wakes up every morning ready to execute the mission. [47]*

Veterans are Disciplined, Follow Processes Well and Operate Safely

Although a few interviewees expressed concern that veterans are overly rigid, veterans' emphasis on structure and discipline was the third most frequently mentioned reason to hire veterans. Comments included:

> *I've read a lot of books on business, and they all emphasize the importance of building and sustaining a good process. If there's one thing that the military has, it's process. It has structure. [14]*

> *[Our industry] is a highly regulated industry with a lot of rules to follow. The military understand this concept very well. [20]*

Some respondents translated structured and disciplined approaches into increased safety, underscoring the direct benefit of military experience to businesses. This includes both the importance of personal safety as well as veterans' experience operating and caring for valuable and potentially dangerous equipment. For example:

> *They understand safety as well, and that's huge in our company. In our industry people lose their lives. They understand that. I'm very passionate. I truly believe that they're a great fit for our company. [25]*

> *[Veterans] have greater safety skills and core values that keep everyone safe. Safety is our number one priority. [45]*

Companies Seek Veterans' Expertise

More than one-third of the companies interviewed hire veterans specifically for their expertise.[48] Essentially, even those companies that do not explicitly target veterans for hiring reported that veterans often have the skills the companies require, such as logistics or technical specialties. Other companies value the security clearance that veterans typically bring from their military experience. Some of the defense companies that were interviewed hire veterans who possess hands-on military experience with that company's products. Still others hire veterans because of their understanding of the military environment, stating for example:

> *Across the board many of our customers are in the military. Having veterans just makes sense*

because of this understanding and often direct experience with our product. [43]

They bring subject-matter expertise because many have used the weapon systems. Some have experience with design of the weapons systems. This permits us to build a better project. [1]

Veterans have a great understanding of the mission of our customer (the U.S. defense community), and this is good because [our] main mission is to help our customers fulfill their missions. ….[V]eterans usually walk in the door with an active security clearance, which means they can hit the ground running and starting working right away – this is a huge advantage. Also, we often find ourselves competing with other contractors for government contracts, and we find we are more likely to get contracts if we have ex-military people. [26]

Veterans Adapt and Perform Well in Dynamic Environments

Veterans are accustomed to working in dynamic and uncertain contexts, and many have demonstrated the ability to adjust and adapt their decisions, acting decisively in high-stress environments. Roughly one-third of the employers interviewed valued this experience, although organizations that target veterans for hiring were especially likely to mention this capability of veterans, with comments such as:

Our current environment is very stressful, and when you have stuff coming at you as a business from every angle, it is good to have someone, like a military veteran, who has experienced even more significant adversity and overcome it. [54]

We search out veterans. In particular, people coming out of high-pressure jobs, high-stress jobs, where they need to make quick decisions without a lot of information. These people are a good fit for [our] corporate culture. [6]

Veterans are Effective Employees

More than one-fourth of the organizations stated that veterans are highly effective and have excellent time-management and multitasking skills. Interviewees repeatedly asserted that veterans are more likely to "get it done." For example:

The vets make a valuable contribution to our company. We find that there is a significant correlation between high performance and military experience. [18]

They are also valuable hires because they are mission oriented and they understand the concept of getting the job done. [21]

When asked specifically whether veteran employees perform better or worse than other employees, no participants stated that veterans are more likely to perform poorly. One-fourth of the companies made statements such as "They perform at or above expectations" [26] or even "They carry the team." [31]

Veterans in the Organization are Successful

Some organizations hire veterans because they perceive that veterans' values and attitudes fit well with the culture of the organization. In some instances, interviewees said that the proven success of other veterans within the company has led them to target veterans for hire, either formally or informally. For example:

Hiring more veterans just seems like a natural course of action. [36]

Many of our supervisors also are former military, so they know those skill sets and want to hire veterans. So we have lots of people that constantly remind people of the value that veterans bring. [1]

Veterans are Resilient

Some of the organizations that actively recruit veterans made reference to performance despite

adversity, including working in difficult environments. Some interviewees referred to veterans' willingness to travel or relocate to benefit the company. These comments included:

> *[We work] irregular hours and in all types of weather. Most civilians have a difficult time working under these conditions, but military personnel are used to all of these factors. [23]*

> *[This] is a tough place to work, especially if you do manual labor, but if you can make it through the military then you can succeed here. [57]*

Veterans are Loyal to their Organizations

Some interviewees spoke of veterans' loyalty to their employers, and a small number of the companies have data indicating that veterans have longer tenures. All interviewees were specifically asked about the relative tenure of veteran employees. Only two said that veterans have shorter tenures, whereas 19 companies indicated that veterans stay longer, with comments such as:

> *The majority of senior veterans stay longer. They are used to having loyalty to an organization. [1]*

> *I recently completed a study on the turnover rates at [my company] and based on the analysis, the attrition rate was 7 percent lower for vets than civilian employees. [5]*

Hiring Veterans Carries Public Relations Benefits

Some companies enjoy a public relations benefit from hiring veterans. In some instances, this benefit is perceived as related to government business. For example:

> *Building a reputation as an employer who hires veterans helps [our company, which] works mostly for the government, win customers. Many customers ask what we are doing for our veterans, and by having veterans at our company, it helps our customers feel an affinity to us – that we are not just corporate America, but representative of America's soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines. [26]*

One company with a well-developed program to recruit veterans described how being perceived as a veteran-friendly employer can help all large businesses.

> *We think it's good to associate our brand with the military brand, which is our country's most trusted institution. It's good for our brand's reputation. Our analysis shows [that] veterans have higher net worth than nonveterans. So I look at hiring veterans as part of operating in the military and veteran space. So I look in terms of our bottom line. I was at [a large company] the other day with their CFO. He said, "We'll never have a full-time resource for military veteran recruiting." I told him, from a business case, if you can quantify the value to [the company] in aligning with supporting the troops, the reputation that you get, if you can quantify the brand value, then that is a good business case. Because I'm involved in the veteran space, I can sell more of our products. So why wouldn't it make sense to dedicate one or two full-time resources [to hiring veterans]? For big companies, it requires only a very small increase, like a fraction of a percentage [in company revenues] to pay the salary of that individual focused on hiring veterans. [40]*

Hiring Veterans is the "Right Thing to Do"

All of the reasons mentioned above involve specific business rationales. For example, effective, resilient and loyal employees with strong leadership skills improve a company. Yet some employers also state that they hire veterans because they see it as the right thing to do for reasons of social responsibility (veterans have served the country and now the country needs to serve them), patriotism and pride (it is part of being American), or national security (the country will falter if the all-volunteer force fails because of veteran unemployment). Several comments

illustrated the themes of social responsibility, national security imperative or corporate morale, including:

> *We have an opportunity to give something back to the military to thank them for what they have done. [67]*

> *There is a national security imperative to make sure that Guard and Reserve are employed. We are a company that understands the national imperative. We want to be part of that solution. [16]*

> *The employees take pride in the fact that we support vets. [45]*

> *I think hiring more veterans is a morale builder for the company. [54]*

Although hiring veterans may indeed be the right thing to do, companies may likely be less inclined to devote resources to targeting veterans for hire if this is the sole motivation. Roughly one-third of companies that formally target veterans when hiring, and only slightly fewer of those that informally target veterans, cited this motivation.

Most employers who asserted that it is "right" to hire veterans also provided multiple other reasons for hiring veterans. Only five of the 18 companies that gave this reason had fewer than five motivations for hiring veterans. There were exceptions: One company that purposefully recruits veterans cited this as their only motivation, and another company that targets veterans does so on the basis of only this and the value of veterans' leadership and teamwork experience.

V. WHY SOME COMPANIES DO NOT HIRE VETERANS

Companies reported six main challenges to hiring veterans, including difficulty translating military skills into skills useful in the civilian workplace, a negative stereotype or negative attitude toward veterans, a mismatch between veterans' skills and those needed by companies, concern about subsequent deployments of guardsmen and reservists, the time veterans need to acclimate to the civilian environment and the difficulty in identifying veterans to hire.[49] More than 80 percent of the companies described two or more challenges to hiring veterans. Figure 4 displays how many companies discussed each challenge. For example, nearly 60 percent of the companies mentioned difficulty with skill translation and negative perceptions of veterans as barriers. Most companies mentioned two to four challenges (see Figure 5). Each of the challenges is explained below, with examples of comments from companies that mentioned these challenges.

Skill Translation

Companies reported the problem of skill translation more frequently than any other challenge to veteran employment. Many firms commented that veterans do not represent their skills and expertise in ways that are relevant to civilian companies and that civilian companies do not know what kind of military skills to seek out, how to understand military jobs or how to discern the promising and high-performing veteran hires. Civilian employers do not always realize that military-specific jobs – such as machine gunner, tank driver or helicopter crew chief – have some components that are directly comparable to civilian environments and involve some responsibilities that transfer directly to civilian workplaces. Even relatively junior military service members may have had responsibility for maintaining and securing very expensive equipment or for large amounts of money. They may have managed a small team, determined daily plans and delegated tasks. In some instances, civilian employers may not understand what a veteran did while in the military. Some perceive this translation issue to be the primary reason for veteran unemployment:

> *Companies really don't know how job skills translate. More than any sort of resistance, we're trying to figure out exactly how to translate for hiring managers what military experience means. In some regards, it's a language. The work that veterans do is not always translatable into corporate life. [3]*

This challenge was most strikingly noted by an employer who recognized his inability to translate MOS:

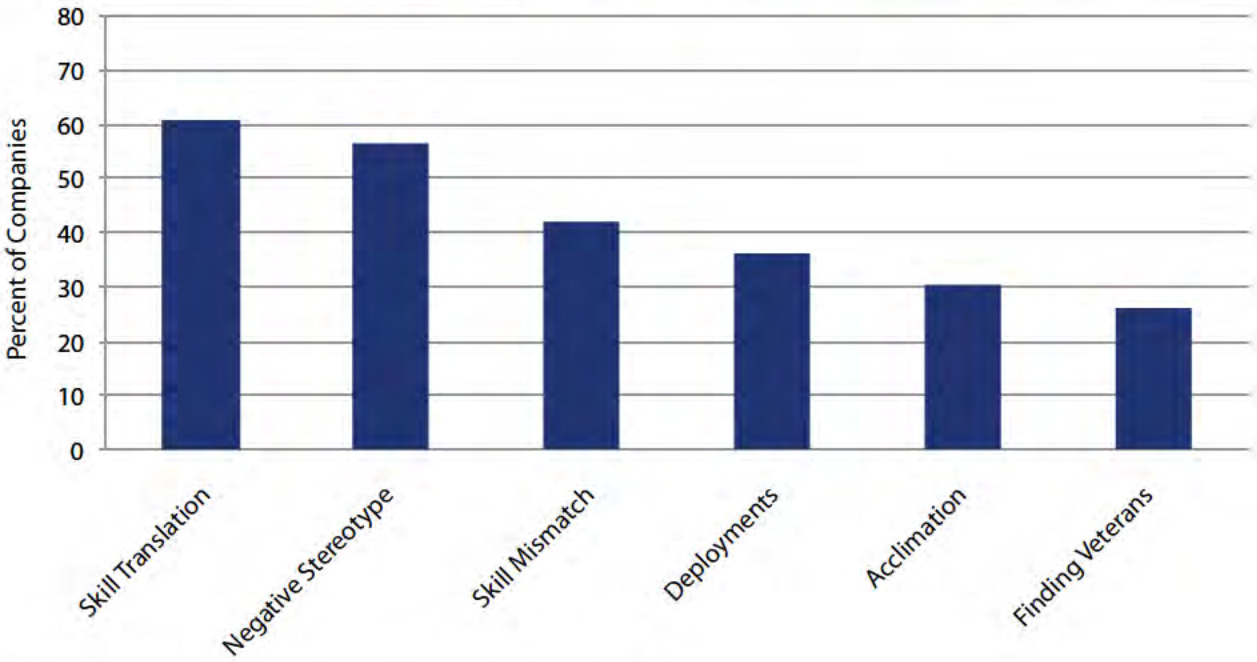
> *Honestly, I don't have enough command of all the MSO [sic] codes to be able to translate the lingo into civilian skills. [23]*

Even companies that target veterans for employment that have developed skill translators, or have hired experts familiar with the military, report such challenges with translating military skills into the civilian context. In fact, the majority of companies that target veterans for hire either formally or informally reported a lack of understanding throughout the company. Even if a director of military hires knows the types of veterans to recruit, the individual hiring managers do not have the expertise to evaluate the resumes. For example, one interviewee explained,

> *For certain jobs, we have our own internal documents that show what occupational specialties from each of the military services are relevant to each of our jobs. I'll be frank, though; many of our locations haven't been able to tap into this resource. [21]*

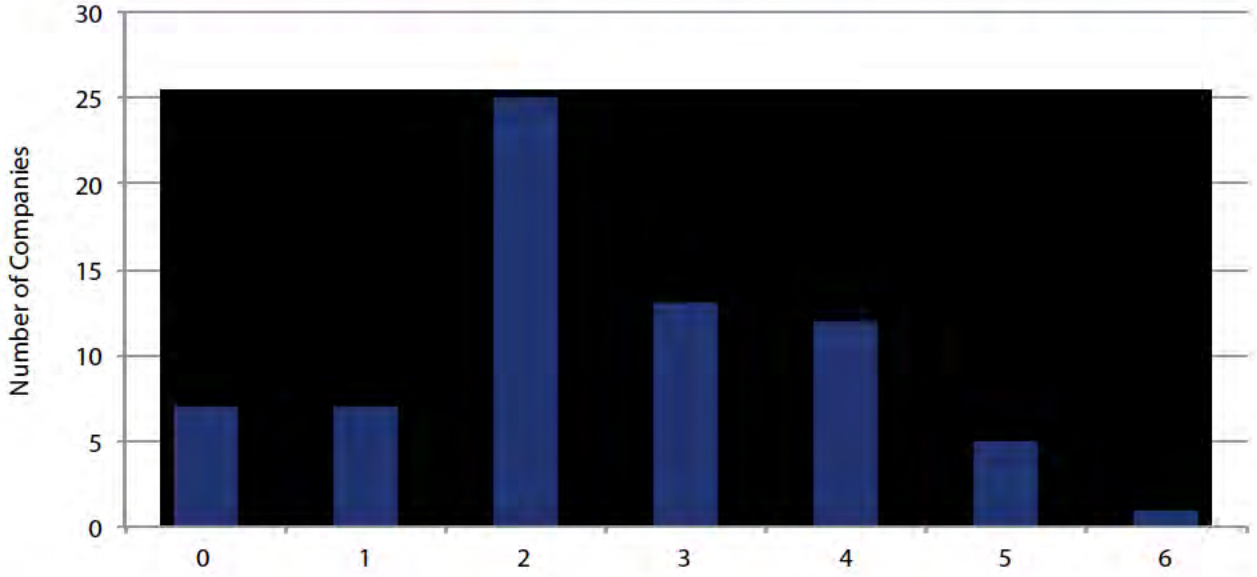
In addition to this general problem, some companies also mentioned the difficulty of translating particular jobs into familiar terms. One company representing an industry that is highly constrained

FIGURE 4: WHY COMPANIES MIGHT NOT HIRE VETERANS



Source: Veteran employment interviews, Center for a New American Security.

FIGURE 5: NUMBER OF CONCERNS EACH COMPANY MENTIONED REGARDING HIRING VETERANS



Source: Veteran employment interviews, Center for a New American Security.

Existing Skill Translators Fall Short

Both civilians and members of the military have a hard time translating military skills into civilian job qualifications – a challenge this report identifies as the most prominent obstacle to hiring veterans. The computer-based skill translators that do exist overly rely on categorizing veterans by their military occupation, as illustrated by the large number of online Military Occupation Specialties (MOS) translators. To use most of these translators, veterans enter their military occupation and the translator generates a list of potential jobs. However, these translators tend to identify only the skills specific to that occupation. For example, 11B (pronounced "eleven bravo") is an exceedingly common occupation in the U.S. Army. An 11B is an infantryman, but his skills go far beyond ground combat. Skill translators tend to suggest the following types of civilian jobs for 11B veterans: law enforcement, security work and construction labor. According to one translator, an 11B has "no direct equivalent to a civilian occupation, however the close teamwork, discipline, and leadership experiences it provides are helpful in many civilian occupations."[50] Most skill translators fail to account for integral aspects of an infantryman's training and thus discount the infantryman's potential value to an employer.

A more effective approach to skill translation would recognize that even a junior infantryman has typically obtained a set of skills and experiences through his military service, and these skills directly correspond to the skills required for many civilian jobs, including:

- The ability to plan and execute tasks in high-stress, unstructured, frequently changing environments;
- Demonstrated commitment to safety;
- Dynamic risk management skills;
- Experience securing, using and maintaining equipment worth several million dollars;
- Proven effectiveness completing complicated tasks and solving problems independently and in groups; and
- Communication skills effective at various levels of the organization.

The value of the information provided by skill translators varies for different occupations. For example, a translation for another common Army occupation, 25B information systems operator-analyst, indicates that this occupation is transferable directly into the rapidly growing computer industry and provides a wealth of information and results on pursuing a career after the military. Although civilian employment in this field may require additional training and certification, the 25B MOS establishes a base knowledge of computer technology. The DOL's online MOS translator produces links to occupational profiles and potential certifications a soldier may possess or be qualified to test for.[51]

by legal requirements discussed an excellent veteran candidate who was almost overlooked because of a poorly translated resume:

> *I've put a few resumes into the system thinking they were a perfect person. I've sent them through without my fingerprints being on the resume. [One very prominent military] inspector general did not get selected, and they said he wasn't right for the job. How could someone that runs compliance for [LOCATION] not get our compliance job? Even though we are veteran friendly, we still have to work very hard to educate our people on the value of hiring veterans. [16]*

Employers also reported an inability to discern high-performing veterans. Although those familiar with the military are more likely to recognize particular jobs assigned only to high-performing individuals, the importance of certain awards or

qualifications or a quick progression through pay grades relative to time in service may be lost on many civilian employers.

Negative Stereotypes of Veterans

Companies identified negative attitudes that can decrease the likelihood of employment for veterans. Although companies mentioned a range of negative stereotypes, concerns about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in particular were a consistent theme, with comments such as the following:

> *I think the only reason companies might be hesitant to hire veterans is because of PTSD. They don't want to hire someone who is not only an unknown but may be damaged, too. [17]*

> *I've heard about some veterans coming back and going on rampages. I've never had this happen to me personally, but I always wonder if it is a possibility. [41]*

Some interviewees identified the media as a source of stereotypes regarding violent veterans:

> *I think it is mainly due to [the] media's negative publicity. The way the media portrays veterans results in the public having a negative perception of the military. The media propagates the notion that all vets have PTSD, and that is only the case for a very minor portion of the military population. [32]*

> *I think, in general, people are positive toward veterans and especially toward wounded veterans. The dark area is PTSD and the unknowns about veterans, and wondering if this guy is going to go postal one afternoon on my job site. This concern may be overblown, but it only takes one incident. [The mayor and I] tried to push [preferential hiring for veterans] into businesses in [our city] through advocacy groups. We were making some progress, and then the local newspaper had a front-page story about a veteran that went crazy and killed [someone]. That one article turned back so much work we had done with local businesses to be favorable hiring vets. Employers are busy enough; they feel they don't need to add to those problems by hiring vets. [33]*

In some instances, individuals reflected upon their own perceptions or knowledge of attitudes in other companies. Even so, among the 19 companies that acknowledged that concerns about PTSD play a role in their hiring decisions, most (12) formally target veterans when trying to fill vacancies.

Another negative stereotype of veterans is that they are too rigid in their approach or lack the ability to think creatively:

> *… specifically, that the veterans will be too rigid or structured to function well or deal with a corporate setting because the military is all that they have ever known. [37]*

Although an emphasis on discipline, structure and process is prized by some employers, other employers perceive veterans as more rigid, less imaginative and less communicative than civilians. These perceptions are the mirror image of many positive comments discussed in the prior section about veterans' discipline and strict adherence to processes, and they were sometimes exacerbated by veterans who stood or sat with a ramrod posture and responded to questions in a military fashion, emphasizing brevity and directness. In these instances, the civilian employer would have preferred the candidate to be more open and communicative, whereas the veteran was likely interacting as the military had trained him or her.

Skill or Qualification Mismatch

Some of the employers expressed a willingness to hire veterans but reported that veterans' skills were not applicable to their business. In other cases, companies knew that the majority of post-9/11 veterans possess a high school diploma but lack a college degree. A few interviewees suggested that even college-educated veterans may lack the

industry expertise needed for more senior positions in corporations, despite their leadership and management experience. These interviewees suggested that veterans were reluctant to accept the lower-level jobs these employees felt were more appropriate to veterans' expertise.

> *Too often I feel like veterans are applying to positions where their skills don't match. For example, you will get veterans applying to HR or IT or finance jobs, even though they don't have experience in those spaces. If veterans are applying for positions that are not entry level and that they are not qualified for, they are going to struggle and employers are going to be reluctant to hire them. [46]*

> *I think there is a disconnect between the types of jobs that are available and the types of jobs the military officers are seeking. [9]*

> *Many do not have the skill sets needed. They are capable of learning, but they do not have the skills. The education component is key for young veterans. [55]*

Another type of mismatch exists when veterans possess the correct skills but lack the qualifications or certifications required. One common example of this occurs with military medics, who lack the certifications necessary for employment in the civilian medical industry. Military truck drivers, who do not receive a commercial driving license at the conclusion of their military training, are another example. Many certifications and licenses are provided on a state-by-state basis, and some states have developed streamlined processes for veterans. For example, New York State waives the road driving test for veterans with appropriate professional experience.[52] This change is significant, as individuals must otherwise provide their own truck to complete the road test. The VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 includes a measure for DOL to work with the individual states to identify these opportunities. Lessons learned from this effort, if implemented consistently, should decrease certification and licensing hurdles to veteran employment. Our interviews with employers contained only limited references to this issue, which has been recognized by others as a problem.[53]

The extent to which veterans possess inappropriate skills for businesses is likely to be obscured by the translation issue discussed earlier. Some of the companies that stated that veterans were inappropriate for their organization may actually have been unable to understand and identify places in their company where veterans would fit in well.

Concern about Future Deployments

More than one-third of the companies raised concerns regarding reservists and guardsmen deploying. Of note, more than half of those companies that do not formally target veterans for hire raised this issue. They expressed particular concerns about the duration of deployment and the possibility that the same employee could deploy multiple times. For example:

> *The downside is that there is no set time that they will be away from the workplace. If they are recalled, the company doesn't know when they'll return to the workplace. You have to find someone to fill the gap, and you don't know how long they'll be gone. [1]*

> *Some people like to volunteer and they stay away a lot and that gets tough. When they're gone for a year or two, that's tough for any company. Did hear complaints about one guy gone for longer. [16]*

This concern occurred in both small and large companies, and some companies confirmed that this issue affected their hiring decisions:[54]

> *I think hiring veterans may be good, but I would be concerned about hiring Guard or Reserve [members] because we work in such a fast-paced*

environment and on so many short-term projects that we could not cover for a staff member that needed time off to serve. [22]

There is a small risk that our guardsmen and reservists may get deployed, which is kind of hard in our business because some of our shop locations are so small that if one of the four mechanics is deployed, then that absence is really felt. That being said, as a general rule, all of our employees are very supportive when their coworkers get deployed because they know they are going to serve their country. Also, to me, deployment isn't that big of a deal. Companies operate at lower strength levels all the time for many reasons. [21]

Some interviewees professed support for guardsmen and reservists and likened deployment to other employee absences for which they sometimes had less notice. When asked whether concern about deployment affected their hiring decisions, two individuals responded:

Sure, if they are deployed for a long time. But that's not really any different from someone being out on FMLA [Family and Medical Leave Act] for 9 months. [4]

To some extent. We need to consider work continuity, but what are the policies in place to support [an employee's] family? We treat this much like maternity leave. We put processes and systems and structures in place to support individuals that have made commitments to serve our country. [10]

Likewise, some of the companies described concerns about deployment while also providing positive experiences with reserve-component deployments:

There are a few potential downsides of having guardsmen and reservists as employees. For instance, with reservists and guardsmen, deployment can be a concern. We realize that affiliated veterans [those who still have a commitment to the Guard or Reserve] may be deployed at any time, and we accept this risk. We guarantee their job, and when they come back, they come back to the same or a better job. During their absence, their job duties are split between other employees. While this creates a bit more work for other employees, we find that most employees don't see it as a burden, and in many instances, they see it as an opportunity to perform new and more challenging tasks. [5]

Even larger companies that target veterans for hire have concerns about deployment. The first example below acknowledges that regardless of corporate policies, deployments affect lower-level managers, and this concern is likely to influence those lower-level hiring decisions. In the second example, the company is concerned precisely because they do emphasize the hiring of veterans and thus may suffer a disproportionate effect if their reservists or guardsmen are mobilized.

From a corporate level, there are no risks associated or identified. From a manager level, it's impossible to ignore that this person might get deployed for a long period of time. I don't think it impacts their performance reviews. But as a hiring manager, I do believe it's entered into the equation whether the company wants it to or not. This is a lower-level person who is making an individual judgment. If it applies at all, it would be at the hiring-manager level for guardsmen. From a company perspective, we don't think about it. [3]

In general, [there are not risks to having reservists and guardsmen as employees], but I have to tell you we have had some discussions about how we would handle a situation where a large number of reservists are deployed. There is an initiative at [my company] to expedite reservist hires, and some are concerned that a large deployment could adversely affect a facility if there were a lot of reservists leaving simultaneously. [13]

Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) of 1994 codified the employment rights of individuals with past, present or future service in the Armed Services.[55]

For service members affiliated with the Guard or Reserve who are called to military service, USERRA ensures that these individuals:[56]

- Are reemployed and retain benefits and pensions commensurate with their level of employment; and
- Receive a continuation of health-care benefits for themselves and their dependents.

For the employers' rights, USERRA requires affiliated service members to:[57]

- Provide advance notification to civilian employer regarding their expected time of service;
- Return to civilian employment in timely manner (those deploying for 180 days or more have 90 days to return following completion of the period of service); and
- Serve in the military for a cumulative period not exceeding five years while an employee of one particular employer.

For service members more generally, USERRA protects individuals receiving honorable discharges from discrimination based on military status resulting in denial of "initial employment, reemployment, retention in employment, promotion, or any benefit of employment."[58]

The Department of Labor investigates USERRA claims and refers those it suspects of violating the law to the Department of Justice for legal action.[59]

Only those employees who remain in the Guard and Reserve have a likelihood of deploying; many veterans have concluded their military service. However, as discussed in Section III, most of the companies interviewed do not understand how many of their veterans serve in the Guard and Reserve. As a result, it is possible that this concern about deployments could affect the hiring opportunities for veterans more generally.

Acclimation

One-third of the companies that target veterans in their hiring processes – and half of those that do not – stated that veterans need some time to acclimate to civilian life before they can succeed in a civilian work environment. This assertion was used to explain veteran unemployment rates, as well as, in some instances, companies' own hesitancy to hire recently separated veterans. They also mentioned it in the context of additional efforts that are required for veterans to succeed in civilian companies. For example:

> *When on-boarding, if someone has already had roles in the private sector and has made that jump and has been involved in civilian life, they are going to be different to on-board than someone who has served for 20 years in active duty and has no corporate experience. Everyone has a learning curve. … It takes people a certain amount of time to figure out how to move from one world to another. [10]*

> *There are some problems with veterans themselves. They've been in a voluntary business. Even if they didn't always like what they did, it was voluntary and exciting: front-page stuff. When they came home, they were, at least for a while, put on a pedestal and celebrated and invited to parties, and that is not going to happen in their civilian pursuit. [33]*

As the following excerpts illustrate, the perception that veterans need time to adjust affects hiring decisions in some companies, whereas others recognize that they will need to spend extra time orienting veterans.

Approximately one-fourth of the participating companies indicated that they struggle to find veterans to hire.

Generally, when [my company] hires veterans for management positions, we hire veterans that have been out of the military world for a while because less transition to civilian culture is needed. [15]

Veterans … don't just walk in the door ready to sit at a computer and produce good work. There is a period of rehabilitation and assimilation. But it is worth it because veterans are great employees and you receive a great return on your investment in the long term if you expend the effort to work with them. [12]

The only additional need veterans at [company] have is trying to adapt to the corporate culture. This can be a bit challenging for some of the vets who have never held a career job in the civilian world. Often, vets that come to [company] have a difficult time understanding how a 401(k) works, how to fill out tax forms, and understanding how a corporation operates. For them, the corporate culture is completely different and new from the military culture. To help vets adjust to the [company] and corporate culture, we use a buddy system and assign vets who have worked at [company] for a number of years to new recruits. This not only helps the new vet employee to adjust to [company] and the corporate culture, but it provides a vital link and support system for the new vet employee. [5]

Some interviewees mentioned veterans' reliance on Unemployment Compensation for Ex-servicemembers (UCX), suggesting that veterans were choosing not to accept work while they acclimated to civilian life.[60] Some veterans are eligible for 99 weeks of UCX, and interviews with DOD officials indicate that although UCX recipients are required to seek employment or to accept employment when offered, there is no systematic monitoring of whether they do so.[61] Thus, UCX could be funding the acclimation period for veterans; some veterans may be declining employment opportunities or choosing not to seek employment.[62] The use of UCX to fund acclimation for veterans is not necessarily a barrier to companies hiring veterans. However, it could be increasing the cost of UCX, using UCX funding for an unintended purpose and artificially inflating the ranks of unemployed veterans with individuals who are not actively seeking employment.[63]

Companies Struggle to Find Veterans

Approximately one-fourth of the participating companies indicated that they struggle to find veterans to hire. There are multiple websites that list employment opportunities for veterans. However, the differences between those sites are confusing, many of the websites charge the employer to list vacancies and there is no single repository of veterans' resumes that employers can review.[64] Employers report frustration, for example:

There are just too many websites and resources for employers, and it can be overwhelming and confusing for employers who are just trying to start hiring veterans because they don't know which resource is reputable or where to start. [46]

On any given week, I get 100 emails from military organizations saying, "hire veterans." Which organization am I supposed to work with? [23]

It's not that [companies are] reluctant [to hire veterans], they just don't know where to go. There are so many third parties, hiring events, consultants. And they turn you off. [25]

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Most of this report focuses on companies' experiences with and perceptions of veteran employment. The description of the business reasons to hire veterans can be used by companies and veterans to increase veteran employment. The other insights from companies pertain to the existing challenges and hurdles to veteran employment. Indeed, the companies who participated in this research provided candid comments on how to improve the context and landscape for veteran employment. These findings suggest an initial recommendation for all stakeholders concerned about veteran employment, as well as a recommendation for companies. We direct the remainder of the recommendations primarily to government agencies engaged in improving veteran employment. By addressing the challenges and risks in hiring veterans, these agencies can improve the context for veteran hiring, thus making veterans even more attractive candidates for employment.

Companies, veteran advocates and policymakers should emphasize the business case when promoting the hiring of veterans. When companies hire veterans, they gain employees with leadership and teamwork skills, who are dependable and trustworthy characters, have good discipline and safety awareness, are adept in complex situations, and are effect, resilient and loyal. Although many individuals believe that hiring veterans is the right thing to do, veterans are not a needy population dependent on the charitable goodwill of companies. Companies will be more motivated – or exclusively motivated – by an emphasis on the business case to hire veterans. Organizations like the Chamber of Commerce should emphasize this in their literature about veteran hiring initiatives and in other communications to member companies about veteran employment.

To gather evidence for their internal business reasons to hire veterans, companies should track veteran hires, veteran performance and veteran tenure. The best evidence to support veteran employment will result from company data indicating that veterans are good hires, but many companies interviewed cannot identify the number of veterans they employ. While employers must be conscientious about adhering to relevant employment law, they should maintain data pertaining to their veteran employees and analyze relative veteran tenure and performance to determine whether there is a business case within their own organization for hiring veterans.

DOD, DOL, other organizations that serve veterans and individual veterans must translate military experience for civilian employers more effectively. Difficulty in translating military skills was the most frequently mentioned challenge to veteran employment. Comments from business leaders indicate that even those companies that have military hiring experts struggle to hire veterans whose resumes do not clearly articulate the skills they would bring to a civilian employer. Thus, the onus of translating military experience needs to be accepted by DOD and VA, as well as by individual veterans. A veteran's resume should explain the individual's military occupation and the specific jobs and responsibilities held while in uniform. Veterans, for their part, should ensure, by permitting a nonveteran to review their resume, that their work experience is articulated in terminology that is clear and understandable to civilians and that their resumes are tailored to each individual position for which they are applying. The revised TAP being developed by the DOD and VA task force should provide informational templates to facilitate translation, as well as individualized resume-writing support from experts in civilian employment.

DOD and VA should seek and support partnerships with qualified American businesses and nonprofit organizations to facilitate the transition

of veterans into civilian workplaces. Many representatives of American businesses and employment specialists are adept at recognizing a good resume and mentoring veterans to represent themselves well to hiring managers. Nonetheless, although some military installations have encouraged local businesses to participate in TAP workshops for transitioning personnel, these partnerships occur less frequently in other locations. Installation commanders and those who oversee TAP workshops should welcome business participation in TAP as the best use of public-private partnerships to facilitate veteran employment.

Congress should revise USERRA to protect the rights and interests of men and women in uniform while ensuring that the employment of those in the Guard and Reserve remains attractive to American employers. USERRA was designed to protect guardsman and reservists from losing their jobs when mobilized, whether for short periods of training, domestic tours of duty or longer overseas deployments. The original USERRA statute was written at a time when the reserve component was considered a "strategic reserve," with an implicit social contract that guardsmen and reservists were likely to deploy not more than once every five or six years. However, since 9/11, the reserve component has evolved into an "operational reserve" that provides more frequent support to the active component, resulting in more frequent mobilizations for reservists.

We recommend that USERRA continue to protect guardsmen and reservists against reprisal for all of their military absences from civilian employment, with one caveat. Congress and DOD should revise the policies and protections in place for guardsmen and reservists who repeatedly volunteer for prolonged overseas deployments. This revision should ensure that reservists and guardsmen still have the opportunity to complete the training and professional military education that they require to excel in the reserve component and should also ensure their availability to the reserve component as needed. However, this change should also compel reserve component personnel to coordinate with their civilian employer prior to volunteering for repeated and prolonged overseas deployments.

This recommendation is important because concern about deployment is a challenge to employers that employ veterans and an obstacle to veteran employment. It is also a challenge that pertains directly to the strength of the U.S. military. Although this concern pertains most specifically to affiliated veterans (those still serving with the Guard or Reserve), companies do not always understand which of their veterans might still deploy. Thus, it is possible that this concern could have implications for the employment of other veterans as well.

Some experts interviewed during this research expressed concern that revising USERRA would limit the reserve component's capability. Ideally, a revised USERRA would not harm the ability of the reserve component to perform its mission, although the change might increase the extent to which the reserve component would have to rely on involuntary rather than voluntary mobilizations. Critics of this change argue that the rights of reservists and guardsmen should be prioritized over the concerns of businesses. However, USERRA currently protects some guardsmen and reservists while harming the employment prospects of many more by failing to address companies' concerns about employing veterans with ongoing commitment to the reserve component.

In hand with revisions to USERRA, the reserve component should reevaluate which deployments are certified as "involuntary." Employers must have confidence that any employee involuntarily mobilized must serve for the success of the military mission; there must be good faith that "involuntary" mobilizations are exactly that. However, the current mobilization process lacks a

clear distinction between voluntary and involuntary deployments. Even individuals who volunteer for deployment sometimes receive paperwork that indicates an involuntary deployment, as it is generally perceived as easier for a service member to tell their family and employer that they were involuntarily mobilized for deployment.[65] The reserve component leadership must reevaluate who is authorized to label an individual mobilization as "involuntary," recognizing that abuses of this determination will undermine any positive result of the USERRA revision and will hurt an undeterminably large number of reservists if American employers are resistant to employing veterans. These changes may require legislative relief to ensure that the reserve component can involuntarily mobilize individuals as necessary.

DOD and DOL should provide clear guidance to companies regarding how to inquire about military service and performance. Employers express uncertainty regarding how to determine which veterans were high-performing service members. DOD and DOL should provide guidelines for companies that explain how to read a DD-214, the veteran's official report of separation, and how to interpret indicators of success, such as paygrade, rate of promotion, selection for particular responsibilities and awards. Because DD-214 reports can vary, such guidelines should also explain to veterans the difference between DD-214 copies, and what each contains or obscures.

DOD should systematically provide companies with access to separating service members who agree to be contacted by potential civilian employers. Given the difficulties that companies report in finding veterans to hire, DOD should provide employers with the qualifications of, and contact information for, separating service members who voluntarily enroll in a commensurate job search program. Service members could volunteer to participate in a resume bank, for example, for use by those employers interested in hiring veterans.

Consistent with the current plans for TAP revision, DOD should ensure that every separating active component service member receives TAP services. These same resources should also be available to separating reserve component service members. However, reserve component service members with civilian employment should be permitted to decline TAP services.

DOD should work to understand better the complex needs of veterans during the process of transition and acclimation to civilian society and should assess the extent to which military unemployment compensation is efficient, helpful and necessary. DOD should conduct or sponsor research on whether veterans do require time to acclimate to the civilian environment and employment. Questions to be considered include which veterans require an acclimation period, how much time is generally needed and whether UCX is currently supporting recently separated veterans through that acclimation period.[66] Because DOD partially funds UCX, this inquiry is best suited to that department, as greater information about a possible acclimation period could help explain, predict and even reduce UCX expenditures. This information will also help to determine whether veteran unemployment rates are inflated by individuals who are actually taking an acclimation break.

Individual states should recognize military certifications and qualifications and streamline, wherever possible, the process of receiving state-specific licenses and certifications, such as commercial driver's licenses. Some states have begun to streamline the processes for veterans to receive licenses and certifications reflecting their military experience. These initiatives positively reinforce the merit and value of military training and work experience, support the individual veteran and provide capable and qualified employees for civilian employers.

Conclusion

Employing veterans contributes substantially to their overall wellness and their reintegration into American communities. Employment provides not only income but also purpose and structure, a sense of belonging and a way of being a part of something bigger than oneself.

Veteran employment is also important to national security, as stable and supportive civilian employment enables reservists and guardsmen to serve as our nation requires. The reserve component will provide a critical capability for the military as it downsizes its active force.

It makes good business sense to hire veterans, and this report documents empirically that businesses see the value of veterans and want them as part of their organizations. The skills and experiences that they bring to the organization, as well as their character and capabilities, underscore their merit as employees. Companies that purposefully hire veterans proclaim the benefit gained from employing individuals who exhibit the same loyalty and strong performance in the civilian workplace that they did while serving the country. There are also hurdles to improving veteran employment, but we see ways that government, business, communities and veterans can work together to address these challenges. Hiring veterans serves those who serve the nation. It is also plain good business.

ENDNOTES

1. Between 2003 and 2010, annual unemployment rates for post-9/11 veterans ranged from 6.9 percent to 10.5 percent, an average of one percentage point higher than rates for nonveterans. These data are from the American Community Survey and can be obtained through the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series website, http://usa.ipums.org/usa/. For a discussion of the differences between these veteran unemployment data and the more frequently used Bureau of Labor Statistics rates, see the forthcoming Center for a New American Security policy brief by Margaret C. Harrell and Ilona G. Iosso.

2. Between 2003 and 2010, unemployment for veterans ages 22 to 24 averaged 14.3 percent, according to data from the American Community Survey. There are not yet reliable data for this age group in 2011. For an explanation of why the appropriate focus is on ages 22 to 24 rather than 18 to 24, see the forthcoming Center for a New American Security policy brief by Margaret C. Harrell and Ilona G. Iosso.

3. Department of Defense, *Defense Budget Priorities and Choices* (January 2012), 11.

4. Nancy Berglass and Margaret C. Harrell, "Well After Service: Veteran Reintegration and American Communities" (Center for a New American Security, April 2012), http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_WellAfterService_BerglassHarrell.pdf.

5. Eighty-seven individuals, representing 69 companies, participated in detailed qualitative interviews. The sample is discussed further in Appendix B. Although the sample includes a range of companies in different industries, of different sizes and with varying levels of support for veterans, this sample is not intended as a representative sample of American companies, but the findings provide important insights regarding employers' perspectives on veteran employment and are thus insightful for policy consideration.

6. Institute for Veterans and Military Families, "The Business Case for Hiring a Veteran: Beyond the Clichés" (March 5,2012), http://vets.syr.edu/_assets/researchdocs/employment/The%20Business%20Case%20for%20Hiring%20a%20Veteran%203-6-12.pdf.

7. Society for Human Resource Management, "Military Employment SHRM Poll" (February 2012), http://www.shrm.org/Research/SurveyFindings/Articles/Pages/MilitaryEmploymentSHRMPoll.aspx.

8. Berglass and Harrell, "Well After Service."

9. The Pentagon's new defense strategic guidance released in January 2012 emphasized that as the defense budget declines and the U.S. military shrinks, DOD will pursue "reversibility," a set of policies that will enable the U.S. military to expand the force quickly in the future to cope with rapidly emerging security threats. See Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (January 2012), 7. DOD has stated explicitly that "a strong Reserve Component is a vital element of the concept of reversibility." See Department of Defense, *Defense Budget Priorities and Choices*, 12. The reserve component is critical to reversibility not only because it makes up approximately 43 percent of total U.S. military manpower but also because it serves as a repository for combat-experienced leaders with prior active-duty service. See Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, "Command Brief" (accessed April 18, 2012), http://ra.defense.gov/documents/publications/OSDRACommandBrief.pptx. These reserve component leaders, including many who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, will play an indispensable role in any future expansion of the force.

10. Working group participants are listed in Appendix D.

11. The authors also wish to acknowledge the extensive and outstanding efforts of the many nonprofit, civic and academic stakeholders whose programs and services benefit both job seeking veterans and their employers immeasurably, although describing these many efforts is outside the scope of this effort.

12. Public Law 112-56, *VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011,* November 21, 2011.

13. The White House, "Fact Sheet on the Returning Heroes and Wounded Warriors Tax Credits" (November 2011), http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/fact_sheet_on_veteran_tax_credits-1.pdf.

14. Employment of veterans with disabilities increased 2 percent for 2007 and 2008 as a result of the tax credit. See Paul Heaton, "The Effects of Hiring Tax Credits on Employment of Disabled Veterans" (RAND Corporation, April 2012), http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/occasional_papers/2012/RAND_OP366.pdf.

15. To be eligible for this program, an individual must be a veteran, unemployed, 35-60 years old, not eligible for G.I. Bill benefits and not have been dishonorably discharged from the military. Eligible individuals can participate in retraining programs offered by technical and community colleges focused on preparation for "high-demand" occupations. Upon completion of the retraining program, veterans can use DOL employment placement services. See Public Law 112-56, Section 211.

16. President Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on the Administration's Work to Prepare our Nation's Veterans for the Workforce" (August 5, 2011), http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/05/remarks-president-administrations-work-prepare-our-nations-veterans-work.

17. Public Law 112-56, Sections 221-226.

18. According to Section 221 of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, the secretaries of defense and homeland security can waive the participation requirement for individuals whom "participation is not and would not be of assistance … based on the Secretaries' articulable justification that there is extraordinarily high reason to believe exempted members are unlikely to face major readjustment, health care, employment, or other challenges associated with transition to civilian life" and those called to support a deployment. See Public Law 112-56, Section 221.

19. Interviews with individual veterans suggest that some TAP instructors are government employees or contractors without any prior civilian employment experience.

20. Department of Labor, "New Employment Initiatives for Veterans," http://www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard.html; Department of Labor, "My Next Move for

Veterans," http://www.mynextmove.org/vets/; and Department of Labor, "O*Net OnLine Crosswalk Search," http://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/.

21. DOL One-Stop Career Centers are located in communities across the United States and assist individuals with job searches, training and other employment services. DOL's Veterans ReEmployment is a veteran-specific program offering assistance to veterans through its One-Stop Career Centers. See Department of Labor, CareerOneStop, "Veterans ReEmployment," http://www.careeronestop.org/ReEmployment/Veterans/default.aspx.

22. Marine for Life, "Marine for Life: Connecting Marines with Opportunities," http://www.marineforlife.org/marines.cfm.

23. United States Army, Army Career & Alumni Program, "Transition Assistance," https://www.acap.army.mil/transition-assistance.aspx.htm.

24. The text box on page 23 also provides information about MOS translators.

25. Note that of the top 13 job boards, only two were graded effective by a third or more of respondents. Society for Human Resource Management, "Military Employment SHRM Poll," 12.

26. Veteran employment interviews, Center for a New American Security.

27. See United States Army Reserve and Army National Guard, "Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces," https://www.employerpartnership.org/; and Yellow Ribbon Program Reintegration Program, "Hero 2 Hired," https://h2h.jobs/.

28. United States Army Reserve and Army National Guard, Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces, "Overview," https://my.employerpartnership.org/AboutUs/Overview.aspx.

29. National Resource Directory, "Veterans Job Bank," https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/home/veterans_job_bank.

30. United States Army, "Credentialing Opportunities On-Line," last updated May 1, 2012, https://www.cool.army.mil/; and United States Navy, "Credentialing Opportunities On-Line," last updated March 30, 2012, https://www.cool.navy.mil/.

31. Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Program services are also available to active service members with a disability rating of at least 20 percent. For more information on VetSuccess, see Department of Veterans Affairs, "Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Service," last updated February 9, 2012, http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/; and Department of Veterans Affairs, "VetSuccess," last updated October 8, 2010, http://vetsuccess.gov/. In addition to VetSuccess, VA offers the Disabled Veterans Enrolled in VA Training Program which provides veterans with service-connected disabilities the opportunity to gain work experience and training at government agencies. See 38 U.S.C. § 31, "Training and Rehabilitation for Veterans with Service-Connected Disabilities." VA also offers services to veterans facing homelessness, substance abuse and physical and mental impairment to obtain gainful employment through the Compensated Work Therapy Program and the Homeless Veteran Supported Employment Program.

32. The VOW to Hire Heroes Act expanded VA authority to provide employers these monetary incentives. These payments are in addition to the tax incentives companies obtain when hiring veterans. See Public Law 112-56, Section 232.

33. The Army Wounded Warrior Program, the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program, the Navy and Coast Guard Safe Harbor Program, the Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment, the USSOCOM Care Coalition and the DOD Office of Wounded Warrior Care & Transition Policy all offer employment services as part of a larger rehabilitation and transition effort. The DOD Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program provides free technical training to federal employees with disabilities, including veterans with service-connected disabilities.

34. America's Heroes at Work is managed by the DOL Offices of Disability Employment Policy and Veteran's Employment and Training Service. Collaborative partners for this effort include the Departments of Defense, Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs along with the Small Business Administration and the Social Security Administration. See Department of Labor, America's Heroes at Work, "About Us," http://www.americasheroesatwork.gov/about.

35. The federal government also encourages those companies it does business with to implement affirmative action programs for veterans. See Department of Labor, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, "The Good-Faith Initiative for Veterans Employment (G-FIVE) Initiative," http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/faqs/dir282faqs.htm; and Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment & Training Service, "OASVET Fact Sheet 97-5: Federal Contractor Program," http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/fact/vet97-5.htm.

36. Office of Personnel Management, "FedsHireVets," http://www.fedshirevets.gov/.

37. United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans' Employment & Training Service, "About VESO," http://vaforvets.va.gov/sites/veso/about/Pages/default.aspx.

38. U.S. Chamber of Commerce, "Hiring Our Heroes" (April 2012), http://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/veterans/HOH%20Overview_0.pdf.

39. Personal interview, U.S. Chamber of Commerce representative.

40. For more information, see http://www.100000jobsmission.com/.

41. JPMorgan Chase & Co., "100,000 Jobs Mission Hires 12,179 Veterans through First Quarter 2012," April 11, 2012, http://investor.shareholder.com/jpmorganchase/releasedetail.cfm?ReleaseID=663357.

42. Veterans on Wall Street, "About," http://veteransonwallstreet.com/about/.

43. Each quote is followed by a bracketed identifier number indicating the company from which the quote came. The numbers indicate to the reader that quotes came from numerous companies. Only the authors can associate an individual company with the identifier number.

44. Federal Register Vol. 70, No. 242 (December 19, 2005), 75253, http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2005-12-19/pdf/05-23961.pdf.

45. Of those companies that informally target or do not target veterans when hiring, only one provides a support program for veteran employees.

46. We interviewed one or two people from each company represented. In order to weigh each company equally, we use "company" as the subject of sentences throughout this report regardless of the number of interviews for that company. These comments refer to the individuals interviewed from the company. The business case was derived from the answers to both open- and closed-ended questions. The complete interview protocol is included in Appendix C. Interviewees were asked several questions pertaining to the motivation for hiring veterans, including, "What is the value in hiring veterans? Specifically, how does it help your business to do this?" and "Would there be any value to your business to purposefully hiring more veterans, including guardsmen and reservists?" These comments were also derived from responses to other items throughout the interview. The qualitative data were coded and analyzed using NVIVO software.

47. It is important to note that interviewees were not queried on every motivation for hiring veterans. This research would not indicate, for example, that half of the interviewees disagree that veterans' character is appealing for hiring reasons. Instead, this research indicates the motivations that are salient to the interviewees; these are the reasons or business cases they articulate when asked why their organization hires veterans or should hire more veterans. An unrelated study reported that 72 percent of Americans consider veterans' integrity when choosing a financial advisor. See PR Newswire, "Military Experience a Plus when Considering a Financial Advisor, According to Edward Jones Survey," *The Business Journals,* http://www.bizjournals.com/prnewswire/press_releases/2012/04/03/CG81033.

48. The motivations for hiring veterans in this report are largely consistent with the research-informed propositions for hiring veterans discussed in the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, *The Business Case for Hiring a Veteran*, although this report uses the terminology most salient to the interviewees. For example, the comments provided within this category are consistent with both "Veterans are adept at skills transfer across contexts/tasks" and also "Veterans have [and leverage] advanced technical training" in Institute for Veterans and Military Families, *The Business Case for Hiring a Veteran.*

49. Study participants were asked about challenges and concerns regarding hiring veterans. These questions were posed in numerous ways and addressed the participant's perceptions, as well as the likely attitudes of other companies. Interviews addressed these topics broadly but also asked specifically about issues considered during hiring decisions.

50. CareerOneStop, "Military to Civilian Occupation Transition," http://www.careerinfonet.org/moc/default.aspx?nodeid=213.

51. Ibid.

52. Office of the Governor of the State of New York, "Governor Cuomo Implements 'Experience Counts' Initiatives to Help Returning Veterans Get Jobs in New York" (February 9, 2012), http://www.governor.ny.gov/press/20912-experience-counts.

53. For example, Congresswoman Lois Capps introduced a bill to make it easier for military medics to become civilian emergency medical technicians. This bill never made it to the House floor for a vote. See *Emergency Medic Transition (EMT) Act of 2011,* H.R. 2853 (September 9, 2011).

54. This behavior could be construed as employment discrimination.

55. 38 U.S.C. § 43, "Employment and Reemployment Rights of Members of the Uniformed Services."

56. See 38 U.S.C. § 4313 for information on reemployment, and see 38 U.S.C. § 4316-4318 for information on benefits, pensions and health care benefits.

57. 38 U.S.C. § 4312 lists the qualifications necessary for reemployment under USERRA.

58. 38 U.S.C. § 4304 states the character of service necessary to benefit from USERRA. 38 U.S.C. § 4311 states conditions by which veterans cannot be discriminated against.

59. 38 U.S.C. § 4321-4327 provide information on enforcement of USERRA.

60. Similarly, the RAND Corporation found that dramatically increased rates of UCX use between 2002 and 2005 were likely not associated with a lack of jobs for veterans. See David S. Loughran and Jacob Alex Klerman, *Explaining the Increase in Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers During the Global War on Terror* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008).

61. Note that if reservists and guardsmen who were employed prior to deployment are accepting UCX for extended periods of time, their employer may no longer be in business. Alternatively, they may have chosen not to return to their employer, or their employer may be in violation of USERRA.

62. Note that the unemployment rate reflects only those veterans who report that they are seeking work.

63. There currently exists a collaborative effort between the DOL Veterans' Employment and Training Service, the DOL Employment and Training Administration, the National Association of State Workforce Agencies and the Department of the Army to assess UCX use in Georgia, North Carolina, Illinois and Texas. (Information provided by DOL personnel.)

64. The Society for Human Resource Management findings indicate that their respondents found Career Builder, Monster and Indeed most helpful for recruiting veterans. However, employers must pay to participate in each of these resources, and the Society for Human Resource Management listed over 20 job portals in their survey, confirming the confusing assortment of resources available. See Society for Human Resource Management, "Military Employment SHRM Poll," 12-13. Section III discusses some resources that are available, free of charge, to employers.

65. Individual interviews with reserve component personnel.

66. The analysis and lessons learned from the current study by the Army, DOL and National Association of State Workforce Agencies regarding UCX use in four states should inform this larger assessment.

Appendices

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Employing America's Veterans

Perspectives from Businesses

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPATING COMPANIES

Aloha Couriers

ARDEX Americas

AstraZeneca, PLC

AT&T, Inc.

BAE Systems, Inc.

Bank of America Corporation

Berico Technologies, LLC

The Boeing Company

Booz Allen Hamilton, Inc.

CACI International, Inc.

Castle Home Services

Caterpillar, Inc.

Chesapeake Energy Corporation

Chevron Corporation

Cintas Corporation

Cisco Systems, Inc.

Comfort Systems USA

CSX Transportation

DeLuxe Laundry & Dry Cleaners

DLR Group

DynCorp International

EADS North America

eLYK Innovation, Inc.

Ernst & Young

Facebook, Inc.

FedEx Corporation

FHLBank Topeka

GEICO (Government Employees Insurance Company)

General Electric Company

Google, Inc.

Health Net

Humana, Inc.

The Huntington National Bank

Integra Telecom Holdings, Inc.

Intel Corporation

JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Kraft Foods, Inc.

Lockheed Martin

ManTech International Corporation

Merck & Co., Inc.

Mitsubishi Electric Corporation

NiSource

Norfolk Southern Railway

On the Go Ads

Peoples Natural Gas

PepsiCo, Inc.

Point Loma Capital

Proctor and Gamble

Prudential

Raytheon Company

Referral Buzz, Inc.

Rockwell Collins, Inc.

SAIC (Science Applications International Corporation)

Schneider National, Inc.

SDLC Partners

Shell Oil Company

Sodexo

Stormont-Vail Healthcare

Target Corporation

Three Pillar Global, Inc.

The TJX Companies, Inc.

Trane, Inc.

Union Pacific Railroad

United Parcel Service, Inc.

W Hotel (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, Inc.)

W. W. Grainger, Inc.

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

Waste Management, Inc.

WILL Interactive, Inc.

APPENDIX B: CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATING COMPANIES

As part of our research, we conducted qualitative interviews with 87 individuals representing 69 companies. The sample was designed to include a broad range of companies within the United States, and the companies were recruited in several ways:

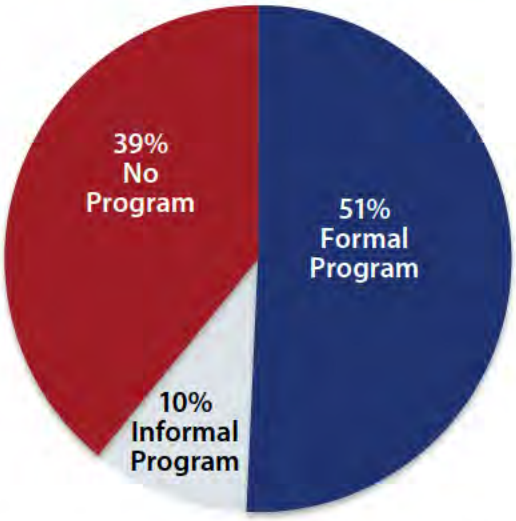
- We invited companies already known for their veteran employment activities to participate in interviews.
- We sought participation from selected companies that have a relationship with the Center for a New American Security.
- We coordinated with local chambers of commerce to identify and recruit companies in and around Pittsburgh; Minneapolis; Jacksonville, Fla.; and Topeka, Kan.
- We contacted companies directly to fill identified gaps in the sample.

Characteristics of Sample Companies

The intent of this research is to provide qualitative insights regarding companies' experiences and perspectives regarding veteran employment. The sample is not representative of all companies in the United States. Nonetheless, there is considerable variation within the sample in terms of company size, geographic region, industry type and involvement with the veteran community. The characteristics of the sample are described below and include the following:

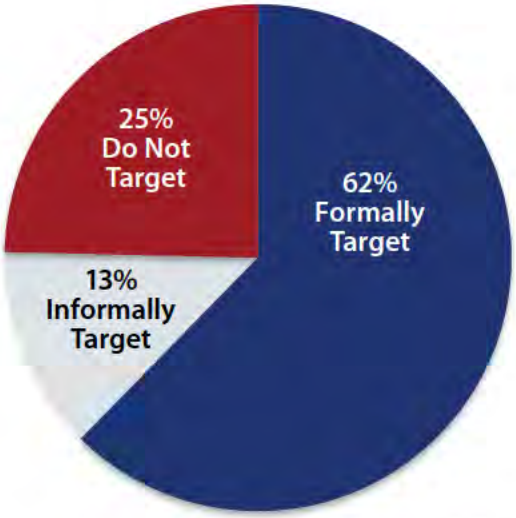
- Whether they have a program to support veteran employees
- Whether they target veterans for hire
- Size
- Geographic region
- Global participation
- Industry

FIGURE B1: COMPANIES IN SAMPLE WITH VETERAN PROGRAMS



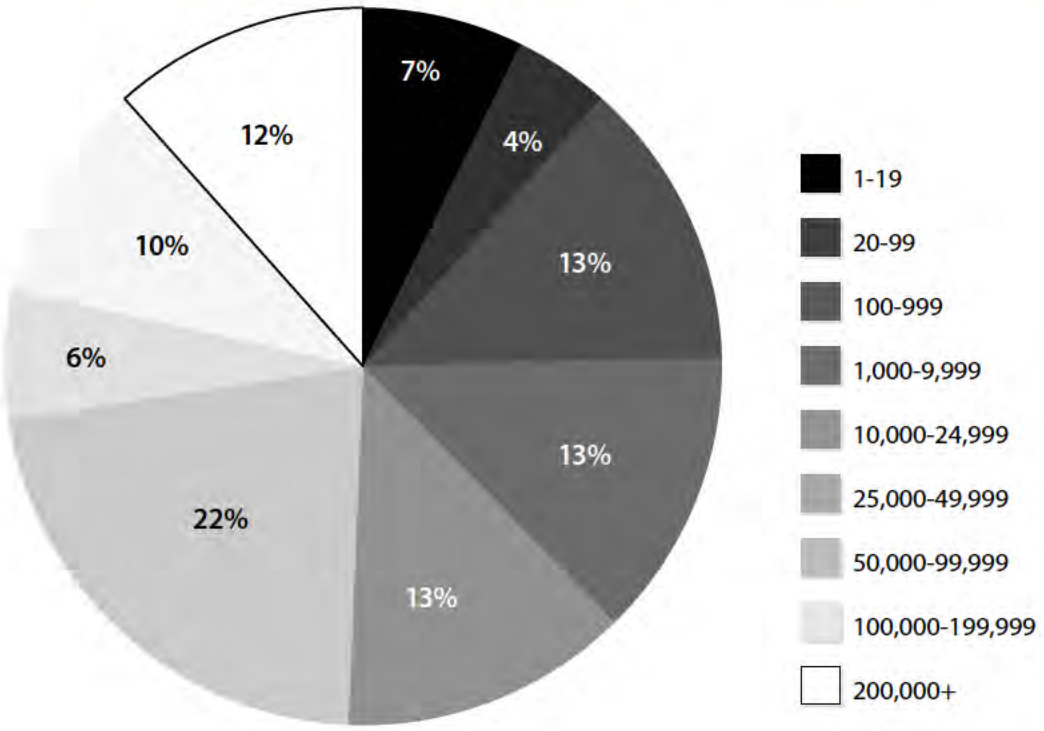
Source: Veteran employment interviews, Center for a New American Security.

FIGURE B2: COMPANIES IN SAMPLE THAT TARGET VETERANS FOR HIRE



Source: Veteran employment interviews, Center for a New American Security.

FIGURE B3: DISTRIBUTION OF THE COMPANIES IN THE SAMPLE BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES



Source: Veteran employment interviews, Center for a New American Security.

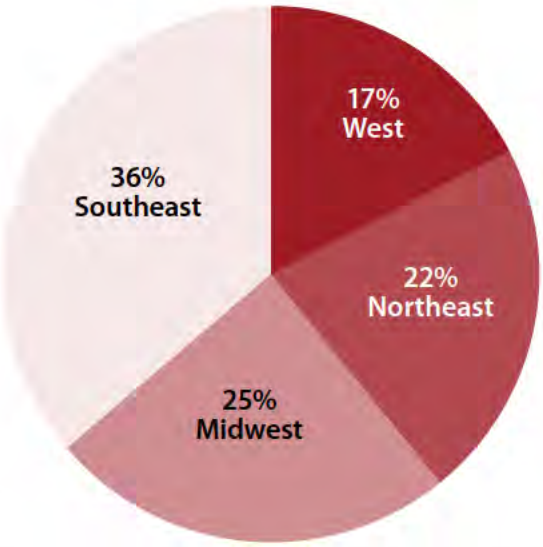
First, most of our interviews were conducted with companies that have veteran programs. Of the 69 companies interviewed, 35 (51 percent) had formal veteran programs, 7 (10 percent) had informal veteran programs and 27 (39 percent) had no veteran programs (Figure B1). We defined formal veteran programs as those with some combination of established leadership, a defined mission statement, a website and a structure capable of institutional memory. We defined informal veteran programs as those programs that do not meet the aforementioned criteria but are known within a company.

Second, most companies in the sample do specifically target veterans in their hiring processes. Of the 69 companies interviewed, 43 companies (62 percent) formally target veterans for hire; they have an established and defined internal effort to hire veterans, generally with responsibility assigned to an individual or team of employees (Figure B2). Nine companies (13 percent) informally target veteran hires. These companies do not have an established program or process but stated that they generally prioritize veterans when hiring. One-fourth of our sample, 17 companies, do not seek out veterans when hiring.

Third, the sample included companies of all sizes, from small businesses to several extremely large companies (Figure B3).

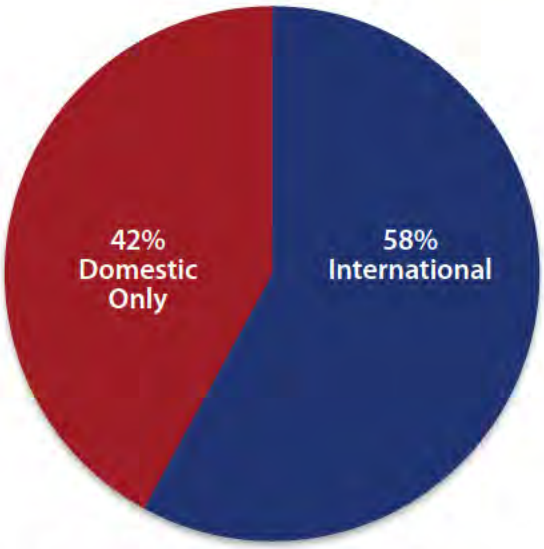
Fourth, the sample includes companies from all regions of the country (Figure B4). Of the 69 companies interviewed, 12 are from the western United States (17.6 percent), 17 are from the Midwest (25.0

FIGURE B4: GEOGRAPHIC VARIATION AMONG THE COMPANIES IN THE SAMPLE



Source: Veteran employment interviews, Center for a New American Security.

FIGURE B5: SAMPLE COMPANIES THAT OPERATE GLOBALLY



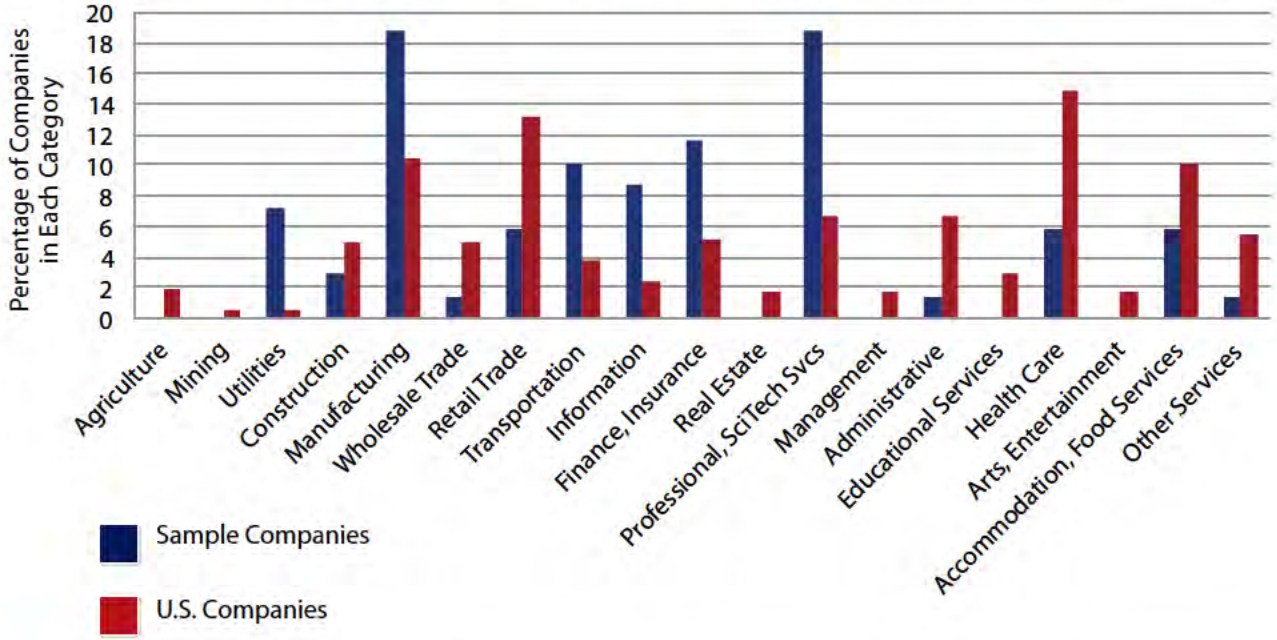
Source: Veteran employment interviews, Center for a New American Security.

percent), 15 are from the Northeast (22.1 percent) and 25 are from the Southeast (36.8 percent).

Fifth, our sample included a mixture of companies that operate globally and companies that operate solely within the United States. Of the 69 companies that participated in the interviews, 58 percent operated globally, and 42 percent operated only within the United States.

Finally, although our sample is not a representative one, it is diverse in terms of industry type. The 69 companies that were interviewed cover 13 industry groups. Figure B6 illustrates the sample companies by their primary North American Industry Classification System code, as compared with companies nationwide.

FIGURE B6: INDUSTRIES OF SAMPLE COMPANIES VERSUS ALL U.S. COMPANIES



Sources: Data for U.S. companies is from Richard Henderson, "Industry Employment and Output Projections to 2020," Bureau of Labor Statistics Monthly Labor Review (January 2012), 66. Data for sample companies is from the Center for a New American Security veteran employment interviews.

Note: For the purpose of classifying the companies interviewed into industry types, we relied on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). This classification system "is the standard used by Federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy." Within the system, there are 20 major categories. Each major category is assigned a two-digit code, such as 23 (Construction) or 54 (Professional, Scientific and Technical Services). Within the major codes, a business can be further classified to a more specific code, such as 236118 (Residential Remodelers). For the purposes of this report, we used the two-digit major code. United States Census Bureau, NAICS, "Introduction," http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/index.html.

APPENDIX C: VETERAN EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

A1. Company Name

A2. Participant Name

A3. Date of Interview

A4. Interviewer Name

A5. NAICS Classification

COMPANY BACKGROUND

CB1. Where is the headquarters for [COMPANY] located?

CB2. How many employees does [COMPANY] have?

CB3. Are [COMPANY] employees represented by a union?

INTERVIEWEE BACKGROUND

I have just a couple questions about you. These are so we can understand your role. As you may recall, we will not be attributing any answers to you.

IB1. What is your title?

IB2. Are you a veteran or do you have another connection to the military? [*If yes, determine what*]

ATTRACTING AND RECRUITING

I'd like to ask some questions now about how [COMPANY] attracts and recruits your employees.

AR1. How many new employees does [COMPANY] expect to hire in 2012?

AR2. How do you generally recruit your employees?

AR3. What kind of positions are you hiring for?

AR4. What is the most difficult type of skill or person to recruit?

AR5. How do you recruit those employees (who are most difficult to recruit)?

AR6. What military occupations or skill sets would most benefit your company?

AR7. How does your company translate military background and experience into terms relevant to your company's needs – how do they know which skill sets to recruit?

AR8. Does [COMPANY] specifically target veterans or guardsmen or reservists for hire?

If company DOES target veterans, including guardsmen and reservists (Questions AR9–AR15):

AR9. Which jobs are most appropriate for them?

AR10. What is the value in hiring veterans? Specifically, how does it help your business to do this?

AR11. How do you know this? Who at [COMPANY] has said this?

Probe:

AR11a. What do you think the average employee thinks about hiring veterans?

AR12. Recognizing that your opinion may be different from the company perspective, do you personally think it benefits the company to hire veterans?

If yes, probe:

AR12a. How?

AR13. How do you target veterans for hire?

AR14. How successful have your efforts been?

Probe:

AR14a. How do you know? How do you measure success?

AR15. The unemployment data suggest that other companies may be resistant to hiring veterans. Why do you think this is?

If company DOES NOT target veterans, including guardsmen and reservists (Questions AR16–AR17):

AR16. Would there be any value to your business to purposefully hiring more veterans, including guardsmen and reservists?

Probe:

AR16a. Why?

AR17. Why do you think that [COMPANY] has not previously hired more veterans?

MANAGING, RETAINING AND PERFORMANCE

Thank you. I now have some questions about managing and retaining your employees and about employee performance.

MR1. Do you notice any difference in tenure – do veterans stay for longer or shorter than other employees?

If yes, probe:

MR1a. What is the difference?

MR2. How well do your veteran employees perform once hired?

Probes:

MR2a. How do you know that?

MR2b. Is their performance different from other employees?

MR3. How do the needs of veteran employees differ from those of other employees?

Probe:

MR3a. Do they require any special accommodations?

MR4. Are there any downsides or risks to having veterans, guardsmen or reservists as employees?

If yes, probe:

MR4a. Are these downsides or risks to hiring unaffiliated veterans – those who have previously served but no longer have any commitment to the military – or affiliated veterans – those who still have a commitment to the Guard or Reserves?

MR5. [*Interviewer can omit "regarding your employees" if they have made it clear that they do not have Guard/Reserve employees*] Are the following a concern regarding your employees or when you consider hiring employees who also serve in the Guard or Reserves? [*If they say yes, ask whether they have concern to some extent or to a great extent*.]

MR5a. Cost of training replacements for them?

MR5b. Potential of the employee being deployed?

MR5c. Weekend training requirement interferes with work?

MR6. I'm going to read a list of factors, and I'd like you to identify whether any of these factor into your decision process as you hire veterans? [*If they say yes, ask them, "Can you say a little more about that?"*]

MR6a. Time necessary to adapt to civilian workplace?

MR6b. Strong leadership qualities?

MR6c. Concerns about PTSD and other mental health issues?

MR6d. Need to have time off for medical appointments?

MR6e. Concerns about cognitive disabilities related to military service?

MR6f. Difficulties with anger or violence?

VETERANS PROGRAM

Some companies have a specific veterans program. For example, this might include an organized effort to hire veterans or it might be a network of veteran or military-friendly colleagues.

[*If appropriate, skip VP1 and say:*] We have talked a little about your [NAME OF VETERAN PROGRAM]. I have a few questions to ensure that I understand as much as possible about this program.

VP1. Is there a veterans program at [COMPANY]?

VP2. What does the program do? What are its goals?

VP3. Who leads the veterans program? [*Get contact information*]

VP4. Does the program have an official mission statement?

VP5. Is there a website explaining the veterans program?

VP6. When was the veterans program started?

And finally, I have some data questions about your veteran employees, if there are data available to address these questions.

NVE1. How many veteran employees are there at [COMPANY]?

NVE2. Of those, how many currently serve in the Guard and Reserve?

NVE3. How many of [THE TOTAL NUMBER] are unaffiliated veterans – those who are done with their military service?

NVE4. How many employees did [COMPANY] hire overall last year?

NVE5. How many veterans did [COMPANY] hire overall last year?

NVE6. How many of the veteran hires last year remain affiliated with the Guard or Reserve?

NVE7. How many of the veteran hires last year were unaffiliated veterans – those done with their military service? [Answer may be apparent, but confirm]

CONCLUSION

Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in our study. I have just three more questions.

C1. Veteran unemployment remains about three points higher than that for nonveterans. What do you think are the main reasons for that difference?

C2. As I stated earlier, the recommendations from this work will not be aimed at companies. Instead, we are seeking actionable recommendations for organizations that may include the VA, DOD and other organizations, as well as veterans themselves. There may also be the need for some legal changes. What are the main things that need to be changed so that veterans can be more attractive to employers?

C3. Is there anything that I should have asked that I did not, or any additional thoughts you'd like to offer?

Before I conclude, we'd like to include you on distribution list when our findings are released, so let me ensure that I have your email address.

Thank you again.

APPENDIX D: CNAS VETERAN EMPLOYMENT WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANTS

The individuals listed below participated in at least one of the working groups, held on October 27, 2011, and April 10, 2012.*

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* The professional affiliations noted here reflect those of each participant on the date of the CNAS Veteran Employment Working Groups.

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