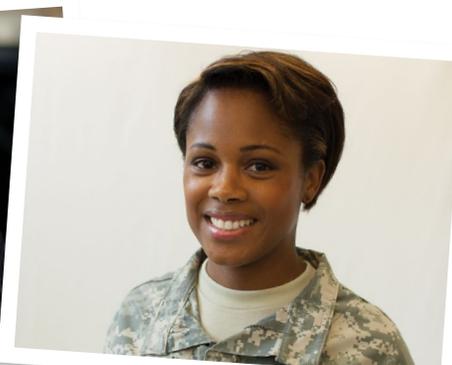




“VocRehab is a tool to assist in that transition, so use it.”

— Mark Wise, Jr.  
(U.S. Army ret., 2007-2012)



Moving from active duty to Veteran status is a significant change. You may have a lot on your mind as you reunite with family and reintegrate into your community. You may also be coping with injuries you sustained in service to our nation. To help smooth the transition, VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VocRehab) program has developed 10 tips to help you move from a military to civilian workforce.

### 1. Network

Ask family members, friends, and other Veterans to put you in touch with the decision-makers at the places you would like to work. Contact those people and ask for an informational interview. Unlike job interviews, informational interviews let you talk with potential employers about your strengths and experiences. Even if they are not hiring, the people you connect with may be able to refer you to others who are—and they themselves may keep you in mind for future openings.

### 2. Emphasize character

Your skills and certifications are important, but civilian employers also want to know about your broader experience and understand how you applied your skills. Use your cover letter, résumé, and networking conversations to emphasize situations in which you took initiative, demonstrated flexibility, exhibited leadership abilities, and performed for the good of the team.

### 3. Translate your credentials

Most of your military training can be applied to your post-military career. However, most states and the federal government require their own licenses and certifications for jobs including flying planes, treating patients, and operating certain machinery. Find out whether you need to take an exam or a recertification course to make use of your military credentials. Military occupational specialty translators are available on VetSuccess.gov to help you find civilian credentials and certificates directly related to your MOS.

#### 4. Pace yourself

From your time in the military, you may already be familiar with PACE planning—the primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency plan for each undertaking. As you begin your search for civilian employment, recognize that your top job choices may not work out. Identify your top job picks, positions you can live with, and positions that you'd rather not take, and apply to all of them. As long as the work won't aggravate any health concerns, don't hesitate to take a less desirable position to pay the bills while you look for something else.

#### 5. Use Veterans' preference

The federal government gives preference to job-seeking Veterans over many other applicants. Not all military service qualifies someone to receive Veterans' preference, and so it is important to understand the specific requirements. For more information about Veterans' preference visit the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's VetGuide ([www.opm.gov/staffingportal/vetguide.asp](http://www.opm.gov/staffingportal/vetguide.asp)).

#### 6. Reduce stress, increase confidence

Employers want to know whether your personality will fit in well with their other employees' personalities. Put your best foot forward at job interviews by keeping your stress levels down. Get plenty of exercise, rest, and engage in normal social activities. If you start to feel anxious about your job search or any other matter, contact your VocRehab Counselor for support.

#### 7. Ready your paperwork

Every Veteran knows the value of his or her DD214 (Report of Separation) or DD2586 (Verification of Military Experience and Training) for VA-related purposes, but these documents are also important as you prepare to enter the civilian workforce or go back to school. Make sure you have copies of your DD214 and DD2586 to show your employer or school so that it can verify your military service, training, and experience. It may also be helpful to provide transcripts of any military training and coursework you completed.

#### 8. Prepare for a new culture

The cultures of the civilian workforce and the military are different. Know in advance that you may feel disoriented for the first few weeks in the civilian workforce, and take your time in getting used to the new work culture.

#### 9. Take control

Career advancement in the military is linear and highly structured: You move up the ladder one step at a time. In comparison, civilian career development is less regimented. Take control of your career development: If you want to learn new skills, identify a course at your local college, university, or other institution of learning and discuss it with your supervisor. Think about how horizontal career moves will help you broaden your skills. And don't be afraid to talk about your career development goals with your supervisor.

#### 10. Connect to VocRehab

VocRehab helps Veterans and Servicemembers navigate the transition from military to civilian employment. VocRehab offers counseling, training, education, and other services to help prepare you for your next mission.



VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT



U.S. Department  
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To find out how VocRehab can help you, visit our website: [www.Benefits.VA.gov/VocRehab](http://www.Benefits.VA.gov/VocRehab)