

Looking to hire a veteran? Contact us

By Bill Blazar

Hiring Minnesota Heroes was launched last summer to work one-on-one with Minnesota employers to develop and launch veterans hiring programs. One year later, we've notched several successes. We are ready for the next steps.

Since the program's start-up, we are working with 102 companies to help create a program or are actively sending candidates their way. In total, 1,251 veterans were hired filling a variety of positions at all sizes and types of companies across the state.

Hiring Minnesota Heroes addresses two pressing needs. No. 1, veterans have valued skills yet frequently find it unusually difficult to get a related job. No. 2, many employers remain challenged to find qualified workers. The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce network with employers and local chambers of commerce is in perfect position to connect employers and veterans.

The first year provided many valuable takeaways for all employers that seek to tap the rich pool of veterans to boost their workforce. Most important, those companies enjoying the greatest success have support from their executive leadership.

There are other useful tips for companies looking to jump-start a program. Among them:

- Hire a veteran or military spouse to manage the recruitment. They understand military resumes and can translate military skills into what's applicable in the civilian workforce.
- Create formal or informal veterans networks within the company.
- Add language to job descriptions that would attract veterans.
- Assist and advise veterans in pursuing licensing and certifications.

The first year identified challenges, too. Many employers are very interested and motivated to hire veterans. But even the most enthusiastic don't know where to find and connect with veterans. The lack of interaction between uniformed military personnel and the Minnesota civilian community makes for a challenging transition for many veterans. Some may even hide the fact of their military service.

Hiring Minnesota Heroes is ready to assist. Our focus this year is linking employers to resources – help them identify pipelines, pathways and partnerships to actually employ veterans. Making the connection is a win-win for employers and veterans alike.

Let us help you get started. Ted Daley oversees our program. He is a former state senator from Eagan with more than 20 years of military management. You can contact him directly at ted.daley@mnchamber.com.

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