



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Highlights on Veterans Employment Initiatives

April 2009

Summary of major activities performed by the Department of Commerce that contributed to an 18% increase of veterans hires in FY 2008 (713 veteran hires) as compared to FY 2007 (602 veteran hires):

- Issued a memorandum to all bureau heads from the Commerce Deputy Secretary to provide strategies and resources to increase the hiring and training of veterans. Commerce is working towards closing the gap between the Department veterans' representation (11.5% in FY 2007) and Government-wide veterans' representation (25.5% in FY 2007).
- Ensured that all Commerce employment vacancy announcements were open to external candidates (U.S. citizens) and contained specific information on how veterans can receive preference in the hiring process. Additionally, all vacancy announcements provided veterans with specific guidance on what materials must be submitted to get the maximum amount of preference points to which they are entitled.
- Launched an educational website that reports Commerce veteran training and employment information, historical accomplishments, and statistical data. This website, which is located at <http://www.hr.commerce.gov/Careers/Veterans/index.htm>, is accessible to more than 40,000 Commerce employees (including hiring managers), veterans seeking jobs, and the general public.
- Modified the New Supervisors Training Program to include modules that specifically highlight the potential benefits of hiring and advancing veterans with disabilities. Continued recruiting efforts by participating in career fairs such as the San Antonio Military Community Job Fair and the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Career Fair.
- Cultivated and increased contacts with various agencies, veteran organizations, employment referral organizations, and rehabilitation counselors to increase the number of applications from disabled veterans for Commerce jobs and training opportunities (examples include: Department of Defense Operation Warfighter and Hiring Heroes; Department of Veterans Affairs Coming Home to Work; Department of Labor Recovery and Employment Assistance Lifelines).
- Served as a strategic partner with the Office of Personnel Management Deputy Director and representatives from other Federal agencies by participating in a round table session to improve the hiring process of disabled veterans. Commerce shared several obstacles expressed by current veterans related to the difficulties of using www.usajobs.gov, government terminology that is used on some vacancy announcements, and issues with understanding general schedule (GS) levels and other equivalents. As a result, the Office of Personnel Management implemented several recommendations to improve the hiring process for disabled veterans.



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Commerce Partnership with other Federal Agencies

Federal Agency	Program Overview and Highlights
Department of Veterans Affairs (Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service)	The Coming Home to Work program provides practical learning experience to eligible service members pending medical separation from active duty at military treatment facilities. Commerce has provided on-the-job training to three 30% disabled program participants. One was hired in the Office of the Chief Information Officer as an Information Technology Specialist.
Department of Defense (Office of the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness)	Operation Warfighter is a temporary developmental learning assignment/internship for service members returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom who are undergoing treatment. It is designed to provide meaningful activity outside the hospital environment and a formal means of transitioning back into the workforce. Commerce has provided 15 assignments in Information Technology, Human Resources, and Security Operations.
Department of Defense (Civilian Personnel Management Service)	The Hiring Heroes program helps wounded veterans find meaningful civilian jobs, by providing resume and interviewing workshops. The program hosts a series of career fairs at Army and Navy medical treatment facilities for severely wounded troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Commerce has participated in career fairs at Fort Dix Army Medical Center, Fort Gordon Army Medical Center, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston Army Base, and Bethesda Naval Medical Center.
Department of Labor (Veterans' Employment and Training Service)	REALifelines provides assistance programs, employment opportunities, and awareness initiatives to meet the needs of injured veterans and their families. The Department cultivated contacts with the program office, local veteran organizations, employment referral organizations, and rehabilitation counselors to market employment opportunities to disabled veterans. Commerce partnered with the Federal Workforce Coordinator to increase the use of the Veterans' Recruitment Appointment authority and the recruitment of preference eligible veterans under the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act.