Veteran Hiring Preferences
In Local Government

Dr. Ulrich Jensen, Dr. Justin Stritch, & Dr. David Swindell surveyed Human Resource Directors of Alliance for Innovation member cities to examine hiring systems used by local governments to target veterans seeking public service jobs.

Project Overview

In 2019, researchers from Arizona State University’s Center for Urban Innovation and Center for Organization Research and Design (CORD) partnered with the Alliance for Innovation to conduct a survey about the hiring of U.S. military veterans in U.S. local governments.

The goal of the survey was to investigate:

a) The implementation and use of veteran’s preference policies in local government hiring;

b) The types of jobs for which U.S. military veterans are commonly hired for in U.S. local governments;

c) The perceptions of the strengths and skills U.S. military veterans bring to their organizations;

d) Local governments’ efforts to recruit U.S. military veteran’s to their organization.

Respondents

We surveyed Human Resource (HR) Department Directors (or equivalent positions) in the U.S. local governments that are active members (dues paying) in the Alliance for Innovation. In November and December of 2018, two graduate students collected contact information (phone numbers and mailing addresses) for all HR directors in Alliance for Innovation member local governments.

We had an initial population of 206 HR directors. In the process of distributing the survey, we identified 6 of these individuals as no longer working in their organization and, thus, they were removed from the final response rate calculation. We had a final population of 200 HR Directors.

At the conclusion of the survey’s implementation, we had 90 completed survey responses. The overall participation rate for the survey was 45.0 percent.
Survey Distribution and Implementation

We distributed the survey over a period of 8 weeks in February and March of 2019. The survey was implemented on Qualtrics Survey Software. We contacted participants using multiple mechanisms, including mailed letters and postcards, email, and phone calls. The following steps were completed as part of the implementation protocol.

- **February 9, 2019**: A hard copy of a pre-notification letter was mailed to all members of our survey population.
- **February 19, 2019**: An invitation to participate and survey link was sent via email.
- **February 20, 2019**: A postcard reminder was sent in the mail.
- **February 26, 2019**: The first reminder with a survey link via email to non-respondents.
- **February 27, 2019**: The second postcard reminder was sent via mail to non-respondents.
- **March 11-13, 2019**: The third reminder email with a survey link was sent to non-respondents.
- **March 25-27, 2019**: The second phone call was made to non-respondents.
- **March 11, 2019**: A phone call was made to non-respondents.
- **March 25, 2019**: The fourth reminder email with a survey link was sent to non-respondents.
Veterans and Your Organization

The percentage of HR Directors indicating that their local governments "often" or "very frequently" hire a U.S. military veteran for each of the following positions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uniformed Police Officers</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firefighters / First Responders</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance Technicians</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory Compliance</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Management &amp; Leadership</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology Officers</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget / Finance</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Professional Services</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy Implementation

The percentage of local governments that give preference to U.S. military veteran applicants in the hiring process:

- Preference: 48%
- No Preference: 48%
- Unsure: 4%

HR Directors' views of their local government's veteran hiring policies:

- Specific: 60%
- Vague: 24%
- Neutral: 16%
Among local governments that assign points to U.S. military veterans:

- 30% Assign points to new hires and internal candidates for promotion
- 27% Assign points to internal candidates for promotion only
- 40% Assign points to new hires only
- 3% Assign points to new hires and are unsure about internal promotion

HR Directors believe that their local government's policies are:

- 50% successful at promoting veterans
- 27% neutral at promoting veterans
- 21% sometimes conflict with efforts to implement their veteran preference policy
- 23% unsuccessful at promoting veterans
Veteran Recruitment

Local governments posted job advertisements in outlets to specifically target U.S. veterans - 39%

Local governments had internal discussions on ways to increase U.S. veteran hiring - 32%

Local governments worked with veteran student centers on a 2-or-4 year college campus to recruit for jobs - 30%

Local governments participated in career fairs specific to U.S. veterans - 11%

Local governments had veteran interns work in the organization through a Department of Defense sponsored program - 8%

Other responses included:
- Word of mouth
- Employee referrals
- Partnerships with local military bases
- Coordination with Office of Military Affairs
- Special requests to TVC Employer Liaisons
- Attend veterans' roundtable and veterans' advocacy board meetings
- Partnered with local veteran organizations to help hiring managers and HR staff be more aware of veteran hiring strategies

* Other Responses Included:
Veteran Skills & Training

**TOP 3 SKILLS**

HR Directors report that in their experience with veterans, military experience enhances these top three skills the most:

#1 Teamwork

#2 Striving for Results

#3 Planning & Organizing

The percentage of HR Directors reporting that U.S. military veterans perform better than civilians for each of the following:

- **Team Orientation**: 66%
- **Work Ethic**: 65%
- **Goal Orientation**: 60%
- **Resilience**: 59%
- **Reliability**: 59%
- **Assertiveness**: 51%
- **Selflessness**: 46%
- **Openness to Other Cultures**: 24%
- **Flexibility**: 25%
- **Creativity**: 14%

These percentages represent answers of "somewhat better" or "much better."
Veteran Skills & Training

The following represents the percentage of HR Directors that think U.S. military service is relevant for preparing someone to be successful in each of the following positions:

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<td>76%</td>
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<td>Top Management &amp; Leadership</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<td>Maintenance Technicians</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Officers</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget / Finance</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Professional Services</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These percentages represent answers of "somewhat relevant," "moderately relevant," and "very relevant."

**TOP 4 SKILLS**

Top four skills and competencies HR Directors feel colleges and universities should prioritize in curricula for veteran students who are interested in public service careers:

1. Flexibility
2. Creativity
3. Team Orientation
4. Goal Orientation
About The HR Directors Who Participated

- 20 Years
  Average experience as a human resource professional

- 12 Years
  Average time in current organization

- 9 Years
  Average time in current position

- 75%
  Of HR Directors are directly involved in hiring

- 21%
  Is the average amount of an HR Director's time spent directly on hiring

- 11%
  Of HR Directors are military veterans
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