

I am Major General Robert W. Smith III, U.S. Army Retired. I am the Director of Veterans' Services Division, Workforce Development Agency, State of Michigan. Veterans' Services Division is part of the Michigan Strategic Fund. Our charge is to work with and for employers to find and match appropriately skilled and trained veterans to fill employment opportunities.

Our first process with veterans is to do an assessment like a triage to determine if they are job ready, need additional education or skill training, need healthcare or if they are just plain unemployable. After the assessment, hopefully the veterans and either the veteran representative or Michigan Works! One Stop personnel will reach consensus on a next step, which could include developing a resume, referral to a veteran's administration counselor to explain GI Bill benefits or a county service officer or veterans' service officer to help them register with the VA to determine if they qualify for a disability rating and benefits.

Concurrently, on the employer side, Veterans' Services Division has helped educate the employer on the benefits of hiring a veteran which can include financial initiatives as part of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

Now to the point of this hearing, we in Veterans' Services Division would like to offer this committee some insight into the questions before us.

First, some of the casual factors that have contributed to returning veterans and higher unemployment:

- Many are unemployed before going on deployment
- Several quitting their jobs before deployment
- Several are in school
- Employer downsizing
- Employer relocations
- Some pick up barriers
 - Bad Conduct Discharge
 - Physical injury
 - PTSD & TBI
- Money from Post 9/11 GI Bill has discouraged some service members to look for employment, as much as \$2000 month.

Secondly, some statewide programs that are in effect include:

- Letter to VETS
- Vet Reps DOL
- Michigan One Stops
- TAP
- Gold Card
- VOW
- National Guard Initiative and Yellow Ribbon
- Priority Service Opportunities
- MPRI & Fidelity Bonding
- Job Fairs
- Out Reach (radio show)
- ESGR
- OJT
- Apprenticeship
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit

Lastly, some new initiatives that are being planned and formulated are:

- TAP in theatre
- Mich-Again (Live/Work/Play Michigan at Discharge Point)
- Social media outreach (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr)
- Michigan joining the National Labor Exchange
- Veteran friendly schools

Thank you for your time.

PURE MICHIGAN®

January 30, 2012

«First_Name» «Last_Name»
«Business_Address_Street»
«Business_Address_City», «Business_Address_State» «Business_Address_Postal_Code»

Dear «First_Name»:

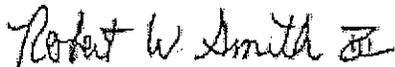
Welcome home! Thank you for your service to our country, and for returning to Michigan.

The State of Michigan is in a period of ongoing transformation, creating a competitive 21st Century Workforce, with workforce training, education, and entrepreneurship at the forefront. As a veteran, you are entitled to benefits and services provided by the State of Michigan through the Michigan Works! One-Stop Service Centers located throughout the state. Whether you decide to continue on a career path using your Military Occupation Specialty or pursue something new, the Michigan Veterans' Employment Services Web site (www.michigan.gov/veteranjobs) can assist you to become part of Michigan's 21st Century Workforce. Here you will find information about employment opportunities, training, starting your own business, information for employers about the benefits of hiring veterans, and veterans' benefits. You will also find information about education and training opportunities utilizing the Montgomery of post 9/11 GI Bill at one of Michigan's veteran friendly institutions.

You are encouraged to contact your local Michigan Works! One-Stop Service Center to start your transformation process from the military. We have Veterans' Employment Representatives, fellow veterans at the Michigan Works One-Stop Service Centers, who can assist you with accessing and using your veterans' benefits in Michigan, or any other special services for which you may be eligible. For a listing of Michigan Works! One-Stop Service Centers statewide locations go to www.michiganworks.org and insert your zip code to find the Michigan Works! Service Center closest to you. For information about filing for unemployment insurance, call (866) 500-0017 or go to www.michigan.gov/uia. On the reverse side of this page is a list of Veterans Service Organizations that provide a wide range of services and benefits to veterans.

If you have any questions, please call the Michigan Veterans' Hotline at (800) 455-5228 or e-mail a Veterans' Resource Specialist at veteransservices@michigan.gov. Your thoughts and concerns are important to us, and we will assist you in every possible way. Again, thank you for your service and welcome back to Michigan!

Sincerely,



Robert W. Smith III
Major General, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Director, Veterans' Services Division
Workforce Development Agency

RWS:EM:jml



Workforce Development Agency, State of Michigan
Victor Office Center : 201 North Washington Square, 5th Floor | Lansing, Michigan 48913
michigan.gov/bwt | 517.335.5858 | TTY 888.605.6722

The WDASOM is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids, services and other reasonable accommodations are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Welcome Home!

Veterans Service Organizations



The American Legion:

☞ <http://www.michiganlegion.org/>



Veterans of Foreign Wars:

☞ <http://www.vfwmi.org/>



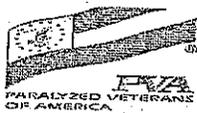
Disabled American Veterans:

☞ <http://www.davmembersportal.org/mi>



Marine Corps League:

☞ <http://www.mcleague.org/>



Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America:

☞ <http://www.michiganpva.org/>



Military Order of the Purple Heart

☞ <http://www.purpleheart.org/>

THE VOW TO HIRE HEROES ACT OF 2011

COMPREHENSIVE LEGISLATION TO END VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT

The Problem – Veteran Unemployment

Approximately 160,000 active duty servicemembers and 110,000 National Guardsmen and reservists transition to civilian life each year. For too long, we've patted our veterans on the back for their service and then pushed them out into the job market alone.

This has led to an unacceptably high unemployment rate among veterans, without regard to their period of service. A recent Department of Labor report states that in 2010, **the average unemployment rate among returning veterans was 11.5%**. That is **one in ten** of our nation's heroes who can't find a job to support their family, don't have an income that provides stability, and don't have work that provides them with the self-esteem and pride that is so critical to their transition home. Currently, there are nearly 1 million unemployed veterans in the United States.

The Solution – “The VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011”

“VOW to Hire Heroes Act” is bipartisan, bicameral, comprehensive legislation that would lower the rate of unemployment among our nation's veterans. This bill combines provisions of Chairman Murray's Hiring Heroes Act (S. 951; Report #112-36), Chairman Miller's Veterans Opportunity to Work Act (H.R. 2433; Report #112-242), and veterans' tax credits into a comprehensive package that will aggressively attack the unacceptably high rate of veteran's unemployment by:

- *Improving the Transition Assistance Program (TAP):* The VOW to Hire Heroes Act will make TAP mandatory for most servicemembers transitioning to civilian status, upgrade career counseling options, and resume writing skills, as well as ensuring the program is tailored for the 21st Century job market.
- *Facilitating Seamless Transition:* This bill would allow service members to begin the federal employment process prior to separation in order to facilitate a truly seamless transition from the military to jobs at VA, Homeland Security, or the many other federal agencies in need of our veterans.
- *Expanding Education & Training:* The VOW to Hire Heroes Act provides nearly 100,000 unemployed veterans of past eras and wars with up to 1-year of additional Montgomery GI Bill benefits to qualify for jobs in high-demand sectors, from trucking to technology. It also provides disabled veterans up to 1-year of additional Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Benefits.
- *Translating Military Skills and Training:* This bill will also require the Department of Labor to take a hard look at what military skills and training should be translatable into the civilian sector, and will work to make it easier to get the licenses and certification our veterans need.
- *Veterans Tax Credits:* The VOW to Hire Heroes Act provides tax incentives of up to \$5,600 for hiring veterans, and up to \$9,600 for hiring disabled veterans, if the veteran has been looking for work for six months or longer.

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

GOLD CARD

SERVICES FOR POST 9/11 ERA VETERANS

The One Stop Career Centers are ready to provide you intensive services for up to a six month period through an exciting array of career and supportive services to include:

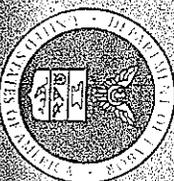
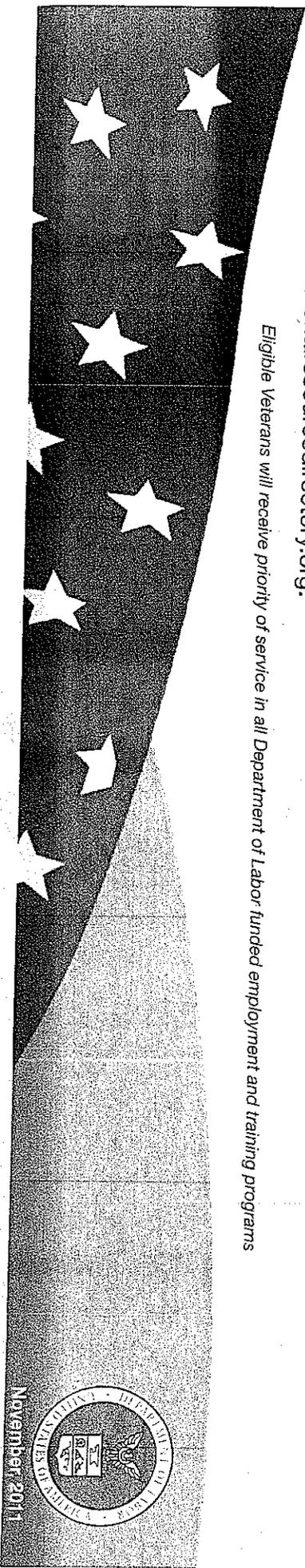
- Case management
- Skills assessment and interest surveys
- Career guidance
- Job search assistance



HOW TO ACCESS GOLD CARD SERVICES?

- Information about Gold Card Services can be found at www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard.html.
- Locate your nearest One Stop Career Center by going to America's Service Locator www.servicelocator.org or by calling Toll-Free 1-877-US2-JOBS (1-877-872-5627) TTY: 1-877-889-5627.
- Once a One-Stop Career Center has been located, go there and present this Card.
- Information about other services and benefits can be found at www.ebenefits.va.gov/ and www.nationalresourcedirectory.org.

Eligible Veterans will receive priority of service in all Department of Labor funded employment and training programs



November 2011

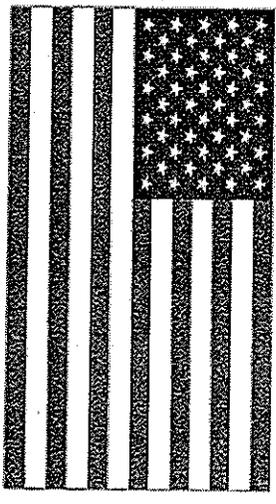
PURE MICHIGAN®

VETERANS' SERVICES DIVISION

MICHIGAN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
 Help Line 800-455-5228,
veteransservices@michigan.gov
 Monday-Friday 8 a.m. -- 5 p.m.
<http://www.mitalent.org/veterans>

Veteran Qualities that Will Improve Your Bottom Line:

- Leadership
 - Teamwork
 - Integrity
 - Diversity and inclusion in action
 - Efficient performance under pressure
 - Respect for structure and punctuality
 - Current with technology
 - Accelerated learning curve
 - Conscious of safety standards
 - Triumph over adversity
- In addition, employers get:**
- Financial incentives/tax breaks
 - Satisfaction in showing appreciation for those who served



LARA

LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
 CUSTOMER DRIVEN. BUSINESS MINDED.

Michigan Talent Bank

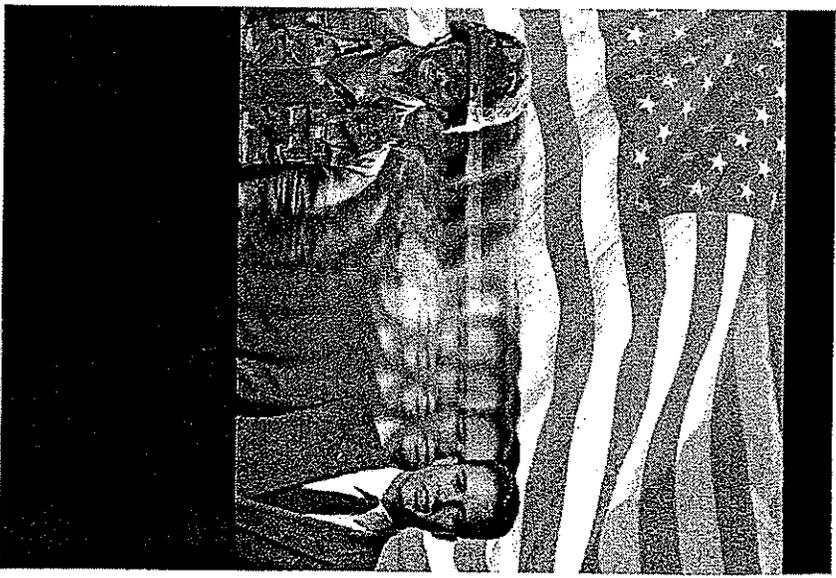
Help Line 888-253-6855
 Monday-Friday 8 a.m. -- 5 p.m.
www.michigan.gov/talent

MICHIGAN WORKS

www.michiganworks.org
 800-285-WORKS (9675)

The Michigan Workforce Development Agency is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Printed by authority of Jobs for Veterans Act Reprinted xx/2012, Total copies: 250,000 Total cost: \$xxx.xx, Unit cost: \$.xx WDASOM xxx-xxxx

Need Qualified Employees?



Why should your company hire military veterans?

As an employer, you are aware that the success of your company depends on its assets. People are the greatest assets in which you invest and hiring the right people will save you time and money.

You acquire valuable assets by hiring military veterans. They have been taught to work as a team, often multi-tasking under stressful conditions. Members of the military are routinely responsible for millions of dollars worth of equipment, have learned to creatively solve problems, and must adapt to constant change. If all of your employees had these traits, your productivity would increase substantially and result in higher profits.

In addition to being disciplined and ethical, veterans are trained to be physically and mentally fit, which can result in decreased medical costs. Training costs can be reduced due to their strong work ethic and the extensive training they may have already received.

The loyalty and dependability of veterans is unsurpassed, and they can help to reduce turnover and improve corporate image. Your company should hire military veterans because they are human capital and may become your most valuable assets.

Incentives and Assistance

As part of the Hiring Incentive to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act, the IRS gives tax benefits for hiring qualified workers who were unemployed/underemployed for the past 60 days. HIRE credits may be used in conjunction with WOTC. www.irs.gov.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers financial incentives for hiring certain disabled veterans. Employers may be reimbursed up to 50 percent of the veteran's salary for the first six months. Details may be found at www.vba.gov/bln/vre.

Fidelity bonding (up to \$25,000) is offered by the State of Michigan free for six months.

Employers can receive assistance in finding qualified veterans to fill their open positions by contacting a Veterans' Employment Representative. These representatives are great liaisons between employers and job seekers. They can help you post your positions free of charge on the Michigan Talent Bank, where you can search resumes for specific criteria. View a list of local employment representatives at <http://www.michigan.gov/vetreprs>.

If you have questions about hiring military veterans or the tax credits and incentives available to you, call the State of Michigan Veterans' Services Division through the Veterans' Hotline at 800-455-5228.



Employer Tax Credits

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is available to private for-profit employers who hire specific military veterans. Depending on the employment scenario, private businesses may qualify to reduce their federal tax eligibility by as much as \$9,600 for one hire!

The WOTC applies to new employees who began work on or after December 31, 2005. You may be eligible to reduce tax liability by as much as:

Target Group	% Credit and Retention Period	Maximum Credit
All Veterans	25% with min. of 120 hours.	\$1,500
All Veterans	40% with min. of 400 hours.	\$2,400
Veterans with at least four weeks of unemployment benefits in the past year	40%	\$2,400
Veterans with at least six month of unemployment benefits in the past year	40%	\$5,600
Disabled veterans discharged within the past year	40%	\$4,800
Disabled veterans with at least six month of unemployment benefits in the past year	40%	\$9,600
Other disabled veterans	25% with min. of 120 hours.	\$3,000
Other disabled veterans	40% with min. of 400 hours.	\$4,800

For more information on the WOTC, go to www.michigan.gov/via and click on "Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program" or call the WOTC Unit at 800-482-2959