

**PROJECT:**

Supporting Veteran Employment: Best Practices

**INVESTIGATORS:**

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**SPONSOR:**

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

**AMOUNT AWARDED:**

\$769,642

**BACKGROUND:**

Since 2001, about 1.9 million U.S. troops have been deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq. Despite today's military experiencing multiple deployments to a war zone, most men and women return successfully and adjust to civilian life. Others experience difficulty transitioning to employment within the civilian workforce, pursuing education, or adjusting to family life upon their return.

In order to better assist veterans as well as National Guard and Reserve members in making a successful transition to the workforce, there is a need for an improved understanding of "what is working" and "what is needed" by employers. This includes an investigation into successful on-boarding and retention strategies, use of affinity or employee resource groups, mentorships, workforce education, and effective management practices with regard to the psychological health related challenges (or perceived challenges) among returning veterans.

The goal of this project is to identify promising and emerging best practices with regard to supporting the success of veterans in the workplace. The information gained from participating companies will be used to develop toolkits, resources, and online materials for both employers and veterans to help facilitate the hiring and retention of veterans and support their long term careers.

In the course of the project, researchers will document the hiring and retention practices as well as the current policies and programs that employers across the country, including Fortune 500 companies, have in place with regard to military veterans. The team will assess employers' understanding of the mental health and related needs of veteran employees as well as employers' knowledge of the supports that facilitate veteran employees' productivity and advancement.

In addition to BBI, the project team includes Corporate Gray, a veteran-owned business connecting employers with veterans nationwide, and the US Business Leadership Network. The research team also works closely with staff from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the project's Advisory Board, which consists of veterans, corporate executives, employee assistant program experts, human resource directors, leaders of veterans' advocacy groups, and representatives from the Department of Defense and the Department of Labor.

**POTENTIAL IMPACT:**

- New knowledge on best practices that support the success of veterans in the workplace.
- High rates of use by companies, nationwide, of state-of-the-art online toolkits and other support materials to refine and improve current and future initiatives, practices, and programs.
- Greater hiring and retention rates of veterans in companies that put these resources to use.
- High rates of use by veterans, nationwide, of state-of-the-art online toolkits and resources that support their transition to the workplace and their long term career goals.
- Greater rates of retention and career advancement in the workplace among veterans.