



NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS

“Beyond Yellow Ribbon: Are Employers Prepared to Hire, Accommodate, and Retain Returning Veterans with Disabilities”

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Quick Takeaways:

- Employers confront a number of barriers to effectively hiring veterans with disabilities (VWD) including gaps in knowledge, misconceptions about the population, and confusion about accommodation practices.
- While employers generally agree on the potential benefits of veteran employees, many believe that hiring VWD – specifically those with PTSD or TBI – will be prohibitively costly and time consuming.

Study:

Researchers conducted a survey of 1,083 human resource professionals to understand employer readiness to hire, accommodate, and train VWD and determine how that readiness translates into practical actions. The researchers divided employer barriers into three types: Don't Know (knowledge); Won't (willingness); and Can't (ability) to answer the following questions: 1) Do employers possess the knowledge needed to effectively employ VWD; 2) Do employers have the beliefs/willingness to employ VWD; and 3) Are the employers' policies/practices geared toward effectively hiring VWDs?

Findings:

Despite a widely stated preference to hire VWD and a general belief that VWD employees would benefit an organization (73%), many employers demonstrated barriers in all three areas. Knowledge gaps existed in recruitment, legal requirements, and accommodation resources. For example, many employers (73%) lacked knowledge of programs which could help recruit VWD, such as the VA's VetSuccess Program. There were also significant knowledge gaps regarding both the needs of VWD with PTSD or TBI, and where to find accommodation resources.

The survey found that most employers believed that accommodating VWD would require significant effort. Furthermore, most employers did not have practices in place that would support the effective employment of VWD. These practice deficiencies covered the entire spectrum of employment – from recruiting and hiring to providing accommodations and post-employment support.

Conclusion:

Employing, recruiting, and accommodating VWD, including those who are diagnosed with PTSD or TBI, requires knowledge and willingness on the part of the employer. Misconceptions and lack of understanding about mental and physical health conditions may cause employers to overlook qualified and knowledgeable candidates. Interventions that address all three barriers may increase job retention, create a positive work environment, and promote willingness among employers to hire veterans regardless of disability status.