



You have a lot to Offer: Ten Points for Veterans to Consider When Returning to Work with a Disability

1. Focus on the right stuff.

You have a lot to offer in the workplace: skills, discipline, teamwork ability, resilience and courage. This is as true now as it ever was, even though things might have changed. You have a range of rights, services and resources to support you in your transition to civilian work life. A key challenge for any veteran with a disability is to not sell themselves short. Your talents, skills, passions and aspirations matter now as much as they ever did. Work isn't just about money. It's also about getting back to civilian life, about meeting people and about applying the skills and experiences learned in the military. Returning to work can be part of the healing process. For more information, go to:

www.americasheroesatwork.gov

www.hireahero.org

www.dol.gov/vets/programs/Real-life/main.htm

www.hirevetsfirst.org

www.familyofavet.com/aboutus.html

healmyptsd.com/

www.militaryfamily.org/search/search.jsp

www.vetjobs.com

www.askjan.org/topics/veterans.htm

vetcentral.us.jobs

www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-userra.htm

familysupportclearinghouse.org

www.dhs.gov/xabout/careers/gc_1246894993888.shtm

biztaxlaw.about.com/od/taxcredits/f/Whats-The-Tax-Credit-For-Hiring-Unemployed-Veterans-.htm

2. What about working and benefits?

Benefits and work incentives planning are critical supports to aid veterans in balancing their recovery, managing the array of public benefits they receive (e.g. Veterans Administration, Social Security Administration, healthcare and others) and taking their first steps toward going back to work. Work Incentive Planning and Assistance programs provide these important services. For more information, go to:

www.military.com/benefits/military-pay/va-disability-compensation

www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/va-compensation-tables

yourtickettowork.com/wipas

www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/

www.va.gov/

www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/state-veterans-benefits-directory

www.fallenheroesfund.org/Family-Resources.aspx

biztaxlaw.about.com/od/taxcredits/f/Whats-The-Tax-Credit-For-Hiring-Unemployed-Veterans-.htm

3. Some disabilities are obvious to others; some are not.

Conditions like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury may not always be obvious to others. But these conditions are often still considered disabilities under the law. This is important because veterans with both obvious and non-obvious disabilities have rights under the American with Disabilities Act and other laws. For more information, go to:

www.earnworks.com

www.careeronestop.org/militarytransition/disability.aspx

4. Telling others about a disability when applying for a job— it's a choice.

Veterans (or anyone else with a disability) do not have to tell a potential employer about a disability when applying for a job. This is the case even when they believe they might need an accommodation once on the job. Veterans who decide they don't want to tell about their disability when they apply for a job are not "lying." They are exercising a legally protected choice. For more information, go to:

www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/guidance-inquiries.html

5. Telling about a disability: Making a decision that's right for you.

Before applying for a job, think through your decision about telling a potential employer about a disability. Some people choose not to let the employer know about their disability. They might think the disability doesn't impact the job; they might believe they won't be considered fairly for the job; or they might fear a potential employer will not understand. Others may decide they do want to tell a potential employer about their disability--they might want to discuss their needs on the job; they might be eligible for special considerations in the workplace; or they might just want to avoid surprises after they get hired. Think through a decision that's right for you. For more information, go to:

www.askjan.org/topics/discl.htm

www.eeoc.gov/facts/jobapplicant.html

6. What is an accommodation?

Veterans (and any worker) with a disability often have a right to a reasonable accommodation when applying for a job and when working. Simply put, an accommodation is any change in the work environment or in

how things are usually done that enables a worker with a disability to enjoy equal work opportunity and perform the essential functions of a job. Examples of accommodations are changing facilities or equipment, changing schedules, changing work location, changing marginal (non-essential) job tasks, or getting extra time to do a test during a job application. For more information, go to:

www.askjan.org

www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/accommodation.html

www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-userra.htm

7. Asking for an accommodation.

A veteran (or anyone else) with a disability doesn't need to use special legal or medical language to ask for an accommodation. You just need to let the hiring manager or employer know that you need an adjustment or change because of a medical condition. The employer may or may not decide to get more medical information about your condition in order to understand your accommodation need. All of this must be kept confidential and if more medical information is collected, this information must also be kept confidential. For more information go to:

www.askjan.org/Eeguide/index.htm

8. Think through what accommodations you might need.

When it comes to accommodations, no one size fits all. Even veterans with the same condition might need different types of accommodations depending on their job, their situation and the duration of their disability. Think through your condition, how your condition

could impact job tasks, your own work style, and how your condition might change over time. The employer bears the cost of an accommodation, but most accommodations cost far less than what employers believe. Also, there may be resources available to help with the cost of an accommodation. For more information, go to:

www.askjan.org/media/atoz.htm

cap.tricare.mil/wsm

9. Getting an accommodation on the job is a right, not a "special favor" or a weakness.

Just because someone needs an accommodation does not mean they are failing or are unqualified for the job. Also, an employer cannot penalize or terminate an employee because they ask for an accommodation. If you are working with a disability, you should consider asking for an accommodation before your disability impacts job performance. An accommodation is not a special favor or a sign of weakness; it is a legally protected right. For more information, go to:

www.askjan.org/Eeguide/IIRequest.htm

www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-userra.htm

10. Myths about workers with disabilities—don't buy into them!

Studies show that employees with disabilities perform as well on the job as any other employee. They may just do things a little differently. For more information, go to:

www.doleta.gov/disability/html/docs/myths.cfm

www.whitman.syr.edu/ebv

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www.northeastada.org

