

VETERANS



HONORING ALL WHO SERVED
VETERANS DAY

**Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion
(DEI) Toolkit for Veteran's Day**

www.diversityequalityinclusion.org

Introduction

Veteran's Day is a time to honor the service and sacrifices of our military veterans. As organizations strive to create inclusive environments, it's crucial to recognize the unique experiences and contributions of veterans within the workplace and broader community. This toolkit is designed to provide practical strategies and resources to support veterans, promote understanding of their experiences, and foster an inclusive environment where they can thrive.

Target Audience

- **Human Resources Professionals:** To develop and implement veteran-friendly policies and practices.
 - **Educators:** To foster an inclusive environment for student veterans and incorporate veterans' experiences into the curriculum.
 - **Community Leaders:** To engage and support veterans within the community.
 - **Diversity Officers:** To integrate veterans' issues into broader DEI initiatives.
 - **Employees and Colleagues:** To better understand and support veteran coworkers.
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1. Understanding Veterans in the Workplace

Definition of "Veteran":

A veteran is any individual who has served in the United States Armed Forces, including the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and National Guard. Veterans can be of any rank, with varying lengths of service, and may have served during peacetime or wartime.

Common Challenges Faced by Veterans:

- Transitioning from military to civilian life.
- Dealing with mental health issues, such as PTSD.
- Finding employment that matches their skills and experiences.
- Facing potential bias or misunderstanding from non-veteran colleagues.

The Value of Veterans in the Workforce:

- Strong leadership and teamwork skills.
- Experience in high-pressure environments.
- A strong sense of duty, discipline, and work ethic.

- Technical skills and training from military service.
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2. Creating a Veteran-Friendly Workplace

Recruitment Strategies:

- Partner with veteran organizations and job boards like **Hire Heroes USA** or **Veterans Job Bank**.
- Highlight veteran-friendly policies in job postings.
- Provide information on transferable skills to help veterans understand how their military experience fits with your roles.

Onboarding and Integration:

- Offer a tailored onboarding program that addresses the unique needs of veterans.
- Assign veteran mentors or buddies to help new hires transition.
- Include information about veteran resources and Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) during onboarding.

Veteran Employee Resource Groups (ERGs):

- Create ERGs focused on veterans to provide support, networking, and advocacy.
 - Encourage veteran ERGs to participate in company-wide initiatives and DEI efforts.
 - Promote leadership opportunities within ERGs for veterans.
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3. Supporting Veterans' Mental Health

Understanding PTSD and Other Mental Health Challenges:

- Educate managers and employees about PTSD and other conditions that veterans may face.
- Provide training on recognizing signs of mental health issues and how to offer support.

Providing Access to Mental Health Resources:

- Ensure that Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) include resources specifically for veterans.
- Promote mental health services available through the **Veterans Health Administration** and other veteran-specific providers.

Creating a Supportive Work Environment:

- Encourage open discussions about mental health to reduce stigma.
 - Offer flexible work arrangements to accommodate medical appointments or treatment.
 - Provide a quiet space or designated areas for veterans who may need a break from the office environment.
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4. Promoting Veteran Awareness and Education

Training and Education for Non-Veteran Employees:

- Offer training programs that educate non-veteran employees about military culture and the unique experiences of veterans.
- Host lunch-and-learn sessions with veteran speakers or panels.

Celebrating Veterans' Contributions Throughout the Year:

- Recognize veterans on Veterans Day and throughout the year with events, acknowledgments, and company communications.
- Highlight veterans' contributions to the organization in newsletters or on the intranet.

Incorporating Veterans' Stories into Company Culture:

- Share veterans' experiences and stories in company-wide meetings or communications.
 - Feature veterans in internal or external marketing materials to showcase their impact.
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5. Legal Considerations and Compliance

Overview of Relevant Laws (e.g., USERRA):

- **USERRA (Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act):** Protects veterans' employment rights, including job reinstatement and protection from discrimination.
- Ensure compliance with **ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)** concerning disabled veterans.

Ensuring Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity:

- Implement policies that prohibit discrimination based on veteran status.
- Regularly review and update policies to ensure they align with federal and state laws.

Reasonable Accommodations for Disabled Veterans:

- Provide accommodations as needed, such as flexible work hours, assistive technology, or modified job duties.
 - Work with disabled veterans to identify what accommodations will best support their success.
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6. Practical Tools and Resources

Sample Veteran-Inclusive Policies:

- Develop a veteran hiring policy that emphasizes inclusivity.
- Create a military leave policy that supports active-duty employees and reservists.

Communication Strategies for Engaging Veterans:

- Use clear, respectful language that acknowledges veterans' service.
- Encourage managers to have one-on-one discussions with veteran employees to understand their needs.

Partnerships with Veteran Organizations:

- Collaborate with local and national veteran organizations to support veteran employees.
 - Participate in veteran job fairs and community events to engage with veterans.
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7. Resources and Links

Online Training Programs and Webinars:

- **Veteran Employment Leading Practices** by the U.S. Department of Labor: [Link](#)
- **PTSD Awareness Training** by the National Center for PTSD: [Link](#)

Mental Health Support for Veterans:

- **Veterans Crisis Line:** 1-800-273-8255, Press 1 or [Veterans Crisis Line](#)
- **Make the Connection:** Resources for Veterans and their families: [Link](#)

Veteran Recruitment and Employment Resources:

- **Hire Heroes USA:** [Link](#)
- **Veterans Job Bank:** [Link](#)
- **Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR):** [Link](#)
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Conclusion

This toolkit aims to provide a comprehensive guide for organizations to support and engage veterans effectively. By integrating these strategies and resources, you can create a workplace that honors and leverages the unique experiences of veterans, contributing to a more inclusive and diverse environment for all.



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