Employing Veterans with Disabilities

Elise Shanbacker, Senior Policy Analyst, NGA
Presentation to NCSL Task Force on Military and Veterans Affairs
December 4, 2013
Two recent NGA initiatives related to employing veterans and people with disabilities:

A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities

Overview

• Launched in July 2012
• Focused on what states can do to support private- and public-sector employers in hiring more people with disabilities
• Convened governors, state & federal officials, business leaders, advocates & self-advocates, experts, and thought-leaders from across these communities
A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities

Five Strategies for Governors

1. Make Employing People with Disabilities Part of the State Workforce Strategy
2. Find and Support Businesses to Employ People with Disabilities
3. Be a Model Employer
4. Prepare Youth with Disabilities to Work
5. Make the Best Use of Limited Resources
A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities

Five Strategies for Governors

1. Make Employing People with Disabilities Part of the State Workforce Strategy
   - Establish employment as a priority (e.g. Employment First)
   - Track outcomes
   - Make the business case
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Five Strategies for Governors

2. Find and Support Businesses to Employ People with Disabilities
   - Dedicate one point of contact with business expertise
   - Work with businesses in sectors
   - Include small business
   - Focus on skills and assessment
   - Help navigate the complexities of benefits
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Five Strategies for Governors

3. Be a Model Employer
   – Fast-track hiring for people with disabilities
   – Focus on retention and advancement
   – Adopt complementary approaches such as ensuring disability-friendly state websites
   – Set hiring goals and track progress
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4. Prepare youth with disabilities to work
   • Incorporate career readiness content into the educational curriculum to establish an early emphasis on working and launching a career
   • Provide professional skill development and job exploration opportunities in high school
   • Encourage state colleges and universities to support college students with disabilities by linking disability services with career services and providing students with specific knowledge and skills to be successful
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5. Make the best use of limited resources
   – Use the numerous federal programs;
   – Connect to the private sector and foundation community resources;
   – Take advantage of the disability experts in your state.
Veterans’ Licensing and Certification Policy Academy

• Overview
  – Two-year demonstration project with DOL (VETS & ETA)
    • May 2013-May 2015
  – Authorized in the VOW Act (2011)
    • Section 237
  – Pilot strategies to ease credentialing barriers for separating Service members in:
    • 6 states
    • 5 in-demand occupations
## Selected States & Occupations

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<th>CDL</th>
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<th>Other Health Occupation</th>
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Veterans’ Licensing and Certification Policy Academy

• Goals
  – Create accelerated credentialing processes that facilitate the transfer of military training and experience to civilian occupations.
  – Increase the number of credentials attained by service members returning to or entering the civilian workforce.
  – Reduce the number of UI claims by service members at EOS.
  – Reduce the length of time for which veterans receive UI benefits.
  – Compare and reduce the costs associated with credential attainment.
Key Activities

• Conduct gap assessments
  – Build on existing gap assessments based on national standards;
  – Access military training materials and understand the training that is provided in the military.

• Grant equivalency where appropriate
  – Model legislation, board-recognized equivalency, waivers, customized pathways to licensure, standards for granting academic credit (interpreting ACE standards & military transcripts), etc.

• Bridge gaps where they exist
  – Develop and pilot bridge programs
First Policy Academy Meeting

• Held November 19-21 in Washington, DC
• States focused on:
  – Understanding the training provided by the military in each occupation;
  – Developing best practices to grant equivalency and bridge the gaps between that training and their unique civilian licensing and certification standards.
• States also:
  – Developed an action plan to implement best practices;
  – Learned about other ways to support veterans in the transition from the military to civilian careers, beyond licensing and certification barriers.
Veterans’ Licensing and Certification Policy Academy

• Deliverables

  – Cross-State blueprint based on implementation strategies to address barriers and carry out solutions.
  
  – Cross-State cost study based on real and projected costs and savings by each state demonstration pilot.
Questions?

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