



Understanding opportunities for U.S. veterans

Policymakers: Secure better outcomes for veterans

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Veterans still face inequities in the U.S. workforce.

Veterans are technically skilled and highly educated, yet military experience is undervalued by employers. Based on LinkedIn data and insights, we found that despite veterans having leadership as a top skill and nearly 2x more work experience than nonveterans, veterans are half as likely to reach director or vice president leadership roles in the civilian workforce.

The **2023 Veteran Opportunity Report** aims to shine a light on the current state of veteran employment to help policymakers and employers shape a better future for veterans.

Let's look at the facts:



Veteran employees have higher retention rates.

Veterans are 27% less likely than nonveterans to leave their first job within 6 months.



Veterans are more likely to hold advanced degrees.

Veterans are 3x more likely than nonveterans to have a graduate degree.



Veterans have valuable experience.

Veterans have nearly 2x more work experience than nonveterans.



Veterans are highly skilled.

61% of veterans' first civilian jobs are high-skilled, and eight of LinkedIn's top 10 most in-demand skills are top veteran skills.

Investigating the role of internships in the post-military transition:

Nonveterans are nearly 6x more likely to have an internship while in school than student veterans. **Almost one in three (30.4%) nonveteran students participate in at least one internship, compared to just 5.3% of student veterans.**

One possible explanation for this is that veterans may feel pressured to enroll in summer school to maintain or extend their GI Bill basic allowance for housing benefits, which stop or pause when they are not in school. Facing financial instability, veterans may choose school over internships, hindering their long-term employment outcomes.

Transparency around internship compensation may aid this community in making more informed decisions about where to invest their time.



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Recommendations: Close the employment and advancement gap for veterans.

Here are three steps policymakers can take to secure better outcomes for veterans:

- 1 Fund and promote programs designed to streamline the transition.** Programs like [SkillBridge](#) play a critical role in helping veterans launch meaningful post-service careers. But many transitioning service members are unaware of the resources available to them. Expanding these programs and increasing awareness of them in military communities will help ensure more veterans find the support they need to get their new careers off the ground.
- 2 Advocate for veterans in the workforce.** Military experience is often undervalued by civilian employers. Policymakers can help change perceptions by publicly celebrating companies that have strong veteran hiring and professional development programs. For industries facing staffing challenges, partner with government public employment services to help connect veterans to employers that could benefit from their skills.
- 3 Ensure government hiring and promoting practices meet veterans where they are.** Veterans are often uniquely well suited for government work. Work with hiring managers and third-party vendors to take a skills-first approach to hiring that reflects the ways service members pick up critical skills outside of traditional workplace settings. Track promotion rates among veteran and nonveteran hires to ensure staff with military experience aren't being left behind.

Understanding veteran underrepresentation in executive roles:

As previously noted, **veterans are half as likely to reach director or vice president leadership roles in the civilian workforce**, despite having more work experience than nonveterans and strong leadership skills.

However, veterans who are able to break through initial barriers get promoted more quickly than nonveterans, reaching both director and VP roles with 1 year less non-military work experience than nonveterans.

These insights suggest that the corporate sector undervalues military experience and does not take full advantage of veterans' skills — hindering the career advancement of veterans and robbing organizations of diverse leadership perspectives.

Conclusion

Veterans bring a wealth of needed skills to the workforce. By developing national and local strategies to support them, policymakers can help ensure that veterans reach their full potential in their post-military careers — benefiting their communities, employers, and the economy as a whole. **Download the full 2023 Veteran Opportunity Report for more insights into the state of veteran employment.**

[Read the report](#)

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