



Wisconsin Welcomes Service Members Transitioning to Civilian Life

Talent attraction initiative touts benefits, services offered to Veterans, families

MADISON —Now is a great time to be a military Veteran in Wisconsin.

When Governor Scott Walker appointed me WDVA secretary 19 months ago, he asked me to ensure that every Veteran who wanted a job had one.

Even as our employers have been doing a great job employing our Veterans, demand for Veterans continues to grow as hundreds of employers that are eager to hire them have now registered thousands of jobs on WiscJobsForVets.com, the state's online resource to connect veteran job seekers with good-paying career opportunities in Wisconsin. Fortunately, not only is Wisconsin the national leader in state benefits offered to Veterans and their families, but we also lead the nation in how states attract and employ Veterans and their spouses after military service.

On Friday, we officially announced the details of our Veterans talent attraction program. As part of the \$6.8 million bipartisan legislation that was signed by Governor Walker last spring, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs has teamed up with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, the Department of Workforce Development and the Department of Tourism to attract highly-skilled servicemembers and their families to Wisconsin.

The foundation of our Veterans talent attraction program is that we don't wait for Veterans and their families to find out on their own why Wisconsin is the ideal place to live and work. We go out to where they're stationed, engage them face-to-face, and in collaboration with Wisconsin's great employers, get servicemembers and their spouses jobs in Wisconsin BEFORE they leave military service and help them transition their families into Wisconsin's communities.

For the past 100 years, states have simply waited for separating servicemembers to return home after service. That might have been effective when everyone returned home to the farm or factory, but it doesn't work now. Wisconsin is leading while many other states are still waiting. We are the only state to partner directly with Hiring Our Heroes and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to reach and employ separating servicemembers and spouses before leaving service.

At our first transition summit at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton from August 29-30, more than 1,000 talented Veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses will participate in a series of town hall-style panel discussions, networking receptions, employment workshops, and Hiring Our Heroes job fairs. On the dais with hiring behemoths like Microsoft and Amazon will be the State of Wisconsin, reinforced by its fabulous Veteran-ready employers interested in hiring as few as one or as many as 3,000 Veterans.

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We have thousands of family-sustaining jobs currently available statewide across myriad industries. We're No. 1 in healthcare services. We offer a low cost of living in comparison to other states. There are County Veteran Service Officers in each of our 72 counties to act as tireless advocates. Most of all, the Veterans community in Wisconsin as a whole is ready and eager to help servicemembers and families make the transition into civilian life.

So, whether you are an employer interested in hiring Veterans, a Veteran or spouse in search of employment, or just interested in helping, I encourage you to visit WiscJobsForVets.com and join in our talent attraction effort.

(Daniel J. Zimmerman is the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs. He has a 25-year military career and is the chief advocate for more than 354,000 Veterans living in Wisconsin.)