

NASPE Communications Awards

**Veterans Employee Resource Group (VERG)
Quarterly Newsletter**

Washington State

**Glen Christopherson, Assistant Director for State Human Resources
Washington State Office of Financial Management
PO Box 47500
Olympia, Washington
98504-7500**

Narrative

1. Provide a brief description of the submission.

The Veterans Employee Resources Group (VERG) is made up of volunteers from across Washington state government agencies. The group's focus is support development, recognition, support, and retention of current veterans working in state government. The newsletter communicates individual accomplishments, provides career growth information, and supports outreach on benefits and services for veterans.

2. How long has the submission been in existence?

The VERG Newsletter was developed in the fall of 2013 and released its first publication in early February of 2014, with plans to publish the second installment in May of 2014.

3. Why was the submission created?

The Newsletter was created to communicate the opportunities and successes of the VERG, as well as support career growth and support for veterans in state service. The newsletter is also a precursor to what will become a dedicated website.

4. How does this submission support the goals and objectives of your agenda/department?

The VERG Newsletter supports the goals and objectives of State HR by promoting recruitment, retention, and development of veterans in the state workforce. In addition to supporting Governor Inslee's first executive order on transitioning service members, the newsletter will promote career development activities which are prototypes for broader workforce development efforts. The newsletter also supports our efforts to grow the VERG as it moves into its third year.

5. Have you been able to measure the effectiveness of this submission? If so, how?

Yes. We have been able qualitatively evaluate each of the VERG's subgroups' efforts to communicate their activities and outcomes to target audiences. We have also been successful in creating a communications plan for this group which details the myriad of partners the VERG has been able to leverage in order to be affective in reaching target audiences.



Veterans
Employee
Resource
Group

WASHINGTON STATE

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NEWSLETTER

February 2014

Volume 1

2013-2014 Executive Committee Member Agencies

- Attorney General's Office (**ATG**)
- Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals (**BIIA**)
- Consolidated Technology Services (**CTS**)
- Department of Commerce (**COM**)
- Department of Corrections (**DOC**)
- Department of Ecology (**ECY**)
- Department of Enterprise Services (**DES**)
- Department of Financial Institutions (**DFI**)
- Department of Health (**DOH**)
- Department of Labor and Industries (**L&I**)
- Department of Licensing (**DOL**)
- Department of Natural Resources (**DNR**)
- Department of Revenue (**DOR**)
- Department of Social and Health Services (**DSHS**)
- Department of Veteran Affairs (**DVA**)
- Employment Security Department (**ESD**)
- Health Care Authority (**HCA**)
- Human Rights Commission (**HUM**)
- Office of Administrative Hearings (**OAH**)
- Office of Financial Management-State HR Division (**OFM/SHRD**)
- Parks and Recreation Commission (**PARKS**)
- Puget Sound Partnership (**PSP**)
- Recreation and Conservation Office (**RCO**)
- State Investment Board (**SIB**)
- Washington Lottery (**LOT**)
- Washington State Department of Transportation (**WSDOT**)
- Washington State Patrol (**WSP**)
- Washington State School for the Blind (**WSSB**)
- Washington Student Achievement Council (**WSAC**)

Executive Board

Chair: Marcos Rodriguez (**PARKS**)
 Co-Chair: Cathrene Nichols (**DVA**)
 Secretary: Ashley Harris (**OFM/SHRD**)
 Executive Sponsor: Mary Forbes (**DVA**)

Introduction

Welcome to the introductory issue of the VERG Newsletter. This newsletter is intended as a resource for state agency military veteran employees, family and friends of veterans, and those assisting veterans with state employment.

Background

The Washington State Veterans Employee Resource Group (VERG) was formed in 2012 as a resource for making state government an employer of choice for Veterans by recommending and developing strategies with the state employees' veteran community. The Office of Financial Management, State Human Resources will provide guidance and support to help the VERG succeed.

Purpose

The VERG exists to help integrate the experience, values, and knowledge of veterans and transitioning service members in state employment. The VERG will provide advice and

assistance to state agencies on veteran recruitment, retention, and strategy development in accordance with the [Governor's Executive Order 13-01](#). This Employee Resource Group supports existing state employees who have served as members of the armed forces through recognition, resource identification, and mentorship.

Goals

- Recruit veterans to state service through outreach and educational activities.
- Retain veterans by providing a support structure, education, and career progression assistance.
- Recognize veterans by planning annual activities that honor their military and state service.



VERG's Founding Members One Year Anniversary

Committee Contacts

[Ashley Harris](#) —OFM
[Barbara Anderson](#) —PSP
[Becky Boutilier](#) —DSHS
[Bill Allman](#) —HCA
[Bill Dodge](#) —OAH
[Bob Euliss](#) —RCO
[Brian Shrader](#) —WSIB
[Bruce Dempsey](#) —DOH
[Carole Horrell](#) —LNI
[Gary Allin](#) —WSAC
[Howard Cox](#) —DES
[Janet Kurz](#) —WSSB
[Janice Whitman](#) —HUM
[Jennifer McDaniel](#) —LOT
[John Moysiuk](#) —ESD
[Jose Zamora](#) —DOR
[Juanita Sandifer](#) —BIIA
[Kim Siebs](#) —ATG
[Leialani Jensen](#) —HCA
[Lonnie Spikes](#) —DOL
[Marcos Rodriguez](#) —PARKS
[Mike Hashberger](#) —WSDOT
[Mike Stout](#) —DFI
[Molly O'Donnell](#) —CTS
[Robert Bamba](#) —DOC
[Steve Young](#) —DNR
[Sue Richards](#) —COM
[Todd Wagner](#) —ESD
[Tommy Simpson](#) —DOH
[Troy Tomaras](#) —WSP
[Walter Bennett](#) —ECY

VERG Committees

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

COMMITTEE

We have targeted several initiatives for 2014 that support retaining and growing the Veteran talent pool within state employment. These include:

- Engaging HR and other hiring managers in opportunities to help identify eligibility and associated qualifications that Veterans possess during both the recruitment process and career enhancement and advancement opportunities.
- Sponsoring a State Employment Career Fair specifically for Veterans interested in state employment.
- Scheduling outreach activities with military organizations (TAP/ACAP), Veterans-specific organizations (e.g. VFW, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, VA), and site visits with state agencies.

We are excited about getting out there and helping Veterans actualize their state career goals to the fullest extent possible. Your feedback is welcome as we work to build and improve this infrastructure.

RECOGNITION COMMITTEE

The Support Tactics and Recognition Sub-group (STARS) is tasked with developing and delivering methodologies to draw ongoing attention to the value of Veterans who are already employed by Washington State. Our efforts focus on providing a variety of resources to agencies intended to aid them in their Veteran recognition and support activities. Examples of resources include web page content, holiday event notifications, and collaboration with Veterans across the state to openly display our share appreciation for the skills, values and knowledge that are inherent to Veterans and a benefit to their employers.

THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Communications Committee aims to promote, communicate and share consistent, reliable, veteran specific transition support information as well as employment opportunities for state service. In addition to putting together a periodic newsletter to share employment resources and news among Veterans within state government, the committee also plans to utilize the following to assist with VERG-related outreach efforts:

- Social media (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook)
- Emails
- Employee publications
- Media op-eds articles, etc.
- Meetings
- On base media channels
- TVW
- Radio

Transition Assistance Online

Since 1996, TAOnline.com (Transition Assistance Online) has been here to help the nearly 200,000 service members who transition from active duty every year as well as the hundreds-of-thousands of veterans, reservists, guardsmen, and spouses looking for civilian jobs. Our career site is dedicated to their placement in careers that fit their extraordinary motivation, loyalty, and skill. TAOnline.com assists our country's heroes in gaining employment at the world's finest military-friendly companies. We help match employers to candidates through the use of pertinent and dynamic career information, unique online tools, relationships with key partners, and our longevity and experience in the military career site business.

Founded by former military personnel, TAOnline.com has been recognized by industry experts and organizations as a top leader in providing veteran jobs.

Transition Guidance - Success during your transition is the result of an honest self-assessment, developing sound financial and career planning objectives, aggressively pursuing your job search strategies and a little hard work!

Both federal and state employers offer a wide-array of benefits to veterans and others. While there are differences, many federal and state employment laws tend to overlap. For more information, job-seekers are also encouraged to consult their state Department of Labor.

About the VERG

The VERG is governed by a set of By-Laws that outlines the group's membership, operational processes, and scope of activities. The VERG does not act as an alternative employment mechanism for addressing employee grievances and operates in alignment with all related bargaining agreements, rules, and laws.

Camo 2 Commerce

The Camo 2 Commerce program is a partnership of the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council, Workforce Central, the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce and the Stone Education Center. The goal of the program is to help transitioning service members find meaningful employment in the local labor market. One of the services offered through the program is On the Job Training, which provides a wage reimbursement to employers who hire transitioning service members.

Shortly after John Stevens left active duty, he enrolled in the program to get help finding an employer where he could apply his education and experience gained in the U.S. Army.

Using the on-the-job training program, Camo 2 Commerce helped John find a job with the Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs as a Case Manager for their Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program. After serving his country for 23 years, John has a new and rewarding job helping veterans get the services they need and deserve.



HR Helpful Hints

by Leialani C. Jensen

This section of our newsletter is to help communicate ideas, resources and helpful tips to any Veteran that may be interested in pursuing a job with the State of Washington. This month's Helpful HR Hint: [Employment Workshops](#)

For those applicants who are interested in how to begin a career in state service, a great resource to start you off is the monthly state Employment Workshops that are presented by the Department of Enterprise Services. Applicants will get personal instruction on how to find out about state job openings, how to use the online application tool, and will gain an understanding of how the application and screening process works. The Washington State Human Resources website maintains information for these workshops, in addition to other Online Resources. Just visit: [Job Seeker Services](#) to find out more.

Book Review: Elements of Resume Style

by Mike Stout

[Elements of Resume Style\(ERS\): Essential Rules and Eye-Opening Advice for Writing Resumes and Cover Letters that Work](#) is a short and easy to read. The author, Scott Bennett, has been hiring and coaching job seekers since 1996.

[Elements of Resume Style](#) is written in a question and answer format; so navigating key topics is easy. Scott Bennett covers a few things very well. ERS explains key resume elements such as experience, education, contact information, and page format. There are numerous examples of using Action Statements to describe work experience. There are lists of descriptive verbs and phrases; and there are lists of negative words that waste space. There are several example resumes showing proper formatting and style. ERS is full of example Position Descriptions that show the reader how to translate technical jargon and abstract skills into business language. ERS will help you sell your skills by keeping the reader in mind. Remember a good resume makes an interview possible.

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Veteran Employees Resource Group
P.O. Box 43113
Olympia, WA 98504-3113

Article Submission

If you'd like to send an article for inclusion in the newsletter, please send it the following email address:

william.allman@hca.wa.gov