

THE INFORMER

The Official Newsletter of the Washington State VERG

February 27, 2019

VERG Hiring Event

On November 1, Joint Base Lewis McChord hosted their quarterly summit for transitioning veterans and their spouses. This unique opportunity allows current active duty soldiers, transitioning veterans, veterans and their spouses to speak directly with Recruiters from a plethora of state agencies in both a panel forum and job fair to ask questions and gain insight to getting employed with the state of Washington.

Recruiters and others representing state government shared tips and tricks on how to navigate the state application system and explained how to get past the barriers of translating military skills into a civilian environment, specifically state government. The transferrable skills that both spouses and military possess, regardless of whether they have utilized them in the work force were explained, along with how Veteran's preference is used during the recruitment process.

Representatives shared best practices to help our warriors get into state government by discussing how to get an informational interview, the basics of networking, the importance of the Veterans Employee Resource Group (VERG) and using the resources of those in attendance to help gain employment with the state. The summit was an amazing success and the state will surely benefit from hiring and retaining such skilled talent.

– Submitted by Lisa Biscay, MSHR LBiscay@agr.wa.gov

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Veteran Fellowship Program

Employers hope to make progress in building inclusive workplaces through diversity recruiting efforts and will continue to experiment with new recruiting, interviewing and selection techniques that will bring top talent into the workforce. Steve Jobs said it best when he said, "Great things in business are never done by one person. They're done by a team of people" (Jobs). Our VERG recruitment initiative will be working with our State OFM military recruiting efforts to help ensure that we are promoting the importance of hiring veterans and their family because of the skills, abilities, and diversity they bring to the workforce. We have some exciting plans to help recruit top talent into our organizations; we hope to really get things started in January. Here are some of the strategies we have to get the ball rolling:

1. Reinvigorate the WA State Non-Paid Fellowship program for transitioning Service Members;
2. Work with partners that already focus on providing Fellowship opportunities with state agencies;
3. Develop data tracking guidelines to capture the work the VERG is doing regarding recruitment;
4. Support OFM's Military recruiting pilot program and provide recommendations for future programs;
5. Support the Washington State Military Transition Council and their efforts to develop statewide strategies for transitioning service members in WA State.

These are some exciting times and I appreciate all the hard work and ideas that our committee members have put together so far to get things going. I look forward to working with other state agencies as well as other partner organizations to ensure that we have the most veteran friendly state in the country.

If you have any ideas or would like to get involved with our efforts please contact us at:

prescss@dshs.wa.gov

paulcr@dva.wa.gov

Thanks for all you do!

Respectfully,

Shawn Prescher and Paul Cruz

VERG Employer of the Year Award

Congratulations to the Department of Revenue (DOR) for winning the 3rd Annual 2018 VERG Employer of the Year award. VERG Chair, Christine Dominguez and Co-Chair, Ray Hicks, presented the award to DOR Acting Director, Randy Simmons, in a Veterans Day ceremony at DOR on November 6th.

The Recognition subcommittee is now working on plans for the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Ceremony to be held in place of the March VERG meeting at Department of Revenue in Tumwater. More information will be forthcoming.

Veteran Recruitment Initiatives

On November 13, 2018, OFM invited HR practitioners, HR managers and other stakeholders involved in the recruitment of veterans to participate in a discussion on topics that directly impact veteran recruitment initiatives. The topics of discussion included the current status of the Enterprise Veteran Recruitment Plan, Online Recruiting System Capabilities & Benefits of Full Utilization, Veteran Fellowship Program, and Veteran Preferences Application.

The goal of the event is to inform as well as to welcome the discussion of the challenges faced when recruiting veterans into state government employment. Veteran-related discussions allow us to identify opportunities and collaborate to find ways to improve veteran recruitment efforts. Attendees were enthusiastically participating in the discussion and welcomed the opportunity to have additional sessions to discuss similar veteran-related topics. OFM will revisit some of the topics during upcoming Lunch & Learn opportunities.

Submitted by Flora Estrada, Veteran Strategy Specialist Flora.Estrada@ofm.wa.gov



Transition Council Launches Spouse Employment Initiative

If you are not already familiar with the Washington State Military Transition Council (WSMTC), it was established in the same executive order that created the VERG. However, instead of focusing only on state government, the WSMTC focuses on veteran and military family employment across the entire state.

Consisting of leaders from state and federal agencies, military installations, and other non-profit partners, the WSMTC Executive Committee gets together each year and establishes priorities for collaborative work. Last year the Executive Committee endorsed creation of an on-base American Job Center, resulting in creation of WorkSource JBLM. This year the Executive Committee endorsed two strategic priorities: support for military spouse employment and professional development, and portability of licenses and professional certifications for both veterans and military spouses.

Now that the Department of Defense is focusing again on recruitment and retention, most of our state, federal, and local partners have begun putting additional resources and time towards supporting the entire military family. Many service members choose to leave because the military lifestyle gets in the way of their spouse pursuing their professional goals. Also, many hiring managers have a bias against spouses who they perceive to be unreliable due to gaps in their work history or frequent moves. The lack of dual-incomes makes it very difficult for many service members to continue in the armed forces.

In October 2018, workgroups were formed around the two WSMTC strategic priorities. The spouse employment group will initially focus on (1) improving military spouse access to employment and career information; and (2) obtaining better data on the number of military spouses in the labor market. Long term efforts will focus on strategies to improve access to childcare and flexible work, and develop resources for employers to become more 'military-spouse friendly.' The license and certificate portability group will also initially focus on improving spouse access to license and certificate information, as well as identifying which licenses, certificates, and other credentials are most valuable to veterans and military spouses. Long term, this groups will work on developing and sharing best practices between agencies to streamline and expedite licenses and certifications.

In addition to the work of the WSMTC, we are also partnering with the US Chamber Foundation on their Military Spouse Economic Empowerment Zone (MSEEZ) initiative. 'Zones' are an employer driven partnership to expand military spouse employment opportunities. Washington State was the first statewide zone endorsed by the Chamber back in June 2018, and Olympia and Spokane quick followed suit in September. We also anticipate future zones in Bremerton, Everett, and Tri-Cities. The Statewide Zone will serve as an umbrella to support local efforts, and each local zone will identify regional career clusters or 'pillars' around which to develop spouse employment initiatives. At its launch event in September, the Olympia MSEEZ identified five pillars: government, tribal enterprises, information technology, health care, and retail/hospitality/tourism. The Spokane MSEEZ identified three pillars: public service & education, healthcare, and professional services. Each pillar has its own workgroup of employers and community partners who will collaborate on developing military spouse employment strategies.

Moving into 2019, there will be many opportunities for state agencies and other partners to participate in WSMTC and MSEEZ efforts. If you are not already connected, please contact Mark Sullivan at marks@dva.wa.gov. We look forward to working with you in 2019!

Veteran Spotlight – Lisa Maxim Biscay, Recruiter (HRC4), US Army Veteran Washington State Department of Agriculture



Lisa Maxim Biscay is a U.S. Army veteran serving as a Recruiter for the State of Washington's Department of Agriculture. She is currently assisting Human Resources to design a new onboarding process for new hires. Lisa has a Bachelor of Arts from San Francisco State University and a Master of Science in Human Resources. She served in both active duty as well as the California Army National Guard.

Prior to working for the state, Lisa was the Human Resources Manager for over five years with Oregon Aero, an aerospace company located just north of Portland, Oregon. She created a Human Resources Department from the ground up, developing and executing human resource strategy, to include succession planning, talent management, change management, organizational and performance management, training and development, and compensation. As part of her duties, Lisa conducted full cycle recruiting, onboarding, testing administration, job counseling and salary negotiations. She was accountable for retention, payroll, worker's compensation and employee relations, and she ensured the company maintained compliance with all legal and regulatory guidelines.

During her tenure as the Human Resources Manager, Lisa instituted the Work Share (Shared Work) program in her company, alleviating potential layoffs. She was handpicked as a national spokesperson for the National Employment Law Project (NELP), and she spoke twice in Washington, D.C. on behalf of the Department of Labor and NELP, helping pass legislation to implement the program in numerous states. In addition, Lisa gave testimony before the State of Oregon's Ways and Means Committee regarding the benefits of the program. For this work, she was awarded the Oregon Award of Merit, both group and individual, as well as the International Association of Workforce Professionals International Individual Citation award in 2016. She currently promotes the program in a volunteer role as she continues her new career within the WA State Department of Agriculture.

As a volunteer, Lisa served as the President of the Oregon Employer Council, Portland Chapter, a non-profit organization dedicated to educating and promoting workforce development across private and public sectors throughout the state. She served as Vice President of the Oregon Washington Industrial Liaison Group, a non-profit group that fosters open communication between federal contractors and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and provides scholarships to high school seniors. Lisa was a board member of the Education and Workforce Committee for Associated Oregon Industries, whose focus is on educational excellence for Oregon's youngest citizens.

Lisa co-founded and was a board member of the Oregon Sewing Consortium; in this role, she worked with the University of North Carolina Fashion Design program and served as a liaison with the University of Oregon's Sports Management Board. She currently volunteers for veteran organizations, including Hero2Hired and Camp Withycombe Veteran Job Fairs, helping veterans with resume writing and interviewing skills as part of their transition to civilian employment. She also works with local high schools, developing curriculum for students to develop their resumes and interviewing skills.

Governor Jay Inslee Holiday Reception for the VERG

Governor Jay Inslee and First Trudi invited the Veterans Employee Resource Group (VERG) on Thursday, December 20, 2018, for a holiday reception. The Governor thanked the VERG for all the hard work that the VERG has done to help transitioning members attain careers within Washington State.



VERG Website:

<http://www.dva.wa.gov/about-wdva/washington-veterans-employee-resource-group-verg>