

RETIREMENT AND TRANSITION CHECKLIST NATIONAL GUARD EMPLOYMENT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (NGEEP)

As you begin to look at **ACTIVE GUARD RESERVE (AGR) OR FEDERAL TECHNICIAN (FT)** retirement and transition from the **OHIO NATIONAL GUARD** into the civilian market – there is a lot to consider. When to begin looking for your next career, how to gain an understanding of the job market, and most important, how to prepare yourself for a significant lifestyle change. The intent of this checklist is to provide a basic framework that includes best practices, recommendations, actions, and selected links designed to assist you in addressing challenges service members face as they move from the military into their next career.

BASIC RULES

- START EARLY.** Beginning to prepare for retirement/transition can span **2-3 years** depending on the type of career you want and the required education, experience, and connections needed to get hired. The earlier you start – the more aware and prepared you are for multiple opportunities.
- UNDERSTAND THE MARKET.** Though many corporations claim to be military friendly – the reality is that the right combination of education, skills, experiences, and potential remain as the most prominent factors in obtaining a job or beginning a career. Though your status as a former service member can open doors – it is not a guarantee of employment.
- KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO MAINTAIN YOUR CURRENT LIFESTYLE.** Understanding your expenses and revenue is an essential aspect of the job/career search. Using a simple excel spreadsheet/ledger to compare current/future income against lifestyle costs (mortgage, expenses, savings, etc.) can provide a bottom-line in determining salary needs/expectations. Check with HRO to determine your after tax retirement pay and budget from there.
- BE REALISTIC.** Civilian corporations do not provide BAH or BAS. Additionally, they are not compelled to meet your previous military salary or range of benefits. You will need to start somewhere in the corporation below the president or director level and prove that you are everything that the military said you were – hardworking, resilient, and reliable. **PATIENCE IS KEY.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- KNOW WHAT INDUSTRIES AND POSITIONS/CAREERS ARE MOST IN DEMAND** in Ohio and your area (or the area you want to move to). Go to <http://omj.ohio.gov/OMJResources/In-DemandOccupations.stm> for a comprehensive listing by **OCCUPATION, SALARY, ANNUAL OPENINGS, AND REQUIRED EXPERIENCE.** If you are undecided on your next career – this information can provide awareness and understanding of key careers in Ohio which could lead to you pursuing credentials or education that is relevant to the job market. For a larger perspective - **VetNet** at <http://www.vetnethq.com/> **ONET** at <https://www.onetonline.org/> - **My Next Move** at <https://www.mynextmove.org/vets/> and **Career One Stop** at <https://www.careeronestop.org/ResourcesFor/Veteran/veteran.aspx>
- JOIN AND USE LINKED IN.** If you had a professional career in the military and want a professional career as a civilian – LI is an essential platform that provides the following
 - Information on individual corporations and companies (understanding the market)
 - The ability to connect directly with hiring managers and advocates (networking)
 - Relevant information on how to create a profile, personal brand, resume, and network (preparing)
 - Interacting with virtual mentors (current and former military members in the civilian market)(networking)**As a Veteran you qualify for one year of free premium LI use.** Go to <https://linkedinforgood.linkedin.com/programs/veterans/premiumform> for registration information. Make sure to use a professional (non-military) picture (the photo lab at Beightler does these). The Ohio National Guard Employment Enhancement Program (NGEEP) has a LI page <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8572440> - link with any of the connections found here. Use <https://www.linkedin-makeover.com/services/veteran-support/> as a resource for developing your LI page and profile. Also use the **31 Best LinkedIn Profile Tips for Job Seekers** at <https://www.themuse.com/advice.the-31-best-linkedin-profile-tips-for-job-seekers>

- ❑ **USE OHIO MEANS JOBS** at <https://jobseeker.ohiomeansjobs.monster.com/Veterans/VeteranInfo.aspx>. The site provides links to career resources and benefits; licensing, education, and training; and employment information specific to Veterans/service members. It also allows you to post resumes for review and post resumes to their job site (free). For a wider perspective on training for a new career or pursuing higher education – go to <https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/veteran-and-family-resources/>.
- ❑ **REGISTER WITH USAJOBS** at <https://www.usajobs.gov/>. If you are looking for a government position after military service – USAJOBS is the official site for all job listings. It also provides instruction for creating Federal resumes and has links for Veterans/service members wanting to apply military service and disability hiring preference points toward positions. If you register – you can set your preference and receive updates on positions that meet your interests and qualifications.
- ❑ **BIGGER IS SOMETIMES BETTER.** Large corporations and companies have a wide span of positions and typically have a **MILITARY/VETERAN EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP** that exists to support military members and to assist in recruiting other Veterans and military members. As many corporation look to diversify their employee base, from a demographic and experience perspective, Veterans and service members are an ideal audience. In your job search – look for those corporations that have military resource groups. Connect with the group and individual members to understand the industry, company, or open positions. In Columbus – **JP Morgan Chase, Cardinal Health, Nationwide Insurance, Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Huntington Bank, PNC Bank, and AEP** all have these groups. Using LI will help identify individuals (Veterans and service members) within these groups for you to network with.
- ❑ **GET REFERRALS.** Many times getting an interview is contingent upon who you know, or who you know that knows someone else. A reliable strategy is to leverage your **EXTENDED FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND OTHER ADVOCATES** in using their connections to introduce you to opportunities within industries, career fields, and corporations. Though the ultimate goal is to land an interview – there are other fundamental reasons to make as many connections as possible through individuals who know you or know where you came from (other service members). As part of the referral gamut – most initial interviews are exploratory/informatory. The company wants to explain who they are to you to make sure that you understand their culture, norms, and values. This is a critical for you as it provides awareness and an opportunity to ask questions and have a dialogue about all available positions – not just one. Make a good impression and ask the right questions – second interviews occur.
- ❑ **FIND A MENTOR (or two, or three).** Individuals within industries and careers you are interested in can serve as an experienced source of information and support – especially if they have also made the transition from military to civilian. Similar to referrals, start looking for individual in your extended reach of family and friends. Linked In is one of the best ways to seek out mentors and coaches.
- ❑ **UNDERSTAND JOB FAIRS.** Job fairs are more about networking and gaining information than getting a job. Be prepared to ask questions about the company – not just specific jobs. Look to get a business card from the individuals representing the company and ask how you can follow-up with them about employment opportunities.
- ❑ **POSTING RESUMES.** See get referrals and join and use LI... The OMJ site will allow you to post a military/Veteran tagged resume to their job board. Other than that – applying for jobs by sending resumes to individuals who do not know you is time consuming and ultimately - frustrating.
- ❑ **UNDERSTAND YOUR GI BILL.** Using and managing your GI Bill or other Veteran related tuition programs can provide the right level of education or credentials required for your next career. The ONG has an education team that can directly assist you (go to <http://ong.ohio.gov/education/index.html> for contact information and additional resources), while the GI Bill site is at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/>.
 - Understand the rules for passing your GI Bill benefits on to your family
 - Weigh the cost and benefits of using your GI Bill instead of passing it to your family (can augment your cost of living while attending school or taking a transitional job while looking for your next career)

ACTIONS

- Create a basic resume that describes what you have done (chronologically) across your career. A few guidelines...
 - Go back 10 years – no farther unless the next position/career you are looking for has some relevance to what you did more than 10 years ago
 - No more than two pages – 12 or 11 pt. font in Ariel or Times New Roman. Do not use pre-formatted resumes as they are difficult to scan, modify, and change
 - Start with an opening paragraph that explains who you are (3-4 sentences) – in general what you have done across the last 10 years (Manager, Supervisor, Program/Project Manager, HR Manager, Logistics Manager, Executive, Consultant, etc.). Do not worry about translating from military to civilian, just provide a basic overview that is easy for anyone to understand
 - For each individual job – use 2-3 sentences to describe what you were responsible for managing or accomplishing. Here – using the number of individuals you managed, mentored, trained, or supported is key. Additional information on the amount (\$\$) of equipment, resources, or facilities you managed or supported is also appropriate
 - Under each job – use 3-5 bullet comments to describe how you were successful or accomplished one or all of your responsibilities. Detail is important – but, so is brevity. Hiring managers are generally looking for how you increased efficiency, managed change, took on additional responsibility, contributed to overall success, collaborated with others, were recognized for achievement, or used innovation to address a need or challenge. Be careful to accurately portray yourself
 - Do not list TS clearances, awards, or military schools that are not pertinent to the civilian market (which are most of them). If you have Lean Six Sigma, Six Sigma Belt(s), worked on Baldrige, or have any type of leadership courses (officer, warrant officer, NCO professional development) – those are all civilian compatible. List all of your civilian degrees or skills – even if you are currently enrolled (do not put graduation dates on your resume unless you want them to get a solid guess on your age)
 - Avoid hobbies, interests, and anything not germane to the job, career, or industry you are applying to
 - Resume links for Veterans/service members:

<https://www.hireheroesusa.org/10-tips-writing-resume-stands/>

<http://www.resumes4vets.org/>

<https://www.alliesinservice.org/our-programs>

<https://www.jobscan.co/#>

<https://resunate.com/>

<https://app.enhancv.com/resume/new>

<https://theladders.com/resume-builder>

- Go through LI and look at individual profiles and accounts. Get a feel for what is stylish, appropriate, and engaging. Use your resume as a base for your LI profile. There are no correct answers or formats here – just a lot of bad ones that look like Facebook.
- **CONTACT THE NGEPP. We are free employment assistance program that is funded through the Dept. of Defense and created to prepare you for your next career and connect you with employers.**

Cleveland/Akron - Scott Lim 614.400.3520 | 216.973.6112 | scott.kirby.lim@gmail.com

Toledo - Cheryl Hagan 614.400.8845 | cheryl.d.hagan.ctr@mail.mil

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