The Illinois Hires Heroes Consortium (IHHC) is a group of elite Illinois employers who recognize the great value veterans bring to the workplace and operationalize the term “veteran-friendly” by committing to implement veteran recruitment, training and retention practices. Members of the Consortium are Illinois employers who commit to at least three initiatives – one relating to recruitment, one relating to HR training, and one relating to retention and support practices.

The Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs (IDVA) and the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) will actively assist participants in meeting the simple goals that will lead the employer on the path to recruiting and retaining high-quality veteran candidates.

IHHC Members receive:
1. Direct access to Illinois’ broad database of job-seeking veterans through IL Job Link;
2. No-cost, expert support from state agencies in recruiting, hiring & retaining veterans;
3. Preference in getting a spot at high-level hiring events across the state;
4. Innovative HR training practices to maximize the attainment of skilled workers;
5. Exclusive access to the IHHC Member Logo, furthering your veteran-friendly brand;
6. Exclusive access to the IHHC Chronicle, a quarterly newsletter with insider news & tips;
7. Referral support accessing the Illinois Veteran’s Tax Credit.

Employers can join the Illinois Hires Heroes Consortium at:
www.illinoishiresheroes.com

Employers can join the Illinois Hires Heroes Consortium by applying at:
www.illinoishiresheroes.com

If there are any questions, feel free to contact the Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs (IDVA) or the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) at:

IDVA: Emanuel Johnson Emanuel.Johnson@illinois.gov 312-814-3355
IDVA: Robert Lewis Robert.Lewis@illinois.gov 312-814-5538
IDES: Bill Harrison William.Harrison@Illinois.gov 309-794-3604
IDES: Tory Davis(alternate) Tory.Davis@Illinois.gov 309-671-4976

TAKE THE PLEDGE NOW!

1) Recruiting Practices  2) HR Training  3) Retention & Support Practices
Consortium Commitments

Members commit to at least one initiative in each of the following categories:

Recruiting Practices

1. List job openings on Illinois Job Link and on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Employment Center (VEC) (https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs).
2. List job openings on Illinois Job Link and participate in any of the statewide Hiring Heroes events held at various dates throughout the year.
3. List job openings on Illinois Job Link and become an Army Partnership for Youth Success (PaYS) Partner.

Human Resources Training

1. Participate in the Illinois Department of Employment Security’s training regarding military-to-civilian skills and lexicon translation. Alternate delivery options include training furnished by America’s Heroes at Work by the Department of Labor – Veterans Employment and Training Service, and/or Syracuse University’s Institute for Veterans and Military Families.
2. Participate in the Department of Labor – Veterans Employment and Training Service’s “USERRA 101” and “USERRA 102” online training modules.

Upon completion of one or more of the above-listed HR training practices, email Emanuel Johnson at Emanuel.Johnson@illinois.gov notifying the IHHC Administrative Team of completion. Please attach relevant digital certificates, screenshots, or registration documents to verify completion.

Retention & Support Practices

1. Sign the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Statement of Support and highlight, on company media and web-based platforms, veteran hiring/employment support programs and initiatives on a recognizable tab/page for quick/efficient access.
2. Establish/promote an employee resource group and/or corporate mentorship program for prior service members.
4. Pay National Guard and Reserve members the differential between their normal wage and their National Guard wage when they are activated for duty.
Frequently Asked Questions

Recruiting Practices

1. What is Illinois Job Link?

A: Illinois Job Link (IJL) is an Internet-based job search tool that features current job openings and includes both statewide and nationwide job banks. By enrolling in IJL, veterans will be able to navigate job opportunities; may qualify for assistance from IDES’s veteran employment representatives (LVERs); and will be included in the main database used to search for qualified veterans as IDES works directly with major employers seeking to hire veterans. Most importantly, it’s free to employers and job-seeking veterans. IDES staff is standing by to assist employers in listing their positions directly on IJL. For further information on IJL or assistance in enrolling, please visit: https://illinoisjoblink.illinois.gov.

   Contact Name: Bill Harrison, IDES
   Contact Phone Number: (309) 794-3604
   Contact Email: William.Harrison@Illinois.gov

2. What is U.S. jobs by the National Labor Exchange?

U.S. jobs by the National Labor Exchange (NLX) is a powerful, no-cost online tool designed to match qualified job-seekers with job postings. Employers who post jobs openings via NLX will have their jobs posted to the Veterans Job Bank. Post your jobs via the following webpage: https://us.jobs/indexingrequest.asp?phase=3&state=ebenefits.

Here’s how it works: the Veterans Job Bank picks up job openings from an organization's career site through the NLX. By this process, you enable US.jobs to index jobs from your company website and provide links from the National Labor Exchange search results page back to your jobs. If your organization is already included in NLX, veterans and service members can find your job postings on the Veterans Job Bank. Click here to see if your organization is already registered. You do not have to be registered with NLX in order to participate in the Veterans Job Bank, but it may streamline the process.

   Contact Name: Laurie Pensworth
   Contact Phone: 317-874-9015
   Contact Email: Laurie@directemployers.org

3. What is the Veterans Employment Center ™?

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The Veterans Employment Center™ (VEC) is the Federal government’s single authoritative internet source for connecting transitioning Service-members, Veterans, and their families to meaningful career opportunities. The VEC™ is the first government-wide product that brings together a reputable cadre of public and private employers with real job opportunities, and provides transitioning Service members, Veterans and their families with the tools to translate their military skills into plain language and build a profile that can be shared – in real time with employers who have made a public commitment to hire Veterans.

In connection with the First Lady and Dr. Biden’s Joining Forces initiative, the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Labor, Defense and Education, the Small Business Administration and the Office of Personnel Management, collaborated to design and develop the VEC™ to incorporate the best features of existing online employment tools. The VEC™ can be found at www.ebenefits.va.gov/jobs.

4. What are state-sponsored veteran hiring events and how can I participate?

State-sponsored veteran hiring events are supported by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) and/or the Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs (IDVA) as a means to assist Illinois veterans with employment opportunities, job training, education, and specialty programs available for veterans and military spouses. These include events organized through the Hiring Our Heroes initiative of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the 100,000 Jobs Mission, and other major veteran hiring initiatives. For a listing of upcoming events, visit www.ides.illinois.gov/Pages/EventsandWorkshops.aspx. For more information on how to participate in these events or others, please contact:

- **Contact Name:** Bill Harrison, IDES Employer Services  
- **Contact Phone Number:** (309) 794-3604  
- **Contact Email:** William.Harrison@Illinois.gov

OR

- **Contact Name:** Emanuel Johnson, Program Manager, IDVA  
- **Contact Phone Number:** (312) 814-3355  
- **Contact Email:** Emanuel.Johnson@illinois.gov

- **Contact Name:** Robert Lewis, Program Associate, IDVA  
- **Contact Phone Number:** (312) 814-5538  
- **Contact Email:** Robert.Lewis@illinois.gov

4. What is Illinois Joining Forces?

A: Illinois Joining Forces (IJF) is a network of public and not-for-profit organizations working together to improve services to Illinois’ military and veteran communities. The
goal is to create a “no wrong door” system through which service members, veterans and their families can access the right resource at the right time, making a very overwhelming “sea of goodwill” more navigable for service providers and veterans alike. IJF also seeks to meet remaining gaps in services through the work of our member organization Working Groups, which design and implement projects to create best practices guides, train the civilian provider community in order to build system capacity, and more.

Contact Name: Ken Barber, Executive Director, IJF  
Contact Phone Number: (312) 603-6423  
Contact Email: bill.browne@cookcountyil.gov

OR

Contact Name: Bill Browne, Chair, IJF Employment Working Group  
Contact Phone Number: (312) 603-6423  
Contact Email: bill.browne@cookcountyil.gov

5. What is a Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER)?

A: IDES’s Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) conduct outreach to employers and engage in advocacy efforts with hiring managers to increase employment opportunities for veterans and generally assist veterans to gain and retain employment. LVER staff conduct seminars for employers and job search workshops for veterans seeking employment, and facilitate priority of service in regard to employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans by all staff of the employment service delivery system.

When using Illinois Job Link, take advantage of one-on-one assistance from your Local Veterans Employment Representative. The representative can guide you in describing and posting your job order so that you can match successfully to qualified job seekers. To contact your representative, visit www.ides.illinois.gov or call 1-888-367-4382.

Contact Name: Bill Harrison, IDES  
Contact Phone Number: (309) 794-3604  
Contact Email: William.Harrison@Illinois.gov

Human Resources Training

1. What is the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)?

A: IDES provides unemployment insurance (UI), employment services and guidance to workers, job seekers, and employers through a statewide network of IDES offices and Illinois workNet centers. The agency combines federally-funded job training programs in
Illinois into a "workforce development" system via which individuals can find a job or train for a new career. In addition, IDES statewide network of veteran employment representatives and employment specialists stand by to assist Illinois employers with varying employer services. For further information on IDES, please visit: [http://www.ides.illinois.gov/](http://www.ides.illinois.gov/).

IDES will provide a customized, in-person presentation, at no cost, to all interested human resource personnel on a monthly basis at a pre-designated location, date, and time. The presentation will communicate the value of hiring military veterans and illustrate best practices in veteran recruitment, training, and retention practices.

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<tr>
<th>Contact Name:</th>
<th>Todd Lowery, IDES</th>
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<th>Contact Name:</th>
<th>Rich Wuthrich, IDES</th>
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<td>Contact Phone Number:</td>
<td>618.277.8944</td>
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<td>Contact Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Richard.Wuthrich@Illinois.gov">Richard.Wuthrich@Illinois.gov</a></td>
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2. **What is the U.S. Department of Labor – America’s Heroes at Work Veteran Toolkit?**

A: Filled with useful information on hiring veterans, this Toolkit is designed to assist and educate employers who want to include veterans and wounded warriors in their recruitment and hiring initiatives. Featuring a straightforward six-step process, it pinpoints helpful tools and outlines important steps to take when designing a veterans hiring initiative. To obtain the free toolkit, please contact the Department of Labor – America’s Heroes at Work. For further information on the Veteran Toolkit, please visit: [http://www.americasheroesatwork.gov/](http://www.americasheroesatwork.gov/).

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<th>Contact Name:</th>
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<td>Contact Phone Number:</td>
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<td>Contact Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:AmericasHeroesAtWork@dol.gov">AmericasHeroesAtWork@dol.gov</a></td>
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3. **What is Syracuse University’s Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF)?**

The mission of Syracuse University’s IVMF is to fully leverage the intellectual, human and social capital of higher education, in service to America’s veterans and their families. IVMF develops education and employment-focused programs in collaboration with industry, government, NGOs and the veteran community, to address the primary economic and public policy concerns of our nation’s servicemen and women, and their families. For further information on IVMF, please visit: [http://vets.syr.edu](http://vets.syr.edu).
To access “The Guide to Leading Policies, Practices & Resources: Supporting the Employment of Veterans and Military Families,” is a collaborative effort of the Institute and more than 30 private sector employers and supporting organizations to delineate best practices, lessons learned and innovations tied to the recruitment, assimilation, retention and advancement of vets in the workforce. It is available as a PDF at http://vets.syr.edu/pdfs/guidetoleadingpractices.pdf for download. In addition, IVMF issued a brief, “The Business Case for Hiring a Veteran: Beyond the Clichés,” which draws from academic literature to suggest a robust, specific and compelling business case for hiring individuals with military background and experience. It is available at http://vets.syr.edu/pdfs/The%20Business%20Case%20for%20Hiring%20a%20Veteran%203-6-12.pdf.

Contact Name: James Schmeling
Contact Phone Number: (315) 443-2937
Contact Email: jschmeli@syr.edu

4. What are the USERRA 101 and 102 online training modules?

A: The training assists companies in understanding employee eligibility and job entitlements, employer obligations, and benefits and remedies under the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). USERRA protects the job rights of individuals who voluntarily or involuntarily leave employment positions to undertake military service or certain types of service in the National Disaster Medical System. USERRA also prohibits employers from discriminating against past and present members of the uniformed services, and applicants to the uniformed services. For further information on the USERRA online training, please visit: www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra.

- **USERRA 101 Basic Web-Based**
- **USERRA 102 Advanced Web-Based**

Contact Name: Kathy Kozak, Illinois ESGR
Contact Phone Number: (708) 824-6111
Contact Email: kathy.a.kozak.ctrl@mail.mil

5. What are the Hiring Our Heroes Employer Webinars?

A: Hiring Our Heroes, a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, was launched in March 2011 as a nationwide initiative to help veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses find meaningful employment opportunities. Working with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s vast network of state and local chambers and strategic partners from the public, private, and non-profit sectors, the goal is to create a movement across America in hundreds of communities where veterans and military families return every day.
Hiring Our Heroes Employer Webinars are exceptional, no-cost opportunities for veteran-friendly employers to obtain expert training on best practices for effective recruitment and retention of veterans and military spouses. Three different webinars are offered, all one-hour in length:

- **Employer Best Practices Webinars** – Insight from experienced trainers on recruiting, hiring, and retaining veterans
- **Military 101 Webinars** – A recruiter/HR manager’s guide to navigating the military infrastructure
- **Wounded Veteran Employment Webinars** – A comprehensive guide to hiring veterans with disabilities

For more information, or to register for a webinar (which is required), visit the following webpage: [https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/employer-webinars](https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/employer-webinars)

**Contact Name:** Marady Leary, U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
**Contact Phone Number:** (202) 280-9937  
**Contact Email:** mleary@uschamber.com

6. **What are The Value of a Veteran HR Training Webinars?**

The value of a Veteran provides human resources consulting and training for organizations that are seeking to improve support, recruitment and retention of military veterans. In support of IHHC, The Value Of a Veteran offers twice-monthly free web seminars that review the basic building blocks of effective veteran recruitment and retention programs and provide hiring managers with actionable tasks they can begin doing now to improve their ability to recruit and retain veterans. Topics covered in the webinar include:

- The top myths and misperceptions about the skills and talents of today’s military, and the facts that will empower you to overcome hiring manager resistance to considering veteran applications.
- Intro to over a dozen approaches to finding military talent, including many low-to-no cost sources, and the types of talent you are likely to find using those resources.
- Practical ideas for conducting Veterans Outreach as part of your recruitment marketing efforts.
- Insight into translating Military Occupational Codes (MOC’s) so you can understand a resume written in “military-ese.”

For information, or to register for a webinar (which is required), visit the following webpage: [http://thevalueofaveteran.com/webinars/](http://thevalueofaveteran.com/webinars/)

The Value of a Veteran also provides IHHC members with exclusive, no-cost access to
their exceptional Veteran Hiring Guide. Visit their website to download.

Contact Name: Lisa Rosser, CEO and Founder  
Contact Phone Number: (877) 681-9960 ext. 1  
Contact Email: lisa@TheValueOfaVeteran.com

7. What is the Employer of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)?

The ESGR is a Department of Defense organization, established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve component members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment. ESGR seeks to inform and educate employers about their responsibilities toward employees, who serve in the National Guard and Reserve, as well as to recognize and reward those employers who go "over and above" the requirements of the law. For further information on the ESGR, please visit: http://www.esgr.mil/site/.

See Appendix A for a printable copy of the Seven Seals Statement of Support (SoS) for ESGR. If you commit to this option, please print the form and return it to the IHHC Administrative Team.

Contact Name: Kathy Kozak, Illinois ESGR  
Contact Phone Number: (708) 824-6111  
Contact Email: kathy.a.kozak.ctrl@mail.mil

Retention & Support Practices

1. Is there assistance in establishing veteran employee resource groups and/or mentorship programs?

A: The Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs can assist in providing guidance and mentorship in establishing corporate employee resource groups and/or mentorship programs. In addition, the following companies have agreed to provide “best practices” on establishing an affinity and/or mentorship program: Sears, AT&T, BMO Financial, and JP Morgan Chase. Contact information is available upon request.

Contact Name: Emanuel Johnson, Program Manager, IDVA  
Contact Phone Number: (312) 814-3355  
Contact Email: Emanuel.Johnson@illinois.gov

Contact Name: Robert Lewis, Program Associate, IDVA  
Contact Phone Number: (312) 814-5538  
Contact Email: Robert.Lewis@illinois.gov
2. What is the Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs (IDVA)?

A: IDVA is a state agency dedicated to empowering veterans, as well as their dependents and survivors, to thrive by assisting them in obtaining the benefits to which they are entitled; by providing long term health care for eligible veterans; by approving educational institutions for GI Bill funding; by administering state grants and benefits to eligible Illinois veterans; and by working with other agencies and non-profits to help veterans address education, mental health, housing, and employment challenges. For further information on IDVA, please visit: http://www2.illinois.gov/veterans.

Contact Name: Harry Sawyer, Assistant Director, IDVA
Contact Phone Number: (312) 814-2745
Contact Email: Harry.Sawyer@illinois.gov

3. What is National Able?

A: National Able Network is the provider of military-to-civilian employment program models for veterans. National Able’s Veterans Services carries out Able’s mission as it assists those self-sacrificing individuals of the armed forces in becoming self-reliant members of the workforce while also addressing the physical and emotional damages experienced during their service. National Able Network’s Veterans Navigation Assistance Program meets the needs of veterans through a comprehensive service delivery model which addresses personal and professional barriers common among veterans. The integrated program is designed to meet the needs of veterans of all branches, ages, and stages of their career. The program includes specialized job coaching, workplace mentoring, natural workplace supports, customized training, and linkages to supportive services to meet basic needs.

Contact Name: Adam Hughes, Director of Veterans’ Affairs
Contact Phone Number: (312) 994-4292
Contact Email: ahughes@nationalable.org

4. What is CareerOneStop Business Center?

A: Looking to hire a veteran? Then you probably already know the many reasons that veterans make excellent employees. Their military experience has provided them with education, training, values, leadership skills and teamwork experience.

Translate military skills
Many veterans have specific skills that can be put to good use in your workplace. To learn about military occupations that may share skills and work experience with the jobs you're hiring for, visit the [Civilian-to-Military Occupation Translator](#). For questions, call 1-877-348-0502.