

# Welcome Home Tip Sheet

Getting ready to welcome a Military Service Member back from deployment, but unsure how to appropriately recognize him or her? Wondering how you can help a coworker reintegrate to the workplace?

Use this tip sheet for ideas and guidance on how to best recognize, thank and welcome back Military Service Members to their civilian positions.

Supporting the reintegration of a Military Service Member consists of three key activities:

1. Plan a Welcome Home event
2. Acknowledge his or her service
3. Create a welcoming environment

## 1. Plan a Welcome Home Event

Organizing a welcome home event, such as a breakfast, lunch or office party, creates a supportive environment by fostering team cohesion and building a sense of community. Get started by implementing one or more of the suggestions below.

- Schedule a one-on-one informal lunch or coffee to welcome your employee back. If possible, arrange for your department director or team leader to schedule a similar personal get-together.
- Decorate your returning employee's desk with a Welcome Home banner, signed with personal messages from each team member.
- Provide a thoughtful thank you card signed by all team members.
- Schedule a "first-day-back breakfast," and allow time for team members to offer personal sentiments of gratitude to the Military Service Member.
- Hold a staff meeting to officially welcome back your returning employee, thank him or her for his or her service, and offer a small token of support.
- Plan an off-site team-building activity, such as a family picnic or bowling night.

## 2. Acknowledge his or her Service

A small token of appreciation will give the Military Service Member a visual reminder of your support for his or her military service. Select one of the items below, or an item of your choice, to present at the welcome home event. The suggested items are available at low or no cost.



**A. Department of Veterans Affairs Honor Coin**

**B. Tri-fold Flag and Case**

**C. Certificate of Appreciation**

### 3. Create a Welcoming Environment

It is important to create a supportive environment that will ensure your returning employee's homecoming is a smooth one. The following tips will help you develop a supportive and inclusive workplace environment in which the Military Service Member feels honored and recognized:

- **Access VA for Vets resources**

Before your employee returns to the workplace, explore the VA for Vets website for [supervisor-specific guidance](#) about reintegrating Military Service Members into the organization. Available resources include the Supervisors Tip Sheet, Employer Support Resources Flyer, Reintegration Guide and Reintegration Checklists. Compile a Reintegration Toolkit for your Military Service Member.

Direct your returning employee to the deployment and reintegration information on the VA for Vets website.

Encourage him or her to review the tools, training and resources on the website and reach out to a VA for Vets coach for one-on-one reintegration support.

- **Inform your team**

Schedule one-on-one meetings with the returning Military Service Member's immediate coworkers to personally discuss any concerns they have about the impact the Military Service Member's return may have on their responsibilities, as well as to promote the importance of providing a supportive environment throughout the readjustment process.

- **Schedule weekly touch-base meetings**

Within the first few weeks of the Military Service Member's return to the workplace, set up a weekly touch-base meeting with the employee and his or her coworkers to see how they are adjusting, discuss any issues they may be facing, get project updates, and find out how you can help them further.

### Welcome Home Timeline



For additional support, contact a VA for Vets coach.

