

>> I'm Julia Bumbaca with the branch of equal opportunity and diversity and I'm here today to give you some information on our keys to success with veterans programs we have been working with over the last three years in the Washington Office and that have now expanded beyond to Servicewide.

These programs are way of supporting our veterans and we're very proud of these programs and we actually have a lot of veterans already in the Department and in the Fish-&-Wildlife Service and as of April 30th, 2010, DOI had 9,153 veterans and Fish-&-Wildlife Service had 1,335.

So as you can see those are some significant numbers in our workforce and we're looking forward to increasing those numbers and we have a lot of encouragement from the administration to do just that as more and more of our servicemen and women are returning and retiring and returning from service.

So in October 2009 Secretary Salazar put out a memorandum citing the tremendous potential source of well qualified candidates for positions in the Department of Interior and encouraging all the bureaus to use -- utilize the special hiring authorities for veterans more often and support our veterans as they return.

Another policy is the executive order 13518 that came out in November 2009 shortly after the Secretary's memo, and it establishes a council on veterans appointments, and it's also -- requires us to create -- requires the Federal government to create a veterans recruitment and employment strategic plan for 2010-12 and requires all agencies to have a veterans employment program office.

The Department of Interior recently hired a veterans program manager, Martin Pursley who is working with all bureaus now and we're working closely with Martin to share some our best practices over the last three years that you're going to be hearing about.

So what are the programs that we're working with?

We're working with the Department of veterans affairs and their vocational rehabilitation and employment program.

Under that program there are two programs we work with, coming home to work and the nonpaid work experience program.

Basically these programs provide 90-day internships for soldiers and with the opportunity for the employer to pick some up for permanent employment after the internship should it work out, and the other program we work with is the Department of Defense operation war fighter program which started at the Walter reed army medical hospital and what happened is the military noticed the soldiers had a significant amount of time towards the end of their medical treatment and they wanted to give them some meaningful work, and they started to do this through internships at DOD and then they expanded this to civilian agencies, and we've been working with them over the last few years and have with that program and with the VA program we've placed many veterans in internships and hired many of them as well.

So they've been very successful.

The coming home to work program is an early intervention and outreach program, and the emphasis is on soldiers from the operation Iraqi freedom and operation enduring freedom, and this program is very similar to the other program we work with, nonpaid work experience program.

It provides nonpaid work experience to eligible veterans who are recently separated or pending medical separation, receiving treatment at community-based healthcare organizations and veterans affair medical treatment facilities.

So participants in this program receive a stipend and work 90-day internships that can be extended upon request but not to exceed 180 days, and service members and veterans receive a stipend from DOD or

veterans affairs and the only cost to us is the cost for a background investigation if one is needed.

The nonpaid work experience is similar to coming home to work.

It also has internships that are 90 days, and the veteran receives a stipend, and, again, the only cost us to is the background investigation.

How do the programs work?

Well, first we identify managers who are looking for interns, and we get the position descriptions, and then we match them up with resumes that we receive either through career fairs or from the program managers for these programs.

Again, there's no FTE or salary needed, not at least for the nonpaid portion of the internship.

There's a monthly subsistence from DOD or VA and participants gain or strengthen their particular skill sets and again there is no obligation to hire.

The other program that I mentioned is the operation war fighter program, and it's a little different from the others because this is the program that started at the Walter reed army medical hospital and it provides recuperating service members with meaningful activity outside the hospital environment.

It also provides soldiers with the opportunity to build their resumes, explore employment interests and develop job skills and gain valuable work experience, and through this program we've allowed -- we've been able to set up internships on refuges where many of the soldiers want to work outdoors and we're just having a lot of success and a lot of interest from refuge managers, and as I said this is now going nationwide, and we're looking forward to expanding it.

The internship period for operation war fighter is -- can be 90 days to over a year.

The hours do need to be flexible because their medical appointments are a priority of course.

So, for example, they might work two to three days a week, and again they're receiving their military salaries so there is no cost to the Service as far as salary goes, but again we would pay for the background investigation if one is needed.

And where do we find them?

We go to the operation war fighter website on a weekly basis, and that's where we can find their resumes and match them up with managers and supervisors.

Where is it expanding?

It's expanding nationwide in '09.

All of our regional offices helped participate in the expansion, and as you can see, Fort Bragg, Fort Carson, Fort Hood, Stewart, Fort Benning were places where program expand to do, and it's expanded far beyond that since then.

So in this population map for the warrior transition units, you can see there is quite a number of locations of military installations where these Warrior transition units are, and they match up pretty well with our regional offices and field office.

So there's great opportunities here for us to provide internships for the soldiers.

The next map shows you the community-based transition units for the operation war fighter expansion, and, again, these are civilian hospitals where they're receiving their treatment.

So this map combined with the other map you can see there are plenty of opportunities for us to support our veterans, and through that operation war fighter

program.

The last program I wanted to tell you about is the transition assistance program.

This is a program that the Department of Defense and Department of Labor provide to the soldiers as they're transitioning to civilian life, and there are workshops, and these workshops are held all around the country, and there's a website which you'll see here that can identify the closest office near your location, and they like to have employers such as the Fish & Wildlife Service participate in these workshops and provide information on our agency, career information, and opportunities for internships and jobs.

So as I said, we're very proud of these programs and we look forward to working with more managers and supervisors in placing soldiers around the country in internships and eventually hiring them and if you have any questions and you'd like to learn more and participate, I encourage you to call me.

You have my number.

I thank you so much for listening.