

MIXTURE OF SKILLS OFTEN SLOWS EMPLOYMENT FOR VETERANS



Many veterans who are now returning to civilian life after spending many months and years deployed are having trouble finding employment as they return to their hometown, especially as the unemployment rates are still higher than they should be, which leads to a lot of competition for each position. This is very unfortunate, especially as these veterans are people who have served for the country and deserve employment when they need it. Once a week, unemployed veterans get together and meet at the Minnesota Workforce Center. During the meeting, the veterans are able to practice different skills, including interview skills, which can benefit them and possibly help them land the job that they are interviewing for. A lot of these veterans are at least 40 years old and some of the veterans are even older than that. They are seeking employment after losing a job due to the Great Recession, which took place in 2007 and ended in 2009. Although the recession ended in 2009, the economy in the United States has not yet been the same as it was pre-recession, which has kept a lot of people out of work, even those who are actively pursuing job leads. Aside from being older, there are other obstacles these veterans are stuck overcoming. It can be hard to go from military life to civilian life, as adjustments will need to be made. Some veterans have a harder time making the transition back into civilian life. Veterans are excellent employees, having many skills that the average individual does not have. However, they are not always as good with interviews as other people. This is primarily because while serving in the military, these veterans are taught to be direct with their answers, instead of being conversational. A director for veteran employment at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, Jim Finley, says that nearly 12 percent of veterans from after September 11th took place are unemployed. It has been quite a challenge for these veterans to find employment. It will be even more challenging during the spring, when nearly 3,000 soldiers from the Minnesota area come home from Kuwait. Some of these veterans will head over to college while other veterans will be left without jobs, actively seeking employment. There is currently a bill, which is in the process of heading through the Minnesota Legislature, which would make it easier for veterans to find employment after returning home from a deployment by allowing private employers to set preferences for former military members during the hiring process. This is definitely top priority because it is jobs that truly help veterans adjust back to their civilian lifestyle, which is a process and will take time.