

February 28, 2014

The Honorable Tom Saxhaug, Chair
State Departments & Veterans Division
328 State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Kari Dziejic, Vice chair
State Departments & Veterans Division
320 State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Roger C. Chamberlain
Ranking Minority Member
State Departments & Veterans Division
129 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Mary Murphy, Chair
House Government Finance & Veterans Affairs
443 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Jerry Newton, Vice Chair
House Government Finance & Veterans Affairs
575 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Bob Dettmer
Ranking Minority Member
House Government Finance & Veterans Affairs
279 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Veterans Report

Dear Senators and Representatives:

Article 3, Section 22, of Chapter 94 from the Session Laws of 2009 direct Minnesota Management & Budget to prepare the attached annual report and submit it to the chairs and ranking minority members of each of the Senate and House committees having responsibility for veteran policy and finance issues.

Questions regarding this report may be directed to john.pollard@state.mn.us or 651.201.8039.

Sincerely,



Jim Schowalter
Commissioner

cc: Kevin Lundeen, Senate Fiscal Analyst
Bill Marx, House Fiscal Analyst
Eric Nauman, Senate Fiscal Analyst
Helen Roberts, House Fiscal Analyst



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Mark Dayton

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

February, 2014

Members of the Minnesota Legislature:

For more than 150 years, each generation of Minnesotans has answered the call to service in our Armed Forces. Today, more than 20,000 Minnesota men and women serve on active duty in the Minnesota National Guard; and the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and Reserves. Currently, more than 360,000 veterans call Minnesota home. These heroes have put their lives on the line to make our communities stronger, America safer, and the world a better place. We owe them our thanks.

Minnesota veterans deserve more than our gratitude and support. They have earned the promise of a great education and the opportunity to find meaningful work.

State government has a responsibility to do all we can to help Minnesota veterans fulfill their dreams and provide a better life for their families. That is why, as Governor, I have committed Minnesota to removing barriers to employment for Minnesota veterans. Our veterans and our economy have much to gain from these efforts.

Hiring veterans is one of the best investments a business or organization can make. Minnesota veterans have the skills employers seek, including: leadership; intelligence; dedication; and loyalty. Our veterans are resourceful leaders with the capacity to produce results in the most difficult environments. They offer the energy and know-how our economy needs.

The past three years, my administration has connected thousands of hardworking veterans with meaningful employment during the past three years—in state government and the private sector. Through new recruitment and retention efforts, strong relationships with veteran's organizations and advocates, support for deployed soldiers and their families, a focus on hiring veterans in state government, and reintegration training, we are getting our veterans back to work one service member at a time.

I am proud to report the state of Minnesota is leading by example. In Fiscal Year 2013, the state of Minnesota hired 331 veterans. Approximately 9.5% of state employees in cabinet-level agencies have self-identified as veterans, compared to 5.5% in the private sector.

We still have more work to do. And as long as I have the privilege of serving as Governor, I will continue doing everything I can to support our veterans. I ask for your help and your ideas as we work to give all our heroes the promise of freedom and prosperity they have fought so selflessly to defend.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Dayton".

Mark Dayton
Governor

January 2014

Minnesota State Government Efforts to Employ and Support Veterans

**Submitted to the Minnesota Legislature by
Minnesota Management & Budget**

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Upon request, this document can be made available in alternate formats such as large print or braille or audio tape.

Questions about this report may be directed to (651) 201-8039

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Introduction

Minnesota's workforce is comprised of veterans in both the public and private sectors. To assess Minnesota state government's efforts as an employer of veterans, the 2009 Legislature directed the Commissioner of Minnesota Management & Budget to annually collect veteran employment data from each cabinet-level state agency. In addition, Executive Order 10-13 instructs state agencies to report their veteran focused recruitment and retention activities which demonstrate their support and commitment to being a Veteran Friendly employer. This report fulfills Article 3, Section 22 of Chapter 94 from Session Laws of 2009 to provide a report and any additional data deemed important by the commissioner. This document reports veteran activity for fiscal year 2013.

Minnesota Management & Budget would like to acknowledge and thank the executive branch agencies for their support and for providing information on their recruitment and retention activities to be included in report.

Executive Summary

The Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) is required by Article 3, Section 22 of Chapter 94 from the Session Laws of 2009 to annually collect data on the number of veterans in state government and veteran information at various points in the state recruitment and selection process. This is collected from each cabinet level agency. In addition, Executive Order 10-13 instructs state agencies to submit to MMB their veteran focused recruitment and retention efforts demonstrating their support and commitment to veterans.

There were a number of veteran-related laws affecting state employment in the 2013 legislative session. These are summarized on page 3, but the highlights include:

- Public employers are now required to allow deployed employees to choose when within a 12-month period they would like to take their 15-days of military leave
- Department of Defense form DD-214 indicating honorable discharge or separation under honorable conditions can be used to indicate rehabilitation or evidence to perform duties for certain jobs for which an applicant may have previously been disqualified

State law requires that the number of veterans among the state government cabinet-level agency workforce be reported to the legislature every year. Self-identification of veteran status is voluntary and employees are not legally required to provide this information. A self-service page is available on the MMB website for state employees to update their veteran status at any time.

According to fiscal year 2013 data, approximately 9.5% of the state government employees in cabinet-level agencies indicated they were veterans. By comparison, 5.5% of Minnesota's civilian labor force between the ages of 18 and 64 are veterans (*US Census, 2012 American Community Survey*).

Cabinet-level agencies hired 331 veterans into full-time unlimited positions in fiscal year 2013. Since fiscal year 2010 the cabinet-level agencies have hired 1,120 veterans to unlimited positions.

To promote the state as a veteran friendly employer and to increase opportunities for veterans in state government during fiscal year 2013, state agencies conducted veteran focused recruitment and retention activities; provided reintegration education and guidance; built partnerships with veteran organizations and advocates; provided support to their deployed military employees; and retained job classifications whose sole purpose is supporting veterans and in some cases must be filled by veterans. The Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs provides services to ensure that Minnesota's veterans, their dependents and survivors receive the full measure of benefits and services to which they are entitled. In addition, the Minnesota Department of Military Affairs provides support to the Minnesota National Guard members.

Veteran Focused Legislation

Amended 2013 Legislation

M.S. 364.03 Relation of Conviction to Employment or Occupation

- Subd. 3. Summary: Persons shall not be disqualified from public employment or pursuing, practicing, or engaging in occupations requiring licensure solely due to prior criminal convictions, unless the crime or crimes directly relate to the employment position or occupation licensure area. If the crime directly relates to the employment position or occupational licensure area, the person shall not be disqualified if he or she can show evidence of rehabilitation and present fitness to perform the duties. The new amendment extended evidence of rehabilitation to include United States Department of Defense form DD-214, a document indicating honorable discharge or separation under honorable conditions from military service.

M.S. 626.8517

- Summary: Persons in active duty service may take the peace officer exam, but are not eligible to become licensed peace officers until honorably discharged from military service.

M.S. 192.26

- Summary: Public employers are now required to allow workers called to active duty to choose when during the calendar year to take their 15 days of paid military leave.

Existing Legislation

M.S. 1.05 Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights (USERRA)

- Subd. 5. Summary: Allows a current, former or prospective state employee who is a veteran to file a civil suit against the state for alleged violation(s) of USERRA.

M.S. 43A.09 Recruitment

- Summary: Requires MMB, in cooperation with appointing authorities of all state agencies to emphasize recruitment of veterans in addition to protected groups to “assist state agencies in meeting affirmative action goals to achieve a balanced work force.”

M.S. 43A.11 Veteran’s Preference

- **Subd. 7. Ranking of veterans**
Applicants who meet the minimum qualifications for a vacant position and claim veteran’s preference shall be listed in the applicant pool **ahead** of all other applicants.
- **Subd. 7. Recently Separated Veteran Interview Law**
Each recently separated veteran who meets minimum qualifications for a vacant position and has claimed a veteran’s or disabled veteran’s preference must be considered for the position. **The top five recently separated veterans must be granted an interview for the position by the hiring authority.**

M.S.43A.111 Noncompetitive Appointment of Certain Disabled Veterans

- Summary: Allows agencies to appoint qualified veterans with a verified service connected disability rating of at least 30% to classified positions on a noncompetitive basis.

M.S. 192.261 Leave of Absence

- Subd. 1. Summary: Requires the state or any political subdivision, municipal corporation, or other public agency of the state to allow an employee “during convalescence for an injury or disease incurred during active service” up to four years unpaid leave of absence to convalesce, along with a right to employment reinstatement.

M.S. 197.455 and 197.46 Veteran’s Preference Hearing Statute

- Summary: Eligible veterans may not be involuntarily terminated from employment, except as permitted by statute. Employers must notify the veteran of their proposed termination and inform the veteran of their right to contest the termination in a formal hearing. The veteran has 60 days to petition for a hearing. Terminations may not be effected until after the veteran has exercised their right to a hearing or the 60 day timeline to petition has expired. Veterans remain in payroll status during the 60 day period. If the veteran chooses to appeal the termination decision, compensation continues until a final determination is made.

M.S. 197.46 Veterans Preference Act; Removal Forbidden; Right of Mandamus (Amended)

- Requires that when certain government subdivisions notify an employee who is a veteran of intent to discharge the veteran from employment, the subdivision must state that the veteran has 60 days to identify and provide contact information about the person who will represent the veteran before a three-person board hearing the veteran’s complaint about the discharge. A failure of the veteran to provide the information within 60 days constitutes a waiver of the veteran’s right to the hearing and all other legal remedies available for reinstatement of the veteran’s employment position.

Executive Order 10-13 - Supporting the Selection and Employment of Veterans

- Directs state departments and associated agencies, boards, and commissions to continuously review and revise policies and procedures, and conduct increased outreach in order to engage and employ veterans as part of their hiring or selection process.

Veteran Employment Data

The state employee data in **Tables 1 and 4** are collected from the state's personnel and payroll system. These represent a snapshot of state employee data on November 5, 2012 (an approximate mid-point date in fiscal year 2012). The veteran information in **Tables 2 and 3** is collected from the state's applicant tracking system and is applicant data from fiscal year 2013 (July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013). The numerical data in this report is from the cabinet-level agencies in the executive branch as required by statute. The cabinet-level agencies account for over 95% of state employees. The data in this report does not include the legislative branch, judicial branch, MnSCU, or the retirement agencies.

State Employee Veteran Status and Voluntary Disclosure

State law requires that the number of veterans among the state government cabinet-level agency workforce be reported to the legislature every year. Identification of veteran status is voluntary and employees are not legally required to provide this information. To obtain veteran status from state employees, a self-service webpage is available for state employees to update their veteran status at any time. Employees are encouraged, but not required to disclose their veteran status. As a result, some employees who are veterans may have opted **not** to self-identify, impacting the accuracy of this data.

Veterans in State of Minnesota Government Workforce - Table 1

Table 1 shows the distribution of veterans in executive branch cabinet-level agencies.

Key points:

- Approximately 9.5% of State of Minnesota government cabinet-level agency employees self-identified as veterans.
- 5.5% of Minnesota's civilian labor force between the ages of 18 and 64 are veterans. Labor force means employed or available and actively seeking employment. *Source: US Census, 2012 American Community Survey.*

TABLE 1

Veterans in the State of Minnesota Government Workforce

*November 5, 2012 – State Payroll System

Cabinet-Level Agency	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
	Number of employees in FT positions	Number of employees self-identified as veterans	Number of FT positions filled in FY 2013
Administration	421	41	89
Agriculture	403	22	74
Bureau of Mediation Services	11	1	2
Commerce	309	25	98
Corrections	4,059	590	767
Education	361	13	64
Employment & Economic Development	1,369	102	233
Health	1,241	49	300
Housing Finance	221	12	42
Human Rights	32	3	12
Human Services	4,398	263	929
Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation	51	3	17
Labor & Industry	431	40	75
Military Affairs	281	100	87
MN Management & Budget	221	9	97
Natural Resources	2,192	132	590
Office of Higher Education	61	1	17
MnIT	2,019	189	362
Pollution Control	805	33	124
Public Safety	1,787	226	352
Revenue	1,485	71	609
Transportation	4,516	542	901
Veteran's Affairs	516	107	92
Total	27,190	2,574	5,933

Column 1 - the total number of persons employed in full-time positions listed by the state agency.

*Rule 3900.400 definition of full-time employee is an employee who is normally scheduled to work 80 hours in a biweekly period. November 5, 2012(*an approximate mid-point date in fiscal year 2013)*

Column 2 - the total number of employees identified in Column 1 who self-identified as veterans.

Disclosure of an employee's veteran status is voluntary and based on self-identification. Employees are encouraged, but not required to disclose their veteran status. November 5, 2012

Column 3 - the total number of vacant full-time positions in the agency filled by hiring or appointment for fiscal year 2013. Includes Unlimited (an appointment for which there is no specified maximum duration) and Limited (e.g. temporary, emergency, seasonal, trainee, provisional).

Veteran Applicants for State Government Employment- Table 2

Table 2 shows a summary of veteran job applicants, interviewing and hiring in fiscal year 2013.

Key points:

- Approximately 8.8% of applications for state employment are veterans.
- About 47% of veteran applications were found to meet the minimum qualifications for the positions for which they applied
- About 9% of the full time jobs filled in 2013 were filled by veterans. Ninety-seven percent of veterans who are offered a job accept the offering.

TABLE 2
Veteran Applicants for State Government Employment
Fiscal Year 2013 – State Applicant Tracking System

Cabinet-Level Agency Name	COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4	COLUMN 5	COLUMN 6	COLUMN 7	COLUMN 8
	FT Positions Filled	Total App Received	Veteran Applicant	Veterans meeting MQ's	Veterans Interview	Veterans Offered Jobs	Veterans Hired	Veteran Letter*
Administration	81	5,375	494	236	199	4	4	0
Agriculture	44	1,622	100	33	33	3	3	11
Commerce	36	4,396	411	350	266	5	5	66
Corrections	320	7,926	850	478	411	33	33	163
Education	45	2,294	153	56	54	4	4	36
Employment & Economic Development	130	5,481	447	254	179	12	12	7
Health	265	13,073	747	278	250	15	15	475
Housing Finance	32	3,048	212	137	29	1	1	0
Human Rights	9	1,056	85	80	27	0	0	0
Human Services	891	37,787	2,532	858	697	57	57	2,169
Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation	4	38	5	1	1	0	0	0
Labor & Industry	65	2,318	218	79	66	5	5	1
Office of Higher Education	4	351	19	16	2	1	0	0
Military Affairs	56	1,437	430	284	279	24	23	0
MN Management & Budget	53	3,839	258	138	108	5	5	12
Natural Resources	339	13,027	922	279	209	21	21	398
MnIT	144	6,291	762	357	293	11	11	10
Pollution Control	92	4,459	312	182	182	9	8	21
Public Safety	194	10,120	902	322	256	26	26	611
Revenue	310	6,480	479	258	217	21	20	9
Transportation	543	11,085	1,273	559	525	59	54	384
Veterans Affairs	84	5,001	1,273	866	841	26	24	836
Total	3,741	146,504	12,884	6,101	5,124	342	331	5,209

Column 1 - the total number of vacant full-time positions in the agency filled during fiscal year 2013. *This is only unlimited positions (an appointment for which there is no specified maximum duration)*

Column 2 - the total number of applications received for the positions identified in Column 1

Column 3 - the total number of applicants identified in Column 2 who indicated veteran's preference status

Column 4 - the total number of veteran applications identified in Column 3 who meet the minimum qualifications (MQ's)

Column 5 - the total number of veteran applicants identified in Column 4 who were interviewed

Column 6 - the total number of veteran applicants identified in Column 5 who were offered employment

Column 7 - the total number of veteran applicants identified in Column 6 who were hired into the open positions of employment in the agency

Column 8 - the total number of veteran applicants who were sent a rejection letter

*43A.11 Subd. 9, if a member of the finalist pool who claimed veteran's preference is rejected, the agency must notify the finalist in writing of the reasons for the rejection. ***Important Note:** If the agency generated the rejection letter from a system other than the state's application tracking database (e.g. word processing or email system), the letter would not be tracked in the state's applicant tracking database and would not be counted in Column 8.*

Veterans Hired in State Government- Table 3

Table 3 on the following page shows a summary of veterans hired for positions in state government between fiscal year 2010-13.

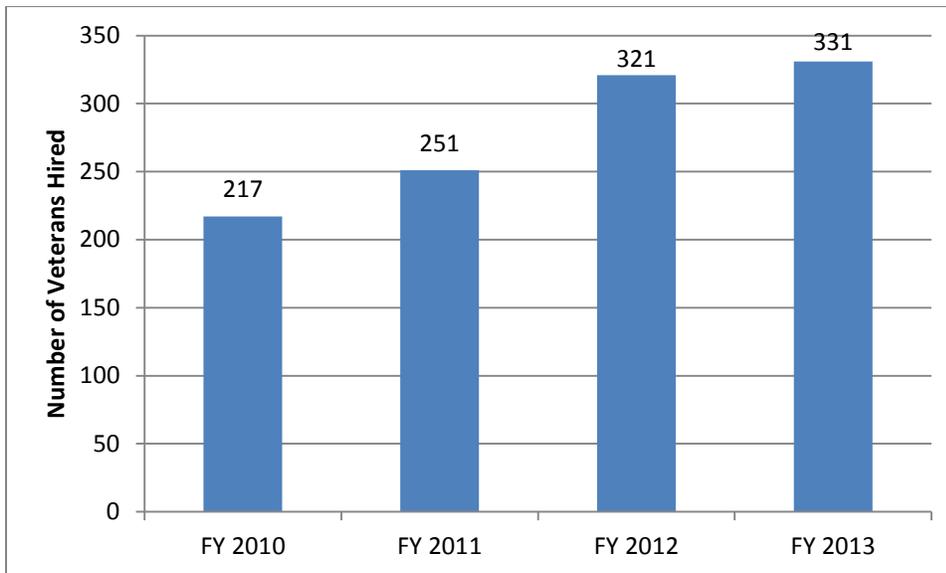
Key points:

- Since fiscal year 2010 the cabinet-level agencies have hired 1,120 veterans to unlimited positions.
- About 9% of new hires are veterans as of fiscal year 2013. This percent is somewhat lower than fiscal year 2012 but is comparable to other recent years.

Table 3: Veterans Hired in State of Minnesota Government at Cabinet-level Agencies

Fiscal Year	Number of full time vacancies filled	Number of veterans hired	Percentage of full time vacancies filled by veterans
FY 2013	3,741	331	8.8%
FY 2012	3,458	321	9.3%
FY 2011	2,500	251	10.0%
FY 2010	2,440	217	8.8%

Number of Veterans Hired: FY 2010-13



Job Classes and Representative Occupations Filled by Veterans in FY 2013 - Table 4

Table 4 on the following page shows a summary of the types of jobs veterans filled in fiscal year 2013.

Key points:

- Healthcare and social science jobs represent the top occupational group with openings filled by veterans in fiscal year 2013 with 77 new staff. Behavior analysts, disability examiners, nurses (RN and LPN), security counselors and veterans' assistance coordinators and claims representatives are among the most common positions filled by veterans in this category.
- Construction, facilities management, manufacturing and transportation jobs represent the second most common occupational group hiring veterans. Among the specific occupations in this group are general maintenance and repair workers, groundskeepers, painters and transportation generalists and associates.

Table 4: Job Classes and Representative Occupations Filled by Veterans in FY 2013

Job Class	Vacancies Filled by Veterans	Representative Occupations*
Administrative Support & Hospitality	29	Customer Service Representatives Office & Administrative Specialists
Construction, Facilities Management, Manufacturing & Transportation	71	Corrections Mfg. Specialists & Supervisors General Maintenance & Repair Workers Groundskeepers Painters Transportation Generalists and Associates
Corrections, Public Safety & Legal	40	Airfield Fire Fighters Correctional Officers Security Guards Radio Communications Operators
Engineering	8	Engineers and Drafters
Environmental Sciences	12	Agricultural Specialists Natural Resources Specialists Pollution Control Specialists
Finance, Regulatory & Economic Development	32	Accountants Revenue Collections Officers Revenue Tax Specialists
General Administration	36	Management Analysts Planners State Program Administrators
Healthcare & Social Services	77	Behavior Analysts Disability Examiners Registered & Licensed Practical Nurses Security Counselors Vets Assistance Coordinators & Claims Reps.
Information Technology	16	Information Technology Specialists 1-5
Other	10	

*Representative Occupations represent only a sampling of the most common occupations employed by veterans.

Veteran Focused Initiatives, Programs and Services

The following section includes programs available to Minnesota veterans. Many of the services listed involve collaboration between state or federal agencies and legislature, veteran advocacy organizations, and private companies.

Commanders Task Force

The Minnesota Commanders Task Force is comprised of elected Commanders and Adjutants of nine congressionally-chartered Veterans Service Organizations in the state of Minnesota. The key functions of this group include developing a united veterans legislative agenda and actively advocating for it before the state and elected officials, serving as a non-partisan advisory group to the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, the Governor and Legislators on Veterans issues in the state, and working to form Veteran Service Organization partnerships in program development.

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Licensing

The DNR provides special privileges to veterans as it applies to hunting licenses, firearms safety training, fishing licenses, cross country ski passes, state park vehicle permits and the Minnesota Conservation Volunteer magazine. For example: free deer hunting licenses; hunt small game without a license privileges; and free annual Minnesota State Park permits.

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses/military/index.html>

Military Tax Related Benefits

The Minnesota Department of Revenue has tax credits and tax relief for current, retired and disabled military service members. Credit and tax relief include:

- Military Spouses Residency Relief Act
- Credit for military service in a combat zone
- Tax credit for past military service
- Tax debt relief for deceased active duty military
- Market Value Exclusion on Homesteads of Disabled Veterans

For more information: <http://taxes.state.mn.us/Pages/index.aspx>

Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers

MACVSO works collaboratively with the Department of Veteran Affairs and nationally chartered Veterans service organizations in promoting the interests and welfare of Veterans who have service in the Armed Forces of the United States of America, their families and survivors. To enhance the quality of their lives through advising, counseling, claims assistance, education, advocacy and special programs. To ensure that they receive all of the benefits and services they so well deserve for the hardships they have endured.

Minnesota Health Care Program

This program helps pay for medical or nursing home care. Military families eligible for Minnesota Care may be able to get coverage without a premium for up to 12 months. The premium can be waived if a family member completed a military tour of duty within two years of being approved for coverage. This benefit is available to members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, National Guard and Reserves. For more information go to [Human Services Programs for Returning Veterans](#)

StandDown Minnesota

The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans holds StandDown events that serve homeless and near-homeless veterans by providing services to help these former soldiers get their lives back on track. Hundreds of volunteers work at the events to provide services such as medical, dental, eye and psychological exams and treatments; job training; legal aid; federal and state tax counseling; social security eligibility information; substance abuse counseling; and food and shelter. Numerous state employees volunteer their time to this valuable program. The goal is to bring many services to one location and make them more accessible to all veterans who otherwise may not seek out services.

Veteran Workforce Programs / Veterans Employment Services

Veterans Employment Representatives are located at WorkForce Centers around the state and are available to work one-on-one with service members in their job search. The individualized assistance includes help with resumes, interviewing skills, networking techniques, referrals to other veteran services, and assistance connecting with employers.

Veteran Business Loan Program

DEED's Minnesota Reservist and Veteran Business Loan Program provides business loans to individual veterans who have returned from active duty and want to start their own business. The program provides outreach to Minnesota veterans returning from active deployment and encouraged use of small business assistance to start or stabilize a business.

Veterans Business Program - Department of Transportation

MnDOT's Veterans Business Program provides verified veteran-owned small businesses with increased access to state contracting opportunities.

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/civilrights/veterans.html>

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

The Minnesota Department of Revenue has 300 sites across Minnesota which offers veterans (and other selected groups) free assistance with filing their state income and property tax returns.

Waiver of Commercial Driver's License

Veterans may be eligible for a waiver of a commercial driver's license based on their military experience. The MN Department of Transportation encourages veterans to contact their County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) to obtain the necessary documentation

Support Programs for Collegiate Veterans

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) has created and supported numerous programs for veterans at their 31 institutions. Each institution is a member of the Servicemember Opportunity College consortium.

- **Minnesota GI Bill Program** - The Minnesota GI Bill program was established in 2007 to provide postsecondary educational assistance to eligible Minnesota Veterans who served on or after September 11, 2001. In July 2013, the Program was expanded to include Veterans from all era's and eligible dependents. Full-time undergraduate or graduate students may be eligible to receive up to \$1,000 per semester, and part-time students can receive up to \$500 per semester. Eligible individuals may receive up to \$3,000 per academic year and \$10,000 lifetime benefit.

The Minnesota GI Bill was expanded to add VA approved On-the-Job Training (OJT) & Apprenticeship programs. Under the current Program, eligible employees may receive up to \$2,000 per fiscal year and employers, up to \$1,000 credit per fiscal year. Total aggregate benefit per employee is \$9,000.

- **Veteran Resource Centers/Higher Education Veteran Programs** – Each MnSCU campus has a veteran resource center. They are designed to be one stop centers to help students who have served or are currently serving in the military with their transition to college. The staff provides information and assistance regarding state and federal benefits, enrollment, placement testing, financial aid, online orientation, tuition and application waivers, military and academic transcripts, and much more. It is also a place where veterans can meet with people who have had similar experiences and where their families are welcomed. This resource is a partnership between MnSCU and the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs.
- **Veterans Education Transfer System** - This Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) online service is available to help veterans and members of the armed forces identify whether their military training can count for college credits in the MnSCU system. The transfer system currently identifies awardable credits for military training in four large occupational areas – law enforcement, diesel and truck mechanics, administrative and human resource assistants, and paramedics. For more information <http://www.mnscu.edu/media/newsreleases/current/article.php5?id=172>
- **Veterans Upward Bound (VUB)** - This program prepares veterans for college and offers free college prep and study skills courses. Veterans also receive career, personal, and financial aid counseling, enrollment assistance, GED preparation, and one-on-one tutoring. The program provides all books and supplies to students at no cost. <http://www.minneapolis.edu/trioprograms/veteransupwardbound/>
- **Campus Veteran Clubs** - Some MnSCU campuses have a Veteran Club. The Veteran Club offers a place for veterans and their family and friends to gather for camaraderie and friendship. One goal is to make both the campus and the local community more aware of veteran issues.
- **Veteran Certifying Officials** - Each MnSCU campus has a Certifying Official (CO) who helps veterans with their benefit paperwork and registration process. Certifying Officials

also ensure that the veterans education programs are certified and the soldier receives the entitled benefits for those courses.

- **Veteran Resource Centers/Higher Education Veteran Programs** – Each MnSCU campus has a veteran resource center. The centers are designed to be one stop centers to help students who have served or are currently serving in the military with their transition to college. The staff provides information and assistance regarding state and federal benefits, enrollment, placement testing, financial aid, online orientation, tuition and application waivers, military and academic transcripts, and much more. It is also a place where veterans can meet with people who have had similar experiences and where their families are welcomed. This resource is a partnership between MnSCU and the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs. Numerous MnSCU veteran resource centers have their own websites:
 - [St. Paul Technical College Resource Center - Easing the Transition](#)
 - [Dakota County Technical College Veteran Resource Center](#)
 - [Hennepin Technical College Veteran Resource Center](#)
 - [MN State University Mankato Veteran Resource Center](#)
 - [St. Cloud State University Veteran Resource Center](#)

Support Programs for Incarcerated Veterans

MN DOC has developed on-going partnerships to meet the needs of the state's veteran offenders who are being released. Veteran services are among the most impactful partnerships. Connection to veteran services and benefits upon release from a facility is extremely important to the success of the veteran.

- **In-Person Visits** - Veteran Representatives conduct in-person visits with veteran offenders while incarcerated. The representatives assist veterans by determining appropriate benefits and enrollment needs. The DOC and MDVA establish these connections as early as possible.
- **Transition Resource Fairs at MN DOC correctional facilities** – The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) and MDVA, along with other government agencies, community non-profits, trade unions and faith-based organizations participate in an annual transition resource fair for veteran and non-veteran offenders. Information and resources are provided in a variety of offender needs areas (housing, employment, family support, personal finance, and mental health).
- **Transition Coalitions** – The coalition is comprised of various organizations for the purpose of discussing issues surrounding offenders. It also offers an opportunity for resource providers and government entities to work together. Veteran organizations such as MACV and MDVA attend these meetings. Another benefit is that non-profit and faith-based community organizations learn about veteran's benefits and share this information with their veteran clients. Veteran organizations learn about valuable resources in the community and where there may be gaps in their services to veterans.
- ***On Your Feet!*** – The *On Your Feet!* program is modeled after the Minnesota Circles of Support and Accountability program developed in 1994. The program is tailored specifically to incarcerated veterans. Small groups of volunteers provide intensive support and accountability to the veteran for approximately one year following their release.

State Resources Dedicated to Veteran Support

The state also has veteran focused positions responsible for supporting veterans as they reintegrate back into civilian life and the workforce. These positions are typically employed at the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs (MDVA), Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), MN Department of Military Affairs, and MnSCU. In addition, many state agencies have web sites dedicated to veteran information, resources and services.

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Staff (MDVA)

The mission of this entire agency's workforce is charged with assisting Minnesota's veterans and their families to obtain their rightful benefits and services. Some of the veteran specific classifications include: Veterans Assistance Coordinators and Veterans Claims Representatives. The agency also has employees who conduct outreach activities and assist veterans in need. This is accomplished by going to the homes of the veteran, relatives and friends. In addition, there is a division whose mission is to serve American Indians who are part of native tribes and are eligible for veteran's benefits. Division staff assists them with the application process to obtain these benefits.

Minnesota Department of Military Affairs (MDMA)

The Minnesota Department of Military Affairs (MDMA) is also known as the Minnesota National Guard. The agency provides leadership, resources, and support to the Nation Guard. The department's customer base is the 13,417 members of the Minnesota Army (11,159) and Air (2,258) National Guard as of August 2012, and the citizens of the state and nation during emergencies. The National Guard is an operational force being utilized daily in the war on terrorism. Since 9/11 and as of August 2012, the Minnesota National Guard has deployed more than 25,000 Army and Air Guard members to more than 33 countries worldwide. The department's staff includes 319 state employees working to support the guard members.

Attorney General's Veterans Assistance Unit

The Minnesota Attorney General's Office provides assistance to veterans and service members. If a veteran, service member, or a member of their family is experiencing difficulty with veteran's benefits, TRICARE benefits, credit issues, home mortgage, identity theft, or another consumer related matter, this can help. Contact (651) 296-3353 or 1-800-657-3787 for free information about voluntary mediation services to help resolve problems.

Director of Military Outreach

This position is established in the Department of Military Affairs and partners with the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. The incumbent works in program development and helps to ensure that programs and services provided to service members, veterans and military families work well together and are accessible. The mission is to improve access to resources and support, and to provide best practices to promote veteran recruitment and hiring.

Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Representatives

The responsibilities of the DEED Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Representative (DVOP) positions include:

- Identify veterans interested in working for DEED and other state agencies.
- Recruit veterans for all state jobs and promote the state at various job fairs.
- Promote Minnesota as a “Veteran Friendly” employer at state and national conferences.
- Coach veterans on the state hiring process and online employment tools.
- Outreach to veteran organizations and advocates such as the County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO), VFW, American Legions, and Disabled American Veterans to promote state employment.
- Outreach to veteran-focused minority and disability organizations.
- Assist veterans and their families with any housing, health or other issues.

Higher Education Veteran Program Coordinators

These MDVA positions connect veterans, military members and their families with the educational benefits and resources available to help them succeed at the MnSCU campuses. This is accomplished via on-campus Veterans Resource Centers. The 64 campus Veterans Resource Centers serve over 5,000 individuals each year.

Coordinators work with the MnSCU system colleges to:

- Provide a welcoming environment for students to interact with other students who are veterans or family members of veterans.
- Facilitate communication between departments and staff who regularly interact with veterans.
- Provide information about veterans services, military education benefits and financial resources, scholarships, and veteran and family support activities.
- Provide training for campus staff related to veteran issues.
- Obtain feedback from veterans and work to remove barriers to services.
- Provide Veteran-Friendly policies and procedures.
- Organize and provide training on veterans issues
- Meet with guard units and their families prior to deployment and provide information about education benefits they earn while deployed.

State Agency Human Resource and Labor Relations Staff

State agency human resources and labor relations staff must be knowledgeable about applicable veteran laws to ensure agency compliance. For example: veterans preference, veteran interview law, noncompetitive appointments of certain disabled veterans, veterans preference hearings, FMLA and military personnel, and USERRA.

State Agency Veteran Focused Web Sites

Many state agencies have web sites dedicated to veteran information, resources and services.

[MN Board of Accountancy](#) Veterans taking the Uniform CPA exam may be eligible for reimbursement of up to \$2,000.

[Department of Commerce - Resources for Military Families](#) Provides links to 32 organization and resources that help military families make informed financial decisions

[Department of Human Rights - The Rights Stuff Forum for Minn Veterans](#) Provides links to information on a range of state and federal protections for veterans and service members. Also includes viewpoints on the challenges facing our returning service members.

[MyMilitaryEducation.org](#) Provides information about education benefits and other related issues is available from a team of experienced advisors and counselors. The Web site offers seven-days-a-week access to customer service staff through a toll-free phone line and online web chat.

[Minnesota LinkVet](#) – Provides support to Minnesota veterans and family members through live chat, by phone, or via email. Operated by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, support specialists are trained in veteran education benefits, employment,

[MnSCU](#) – Provides resources for veterans and service members including college, career, and life planning and information regarding military education benefits and credit transfers

[MyMilitary Career](#) – MnSCU CareerPlan site where veterans can find the tools needed to successfully explore career options.

[Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs](#) – Provides Minnesota veterans, their families and employers a one stop location for information about benefits, claims, higher education, and veterans homes.

[Minnesota Department of Military Affairs](#) –Minnesota National Guard Organization

[Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development - Veterans Programs](#) Provides staff information and resources to help all Minnesota military veterans (no matter their era of service) prepare for, find, and keep a job.

[Minnesota Department of Revenue](#) – Provides information about tax credits and tax relief for members of the military.

[Minnesota Department of Natural Resources](#) Provides information for military personnel and veterans about hunting and fishing licenses, firearm safety training, etc.

[State of Minnesota Career Web - Veteran Information](#) Provides information about employment with the State of Minnesota and veteran preference information.

[Minnesota Management & Budget](#) – Provides information for state employees who are veterans and resources for state agency human resource personnel regarding veteran rights and benefits

[Department of Transportation Veteran Preference Program](#)

Provides information for small businesses owners who are veterans regarding preference in the evaluation of their project proposals for state funded project lead by Mn/DOT.

[Attorney General's Office](#) - A Guide for Military Service Personnel and Veterans.

Provides a guide about state laws pertaining to employment, education, discrimination, motor vehicles, and public records.

[Minnesota Board of AELSLADID](#) – Provides reimbursement information of exam costs for licensing and certification.

[Department of Human Services](#) – Information about Human services programs available for returning veterans.

[Department of Labor and Industry](#) – Provides an FAQ about apprenticeships for veterans.

Recruitment, Partnerships and Outreach Activities

State agencies and MnSCU are proactive in their veteran focused recruitment, partnerships and outreach activities. Representatives of state agencies attend key veteran job fairs and conferences; build relationships with veteran organizations and advocates who in turn, promote state employment to their veteran clients. In addition, MMB provides veteran recruitment and educational outreach on behalf of all state agencies. The goal of these efforts is to promote the state as a Veteran Friendly employer and increase employment opportunities for veterans in state government.

Building Partnerships and Conducting Outreach

Examples of organizations state agencies work with to support veterans:

- Minnesota V.A. Hospitals
- Beyond the Yellow Ribbon
- U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
- County Service Veteran Officers
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Local Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) chapter
- MN Rotary Clubs
- Goodwill Easter Seals Military Services
- Employment Action Centers
- **Leaders in Veteran Employment Seminars**
These DEED-sponsored seminars are held for public and private sector HR professionals, hiring managers, admissions/career counselors, front line supervisors and others who have direct interaction with veterans. The focus is the skills veterans offer and the obstacles and barriers they face. The goal is to recruit, hire and retrain veteran employees. The seminars are held through partnerships between DEED and the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Department of Military Affairs, and the Office of Secretary of State Mark Ritchie.
- **Director of Military Outreach / Yellow Ribbon Company Best Practice Seminar**
The Director of Military Outreach facilitated a seminar with Yellow Ribbon Companies to share best practices for recruiting, hiring and retaining veterans.
- **Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV)**
The MACV is a non-profit organization that assists veterans experiencing homelessness or other life crises with transitional and permanent housing. They work with the Department of Corrections' Sentencing to Serve program, a program that allows carefully selected nonviolent offenders to work on community improvement projects. The Sentencing to Serve crews assists with lawn care and snow shoveling at MACV resident housing for veterans and their families in both the Twin Cities area and Duluth.
- **Minnesota Department of Military Affairs**
The Director of Military Outreach from Military Affairs and the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Deployment Cycle Support Team partner on the following initiatives:

- Identify and track unemployed veterans and connect them with local, state and federal resources to assist the veteran with employment
- Share best practices of veteran recruitment strategies with employers
- Connect veterans with higher education resources
- Provide training to veterans in resume writing, interviewing and networking
- Promote the use of Workforce Centers and Veteran Employment Reps
- Conduct outreach to local Rotary Clubs, Chamber of Commerce, and other business organizations to promote veteran employment

Recruitment

State agencies engaged in the following veteran-focused recruitment activities:

- **Camp Ripley Open House**
The open house is held to invite the public to come in and see what Camp Ripley is all about. The purpose of the open house is to provide the community, military service members and veterans an opportunity to view different aspects of operations and training conducted at Camp Ripley. State agency staff attend the open house to show their support for veterans and share information with the attendees.
- **Veteran Networking Job Club**
DEED hosts seven Veteran Networking Job Clubs at their WorkForce centers. These groups meet regularly to discuss veteran employment efforts, provide support, share job leads and improve job seeking skills.
- **Statewide “Beyond the Yellow Ribbon” Community Events**
State agencies recruit at various yellow ribbon community and reintegration events around the state. This comprehensive program connects service members and their families with community support, training, services and resources.
- **Veterans’ Support Group presentations**
Employee-veterans and recruiters from the Department of Corrections gave presentations at WorkForce Centers in the metro area about their careers in Corrections
- **Interview Accommodations**
State agencies follow with USERRA guidelines to provide job interviews to deployed soldiers using a variety of telecommunication tools

State agencies attended the following veteran-focused recruitment events:

- **Hiring Our Heroes Job Fair**
The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and RecruitMilitary hosted job fairs in both Minneapolis and Rochester, open to servicemembers, veterans, and spouses.
- **Northern Minnesota Veterans Job Fair in Detroit Lakes**

Focusing on veterans actively looking for a job, currently employed, or interested in exploring new careers. Veterans of all eras were encouraged to attend this event.

- **“Hire Vets First” Veterans Career Fair**
This annual career fair is the largest single day recruiting event in the Midwest with 140 businesses and over 1,000 veterans participating. Numerous state agencies attend the event to promote their agency and the state as a Veteran Friendly employer. This event is sponsored by DEED.
- **The Military.com Career Expo**
Military.com hosts a large job board for veterans and military-friendly employers and sponsors numerous career expos across the country giving employers and veterans an opportunity to meet face to face to discuss job opportunities.

Targeted Veteran Advertising

- **Helmets to Hardhats**
This online resource allows employers to both post opportunities and also to view the resumes of veterans registered with the site.
- **Veteran Specific Posters**
Department of Correction created recruitment posters which target veterans for employment. These posters are placed at WorkForce Centers and locations where National Guard conduct drills.

State agencies advertise their job announcements at the following events and venues including, but not limited to:

- DEED Veterans Employment Office
- Disabled Veterans Rest Camp
- Duluth Veteran Center
- MN Assistance Council for Veterans
- Veteran Journal Magazine
- Minnesota Military Resources Website
- Minnesota National Guard
- Minnesota Veterans Homes
- Minnesota Army and Air National Guard
- Veterans for Peace, Minnesota chapters
- St. Paul Veterans Resource Center
- MN Department of Veteran Affairs
- Northland College Military Veteran services
- Army ROTC
- Navy and Marine Reserves
- Employment Action Center (EAC)
- Jobs for Veterans
- Beyond the Yellow Ribbon.org
- Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces
- U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
- GI Jobs Magazine
- Military.com
- DFL Veterans Caucus
- National Association of Veterans Upward Bound (NAVUB)
- MN Workforce Centers
- Employer Support of the Guard & Reserve

Retention and Reintegration Support and Training

Reintegration guidance and support is a key factor in successfully returning veterans to work. Comprehensive reintegration programs provide a supportive environment which encourages the veteran to remain within state employment. It is also important for deployed employees to know they are remembered and supported while on active duty.

Typical agency support activities include the following:

- Pre-deployment
 - Meet with the employees to discuss how the agency can best stay connected with them and their families
 - Ask the employee to designate a representative who can legally interact with the state agency on their behalf
- During deployment
 - Hold positions for deployed employees
 - Encourage employees to return to their positions after deployment
 - Keep agency employees informed about their deployed co-workers using agency newsletter and intranet sites, when given privacy authorization
- Post-deployment
 - Conduct “Welcome Back to Work” recognition events for deployed employees upon return
 - Give appreciation awards for special recognition to veteran employees
 - Encourage returning “active duty” employees to share their military experiences with co-workers and answer questions at brown bag sessions
 - Develop individualized soldier “return to work” plans or supplementary training for smooth transition back to work
 - Grant additional time off for reintegration, if requested
 - Assign mentors or buddies to returning deployed employees
 - Provide information and resources about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and other related programs such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to both supervisors and returning veterans

State agencies shared accounts of their support for their deployed employee and their families. The following are examples of those state agencies’ support efforts:

- Provide on-going communication between employees and deployed employees and the families of deployed employees through emails and letters with photos
- Collect donations of food, gifts, and giftcards for the families of deployed employees to assist with living expenses and to provide for them during the holiday season
- Send deployed employees care packages including holiday gifts, homemade knitted caps, personal products, and letters with photos
- Support the deployed soldiers’ families by volunteering to babysit, provide home maintenance, and stock firewood

- Agency HR staff serve as a resource for deployed employees and their families to answer questions pertaining to payroll, benefits, insurance, while the family is separated.
- The MN Zoo hosts an annual Military Family Week event providing special discounts for military personnel and their families

Training

Many agencies provide or participate in training for managers, supervisors, and state employees regarding the reintegration of deployed employees. Agency human resources staff both conduct and attend training to ensure the appropriate state employees are knowledgeable and in compliance with applicable veteran laws. Some training sessions are led by subject matter experts from U.S. Veteran's Employment and Training Services and the state and federal Departments of Veterans Affairs.

Available training sessions include:

- Reintegration training for leadership staff and the returning deployed employees regarding smooth transitions back into the civilian workforce
- Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act (USERRA) training to outline the responsibilities of the employer and the rights and benefits awarded to veteran employees
- Specific applications of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to deployed state employees and military family members
- Post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and suicide prevention sessions for veteran counselors and coordinators at MnSCU campuses

Agency-specific training includes:

- Minnesota Management & Budget provides consultation, training and information to state managers, supervisors, and human resources staff regarding the Minnesota Veterans Preference Act (VPA), VPA hearings, Recently Separated Veteran Interview Law, and the Noncompetitive Appointment of Certain Disabled Veterans
- Minnesota Department of Transportation developed a 22-minute training DVD titled "We All Serve Fort Minnesota." The presentation covers the military aspects of the Family and Medical Leave Act; the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Program; the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve organization; the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and more. The presentation also includes portraits of a MnDOT employee whose son is on duty in Iraq and one employee who is a member of the Minnesota National Guard. The DVD was sent to each MnDOT district and to anyone who requested it. The DVD's title, "We All Serve Fort Minnesota" builds on the concept that although Minnesota has no active duty military installations, all Minnesotans

can support military families. It is also available on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sIqeUUPSjI>

Awards and Acknowledgments

GI Jobs Magazine Military Friendly Schools Award

Each year GI Jobs Magazine honors the top 20% of colleges, universities, and trade schools across the nation that are doing the most to embrace America's military students and ensure their success on campus. The 2013 Military Friendly Schools list was compiled through extensive research and study of more than 12,000 schools nationwide. The 1,739 schools on this year's list prioritize the recruitment of students with military experience.

23 of 31 MnSCU colleges made the list in 2013. These schools made the grade by offering scholarships, veteran's clubs, military credit, and other services to veteran students. This award is a reflection on the dedication of a school's staff and faculty to our country's veterans.

Proclaimed Yellow Ribbon Companies

A Yellow Ribbon Company unites all key areas (recruiting, policy and procedure, training and development, community and employee outreach/support) within a company structure to create a broad network that connects and coordinates these areas throughout the company for the purpose of proactively supporting veterans and military families.

These organizations' efforts demonstrate a commitment to supporting military employees and local communities resulting in a stronger, more compassionate workplace. The following state agencies have been proclaimed Yellow Ribbon Companies.

- Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Conclusion

There were a number of veteran-related laws affecting state employment in the 2013 legislative session. These are:

- Public employers are now required to allow deployed employees to choose when within a 12-month period they would like to take their 15-days of military leave
- Department of Defense form DD-214 indicating honorable discharge or separation under honorable conditions can be used to indicate rehabilitation or evidence to perform duties for certain jobs for which an applicant may have previously been disqualified
- Specification of when active duty personnel can take the peace officer exam and become a licensed peace officer

According to fiscal year 2013 data, the cabinet-level agencies in state government have a higher percentage of veterans in the workforce (9.5%), compared to percentage of veterans in Minnesota's civilian labor force (5.5%) between the ages of 18 and 64. (*US Census, 2012 American Community Survey*).

In fiscal year 2013, cabinet-level agencies hired 331 veterans into full-time unlimited positions. Since fiscal year 2010 the cabinet-level agencies have hired 1,120 veterans to unlimited positions. Veterans are being hired into a wide range of occupations across state government.

This report demonstrates that the executive branch state agencies and MnSCU are committed to upholding the state as a Veteran Friendly employer through their veteran focused recruitment and retention activities, building on-going relationships with veteran organizations and advocates, supporting deployed soldiers and their families, retaining veteran focused positions, providing reintegration training, and championing statewide initiatives for veterans.

Appendix

Cabinet Level Statutory Reporting Requirements Article 3, Sec. 22 of Chapter 94 from Session Laws of 2009

Sec. 22. REPORTING REQUIRED.

(a) The commissioner of Minnesota Management & Budget must collect the following data annually from each cabinet-level state agency, with the exception of the Metropolitan Council, and must report those data, by agency, by the second week of each legislative session, beginning in 2011, to the chairs and leading minority members of each of the house of representatives and senate committees having responsibility for veterans policy and finance issues:

- (1) the total number of persons employed in full-time positions by the state agency;
 - (2) the total number of employees identified in clause (1) who are veterans;
 - (3) the total number of vacant full-time positions in the agency filled by hiring or appointment during the designated fiscal year;
 - (4) the total number of applications received for the positions identified in clause (3);
 - (5) the total number of applications identified in clause (4) for which veterans preference was elected by the applicant;
 - (6) the total number of applications identified in clause (5) for which the veteran applicant was judged by the hiring authority as meeting minimum requirements for the open positions of employment;
 - (7) the total number of veteran applicants identified in clause (6) who were interviewed by the hiring authority for the open positions of employment in the agency;
 - (8) the total number of veteran applicants identified in clause (7) who were selected for and offered employment within the open positions of employment in the agency;
 - (9) the total number of veteran applicants identified in clause (8) who were hired into the open positions of employment in the agency;
 - (10) the total number of veteran applicants identified in clause (6) who were sent a rejection letter, in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 43A.11, subdivision 9; and (11) any other data or information deemed important by the commissioner of administration and reflecting on the efforts of the subject agency to recruit and hire veterans.
- (b) The data must reflect one full fiscal year or one full calendar year, as determined by the commissioner of Minnesota Management & Budget. (c) The term "veteran" has the meaning given in Minnesota Statutes, section 197.447.