

VETERANS NEWSLETTER

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JANUARY 2011

LOOKING FOR EMPLOYMENT WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT?

On November 9, 2009, President Barack Obama signed Executive Order 13518, Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government, which establishes the Veterans Employment Initiative. The initiative is a strategic, yet very straightforward, approach to helping the men and women who have served our country in the military find employment in the federal government. It also underscores the importance of aligning the talents of these individuals with key positions so the government is better positioned to meet mission objectives and citizens are better served.

This website is a direct result of the Executive Order. In partnership with the Departments of Defense, Labor, Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security, and other federal agencies, our vision is that this website will be the preeminent source for federal employment information for our veterans, transitioning service members, their families, federal HR professionals and hiring managers. Our goal is to provide consistent and accurate information, useful training and other resources in a way that will inform both the applicant and the hiring agency.

We hope you continue to visit us in the coming weeks and months as we expand this site to include new features, updates on the progress of the initiative, and additional resources.

Link:
www.fedshirevets.gov

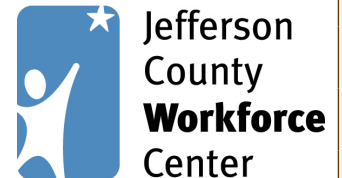


VETERANS PREFERENCE IN CIVIL SERVICE...

In recognition of the sacrifices made by those serving in the Armed Forces, Congress enacted laws to prevent veterans seeking federal employment from being penalized because of time spent in military service. By law, veterans who are disabled or who served on active duty in the Armed Forces, during certain specified periods or in military campaigns, are generally entitled to preference over non-veterans both in federal hiring practices and in retention during reductions in force.

Preference applies in hiring for many positions within the federal competitive service, and provides a uniform method by which special consideration is given to qualified veterans. Veterans' preference laws do not, however, guarantee veterans a job, nor do they give veterans' preference in internal agency actions such as promotion, transfer, reassignment, and reinstatement.

For More Information, visit: <http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/vetspref/>



Serving the Tri-County Region

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Federal Employment*
- *Veterans Preference*
- *Lifelong Learning*
- *Interviewing Tips*
- *Post-Interview Tips*
- *Schedule of Events*

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LIFELONG LEARNING DRIVES YOUR CAREER

WHEN YOU THINK YOU'VE ARRIVED, YOU SHOULD RETIRE.

by Shane Christopher

Tom Larkin learned a lot. Tom, a military transitioner I once knew, was excited about graduating from business school. To him, it meant an end to 25 years of continuous school and studying. You see, after finishing college, he went through two years of Navy nuclear power school, nearly two years of surface warfare (SWO) qualifications, study for his engineer's exam, recruiting school and finally, three years to earn his MBA. This 29-year-old had spent every year since he was four in school. Now he was ready to have someone pay him for how much he knew but did he ever have something to learn!



1. An education gives you the license to learn more.

The learning after your formal education will take a different form. Textbooks become newspapers and trade magazines. Exams become projects assigned by your boss. And homework becomes research. The result is the same. You're still learning.

2. An education teaches you a way to look at things and how to solve problems.

I graduated from college with a degree in engineering. I thought I was smart because I memorized Boyle's Law and could apply it to a heat transfer problem. But I wasn't smart because I could regurgitate a formula that could be found in any textbook. (WARNING NOTE: Never go into a field where the work is so repetitive or basic that you can be replaced by a machine.) I was smart because I was taught to solve problems in a very logical manner, one that efficiently resulted in a solution. I could evaluate and react. I was trained to make good decisions. The specific details of what you learn pale in importance to the logic, reasoning and problem-solving skills you learn.

3. An education propels you to a more sophisticated place.

An educated friend of mine used to tell me how he envied his high school dropout father. You see, from his father's perspective, while he was never educated, he had everything he had ever wanted; a small home, a car that ran, two healthy children and food on the table. His father was the monarch of his little domain. But an education makes your world larger and shows you how to understand it. It teaches you to question things. (ANOTHER WARNING NOTE: One negative by-product of sophistication and education is dissatisfaction with the status quo, and the potential for cynicism at the world's dysfunction.)

4. An education proves that you have potential in a certain field.

You passed all of your exams and have shown a propensity for success in your chosen field. What you haven't shown yet is actual success in that field. Even Number One draft picks can bust. "An educated friend of mine used to tell me how he envied his high school dropout father."

5. Finishing an education is when the real learning starts.

Did you ever wonder why a graduation ceremony is called a "commencement?" Webster's defines "commencement" as a beginning, a start. The people who graduated with degrees like yours 20 years ago have been using that degree for 20 years. Do you think they know more than you know now? Most of what you learned in school is stuff that someone else already figured out and told you. That doesn't exactly differentiate you from others. Taking that baseline of knowledge and coming up with new stuff is what makes you special.

6. An education gives you a lifelong thirst for learning.

The most successful people I've ever known have been the most curious. Peter Jennings was arguably one of the top journalists of our time. Amazingly, Peter didn't even graduate from high school. Perhaps the biggest compliment his colleagues paid him, and perhaps the biggest reason for his success, was that he had a powerful curiosity. He was constantly questioning, constantly learning. That trait enabled him to acquire more knowledge and frame his stories in a way that was often better than his competitors.

If you're afraid to ask why for fear of looking stupid, you'll never learn anything and you'll continue the spiral of ignorance.

If you're like Tom Larkin and you refrain from learning because you're sick of studying, you should instead look forward to a different type of learning after your formal education.

If you think you know it all, you should retire. Your competition realizes they don't know it all.

One question I always ask in a job interview: "Do you have any questions for me?" The interviewee who has none clearly lacks the curiosity and foresight to be successful working for me.

Get curious. A commitment to and a love of lifelong learning may be the most important trait for success.

A FEW BRIEF TIPS WHEN INTERVIEWING...

By Dennis Orr

Before the interview, drive over to where the interview will take place a day before the interview and at the same time as the interview. If you go in advance you will know how to get there, find out about any cone zones or problem spots so you can avoid or leave early enough to miss, where to park, etc. Go inside and see how people are dressed so you will not be over or under-dressed for the interview. If you are dressed like the others they will start to see you as fitting in. Introduce yourself to the receptionist and pick up any literature available. This will relieve jitters you could get if you had not reconnoitered. You will notice you are more relaxed for the interview.

During the interview, if you encounter 1.) an interviewer who has a wandering eye 2.) or you have a problem with eye contact then look at the bridge of the nose of the interviewer. You will then appear to have eye contact and also not get caught looking at the wrong eye of the interviewer.

Dennis Orr is a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist with the Jefferson County WFC.



Post-Interview Follow-Up

by Shane Christopher

My wife loves to ridicule me for starting projects and not finishing them. After buying a house a few years ago, we decided that the family room was too small and the formal living room unnecessary. So I removed the wall between the two, creating one very large great room. Since my dad was lucky to know the difference between a screwdriver and a pile driver (forgive my embellishment for effect, Dad), and since you normally learn these trades from your father, it took me a long time to finish. I removed the wall, re-routed electrical outlets, repaired the carpet and patched the drywall ceiling. I did 99 percent of the work, but for some reason left the patched ceiling unpainted. For the record, that was nearly a year ago. Mrs. Christopher hasn't let me forget it.

Your job interview is the culmination of a lot of work. You've prepared and polished your resume, gone through TAP or ACAP, read your back issues of G.I. Jobs, passed the online screening questions and finished the in-person interview. There's a natural tendency to feel as if you've finished. But you haven't. And those who realize there's still one percent of the job to do are more likely to taste job offer success. Within two days after an interview, you should follow up with the interviewer, offering thanks for his or her time.

The purpose?

- Summarize the main reasons they should hire you.
- Show that you know general business etiquette.
- Reinforce your desire to work for them.
- Answer any open questions that came out of the interview.

Format

Follow-up letters can be email or snail mail (handwritten or typed). Email is the most informal but also becoming the most prevalent. And that's generally acceptable, especially if your interviewer seems to prefer email to other forms of communication. But still, consider a handwritten note. Since they're so rare these days, they set you apart from others vying for the job. They may also indicate a stronger-than-average desire for the job since it takes more time to write it out. Sending both is also acceptable.

You've sent the follow-up but haven't heard from anyone. What to do?

Hopefully, the interviewer described next steps to you. If a day or two beyond when you expected to hear back has passed, politely call the interviewer, reaffirming your interest in the position and asking when you may expect to hear something. You want to show interest without sounding desperate. It's a matter of displaying some class. Keep in mind, too, that most companies balance many variables when hiring. So well-intended quick decisions sometimes fail. Now finish the job. Paint the ceiling!



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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- ◆ **Veterans Job Seeker Workshop** - This workshop is designed for the veteran job seeker and will provide an orientation to all the services offered at Jefferson County Workforce Center. In addition, you will receive information on priority of service, supportive services available in the Tri-County region, information and tips on today's competitive job market and the unique resources available to the veteran job seeker. **Dates: Wednesdays, January 5, 12, 19, and 26, 2011; Time: 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM.**
- ◆ **Veterans Over 50 Workshop** - Does "overqualified" sound familiar? For seasoned veterans who want to learn how to take advantage of our age and not be taken advantage of. What are the advantages of being over 50 and how can we position ourselves effectively in the marketplace from looking for the job to interviewing and fitting into the new job? **Date: Thursday, January 6, 2011; Time: 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM.**
- ◆ **Veterans Learning to Network Workshop** - Revealing the relevance of networking to today's hidden job market, the veteran comes to understand both the definition and importance of networking for his/her own career search. Exploring the difference between networking vs. other search strategies, attendees leave the workshop having received help in the development of both a networking plan and a personal "star story". **Dates: Tuesday, January 11 and 25, 2011; Time: 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM.**
- ◆ **Veterans Entrepreneurial Workshop** - Have you ever wondered what it would be like to own your own business? We will explore the pros and cons, types of organizations, writing a business plan, financing, and marketing. Also learn how to set up a Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business to sell products and/or services to the government and how to market to the government. **Date: Tuesday, January 18, 2011; Time: 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM.**
- ◆ **Veterans Federal Job Search Workshop** - Is Federal employment for you? Where do you start? How do you apply? How do you compete with your qualifications? These are just a few of the questions we answer and provide information and resources to take with you. Bring your questions to this interactive session. **Date: Thursday, January 20, 2011; Time: 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM.**

WE ARE ON THE WEB!
WWW.JEFFCOWORKFORCE.ORG

JEFFERSON COUNTY WORKFORCE
CENTER'S VETERANS EMPLOYMENT
PROGRAMS

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“Unemployment is also Hell...”

