

# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

**INTRO:** Welcome to the National Veterans' Training Institute podcast series, where we discuss pressing issues affecting today's veterans.

**HOST:** Hello and welcome. My name is Hannah, and I will be the host of today's podcast, Why Hire Veterans? Conversations with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients. H-I-R-E or HIRE, in this case, stands for the Honoring Investments in Recruiting and Employing American Military Veterans. The HIRE Vets Act was signed into law in May 2017, and it requires the Secretary of Labor to establish a program that recognizes employers for their efforts to recruit employ and retain veterans. The HIRE Vets Medallion Program is the only federal level veterans' employment award that recognizes an organization's commitment to veteran hiring, retention, and professional development. We have a wonderful and knowledgeable panel joining us today. Will you each please take a moment now to introduce yourself, tell us where you're from, and tell us a little bit about your current role. Jerry, can we get started with you?

**Jerry:** Yes, hello. My name is Jerry Flores. I serve as a Local Veterans Employment Rep, or LVER, in the great state of Oregon, and I help employers recruit, hire, and retain veterans.

**Marty:** My name is Marty Estrada and I'm the Local Veterans' Employment Representative and business outreach coordinator for the state of Maine Department of Labor in Bangor, ME. I'm also a veteran of the United States Marine Corps.

**Leo:** Good day everyone. I am Leo Deon, Veterans' Program Manager with the Maine Department of Labor out of Augusta, ME. I've been in this role since September of 2022 and before that I also served as a Local Veterans' Employment Representative in the same department for five years. And I am also a retired Chief Warrant Officer with the United States Coast Guard.

**Gerry:** My name is Gerardo Cruz, United States Navy retiree from Jacksonville, NC. I am a Local Veterans' Employment Representative, and my main role is to advocate for employers to hire veterans.

# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

**Nadine:** Hi, my name is Nadine Rodriguez. I am the recruiting manager at Sherman Brothers Trucking Team Transport. I am joining you today from our Harrisburg, Oregon terminal. I've been with Sherman Brothers since 2016. We are a family-owned and operated business who has been in the transportation industry since 1969. I am honored to be with you today and I look forward to telling you more about the HIRE Vets Medallion Program.

**Justin:** Hello, my name is Justin Spencer, and I am also a Local Veterans' Employment Representative with the Maine Department of Labor. As a LVER, it is my responsibility to connect with employers and advocate for veterans, along with assisting those veterans in the process of finding new job opportunities. I am also a U.S. Army veteran.

**Tracy:** Hello everyone. My name is Tracy Thibodeaux. I'm the Director of Human Resources for Dead River Company. We are in northern New England's largest full-service home heating provider. I have over 25 years of human resources experience developing corporate HR plans, supporting the employee experience and organizations, overseeing HR initiatives, and ensuring compliance with employment laws and regulations.

**HOST:** Thank you all so much for being here today to discuss the HIRE Vets Medallion Program's importance for employers and for veterans. I noted the general definition, but what detail would you each like to add? Leo, will you share first?

**Leo:** Sure, Hannah. Thank you. You know, as you said, the Honoring Investments in Recruiting and Employing American Military Veterans Act of 2017 did direct the Secretary of Labor to establish a program that recognizes employer efforts to recruit, employ, and retain veterans. The HIRE Vets Medallion Program, or HVMP, was officially launched in January of 2019.

**Marty:** To add to what Leo shared, the HIRE Vets Medallion Program is a program that gives an employer the opportunity to have a veteran centric program in house that shows that it is a veteran friendly employer that will assist in the recruitment and retainment of veterans.

**Jerry:** As stated before, it is the only federal program recognizing businesses that make the commitment to recruit, hire, and retain veterans. It is also important to note it is not a

# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

superfluous award. A business must make some internal changes to qualify for the award.

**HOST:** Thank you for the great HIRE Vets Medallion Program introduction. I particularly like what Marty said there. It does give an employer a unique opportunity to have a veteran centric program in house and really display that for others to see and recognize, and it truly is an opportunity. So, let's get into how a business can take advantage of this opportunity. What must a business do to participate in the program? Jerry, would you begin for us?

**Jerry:** Yes, Hannah, I'd be happy to. Thank you. As I said earlier, the HIRE Vets Medallion is not a "pay to play" type of award. Businesses have to meet hiring and retention metrics, update employee handbooks and they may have to create a veteran's resource group. If a business wants to participate, I encourage them to contact their Local Veterans' Employment Rep, or LVER, for assistance in navigating the application process.

**Leo:** It is important to share that recognition criteria is broken down into two levels in multiple categories. For example, an employer can apply for platinum or gold level recognition and then categories for employers are broken down into small, medium, and large employers. Based on the number of overall employees and there are recruitment, retention, and program criteria to meet for consideration.

**Tracy:** So, to add to what? Leo shared the three tiers of the businesses are: small employer is 1 to 50 employees, medium employer is 51 to 499 employees, and large employer is 500 plus employees. The criteria for the recognition vary by level. Platinum or gold, employer size, large, medium, small. Businesses meeting the award program qualifications can submit an application to the Department of Labor.

**Nadine:** As someone on the employer side, my first recommendation would be to reach out to your Local Veterans' Employment Representative staff member. Your LVER will quickly make time to meet with your company to explain the program further. After you have received more information and decided to proceed with applying, the next step is to review your veteran hiring and retention metrics for the previous calendar year. There are several sets of criteria to qualify for the program, including hiring, retention, and veteran employee percentage. If you do not qualify now, your LVER can assist with recommendations,

# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

resources, and networking opportunities. Then hopefully your business will qualify for the program the following calendar year. In addition to educating about and assisting with the HIRE Veterans Medallion Program, your LVER can recommend other local or regional state resources to assist with your veteran recruitment and retention efforts. Based on my experience, some examples include job fairs and local state employment office referrals. Here in Oregon, we have a program called I-Match Skills through WorkSource, which provides partnerships between state and local government agencies, local colleagues, and nonprofits that provide employment services. Which is an excellent tool for filling your open positions. Your LVER offers a vast number of networking opportunities. At the end of the day, their job is to do what they can to help military veterans. Connect with your LVER. I promise you; you will not regret it.

**Gerry:** Detailed information about the criteria for businesses to participate can be found at the HIRE Vets Medallion Program website, [www.HIREVets.gov](http://www.HIREVets.gov). The application period runs from January to April every year. The businesses have to apply every year to be able to receive the award.

**HOST:** That is very helpful detail. Thank you so much for sharing how a business can participate. It's important for those of us connecting veterans and employers to understand the benefits for all involved when employing veterans. First, let's discuss why employers should want to hire veterans. What strengths do they bring? What other benefits are there to hiring veterans?

**Marty:** Veterans are a unique and special resource that has consistently demonstrated to employers the immense value of having them on their teams. Veterans bring numerous soft skills to any occupation they pursue critical thinking, decisiveness, time management, pride of ownership and teamwork, to name a few. These traits are especially attractive to employers wanting to see them disseminated through their workforce. Veterans tend to be natural leaders and quickly find themselves in positions with supervisory duties.

**Gerry:** I will agree with what Marty has shared. Veterans bring with them the soft skills that most people lack as well as technical skills develop while serving in the military. These technical skills can be polished and adapted to improve business philosophy and culture.

# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

**Justin:** There are many different reasons why to hire veterans. They are adaptable, accountable, dedicated, respectful, and experienced. Veterans have a higher diversity awareness and tend to be a team player and make great leaders. All veterans know what it's like to put on a uniform and represent something with pride, whether it be their country or their employer they enjoy working for.

**Tracy:** Self-direction and motivation are two key traits that veterans bring to a business. The rigorous training military members receive produce highly motivated employees who set high goals and standards for themselves and achieve them. They learn to work toward efficiency, ask for guidance when they need it, and exercise self-discipline.

**Jerry:** It is important to note that many employers don't realize that there is almost a one-to-one match from military to civilian jobs. Military veterans can have experience in healthcare, manufacturing IT, logistics, and hundreds of other occupations. A transitioning service member will bring up-to-date skills to the workplace. All veterans bring leadership and dedication to any role they are placed in. We regularly go above and beyond our duties, striving to leave things better than when we found them.

**Leo:** As Jerry shared for some employers, veterans are often overlooked as a labor force. Yet for those employers who value dedication, devotion to work, and employer loyalty, veterans are essential and integral to their business operation. Veterans not only possess state-of-the-art technical skills in a myriad of industries. But as we've discussed, they also come equipped with intangible soft skills that are challenging to teach, such as leadership, communication, and teamwork skills. Those skills, combined with dedication and employer loyalty, make veterans excellent promotion potential employees as well.

**Nadine:** Since I started with Sherman Brothers, a large percentage of our office and driver personnel, are veterans. One of our original founders is a U.S. Army veteran. The veterans we employ are the foundation of operations at our company, from our upper management team to dispatch, accounting, the shop, and of course, our drivers. In my experience working with veterans for the past seven years, they are individuals who lead with integrity and perseverance. Regardless of the challenge placed in front of them, a veteran can think quickly, clearly, and make an executive decision to solve the problem. In

# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

addition to having invaluable skills, they bring to the team, veterans are the foundation of our day-to-day operations at Sherman Brothers. Our goal is to offer a workplace where veterans are happy and feel valued. If we are successful, they will do what any other person would do when they are happy in their workplace, and that's refer others to a quality workplace.

**HOST:** Well, I almost felt silly asking that last question because it seems so obvious that veterans bring a wealth of benefits to employers and can be valuable to any business. But let's go ahead and dig a little deeper here and expand. What are the benefits of not only hiring veteran, but actually, building a team of veterans?

**Justin:** Naturally, when you're in the military, there is a mission. The mission is understood by the soldiers and the soldiers carry out that mission. They understand how to work as a unit and a team and strive to be proficient and execute the mission. When you put these veterans together in the civilian workforce, you have a great opportunity for increased productivity, higher quality work, a safer work environment and a natural structure.

**Jerry:** I agree with Justin. Every veteran from an E-1 to an O-9, across all services has worked in team environments. While most veterans can work independently, we really enjoy working with our peers. A team of veterans will hold themselves accountable, support each other, and naturally, mentor new team members. Nadine with Sherman Brothers Trucking has built an amazing team of veterans. Imagine being a truck driver in the middle of nowhere, knowing that when you called your dispatcher with a concern, they are also a veteran. How is that for support?

**Gerry:** The team concept is ingrained to veterans from the early stages of their military service, and they also want to be a leading when the opportunity arises.

**Marty:** Bringing in veterans brings in individuals with shared life experiences that can easily adapt to one another because the same structure of expectations can be found in all the branches of service. The missions can vary, but the end goal is the same: Accomplishment. By bringing in veterans, you have the opportunity to transfer some of those traits to employees who are not veterans.

# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

**Leo:** Veterans are adept at working autonomously and equally effective working as a team. An employer who can build work teams with veterans will find mission success with even the most arduous or unique tasks. Veterans have the ability to integrate effectively and efficiently into cohesive teams rapidly by understanding their role in the scope of work assigned.

**Tracy:** There's so many benefits to hiring teams of veterans, I'm going to focus on it from a skills, team building, and leadership perspective. Veterans most often have an impressive work ethic. They strive for excellence. Learning to work hard and use determination to accomplish a goal is one of the primary skills we see in the veterans that we hire. They're highly focused on the task at hand and work well as a team ensuring that everyone contributes their part to a successful project. Due to the regimented structure of the military veterans can bring impressive organizational skills to their business. They're used to setting a schedule, maintaining habits in the military, which they can apply to their work schedule. Veterans have a high level of personal accountability, setting an excellent example for team members to follow and embody, and we also find that they encourage others on their team to be more efficient and more dedicated to their work. Veterans observe different leadership styles from their commanding officers, and they likely have leadership responsibilities themselves throughout their military career and as a result, veteran employees have a high attitude to grow within an organization and mentor others and make strategic decisions.

**HOST:** Great input and examples. Thank you all. And we've talked extensively about the skills and attributes of veterans that make them excellent employees. It's also crucial to discuss how veterans are impacted by working at a HIRE Vets Medallion Program award recipient. Nadine, will you go first here?

**Nadine:** Yes, Hannah, ultimately a HIRE Vets Medallion awardee has put certain processes and programs in place to ensure a veteran's success and retention. For example, we have a veteran success group where new hires will be coached during their onboarding and employment with the company. Individuals in this group assist and coach the new veteran hire to ensure their needs are met throughout their employment with Sherman Brothers. Another great quality I have had the pleasure of witnessing for the past seven years is a strong understanding of who our veterans are and what they bring to the table. If you work with veterans, you know they possess countless great qualities from



# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

excellent teamwork, pride in what they do and how they do it. And one of our favorite qualities, of course, is perseverance. If you are familiar with the trucking industry, then you know things change and they change quickly. You must be willing to adjust your course of action and persevere through whatever comes your way. This is a priceless skill your military veterans possess. In addition to providing a unique sense of understanding and a great work environment for veterans, is the number of veterans we employ from our upper management team to our dispatch team, accounting, IT, shop, and, of course, our Class A drivers. When a military veteran is working with someone else who served in the military, there is an understanding of where they come from and what they have been through.

**Tracy:** I agree, Nadine. Veterans want to work for businesses that will emphasize and understand what's like being a veteran. At our company, our veteran employees who are deployed, receive a ton of support, everything that their family or they need during that time that they're away. We also provide ongoing training as well as development opportunities and growth opportunities for veterans.

**Jerry:** As humans, we like to be appreciated and valued at work. Veterans are no different. If a business has a veterans' employee resource group, a leadership program, or a designated veteran recruiter, I know I will feel valued there and will be more likely to apply.

**Marty:** Leaving the military can be a disorienting and uneasy event for some veterans, and having an employer that actively recognizes the effort, work and sacrifice of a veteran can make that veteran want to work for that employer even more and more so want to see that business succeed in accomplishing its goals?

**Leo:** Veterans find job satisfaction as an employment driver. They want to be appreciated for their contributions through promotional opportunities and increased responsibility. Veterans thrive in environments where mission, vision and values align with their own. HIRE Vets Medallion employers understands what motivates a veteran and provide work engagement aligning with veterans' work ethics.



# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

**Gerry:** Veterans are impacted by the dual commitment with an employer that hires veterans. It becomes like a partnership. It is a win-win situation for the veteran and the employer.

**Justin:** I agree, Gerry, for a veteran to know that they work for an employer that is not only veteran friendly, but to take the extra step and willingness to make sure the company is recognized as a veteran friendly employer is a good feeling. Happy employees make good employees so a happy veteran is and can be a very determined and dedicated valuable employee.

**HOST:** Now that we know the benefits for veterans who are employed by HIRE Vets Medallion Award recipients, what are the benefits of being a business that receives a HIRE Vets Medallion Award? Tracy, will you share first?

**Tracy:** Definitely. Hannah, I have to say a major benefit is pride, pride in knowing that we are supporting the men and women who have made sacrifices for our country. The HIRE Vets Medallion Award is a symbol to veterans who are looking to transition into civilian life and jobs, that we actually walk the walk. We don't just say that we want to recruit, hire and retain veterans. We do it.

**Jerry:** I agree with Tracy receiving the HIRE Vets Medallion is a point of pride for all the businesses. They can use the medallion in their publications, websites and billboards. In my region, I contact local media when a business is awarded the medallion to get them local recognition as well. The advertising and recruiting potential for a small business is huge. Where else can you get an exposure to a nationwide and potentially worldwide talent pool for a minimal investment?

**Marty:** This award will signify not only to possible applicants, but the community at large, that it values our veteran's hard work. The recipient of the award will be able to showcase the award in a number of ways to advertise that veterans are, and will continue to be, an important part of their business model.

**Leo:** As a state government, we're not afforded the opportunity to apply for HIRE Vets Medallion recognition. Yet during our promotion of the program, we

# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

encourage eligible businesses to apply for the program as they can use their digital icon on marketing material, banners, emails, signature blocks and other means of promotion as a signal beacon to other veterans. This recognition allows them to showcase that they are an employer of choice that appreciates the veteran workforce as being essential to the business operation, and that once hired, the employer appreciates the value that veterans bring.

**Gerry:** As others have said, the recipients of the award benefit by receiving a digital copy of it to be used in their marketing material and identify them among other businesses as a supporter of the nation's veterans.

**Nadine:** The HIRE Vets Medallion Award is the only national recognition you can receive for hiring and retaining veterans. Every recipient should be incredibly proud to have been accepted to the program. To put it simply, you get bragging rights. It is on all of our marketing material. I love to talk about the program when I'm speaking to a veteran about a potential trucking job. I will say that when I talk to drivers, many of them are not familiar with the program, but they are proud to know that this is a veteran preferred hiring employer.

**HOST:** The HIRE Vets Medallion Program is a wonderful way to recognize employers and also to attract veteran employees. Frankly, it seems like it should market itself. But of course, we know that's not how it works. How have you successfully marketed the HIRE Vets Medallion Program to employers in your area? Justin, what can you share?

**Justin:** Within my role as a LVER, a big portion of my yearly outreach to employers is with our Maine Hire-A-Vet campaign. With our registration system, each employer is asked specifically if they are aware of the HIRE Vets Medallion. While we record these responses, we document who is already recognized as a Medallion holder and who would like to learn more about the program. From there, we will hold presentations to promote the program.

**Leo:** To add to what Justin shared about presentations. Once the program officially launched in 2018–2019-time frame, the Maine Department of Labor Veterans' Employment team created a presentation to promote the program. This presentation covers program history, benefits, the application process, and we do include a few examples, a timeline of applications, and associated fees. The presentation is about 45 minutes long and can

# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

be done in sections based on audience needs. And it has also been adapted to be presented in person or virtually. Since delivering this presentation, over 100 Maine employers have attended. And this presentation is also considered a best practice by U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service, as well as the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, or NASWA.

**Jerry:** I market the program two ways, primarily as a recruitment tool that will get the business nationwide exposure to transitioning service members and veterans looking to come to our great state. I also use it as a tool to help with their diversity, equity, and inclusion goals by prioritizing veterans.

**Marty:** Coming from 15 years of experience in the private sector as a manager, I understand the challenges and hurdles an employer must get through to build a receptive and ever evolving workforce. Knowing that there are individuals, veterans that not only exist but flourish in environments of fast-paced, ever-changing dynamics and expectations, I make sure businesses in my state understand that the Medallion Program can be a beacon to attract veterans to their business.

**Gerry:** I agree that providing the information to employers is key to the success of the program. I have been marketing the HIRE Vets award program from its inception by sharing the information with every business that I come in contact with. Some businesses have received the award on multiple occasions.

**HOST:** That's great to hear. Now Nadine mentioned earlier that some veterans and businesses she speaks to are unaware of this program. So, what are some of the challenges that you see with getting the word out to employers and veterans about the HIRE Vets Medallion Program and how have you overcome those challenges?

**Jerry:** One challenge is the lack of program promotion and also the fear some businesses have that the Department of Labor will audit them if they participate. We mitigate these challenges by holding LinkedIn campaigns in January and by offering one-on-one assistance to businesses to put them at ease with the process.

# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

**HOST:** So, I'm going to jump in here really quickly. Because I have to ask, why do employers need to be put at ease about the process? I've looked at the HIRE Vets website and it doesn't seem that it's that cumbersome.

**Jerry:** Some of the concerns I've have heard center around Department of Labor oversight and opening themselves up to annual audits by them. I assure them that there are no ongoing audits, show them all the information available on HIREVets.gov and offer to connect them to businesses who have earned the award in the past. I also offer to review their application with them before they submitted to DOL.

**HOST:** Oh, got it. OK, that's very helpful. I would never have thought of that at all. And those sound like really solid techniques to mitigate that issue. Now let's go back to the question. How have you helped get the word out?

**Marty:** It's an advertising game for sure. We are more connected as a species than we have ever been, but for some reason it can be difficult to navigate the masses to get the message to the right people. Word of mouth, e-mail and phone correspondence can do so much, but it's generally one at a time and that slows things down.

**Leo:** Maine is such a diverse state, with most businesses falling into the small employer category. Those businesses do not always have a dedicated HR or human resources staff that can track and apply for recognition. Our Veterans' Employment Team promotes HIRE Vets medallion at each and every event to include our annual main higher that campaign, as we discussed earlier. This is our annual focused effort each fall to get 100 veterans hired in 100 days by 100 employers. The campaign ends in the November-December time frame, so we encourage HIRE Vets Medallion consideration immediately after the campaign is over as it rolls right into when the application period for HIRE Vets Medallion starts in January. We also promote HIRE Vets Medallion at every in any hiring event or resource fair that our Veterans' Employment Team attends.

**Nadine:** I agree that exposure is an issue. When I speak to prospective employees about the program, no one has heard about. It was mentioned during our earlier meeting that there could certainly be more advertising on the program. Perhaps there could be more exposure at the VA. It would also help if there was more information about the program

# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

and encouragement to reach out to the Medallion awardees during the transition from active duty.

**HOST:** We've established that some businesses may be reluctant to participate due to the requirements of the program. What advice do you have to encourage businesses to take part in the program? Marty, will you start us off on this one?

**Marty:** I'd love to, Hannah. The application fee can be a hitch to some but letting them know that if they treat it as part of their advertising budgets, it's a little easier to sell. The payoff for investing in the Medallion Program will overshadow the price of swag at a hiring event every time.

**Leo:** I definitely agree with Marty. The biggest challenge we face is the application fee, and we advocate that this is a marketing expense. To be successful, most businesses have to market themselves in some manner. To be successful in recruiting, today's labor force needs digital marketing. How better to use the digital icon to attract not only veterans in the state, but those veterans and transitioning service members? From out of state. We advise them to apply for higher best medallion recognition if eligible and leverage that digital icon to brand themselves as a veteran employer of choice. Another challenge is that some employers do not track new hires or existing staff veteran status. This is a critical component to validate HIRE Vets Medallion Program eligibility.

**Jerry:** It's important to add that most businesses who want to apply are already doing a lot of the things required in the application. It just takes a little work to meet the criteria. For some businesses. We work with them to develop a recruitment plan so they can then apply the following year using the award criteria as a template for hiring and retention.

**Nadine:** Three words: Do the work. If you employ veterans, you know what they bring to the table: incredible. organizational skills, quick decision making, a strong sense of teamwork, integrity, perseverance, and more. If your business employs veterans and you want to know how to attract more to your business, connect with a LVER staff member. They will steer you in the right direction and connect your business with the resources to seek and employ even more veterans.

# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

**Tracy:** Being committed to recruiting, hiring, and retaining veterans has numerous benefits as we've already discussed. As a company that hires veterans, aligning with organizations that help veterans transition to civilian life is also an important partnership to have.

**HOST:** Those are all great words of advice for businesses. Now what type of assistance, if any, is available to businesses looking to make the required changes to participate successfully in the HIRE Vets Medallion Program. Gerry, will you begin?

**Gerry:** Yes, Hannah. I'd love to. Businesses can reach out to the local American Job Center for assistance. Ask for the Local Veterans' Employment Representative. Advice is given to employers based on their active recruitment plans and their related programs in place at their business. Recommendations are made to meet the requirements to qualify for the award.

**Jerry:** In Oregon, we offer one-on-one LVER assistance to the businesses. If there's something we need further assistance with, we reach out to our regional DOL VETS Outreach Office for clarification and additional information.

**Nadine:** As I have shared before, connect with a LVER, they will be a huge assistance.

**Leo:** As part of our HIRE Vets Medallion presentation, we offer one-on-one employer assistance to help them position themselves for future awards. We can help them create veteran resource groups, walk them through an application process to ensure eligibility, and answer any veteran related questions that they may have.

**HOST:** We all know that networking is critically important and providing that connection between employers and veterans is key. What relationships has the HIRE Vets Medallion Program helped you to create?

**Jerry:** Networking with businesses that have received the HIRE Vets Medallion is amazing. We basically create a pipeline for veterans to apply with these businesses that make it their priority to hire veterans.

# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

**Gerry:** The HIRE Vets Medallion Program has helped to create a commitment to assist employers and to connect them with qualified and committed veterans.

**Marty:** I agree building relationships with employers and developing a network is invaluable. Once again, getting the word out is easier when there are more people talking about it.

**Leo:** Being a HIRE Vets Medallion Program advocate has helped Maine make employer inroads and professional connections. Supporting various hiring events and resource fairs and connecting some employers to alternative veteran service organizations and resources.

**Nadine:** So many networking opportunities for not only our business but also the veterans we employ. Hold meetings to connect our vets with resources that they may not be utilizing that are available to them. During these meetings, we have a veteran service officer, a local veteran's service organization, present to answer questions about veteran benefits that are available. Two of our favorite connections are Jerry Flores, our beloved LVER. Steve Hickson LVER/Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, DVOP.

**HOST:** I love that this program is providing a way to connect veterans and employers. We've discussed the value of the HIRE Vets Medallion Program for both. Now let's discuss how the program can serve as a tool for Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialist or DVOP specialists. And Local Veterans' Employment Representatives, or LVERs, when helping veteran clients gain employment. Will you, will you share your thoughts on this first, Leo?

**Leo:** Sure, Hannah. Thank you. HIRE Vets Medallion Program is what I consider a double-edged sword as a tool for DVOP specialists and LVER staff. For the DVOP specialist, when working with a veteran, they should advise the veteran that if an employer is a HIRE Vets Medallion recipient, and we can show them the icon as to what it looks like for awareness, he veteran can be assured that business is not only veteran friendly, but a place that values veterans on their staff. As a LVER staff member, it is a great attraction tool that can be used to recruit and retain some of the best workforce around. The military veteran.

**Jerry:** I agree that businesses that earn the HIRE Vets Medallion and are a great resource for our DVOP specialists and LVER staff on the DVOP side, we can set up informational interviews with the businesses so that job seeking veterans can learn more about the industry or company before applying or before entering a training program. On the LVER



# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

side, having a network of employers that value the work we do with veterans is amazing. We can call on these businesses for career fairs. Information on emerging trends in their industries and training opportunities that may be available for veterans.

**Gerry:** The HVMP has helped to identify veteran friendly employer to facilitate and expedite the placement of veterans in jobs that can lead to a career.

**Marty:** When talking with a veteran that may be uneasy about getting into the civilian workforce, DVOP specialists and LVER staff can let them know that a company in the Medallion Program has identified their efforts and sacrifices and is actively seeking to hire veterans.

**HOST:** Thank you all for these insights into the program and the value of hiring veterans. What final thoughts would you like to share with our audience about the HIRE Vets Medallion Program or veteran employment in general?

**Jerry:** As a business, if you already have veterans on your team, or if you do want to recruit more veterans, reach out to your local American Job Center or AJC. We will work with you to meet your recruitment goals and assist you in applying for the HIRE Vets Medallion or assist you in developing a plan to recruit, hire and retain our nation's veterans.

**Marty:** Veterans are individuals that at one time in your life stepped up and said I want to be part of something greater than myself. It's that kind of mentality that will help your business to succeed. It's that mindset that will want to see their coworkers succeed. That individual is your next department head, manager, or CEO. Take pride in knowing that bringing veterans into your workforce will provide skills that can only be passed along through examples and that your nonveteran workforce, it will only benefit from it.

**Nadine:** Reach out to your Local Veterans' Employment Representative. You will not regret it.

**Leo:** During my time as a LVER staff member and now as a Veteran's Program Manager, it has taken some time to get traction with this program in Maine. We have consistently had three recipients each year since the program started and are always looking for more. This is not a program that should be just dusted off in January or one that you

# Why Hire Veterans? Conversation with HIRE Vets Medallion Award Recipients

just throw out a few fliers and call it good. Like veteran hiring, the HIRE Vets Medallion Program needs to be a year-round promotional effort, so employers are positioned well when the application period opens.

**Gerry:** In my personal opinion, the nation already recognizes veterans for their accomplishments and commitment in defense of the country. It is also time to recognize employers for their support to veterans.

**Tracy:** Military service results in the acquisition of numerous skills, training and experiences that would benefit any company or agency. I would say just do it.

**HOST:** Thank you to all of our speakers today for joining us in this valuable podcast and providing information about the HIRE Vets Medallion Program. To our listeners, if you would like more information about serving veterans, please visit us at [NVTI.org](http://NVTI.org) to access resources such as this podcast. We are constantly adding new material at [NVTI.org](http://NVTI.org), so check back often. We also invite you to continue the conversation at the Making Careers Happen for Veterans: Community of Practice. Thank you.

**OUTRO:** This podcast is brought to you by the National Veterans' Training Institute, whose mission is to further develop and enhance the professional skills of Veterans' Employment and Training Service providers throughout the United States. This program is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service, and administered by Management Concepts. For more episodes, visit the NVTI website at [www.nvti.org](http://www.nvti.org).