



SPECIAL FEATURE! Veterans Can Enhance the Local Government Workforce – 7 Ways to Engage Them

By Steve Monaghan, Director of the Information & General Services Agency - Nevada County

Hiring veterans can significantly enhance the culture, diversity, and organizational capacity of local government teams. The U.S. Military's leadership programs are highly regarded for producing quality leaders. This has been evident through the successful addition of veterans to many county staff teams.



Leadership, Education, and Experience

The Armed Services' promotion and support of higher education for its personnel are noteworthy. The military is known for its prestigious schools like WestPoint and Annapolis. Beyond these, there is a wide array of military education institutions and leadership programs, as well as support for personnel to pursue traditional university programs. Each military branch offers Professional Military Education (PME) that focuses on leadership, supervision, critical, and strategic thinking, tailored to the rank and service time of its members. This education system promotes continuous learning and development. Nevada County's Human Resources Director Steve Rose, a retired Air Force senior officer with extensive executive experience, brought a new level of dynamism and awareness to the Nevada County organization, showcasing the value of military leadership in local government.

When interviewing service members and veterans, their high level of education and deep leadership training stand out. Many possess a Master's degree (often multiple), with experience in leadership roles that, in many instances, greatly exceeds the requirements of the positions they seek to fill. For example, Mr. Rose commanded an entire Pacific island with an Air Force base, which is akin to managing a small city where every resident is also your employee. This is but one example that highlights the remarkable leadership experience military leaders can bring to local government roles.

Culture and Values

Service members' values and culture often align well with local government environments. The sense of dedication; high ethical standards; core values; service over self; and strong work ethic integrates seamlessly into local government culture. Agencies in areas with proximity to military bases can foster strong connections between the military and their organizations.



Technical Skills

Veterans often possess advanced technical skills relevant across many local government disciplines. For instance, command and control, communications, intelligence systems, and global information operations are among the high-tech capabilities that many veterans bring to local government roles. These skills are beneficial in numerous positions including IT management, network analysis, facilities management, veteran services, emergency services, law enforcement, and airport management.

7 Ways to Engage Veterans with Local Government Recruitment Programs

There are many ways local governments can tap into the recently retired and soon-to-be-retired military workforce.

1. **Direct outreach and relationship building from your Human Resources team with regional military organizations.** Relationships are key to recruiting a talented workforce. Providing information about how to find open positions and about the recruitment process is an important step. For example, Nevada County's Human Resources Director developed a five-County (Placer, Yuba, Sutter, Butte and Nevada) Career Day at Beale Air Force Base, which is now in its 3rd year. The synergy of the five counties increases the opportunities for job seekers and heightens the awareness of county careers.
2. **Department of Defense (DOD) Skillbridge Program.** This program places soon-to-rotate military personnel into organizations for up to six months. Designed to "bridge" people from military employment into their post-retirement careers. With no cost to the employer, the individual retains their military salary for the internship period, with the goal that the internship may lead to long-term employment. Additional information about the DOD Skillbridge Program is available at <https://skillbridge.osd.mil/>
3. **The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Veterans Local Government Management Fellowship.** Coordinated with Skillbridge, this 12-to-25-week program provides transitioning service members with management training and hands-on experience in a local government environment, in order to prepare them for smooth transitions into local government careers. More information can be found at <https://icma.org/veterans-local-government-management-fellowship-vlgmf>
4. **Department of Labor HIRE Vets Medallion Program.** The HIRE Vets Medallion Award is the only federal-level veterans' employment award that recognizes a company or organization's commitment to veteran hiring, retention, and professional development. Find more information about the Hire Vets Program and the criteria for the current award cycle at <https://www.hirevets.gov>



5. **Army PaYS: The Partnership for Your Success (PaYS) Program.** This program is a strategic partnership between the U.S. Army and a cross section of corporations, companies, and public sector agencies. The Program provides America's Soldiers with an opportunity to serve their country while they prepare for their future. Additional information is available at <https://www.armypays.com/>
6. **Army Private - Public Partnership (P3).** Through the relationships fostered by this program, Army Reserve Soldiers are connected with internship, employment, and education opportunities. The Public Private Partnership Office (P3O) ensures Army Reserve Soldiers are succeeding in their civilian careers which directly benefits the Army and the Nation by bringing substantial value and depth to the force. More than 87% of the force integrates military service with civilian careers, providing the Army with professional skills, education and expertise acquired in the private sector. For more information, visit <https://www.usar.army.mil/P3/>
7. **County's Veteran Services Office (VSO).** The local Veteran Services Office can be a valuable recruitment resource, as the VSO knows the pulse of the local veteran community and can direct recent retirees to job postings well-suited to their skillset.

Veterans, when given the opportunity to apply their skills and experience in local government positions, can continue serving the community long after retiring from a military career. Unlike local government retirees, who typically retire in their 60s, many retiring service members are in their early to late 40s. These individuals, with over 20 years of service, are inclined to be highly educated and experienced, and are often seeking to continue their careers for an additional ten to twenty years. Their experience tends to make them a strong fit for local government organizations, enhancing the team with their leadership, management, and technical capabilities.

AUTHOR



Steve Monaghan is the Director of Nevada County's Information & General Services Agency. For twenty-plus years, he previously held the position of Chief Information Officer (CIO) and was responsible for planning, organizing, and directing the county's overall information technology efforts and investments. His efforts have resulted in significant recognitions and awards for his leadership in the IT industry and, during his tenure, Nevada County has received numerous awards for technology leadership and excellence. In addition, Steve created the CSAC/CCISDA County Technology Executive Credential program, serves on NACo and ICMA technology related advisory boards and workgroups, and serves as a member of RCRC's Broadband Advisory Committee. Find additional information about Steve here (https://www.linkedin.com/in/steve_monaghan1/) and connect with him directly at steve.monaghan@NevadaCountyCA.gov