

Tips for transitioning from the military

by Jason Alderman (www.practicalmoneyskills.com)

Reentering the civilian workforce after a career in the armed forces can be challenging even during the best of times. But with today's economic uncertainty and high unemployment rates, retiring and discharged military personnel may need extra help to develop a game plan and manage their personal finances during that transition.

The issue has gained increased visibility with the recent creation of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Office for Service Member Affairs, to be headed up by Holly Patraeus, wife of Gen. David Patraeus, and a long-time advocate for educating military families on consumer issues.

Here are a few resources to help with the important financial and job-transition decisions you may face:

Transition Assistance. The government provides an intensive three-day Transition Assistance Program (www.taonline.com/TAPOffice) to separating or retiring service members and their spouses. Workshop attendees learn about setting career objectives, conducting job searches, current occupational and labor market conditions, resumé preparation and interviewing techniques.

The Department of Veterans Affairs' VetSuccess Program (www.vetsuccess.gov) provides additional assistance to

military personnel released because of service-connected disabilities. For those whose disability is so severe they cannot immediately consider work, VetSuccess offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible.

Finding a job. Although expertise acquired during military service often translates readily into marketable civilian job skills, it sometimes takes extra effort to make those links more apparent. Consider these tactics:

- Begin your research well before you leave the military – a year or more, ideally.
- Contact organizations that link job seekers with military-friendly employers such as Hire a Hero (www.hireahero.org), Military Exits (www.militaryexits.com), Helmets to Hardhats (www.helmetstohardhats.com) and Vetjobs.com (www.vetjobs.com).
- Make your resumé civilian-friendly – watch out for military jargon that might be hard to understand.
- Become acquainted with and post your resumé on popular online job sites such as Monster.com (www.monster.com), Careerbuilder.com (www.careerbuilder.com) and USAJOBS.com, the government's official job site (www.usajobs.com).
- Many service members have one government-provided relocation left when they leave the service; so if a potential job

entails a move and you're flexible about where to live, use that free relocation to your competitive advantage.

Continuing education. While investigating career options, learn what additional required education or certifications you lack so you can begin acquiring those skills now – or at least map out a game plan for how to proceed after you leave the military.

The Post 9/11 GI Bill (www.gibill.va.gov) provides financial support for education and housing to military veterans, including undergraduate and graduate degrees and vocational/technical training. Other VA-sponsored education assistance programs include:

- Reserve Educational Assistance Program for reservists called up to active duty.
- Survivors and Dependents Assistance for eligible dependents of certain veterans.
- VA Work-Study Allowance Program for full- or three-quarter-time students in college degree, vocational or professional programs.

One last tip: Money could be tight during your transition, so it's vital to develop a budget you can live with. Numerous free budgeting tools, including interactive budget calculators, are available online at sites such as the U.S. Financial Literacy and Education Commission's www.mymoney.gov, the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (www.nfcc.org), www.mint.com, and Practical Money Skills for Life (www.practicalmoneyskills.com), a free personal financial management site run by Visa Inc.

Walk a mile in her shoes for CCWRC

April is Sexual Assault awareness month. Join the Columbia County Women's Resource Center (CCWRC) and our allies on April 16. There will be a one-mile high heeled walk to raise awareness and reduce incidence of sexual assault. Come and join our male allies as they "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®."

The walk will take place beginning at IGA/Red Apple in St Helens at 12, noon. The walk will end at the Columbia View Park with a short program, music, prizes and fun. We hope our male allies can make it the downhill mile in heels!

All are welcome to be a part of this international movement where men walk in heels to support survivors and make a statement that gender violence is NOT OKAY in our community! This Walk a Mile in Her Shoes® Event will be a playful opportunity to raise awareness about the serious causes, effects and prevention of sexualized violence. Special thanks to our event sponsor Counseling and Wellness.

Sexual Assault is not just a women's issue. It affects individuals of all gender identities as well as women, men who care about them, their families, their friends, their coworkers, and their communities. Sexualized violence is epidemic. Every two minutes someone in

America is raped. One in six American women are victims of sexual assault and most of these assaults are never reported. That means someone you know, someone you care about, has been or may become the victim of sexual violence. It may be your mother, your sister, your friend, your girlfriend, your wife, your coworker, or your daughter.

This event will be performance art to get people talking and working together to end violence in Columbia County. There is a \$10 registration fee before April 11 that includes a walk t-shirt, after April 11 registration is \$13.

For more information and to register for the walk see our website www.ccwrc.com, call 503.397.7110 or email events@ccwrc.com.

CCWRC is the only agency of its kind dedicated to serving victims and survivors of family violence and sexual assault in Columbia County.

The 22-bed shelter is more than temporary housing. CCWRC provides wrap-around services to women and children. Supports and programs include job training, connections to medical and mental health care, legal advocacy, counseling, support groups, education, risk assessment and safety planning.


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