

Summary of Planned Research on Recently Discharged Illinois Veterans

IWIB Veterans Taskforce – May 25, 2010

The main objective of the research planned for 2010 is to study the transition of recently discharged Illinois veterans from military discharge to stable civilian employment. The analysis will account for the known key characteristics of the veterans while studying the role of programs and services that they receive after discharge and how that utilization may impact their employment path.

The foundation of this study will be based on data obtained from IDVA on recently discharged Illinois veterans for key characteristics such as: date of birth (used to calculate age at discharge and at other dates after discharge); gender; branch of military service (including Regular or Reserve/Guard); military rank (enlisted or officer); military entrance and exit dates (used to calculate months of military service); and city and state of discharge address (converted into Illinois county to determine urban or rural).

Identifier information for recent discharges will be used to obtain additional data from state agencies that have programs that serve the veteran population. These agencies include DCEO, IDES, ISAC, ICCB, DHS, DOC, and HFS. Additional education data will be obtained through the Illinois Shared Enrollment & Graduation consortium and the National Student Clearinghouse. Federal government wage data will be accessed from the Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES) and military occupational codes at the time of discharge from the Department of Defense (DOD). Other potential data elements may be included if they can be found for the individual veterans. Access to the additional data should allow us to account for a very high percentage of the discharges in recent years.

Employment outcomes will be based on available data such as number of months from military discharge until civilian employment and the path that is followed to stable civilian employment, number of weeks receiving unemployment benefits, and wages including the industry and location of civilian employment. This outcome data will be analyzed relative to the key characteristics of the individual veterans obtained from IDVA and the additional information obtained from other sources such as the amount and type of government programs/services received and the education received after discharge (after first discharge in case of some Reserve/Guard veterans).

The planned research project intends to verify the findings determined previously in the 2006 research. More data will be included in the 2010 research and so more findings are expected in regard to the characteristics of veterans and their transition. Example questions that will be investigated via the analysis of available data are:

- 1) How much impact does the unemployment rate of Illinois at the time of discharge have on the employment transition?
- 2) Does the utilization of education benefits impact the wage trajectory of civilian employment?
- 3) Can differences be seen for female discharges compared to the total population? This is the first generation of females to be exposed to the front line and we are aware of some unique issues they may face upon discharge. [single mothers may give priority to family problems upon return and make personal problems secondary]
- 4) Does the county of discharge (urban, rural) have a significant impact on the employment transition?
- 5) Can more correlations between branch of service and industry of civilian employment be identified?[Navy – Utilities; Air Force – Professional, Scientific & Technical Services; Army/Navy – Health Care & Social Assistance; Marines – Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade] Can we add to the knowledge base of correlations between military occupational codes and civilian employment information? Could this information be utilized to accelerate the transition of military discharges to stable civilian employment?
- 6) How different are the transitions to civilian employment for officers and enlisted personnel?
- 7) How does the number of months of military service impact the employment transition?