



Employment of Women Veterans in the Federal Government

Council on Veterans Employment
Women Veterans Initiative

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Executive Summary

Women have served in the United States Armed Forces since the Revolutionary War. Today, there are almost two million women Veterans across the United States, approximately 9.2% of all Veterans, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). As the role of women in the United States Armed Forces has continued to evolve, an increasing number of women have chosen to serve our country in uniform. Accordingly, as United States engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan continues to wind down, the Department of Defense (DOD) projects that up to 250,000 service members will separate from service and return home annually over the next few years. To honor the nation's commitment to those who have defended our freedom and liberty and in recognition of the extensive training and experience gained through service, President Obama launched the Veterans Employment Initiative in 2009 under Executive Order 13518, *Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government*. The Executive Order established the Council on Veterans Employment ("Council"), which comprises 24 federal agencies to advise and assist the President on improving employment opportunities for Veterans in the federal government.

The Executive Order calls upon the federal government, as the nation's largest employer, to lead by example in promoting Veterans' employment. The Council, co-chaired by the Secretary of VA and the Secretary of Labor, and with the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) serving as Vice Chair, has led the execution of the Veterans Employment Initiative, resulting in the Executive Branch hiring the highest percentage of Veterans since 1974. For fiscal year (FY) 2013, Veterans represented 31% of new hires across the Executive Branch. Given these extraordinary results, OPM Director and Council Vice Chair Katherine Archuleta established a Women Veterans Initiative to assess and ensure that the federal government's success in Veterans hiring did not overlook the employment needs of women Veterans.

"Honoring our sacred trust with America's Veterans means doing all we can do to help them find work when they come home so they never feel as if the American Dream they fought to defend is out of reach for them and their families."

– President Obama

The results of the Women Veterans Initiative show that the federal government has performed well in this area, with women Veterans comprising almost 24% of Veteran new hires across the Executive Branch in FY 2013. However, there is considerable variance among agencies, which is possible due to the mission and types of occupations in each agency. In addition to the hiring results, there is also tremendous diversity among women Veterans in the federal workforce, which can support other government-wide diversity efforts.

This report is a summary of the findings of the Women Veterans Initiative and provides an overview of women Veterans and active duty service members, highlights hiring and employment of women Veterans across the federal government, and provides recommendations for next steps. The primary recommendation is to adopt an addendum to the government-wide Veterans Recruitment and Employment Strategic Plan by adding measures related to women Veterans and diversity among Veterans in the Plan's existing goal areas of Leadership Commitment, Employment, Marketing and Information Gateway.

Women Veterans Initiative Workgroup

On behalf of the Council on Veterans Employment, OPM Director and Council Vice Chair Katherine Archuleta established a Women Veterans Initiative to assess the hiring of women Veterans, including diversity within the group, throughout the federal government and develop short- and long-term recommendations.

OPM Director Archuleta asked Department of Homeland Security Chief Human Capital Officer Catherine Emerson to lead the Women Veterans Initiative and established an inter-agency workgroup comprised of representation from the following agencies:

Department of Homeland Security (Lead)	Department of Labor
Department of Agriculture	Department of Veterans Affairs
Department of Defense	Social Security Administration
Department of Education	Office of Personnel Management
Department of Health and Human Services	Department of Interior

In August 2014, OPM Director Archuleta held a kick-off meeting with the Women Veterans Initiative Workgroup to provide the overall direction, underscore the importance and value of the Initiative and discuss the deliverables. In subsequent meetings, research and analysis focused on key demographics about women Veterans and women service members, as well as data about the employment of women Veterans in the federal government.



Women Veterans

Women have served in the United States Armed Forces since the revolutionary war. Today, the almost two million women Veterans across the United States represent 9.2% of all Veterans, 13% of the Veteran labor force, and are one of the fastest growing segments of the overall Veteran population. According to VA's Center for Women Veterans, women already comprise 20% of Gulf War II Veterans – those who served after 9/11.

Among all women Veterans in 2013, over half had served in either Gulf War I (August 1990 to August 2001) or Gulf War II. In addition, active duty and recruiting data projects the percentage of women Veterans to increase to almost 18% of the total Veteran population by 2040.

“The Nation needs traits Veterans possess to keep America competitive. When women Veterans surrender the uniform, they keep the intangible with them – resolute resilience and the unbeatable skills that they will use in business, entrepreneurship, industry, and public service at all levels.”

– Elisa Basnight, Esq., Director
VA Center for Women Veterans

Based on data from the Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service, Women Veteran Program, women Veterans are younger, more educated, more likely to be of a different racial or ethnic group, and more likely to be in the civilian labor force than male Veterans. Women Veterans are also more likely to be in the subpopulations that have higher unemployment rates, such as Veterans currently enrolled in school, those under 35 years old, and those who served in Gulf War II. In 2014, 11% of women Veterans in the labor force between the ages of 18 and 54 were enrolled in school, as compared to 6% of male Veterans in the labor force of the same age groups. Thirty-two percent of women Veterans in the labor force served during Gulf War II, as compared to 22% of male Veterans. Nineteen percent of women Veterans in the labor force were under 35 years old, compared to 14% of male Veterans. Overall, the unemployment rates for women Veterans are trending down, and the annual average unemployment rate for all women Veterans was not significantly different from women non-Veterans in 2013 or 2014 (6.9% vs. 6.8% and 6% vs. 5.9%, respectively).¹

Women Veterans are more likely to work for the federal government than their non-Veteran counterparts. In 2013 and 2014, 14% of employed women Veterans worked for the federal government compared with 2% of employed women non-Veterans. Women Veterans continue to represent an important pool of talent for the federal government with proven skills, extensive training and an interest in continuing public service.

¹ Calculations from Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service, Women Veteran Program, using data retrieved from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014), *Current Population Survey, Unpublished Tables, 2014 annual averages*; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013), *Current Population Survey, Unpublished Tables, 2013 annual averages*.

Women Service Members²

To gain an understanding of the potential pool of talent as women leave active duty, the Women Veterans Initiative analyzed four key demographics for women service members on active duty military service in the Armed Forces. The four demographics explored include:

- The number of women currently serving on active duty;
- Top 10 active duty occupational groups for women on active duty as enlisted and officer;
- Educational certification of women on active duty; and
- Separations of women from active duty service.

Women on Active Duty Service³

According to the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), the actual strength of the Armed Forces of the United States as of June 2014 was over 1.3 million active duty service members.

Of the total active duty officer corps population, women serving as military officers in the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force and U.S. Coast Guard represent 16.7% of the more than 240,000 total officers on active duty. Women service members in the enlisted grade structure represent 14.7% of the more than 1.1 million total enlisted members. Combined, women service members represent approximately 200,000 or 15.1% of the more than 1.3 million active duty service members.

“Today you make the change from peacetime pursuits to wartime tasks. You have given up comfortable homes, highly paid positions, leisure. You have taken off silk and put on khaki...you have a debt and a date. A debt to democracy, and a date with destiny.”

– Oveta Culp Hobby, Colonel
Director of the Women’s Army Corps, WWII

Top 10 Occupational Groups for Active Duty Women

To gain an understanding of the experience of women in active duty, the following chart lists the top 10 occupations for women in both the enlisted and officer occupations. It is important to keep in mind that this chart represents a point in time and that over the course of any service member’s career, they could transition between multiple occupations.⁴

² The data presented in this section may differ compared to other reports based on the parameters used.

³ For the purpose of data analysis and review, the actual strength total does not include those service members who are Reservists, Cadets or Midshipmen since the primary focus was active duty service only.

⁴ The direct correlation between military and civilian occupational specialties is complicated by the fact that military occupational codes can translate to multiple civilian occupational codes, making a crosswalk difficult. Further, there are many military specialties and occupations that may have no direct civilian comparisons.

Women in Military Service – Top Occupations	
Enlisted Primary DOD Occupation	Officer Primary DOD Occupation
1. Supply Administration	1. Medical/Surgical Nurse
2. Medical Care and Treatment	2. Manpower and Personnel
3. Law Enforcement, General	3. Intelligence, General
4. General Personnel	4. Health Services Administration
5. Food Service, General	5. Logistics, General
6. General Administration	6. Nurses
7. Operational Intelligence	7. Ground and Naval Arms
8. Motor Vehicle Operator	8. Legal
9. ADP Computers	9. Communications Radar
10. Electronic Countermeasures	10. Physicians

Education Certification of Active Duty Women

In addition to occupational experience, to gain a more complete understanding of the potential pool of talent as women leave active duty, the Women Veterans Initiative also analyzed the educational certification of women in active duty. Of the approximately 200,000 women active duty service members, almost 96% graduated with a high school degree or attained varying levels of college. The review of the high school and college levels of attainment for women on active duty service revealed that:⁵

- More than 114,000 women received a high school diploma;
- More than 23,000 achieved an associate degree;
- Almost 32,000 achieved a baccalaureate degree;
- More than 14,000 achieved a master’s degree;
- More than 4,200 achieved a first professional degree; and
- Almost 1,400 achieved a doctoral degree.

As women Veterans tend to pursue higher education, they represent a significant pipeline for the federal government, as many federal jobs require positive educational requirements.

Separations of Women from Active Duty Service

The percentage of women who left active duty service (separations) has remained constant – 16.4% in FY 2009 and 15.4% in FY 2013. The chart below denotes the number and percent of women separations over the past five fiscal years.

⁵ Source: DMDC’s *Active Duty Military Personnel by Pay Grade, Education Certification, Service and Gender* table, as of August 31, 2014.

FY	Total Separations	Total Women Separations	% Women Separations
2009	177,416	29,069	16.4%
2010	177,084	28,996	16.4%
2011	186,887	29,652	15.9%
2012	202,768	31,596	15.6%
2013	206,195	31,803	15.4%

With the combination of routine separations from active duty service and the draw down from Iraq and Afghanistan, the growing number of women Veterans presents a unique talent pool for the federal government and industry.

Women Veterans in the Federal Government



According to the *OPM Employment of Veterans in the Federal Executive Branch FY13 Report*, the Executive Branch of government hired the highest percentage of Veterans in more than 20 years, surpassing the previous high set in FY 2012.⁶ The positive story regarding Veterans employment in the federal government also extends to women Veterans. The percent of women Veteran new hires among all Veteran new hires across the Executive Branch increased from 21.1% to 23.7% between FY 2010 and FY 2013. In terms of the onboard percentage, in FY 2013, women Veterans represented 18.7% of

all Veterans employed by the Executive Branch, which is almost twice as large as the representation of women within the overall Veteran population.

Women Veterans – New Hires

Given the size of many federal agencies, the Veterans Employment Initiative has often focused on new hire results, which can be enhanced based on leadership commitment and strategic recruiting. For FY 2013, women Veterans comprised 23.7% of all Veteran new hires across Executive Branch agencies. However, DOD and VA have a significant influence on government-wide results given that they are traditionally the two largest employers for Veterans. For example, DOD and VA hired 71% of all Veterans and 75.6% of women Veterans across the Executive Branch in FY 2013. Removing DOD and VA new hire data from the analysis, women Veteran new hires comprise 19.9% of all Veteran new hires across the remaining Executive Branch agencies. Similarly, the influence of DOD and VA in the hiring trends for women Veterans from FY 2010 to FY 2013 is also apparent, growing from 21.1% to 25.9%. However, removing the new hire data from these two departments from the analysis, results in a more modest increase from 18.9% to 19.9% across the remaining Executive Branch agencies.

⁶ At the time of completing this report, FY13 is the last full year for which OPM can provide government-wide data.

Women Veterans – On Boards

In terms of onboard percentages, women Veterans comprised 18.7% of all Veterans in Executive Branch agencies in FY 2013. As with new hires, DOD and VA also have the highest number of women Veterans onboard. Accordingly, removing onboard data from these departments from the analysis, women Veterans comprise 15.4% of Veterans employed across the remaining Executive Branch agencies. A review of women Veterans onboard trends shows a steady increase from FY 2010 to FY 2013 for all Executive Branch agencies (16.7% to 18.7%) as well as for all agencies excluding the onboard data from DOD and VA (13.4% to 15.4%).

Government-wide Mission Critical Occupations

All occupations are important and serve a distinctive role in achieving the federal government’s missions and goals. While some have a direct impact on mission delivery, others contribute to the mission by supporting employees, processes and systems. Mission Critical Occupations (MCOs) are those occupations that most directly contribute to achieving the government’s various missions. In addition to agency specific MCOs, the government-wide Chief Human Capital Officer Council has identified five government-wide MCOs. The representation of women Veterans and women non-Veterans in those occupations (shown below) reflects the significant opportunity available for women Veterans in these occupations.

Representation of Women Veterans in Government-wide MCOs				
Occupation	Women Veteran	Women Non-Veteran	Women Total	OCLF⁷
0110 – Economist	0.36%	33.28%	33.64%	32.9%
0201 - Human Resources Management	13.64%	56.76%	70.40%	60.30%
0511 – Auditing	3.93%	45.33%	49.27%	60.09%
1102 – Contracting	8.95%	46.93%	55.88%	53.76%
2210 - Information Technology Management	4.89%	25.30%	30.19%	29.64%

Nontraditional Occupations

As noted above, women Veterans comprise almost 5% of the total federal workforce for Information Technology Management, a career field considered nontraditional for women. Other nontraditional occupations include law enforcement; cybersecurity; and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. These high-demand nontraditional occupations for women provide greater earnings and opportunities than many others. Such occupations may also be particularly viable for women Veterans, who have already proven their ability to succeed in a male-dominated field. In addition, women Veterans can also take advantage of educational

⁷ Occupational Civilian Labor Force (OCLF) data sources: 0110-Economist from US Census, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Tabulation, Table EEO-CIT02R.

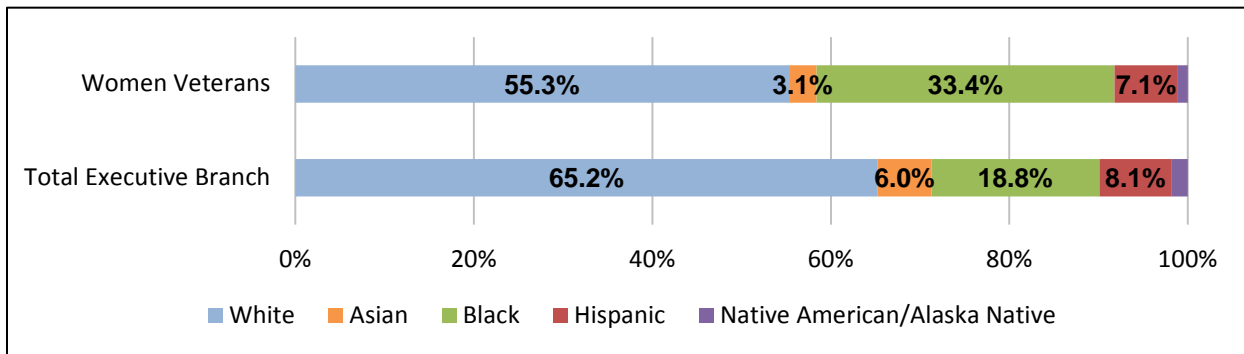
opportunities such the Post-9/11 GI Bill through which women Veterans can gain knowledge and a pathway to success in STEM fields or other nontraditional careers.

Diversity Among Women Veterans in the Executive Branch

In addition to Executive Order 13518, *Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government*, there are other government-wide strategic initiatives related to diversity in the federal workforce. Enhancing agency recruitment and outreach efforts focused on women Veterans could also support some of the other broader diversity initiatives given the tremendous diversity within the women Veteran population.

Based on FY 2013 workforce data, women Veterans are the most racially and ethnically diverse group in the Executive Branch (44.7% all other races and ethnicity), followed by women non-Veterans (40.6%). Male non-Veterans are the least racially and ethnically diverse group (28.1% all other races and ethnicity), followed by male Veterans (31.8%). A large share of the diversity of women Veterans derives from the proportion of individuals who identify as Black/African-American women, 33.4% compared to 18.8% for the total Executive Branch workforce. Women Veterans have slightly smaller populations of individuals who identify as Asian, Hispanic or Latino compared to the total Executive Branch workforce (3.1% vs. 6.0%, and 7.1% vs. 8.1%, respectively).

Race and Ethnicity of Women Veterans in the Executive Branch Compared to the Total Executive Branch



Additionally, among all women Veterans in the civilian labor force, 10% were Hispanic or Latino in 2013 and 9% were Hispanic or Latino in 2014. In both 2013 and 2014, Hispanic or Latino women Veterans had higher unemployment rates than did other races and ethnicities. Among all unemployed women Veterans, 15% were Hispanic or Latino in 2013, and 17% were Hispanic or Latino in 2014.⁸ Through focused recruitment efforts, the federal government can assist those who are most at risk due to long-term unemployment/employment gaps.

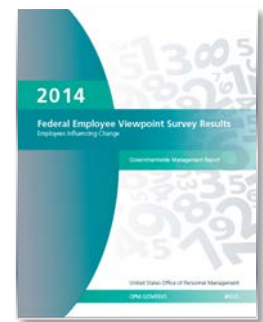
⁸ Calculations from Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service, Women Veteran Program, using data retrieved from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014), *Current Population Survey, Unpublished Tables, 2014 annual averages*; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013), *Current Population Survey, Unpublished Tables, 2013 annual averages*.

“You all are part of a long line of women who have broken barriers... defied expectations and served this country with unparalleled courage and determination... You’ve been on the front lines, often in the line of fire, and generation after generation, women like you have proven you not only serve alongside men, you lead them as well.”

– First Lady Michelle Obama

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

The Women Veterans Initiative Workgroup reviewed the 2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) results in order to identify potential themes pertaining to women Veterans’ in the federal workforce. The review focused on government-wide results rather than agency specific data and compared the results for women Veterans to the results for all Veterans, male Veterans, women non-Veterans, male non-Veterans and all government-wide employees. The Workgroup isolated the survey questions in which women Veterans responded less favorably by five percentage points or more than each of the other groups.⁹ Then, for each comparison pair, they analyzed the isolated survey questions (grouped as factors) for factor comprehensibility. Factor comprehensibility involves the interpretations of subject matter experts to determine if the survey questions included in each factor measured the same area of human motivation.



⁹ OPM guidance considers a difference of five percentage points as notable.

Overall, women Veterans responded less favorably (five percentage points or more) than government-wide employees on eight questions. Three of these questions pertained to employee satisfaction with opportunities for skills improvement, promotions and demonstration of leadership skills, suggesting a theme of *Career Growth*. Another three questions measured employee perceptions of coercion, illegal discrimination and trust in supervisor, suggesting a theme of *Safety and Trust*. The remaining two questions pertained to shared knowledge among employees in a work unit and diversity in policies and programs, suggesting a theme of *Teamwork and Diversity*. The two strongest themes identified by the Workgroup were *Career Growth* and *Safety and Trust*, when they compared women Veterans to other groups, suggesting factor comprehensibility pertaining to gender and to Veteran status. In comparing women Veterans to all non-Veterans (regardless of gender), the strongest interpreted theme was that women Veterans perceived opportunities for *Career Growth* less favorably than did non-Veterans. When women Veterans were compared to all men (regardless of Veteran status), the strongest interpreted theme was that women Veterans perceived *Safety and Trust* less favorably than did men.¹⁰

Conclusion

Women have a long and distinguished record of service in the United States Armed Forces and an increasing number of women are choosing to serve our country in uniform. As such, women also represent the fastest growing demographic within the overall Veteran population.

“Let the generations know that women in uniform also guaranteed their freedom. That our resolve was just as great as the brave men who stood among us. And with victory our hearts were just as full and beat just as fast – that the tears fell just as hard for those we left behind.”

– Unknown U.S. Army Nurse, WWII
(and a quote in the Women’s Memorial)

The President’s firm commitment to honor and support those who have served and sacrificed is also recognition of the extensive training, experience and transferrable skills gained through military service. As the Executive Branch hiring results for Veterans are at the highest levels in many years, the Women Veterans Initiative was established to assess and ensure that the federal government’s overall Veterans hiring success did not overlook the employment needs of women Veterans.

Overall, the federal government has strong results in this area with women Veterans comprising almost 24% of Veteran new hires across the Executive Branch in FY 2013. However, given the

¹⁰ Women Veterans responded less favorably than government-wide employees by five percentage points or more for each of the following eight questions:

Question #1: I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization (-5.38%).

Question #22: Promotions in my work unit are based on merit (-5.04%).

Question #26: Employees in my work unit share job knowledge with each other (-6.72%).

Question #34: Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (-6.32%).

Question #37: Arbitrary action, personal favoritism and coercion for partisan political purposes are not tolerated (-5.49%).

Question #38: Prohibited Personnel Practices are not tolerated (-7.38%).

Question #43: My supervisor/team leader provides me opportunities to demonstrate my leadership skills (-5.42%).

Question #51: I have trust and confidence in my supervisor (-5.88%).

considerable variance across the Executive Branch, which might be a result of the mission and types of occupations in each agency, there is an opportunity for agencies to enhance their recruitment and outreach efforts. Moreover, given the tremendous diversity among women Veterans in the federal workforce, outreach to women Veterans could support other government-wide diversity efforts.

Moving forward, to sustain and enhance these efforts, the primary recommendation of the Women Veterans Initiative is to adopt an addendum to the Government-wide Veterans Recruitment and Employment Strategic Plan to provide measures related to women Veterans and diversity among other groups of Veterans.

Appendix 1: Women Veterans Initiative

Recommendations and Strategy

Recommendation: Adopt an addendum to the Government-wide Veterans Recruitment and Employment Strategic Plan (FY 2014-2017) in the areas of leadership commitment, employment, marketing and information gateway to enhance employment opportunities and engagement with women Veterans.

Proposed Addendum to the Government-wide Veterans Recruitment and Employment Strategic Plan (FY 2014-2017)¹¹

LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

I. Actions:

d. Include data related to women Veterans and diversity in reporting to and from OPM, as well as part of internal agency reporting by:

1. Including data related to women Veterans and diversity in the annual Employment of Veterans in the Executive Branch report issued by OPM
2. Encouraging annual, if not quarterly, reports to agency senior leadership regarding hiring and employment results for women Veterans and diversity among Veterans, in addition to other Veterans hiring and employment results
3. Encouraging agencies to conduct analysis of the FEVS results to identify disparities related to Veterans, as well as specifically for women Veterans and diverse groups of Veterans, and report results to senior leadership
4. Assessing successes and challenges to recruiting and retaining women Veterans and other groups of diverse Veterans through various methods including focus groups and surveys

II. Desired Outcomes:

- e. Agency reporting demonstrates the Council's efforts to monitor and assess recruitment efforts for women Veterans and other groups of diverse Veterans across the Federal Executive Branch

EMPLOYMENT

I. Actions:

d. Design recruiting strategies to attract women Veterans by:

1. Launching targeted outreach focused on women Veterans based on agency specific mission critical occupations and workforce needs

¹¹ Note that the formatting and numbering follows the template of the Strategic Plan.

2. Encouraging agencies to use non-competitive Special Hiring Authorities for Veterans to recruit and hire qualified veterans who are most at risk due to long-term unemployment/employment gaps¹²

III. Desired Outcomes:

- e. Agency Veteran recruitment efforts are aligned with other government-wide recruitment initiatives

MARKETING

I. Actions:

c. Ensure outreach to women Veterans and diverse groups of Veterans by:

1. Enhancing marketing efforts, such as brochures focusing on women Veterans and diverse groups of Veterans, which can be shared in various venues for Veterans and transitioning service members
3. Leveraging strategic relationships with Veteran service organizations, colleges and universities, trade schools, apprentice programs, and affinity organizations representing diverse groups to enhance outreach to women Veterans and diverse groups of Veterans
4. Using Veterans Employment Program Manager meetings to align marketing efforts and share best practices

II. Desired Outcomes:

- e. Hiring officials have a broader pool of diverse Veteran candidates to fill mission critical occupations and meet workforce needs

INFORMATION GATEWAY

I. Actions:

c. Modify the Feds Hire Vets website to improve its effectiveness and audience reach by:

1. Including a link for “Women Who Have Served” on the “Job Seekers, Veterans” tab with resources and information for women Veterans

II. Desired Outcomes:

- e. Resources are readily available to women Veterans to enhance opportunities for federal employment

¹² Long-term unemployed refers to individuals who have been looking for work for 27 weeks or more according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Appendix 2: Employment of Women Veterans in the Federal Government, Council on Veterans Employment Briefing

(See attached WVI PowerPoint)

Appendix 3: Glossary

Active Duty. Full-time duty in the active service of a uniformed service, including duty on the active list, full-time training duty, annual training duty, and attendance while in the active service at a school designated as a service school by law or by the Secretary concerned.

Actual Strength. The number of personnel in, or projected to be in, an organization or account at a specified point in time.

Enlisted Member. A person enlisted, enrolled, or conscripted into the military service. Also includes enlisted personnel currently enrolled in an officer training program.

New Hire. Includes any executive branch employee with a Nature of Action Code of 1xx (Hires) except for those which indicate that the employee is a transfer from another government agency.

Officer. A commissioned or warrant officer.