

The United States has been at war now since September 11, 2001. During that time, according to the US Department of Labor, more than 2.6 million people have served in the military.

In 2013, the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) announced new regulations (known as the Final Rule) regarding the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act (VEVRAA). VEVRAA prohibits federal contractors and subcontractors from discriminating in employment against protected veterans, and requires these employers to take affirmative action to recruit, hire, promote, and retain these veterans. The final rule clarifies the mandatory job listing requirements, and establishes hiring benchmarks to assist in measuring the effectiveness of their affirmative action efforts.

In March of this year, the Labor Department reported that the unemployment rate among veterans who have served since 2001 has declined slightly, to about 9 percent, but remains above overall civilian unemployment levels of about 7 percent. When you dig into the numbers you learn that for veterans ages 18 to 24, the unemployment rate sky-rockets to more than 21 percent. Younger veterans of the more recent conflicts receive training and skills that are applicable to the civilian sector, but they continue to be challenged in finding job opportunities.

In recent years, there have been many efforts and broad recognition across industries that companies need to do more to help this part of our population, who have in many cases sacrificed much while serving in harm's way.

The good news is that a Google search of "*veteran's hiring programs*" yielded 92.5 million results in less than half a second – there is a lot out there and many are helping veterans find jobs. But there is much more to do and the effectiveness of some programs are not as good as others.

In the Spring edition of NEHRA's *Insights* magazine, I will showcase one program that is gaining traction and having an impact for both veterans and employers in Massachusetts.

Edge4Vets helps veterans translate their strengths from the military into tools for civilian success. In a series of workshops based on a resiliency training model, veterans get support from business mentors who participate with them in the translation process. During this process the employers get to know the veterans, and then partnering with the sponsoring HR teams, they work to match them to real job opportunities.

Find out more [here](#), and look out for the full article in NEHRA's Spring issue of *Insights* magazine.

The HR Challenge

How do HR professionals responsible for meeting new OFCCP requirements, as well as doing what we know is the right thing to do, learn about and leverage effective veteran hiring programs?

How do we partner with programs that will help us meet these requirements while filling our critical talent needs?