

COME 'HOME' TO HOME BASE IOWA



Approximately 200,000 veterans come out of the military each year. Eighty-three percent of them have skills that are directly transferable to civilian careers.

The million dollar question is, do returning veterans know how to market the skills they've acquired from the armed services into regular jobs?

In Iowa, the state developed a program to help. It's a non-profit, private-public partnership to recruit veterans and transitioning service members to come work in the state of Iowa.

It's called Home Base Iowa, and it was started in 2013 by Gov. Terry Branstad and Maj. Gen. Tim Orr, the adjutant general of the Iowa National Guard.

"Home Base Iowa really connects the dots between veterans transitioning out of the military and veterans looking for employment here within the state, and great Iowa companies looking for good employees," said Jason Kemp, who is retired from United States Air Force and currently the Home Base Iowa project manager.

Forty-four cities and towns throughout 35 Iowa counties have stepped up to become Home Base Iowa communities. More than 1,400 businesses within those communities then committed to making the hiring of these veterans a priority.

Many Home Base Iowa businesses attend job fairs to recruit veterans for employment. According to an Iowa Business Council report, the program has already provided more than 2,750 jobs for returning service members.

SHAZAM, which is based in Johnston, Iowa, committed to being a Home Base Iowa company in the summer of 2015. SHAZAM already counts 23 veterans among its 450 employees and is looking to use Home Base Iowa to continue that growth.

"Think about it. Someone who worked in security detail in the army would be a good fit to join a corporation's security department," said SHAZAM's Chief Talent Officer

Jackie Rolow. "The same can be said for veterans with telecommunications experience. These are growing fields in the industry and the experience these candidates gain in uniform make them an excellent fit for us."

Rolow added, veterans are especially disciplined from their years of serving their country. They are shown to be focused, not easily distracted and are able to get the job done.

"Basically, they have been well-trained to take the initiative and be decisive," she said.

According to Kemp, the hardest part for a lot of veterans when transitioning into civilian life and careers is just taking the first step. Kemp, an Iowa native who spent 20 years in the military, said he was unemployed for 14 months after he got out of the service.

"I had a bachelor's degree and a master's degree," he said.

Kemp said Home Base Iowa can help steer the employment process in the right direction, even with something many candidates find simple, like writing a resume and cover letters. He said, for some service members, this can be a completely daunting and foreign concept.

"A lot of times, military folks don't know how to translate those skills that they have and make them relevant and applicable to a resume, for a specific job they apply for," Kemp said.

And this isn't just a jobs program. Home Base Iowa includes incentives for veterans who choose to move to the Hawkeye state.

In 2014, the Iowa Legislature passed the HBI Act, which included state income tax exemption on military pensions, \$5,000 military homeowner assistance, permissive veteran preference in employment, streamlined occupational licensure processes and automatic in-state tuition at public universities and community colleges for qualified veterans, spouses and their dependents.

“Any path that focuses on hiring talented and skilled workers into a company is the best path for everyone involved.

“It’s really the most bang for your buck, so to speak, and it doesn’t cost anything,” Kemp said about getting involved with the program.

Whether it’s veterans or other groups of people, any path that focuses on hiring talented and skilled workers into a company is the best path for everyone involved.

“The bottom line is, with Home Base Iowa, it’s about hiring great people with great talent into local businesses that are chomping at the bit for more skilled employees,” Rollow said.

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On behalf of the Community Bankers Association of Georgia (CBA), we are proud to announce the 2017 Julian & Jan Hester Memorial Scholarship and the J. Steven Walraven Scholarship!

The **Hester Scholarship** is open to Georgia high school seniors who will be entering a Georgia college, university or technical school (two year program or more) in the fall semester of 2017. The scholarship is named after the late Jan Hester, daughter of Lalia and the late Julian Hester, long-time CEO of the CBA. The four winning recipients will be awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

“CBA is pleased to assist deserving students in their first year of college while honoring the memory of Jan and Julian Hester,” stated Rob Braswell, President & CEO of Community Bankers Association of Georgia (CBA). “Thanks to the generosity of our bankers and associate members, the Education Foundation is fully funded which means the Scholarship Program is completely self-sufficient, giving support to generations of Georgia’s students in the future,” explained Mr. Braswell.

The **Walraven Scholarship** is awarded in the amount of \$500 to a bank employee who desires to continue their education while working full-time at a CBA member bank. The scholarship is named after the late J. Steven Walraven, an active community banker who exemplified professionalism and community involvement. To compete, employees must write a short essay on how community banking has impacted their life and how it will enable them to give back to their community.

Applications should be returned to the bank no later than **Monday, April 3, 2017**. All completed applications should be submitted to CBA no later than **Monday, April 10, 2017**. Only complete applications will be eligible. A panel of independent judges will review the applications and winners will be announced in late April 2017.

Please visit www.cbaofga.com to download the scholarship application and encourage participation from your community. Contact Jeremy Thomens at jeremy@cbaofga.com for more information on either of these scholarships.

CBA's Leadership Division proudly assists with this initiative.