

WEDA Program Information for segment on Military Role in Economic Development

This fast paced program will begin by outlining the fiscal impact of the military on Washington State, and how the private sector can bid for service and product contracts with military bases throughout the state.

It will then move into a full panel presentation on Snohomish County's history-making Military Family Friendly Employment Partnership Initiative which is opening the doors to a largely untapped and much needed workforce for Snohomish County employers.

Lack of employment for the family members of our military forces is now cited as the greatest concern facing the U.S. military today. Despite being well educated and skilled, military dependents are viewed warily by employers. New military statistics show seven out of ten military family spouses need a job yet their unemployment rate runs four times greater than their civilian counterparts. In the meantime, workforce shortages in the private sector continues to grow. 77% of employers surveyed January 2008 by the National Federation of Independent Businesses report an inability to find and hire skilled workforce.

The goal of the partnership initiative is to help military spouses and family members achieve employment goals and attain financial security, while facilitating employers' access to a diverse and talented pool of candidates. Employers are educated on the many advantages of hiring military family members, with a request to sign a non-binding partnership agreement affirming their support of this workforce.

Launched by The Greater Marysville Tulalip Chamber of Commerce this county-wide initiative is blazing an enthusiastic trail of support across the state and the nation. Cities and county governments have not only declared themselves to be "Military Family Friendly" partners, but have also begun to alter their very hiring practices in order to extend the same veterans preference to military dependents and spouses.