

PRIORITY IN EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE  
FOR  
UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES VETERANS

Senate Bill 936  
G.S. 165-44

**REPORT TO THE NORTH  
CAROLINA JOINT COMMISSION  
ON GOVERNMENTAL  
OPERATIONS**

September 30, 2016  
North Carolina Department of Commerce  
Division of Workforce Solutions

## **Background**

On June 3, 1997, the General Assembly ratified Senate Bill 936, G.S. 165-44, requiring eligible veterans be given priority of service in employment and training programs. The bill states that veterans' priority shall apply to any State agency, department or institution, any county, city or other political subdivision of the State, any board or commission and any other public or private recipient that receives federal or State job training funds and provides employment and training assistance including, but not limited to, employability assessments, support services referrals, and vocational and educational counseling. The bill further states that priority of service is defined as "providing all eligible veterans who register or otherwise apply and qualify for services the opportunity to participate in or otherwise receive the services provided before that opportunity is extended to other registered applicants."

The bill directs the NCWorks Commission to submit a compliance report to the Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations annually.

## **Introduction**

The North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions, acting on behalf of the Governor, is the recipient of funds granted through the former federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 (P.L. 105-220), and carried into the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49, *et seq.*), the Trade Adjustment Assistance Extension Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-40), and Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) Veterans' State Grants Program. The division is the administrative and oversight agency for these funds which are used to provide employability, training, and re-training activities to eligible persons in the state. The resources flow to the division through the U.S. Department of Labor which has regulatory power and policy-making responsibility for activities provided with these funds. WIOA resources are required to be allocated to the 23 local workforce development boards in the state who oversee the delivery of local services to eligible individuals. Services are provided through a series of NCWorks Career Centers around the state that house a number of employment and training programs to serve the state's citizens.

The U.S. Department of Labor provides guidance and policy oversight on the implementation of the Jobs for Veterans' Act (P.L. 107-288). This law also establishes a priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses for services funded through WIOA.

## **Implementation**

North Carolina's NCWorks Career Centers ensure that services are broadly available and address the employability and support needs of the persons and businesses in the state. Staff offer core employment activities including staff-assisted services and more intensive services, which may include in-depth assessments, career counseling, and resources for occupational skills training.

While NCWorks Career Center staff serve many special populations, the federal Jobs For Veterans' Act dictates that each state have dedicated Local Veterans Employment Representatives ( LVERs) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) strategically assigned to service delivery points throughout the NCWorks Career Center system to ensure accessibility to all veterans with employment or training needs. In addition, program staff offer information and employment services at the eight military installations in North Carolina to service members who are transitioning out of the military. North Carolina employs 23 LVERs and 54 DVOPs all of whom are themselves qualified veterans, which conforms to the guidelines in the law.

Priority of service to veterans and others who meet eligibility requirements has been honored in North Carolina for decades. Throughout the workforce delivery system, priority of service is enhanced by the State's electronic job matching system, NCWorks Online, which matches only registered veterans to new job orders on the day they are listed - 24 hours ahead of non-veterans. LVERs monitor priority of service to veterans to ensure that staff complies with policies stipulating that qualified veterans are given an opportunity to apply for jobs ahead of non-veterans.

A major role and responsibility of the dedicated veterans' services staff is the capacity building of other service providers to enhance their knowledge of veterans' priority of service in employment and training programs. LVER/DVOP staff has frequent contact with other NCWorks Career Center partners to keep them informed of current veterans' employment and training issues and to assist in providing direct services to veterans. LVER/DVOP staff members attend staff meetings to provide updates on veteran services to answer questions from staff and discuss needed services. LVER staff are available to provide training to other center staff. DVOP staff members also collaborate with the management and center staff to provide outreach services for veterans, including homeless veterans, and those with significant barriers to employment. LVER staff conduct employer outreach and plan job fairs and other activities to promote the employment of veteran customers. Once a veteran's employment and training needs have been identified, the NCWorks Career Center staff ensures that appropriate services are provided.

Strategies to address individual needs include literacy and basic skills programs, resources for occupational skills training, job accommodations, assistive technologies, disability awareness training, and other activities that may address barriers and support achievement of positive employment outcomes. North Carolina has established, and continues to adhere to, a priority of service to veterans, as well as to low-income individuals and public assistance recipients in accordance with WIOA provisions.

### **Outreach and Information for Veterans**

In addition to veterans served through U.S. Department of Labor funded programs referred to above, the Division of Workforce Solutions offers information services to veterans through links found on the Department of Commerce website and NCWorks Online at [www.NCWorks.gov](http://www.NCWorks.gov),

the State's comprehensive job search/matching career exploration and labor market analysis portal for jobseekers and employers. Veterans' services also have a presence on social media, including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

## Compliance

The comparison of the ratio of service between veterans and non-veterans has been determined to be the measure of compliance. To establish that veterans were given priority of service, the ratio of veterans that applied for services and were determined eligible compared to veterans served should not be substantially less than the ratio of non-veterans that applied for services and were determined eligible compared to the number of non-veterans served.

The table below includes data for Division of Workforce Solutions' programs for the July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016 program year.

Program	#Vets Eligible	#Vets Served	Vets Service Ratio	#Non-Vets Eligible	#Non-Vets Served	Non-Vet Service Ratio
WIA Title I-B Adult	8,058	7,838	97.3	111,589	107,809	96.6
WIA Title I-B Dislocated Workers	432	432	100.0	3,288	3,256	99.0
WIA Title I-B Youth	8	8	100.0	2,831	2,693	95.1
Wagner-Peyser Employment Services	28,433	28,430	100.0	395,852	395,815	100.0
Apprenticeship	1,360	1,360	100.0	3,096	3,096	100.0
Trade Adjustment Act	33	30	90.9	739	703	95.1