

## **Hiring and Supporting Massachusetts Veterans Throughout the Year**

Timothy P. Murray, Lieutenant Governor

Massachusetts leads the nation in providing services for veterans and military families thanks to the strong commitment of our taxpayers, policy makers and advocates. During the month of November attention is given to honor our brave military servicemen and women. However, as citizens of this Commonwealth and this country, we have a collective obligation to support our veterans throughout the year. As the Chairman of the Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services in Massachusetts the Council has worked with our Department of Veterans' Services over the last five years to review and access our current programs, and to always seek new innovative ways to do more for our veterans.

It is critical that veterans receive re-employment and training opportunities as part of the range of services we provide when they transition home. With 385,000 veterans currently residing in Massachusetts and an influx of veterans expected to return home from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Governor Patrick and I have asked the business community to consider hiring veterans for open positions and educating employers about the value of hiring a veteran. Unfortunately, we see unemployment among veterans disproportionately higher than the civilian population and not enough companies are aware of available tax credits to hire veterans. Yet, veterans have bravely served our country and are proven to be reliable, diligent, and always ready to get the job done.

In early November, the Retailers Association of Massachusetts joined the Patrick-Murray Administration and other business groups and associations to encourage their members to hire veterans in Massachusetts. Our Administration thanks the Retailers Association of Massachusetts Board of Directors and staff for working with us on this important initiative.

Through the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services and the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, our Administration is committed to working with the Retailers Association of Massachusetts and its members to educate employers about the benefits of hiring veterans and also inform its members about what the state is doing to encourage the hiring of veterans.

### Benefits of Hiring Massachusetts Veterans:

- Hiring a veteran can reduce a company's healthcare costs if the veteran is already covered by his or her VA Healthcare.
- Companies may be eligible to participate in the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program, which helps individuals who qualify as members of a target group to get a job, and it helps employers who hire qualified individuals by giving them a credit on their federal taxes.
- Companies may soon become eligible for additional tax incentives for hiring veterans. Leading in Veterans Day, the Senate approved two federal tax credit provisions that were originally included in President Obama's American Jobs Act. These provisions will incentivize businesses to hire veterans by providing tax credits up to \$5,600 for businesses that hire veterans who have been looking for a job for more than six months

and up to \$9,600 for hiring veterans with service-connected disabilities who have been looking for a job for more than six months. This legislation also expands educational and training opportunities for older veterans and provides disabled veterans up to one year of additional vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits.

#### Massachusetts' Role in Supporting and Hiring Veterans:

While we are working with the private sector to support the hiring of more veterans, the Patrick-Murray Administration is also leading by example by [implementing a series of initiatives to encourage the hiring of veterans in Massachusetts](#):

- Governor Patrick and I will propose up to \$2.86 million in additional funding in the Fiscal Year 2013 budget, including \$500,000 in funding for the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership to train and employ veterans who qualify for state benefits.
- Governor Patrick and I directed our Secretary of Administration and Finance and the Commonwealth's Chief Human Resources Officer to establish an interagency task force with our Secretary of Veterans' Services to review all Commonwealth hiring guidelines and policies to foster increased employment opportunities for our veterans within all secretariats and levels of state government.
- Governor Patrick and I created a Veterans' Re-Employment and Training sub-committee of the Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services.

With more military servicemen and women expected to return home, there will be an increased need for services and we need to do our part to ensure veterans are aware of these services. In addition to financial benefits for hiring veterans, there is a range of available resources such as health and human services, housing, and education. All 351 cities and towns are required to have a Veteran Service Office working in the municipality to inform the community of these services, and the Massachusetts Department of Veterans Services ([www.mass.gov/veterans](http://www.mass.gov/veterans)) is also an available resource. By working together, we can raise awareness of available resources and benefits Massachusetts veterans and their families have earned and help get our veterans back to work.

Yours truly,



Timothy P. Murray  
Lieutenant Governor