

## Impact of Choices within the Job Search Process

Women separating from military service have choices to make, including when to start the civilian job search process, what resources to use, and how much time to take off between the end of military service and entering the job market. As shown below, how veterans handle these issues has an impact on how soon they become employed and how well they like the jobs they find.

Women nearing separation from the military can begin their job search prior to leaving or afterward. As one example, women who start the job search prior to leaving are more aware of the skills they have to offer as measured on the overall skills scale, found in Appendix D. Specifically, women veterans who started their job search prior to leaving the military felt, in comparison to those who started their job search after separation, that they were:

- Better at communicating in writing;
- Possessed stronger math skills;
- Better at allocating and managing resources;
- More skilled at communicating with their colleagues;
- More comfortable with technology and computers;
- Better thinkers, decision-makers, and problem-solvers;
- More adaptable and better able to work and use reason.

Given the above, it appears that among the women veterans surveyed who started their job search prior to leaving the military, they may be more confident in their abilities than those who started their job search some time after separation.

On average, those who started before separation began their job search about six months prior to separation, while those who started after separation began their job search about nine months after separation, a difference of 15 months. For both groups, however, it took about three months, on average, for them to secure a job once they were available and in the job market. Those starting their job search prior to leaving found a civilian job, on average, about three months after leaving the service; while those that started the job search after leaving, began about nine months after their official separation and secured a job within 12 months of separation--the same three month time span. However, it is important to realize that those starting earlier were able to devote nearly nine months to their job search (six months prior, three months after) as opposed to the three months their peers took. This extra time appears to impact the quality of the job found.

Those who started their job search prior to separation found jobs with which they were more satisfied. They were more likely to describe the job as being just what they were looking for and more likely to say they were better prepared for the demands of the position they accepted. They were also more likely to think that their co-workers appreciated their military background and to feel they had an easier time communicating with their colleagues.

As might be expected, women veterans who began a job search prior to separation were more likely to report discussing their military career with their employer during the interview and more likely to feel that this employer appreciated their service to our country. They are also more likely to feel that their military experience gave them an advantage in the workplace and that their employer valued the skills they learned in the military.

### Practical Implications

There are several practical things that can be done to help women veterans make good career transition choices: encourage women service members to begin their transitions before they separate from the military, help them to appreciate the benefits of taking more time to find the right job and enable their understanding of all they have to offer employers.

**“People do not know how hard it is in the civilian sector. So, they want to get out and not make plans. It is so important to make plans.”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey  
Respondent**