

## Reviewing Useful (and not so Useful) Job Search Resources

Success in entering the civilian job market can be facilitated by taking advantage of resources available outside the military. As is shown below, the use of these resources varies greatly and with varying levels of success among the women veterans surveyed. Some of these resources were, in a relative sense, seldom used successfully, including working with a mentor or paying for a search consultant (i.e. headhunter/recruiter).

### Mentorships

Working with a mentor was used by about one-third of women veterans surveyed, and only one-third of this group thought it was a useful experience. As an example, women veterans who worked with a mentor found it useful and were more likely to report that the job they found was just the one they were looking for; this successful

**“The TAP program I went through was excellent. .... I found (the classes) very helpful and stress reducing.”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

mentor experience is a relatively rare event. Likewise, slightly less than 30 percent of women veterans participating in this survey reported paying a search consultant and less than 30 percent of those – nine percent overall – rated the experience as useful. Looking at the initial results, it appears women veterans seem either not to benefit from these resources or are simply not aware of them as viable job search options. Further research

appears to be warranted to ascertain “how” women veterans make use of these resources and if any positive effects can be enhanced.

### Coursework

Women veterans in the survey reported more success in taking classes to improve job specific skills, but still less than half – 46 percent – did so. However, more than half, nearly 60 percent, who took such a course reported it as being useful, and such women veterans were more likely to be happy with the job they found. Likewise, women veterans reported taking classes in the job search process as a successful strategy. Including classes in things such as resume writing, interviewing and networking, about 60 percent of women veterans reported using these kinds of resources, and half of them found them useful. These findings suggest that these types of resources have potential for expansion.

Job fairs are popular with women veterans, with nearly two out of three reporting they attended such events. However, of those who attended, only about one-third reported they were useful.

### Membership/Professional Organizations

The final item in this category of external resources available to help women veterans includes veterans’, professional or women’s organizations that a veteran may have joined to help her find her first post-military job. Note that this question asks about specifically joining to help in the job search, thereby excluding those who may have joined one or more organizations for some other reason. When getting help in the job search is put forth as the primary reason for joining, only 6 percent of this survey’s respondents report this as being true.

Further, only one-third of those who did join reported that such joining was useful in helping in their job search. It is not possible to discern from the collected data if women veterans are aware of how these kinds of organizations can help them in the job search, but the results suggest that whatever the reason, these organizations are not seen as a job-search resource by the majority of women veterans.

**“The transfer was difficult. Fortunately, I come from a military family; so, my father and mother gave me the support and benefit of their experience transitioning...”**

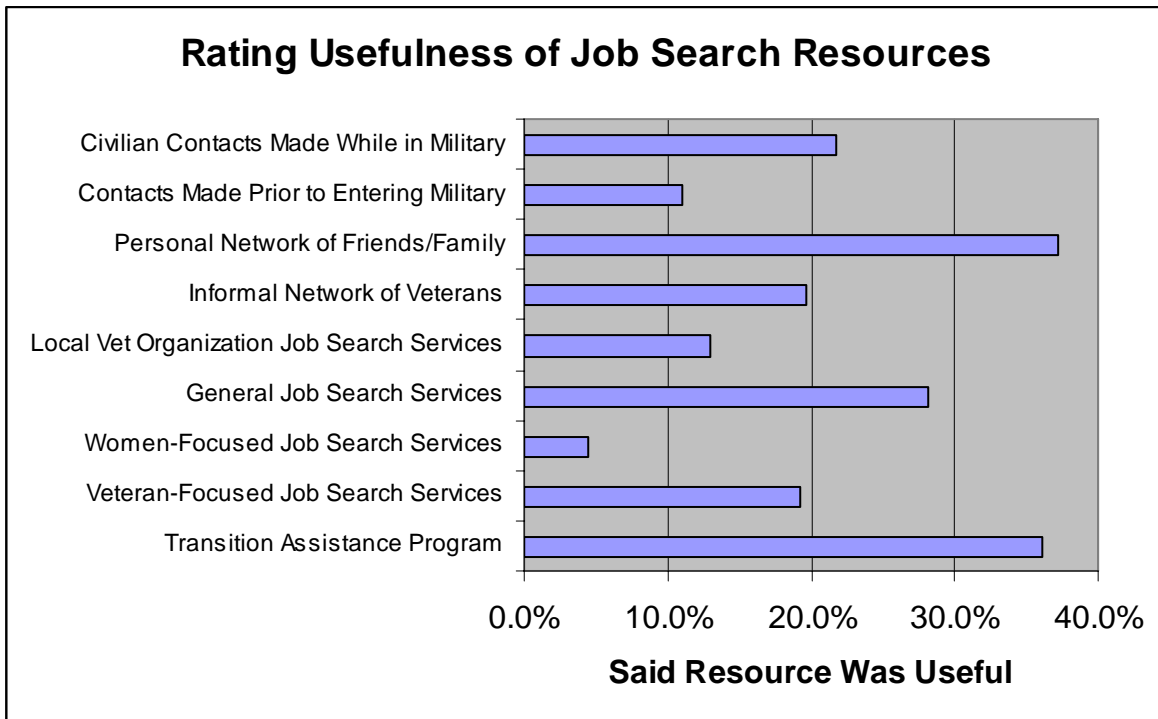
**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

Other resources studied in this survey are activities women veterans did on their own, without the intervention of another person (i.e. mentor, job coach) or organization (i.e. job fair, classes), specifically, working online. Using the internet to gain information on job search skills (resume help, interviewing, and networking) was

one area that was asked about in the survey; the other was posting one’s resume online. Both were used by more than three-fourths of the respondents to this survey, and more than 60 percent thought these were valuable resources. To conclude, women veterans found that the resources they could find on their own on the internet were more useful than the resources they had available in other forms. It should be noted that women veterans answering BPW Foundation’s survey may have a bias towards internet-based services given their comfort-level with completing an online survey.

**Practical Implications**

The role for support organizations appears to be three-pronged. The first is delivering concrete job-search assistance by offering job fairs and classes on job search skills such as resume-writing and interviewing skills. The second prong revolves around building on women veterans comfort with using the internet by offering enhanced services online such as webinars on job skills or perhaps even providing job search/resume listing services focused on women veterans. The final avenue for exploration involves working with women veterans to ascertain if engaging them in business and professional networks can, in fact, facilitate their job search process as well as their sense of adjustment to the civilian workforce even if they don’t originally perceive their help in securing a civilian job.



**Figure F:** What resources did more women veterans surveyed find useful in their job search: personal and family networks, the Transition Assistance Program and general job search services. Far fewer of them made use of or found useful networks beyond their immediate friends and family or targeted search services. For more information, see Appendix D.