

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY &  
INCLUSION PATHWAYS  
TO SUSTAINABLE  
EMPLOYMENT**







# DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To understand if different veteran or veteran-related population groups served by local Goodwill® organizations experience different outcomes, Goodwill Industries International (GII) undertook a study. The primary purpose of this study was to understand and compare program outcomes across different veterans sub-populations to determine if programs are affecting equitable outcomes across participants.

The study focused on the following population groups: women veterans, veterans of color, older veterans, second-chance veterans and military family members. The results are presented in the **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Pathways to Sustainable Employment Report**. Ultimately, this information will help GII and the larger Goodwill network identify areas for improvement in veterans services.

### Demographic Characteristics

Using data provided by ten local Goodwill representatives in Goodwill's proprietary GoodTrak® case management system in 2017 and 2018, the study revealed:

- 85 percent (3,964) of 4,663 individuals included in the study were veterans; 15 percent (699) were military family members.
- 20 percent were women veterans, as compared with the overall U.S. veteran population of 10 percent. Among them, 52 percent were Black, 25 percent were White and 12 percent Hispanic/Latino.
- 42 percent of all veterans served by the 10 Goodwills were Black; 15 percent were Hispanic/Latino. In comparison, only 12 percent of the nation's veterans are Black and 8 percent are Hispanic/Latino.
- Women veterans and women military family members had a higher level of education than males, with 25 percent of women veterans holding bachelor's degrees and 12 percent holding graduate degrees or higher.



Among male veterans, 16 percent had four-year degrees and 6 percent had graduate degrees.

- Hispanic/Latino veterans and military family members were the youngest among the different races and ethnicities; 38 percent of Hispanic/Latino veterans were under the age of 35, compared with 20 percent of Black and 22 percent of white veterans.

### Employment Outcomes

Among the 4,663 veterans and military family members served by 10 Goodwill organizations in 2017 and 2018, 50 percent were employed in early 2019. The average starting wage was \$15.74. Among those who remained employed for six months and a year, the average wages were \$18.16 and \$20.26, representing a \$2.42 increase within six months and a \$4.52 increase by the end of one year.

Both women and men veterans had virtually the same employment rate (53 and 54 percent, respectively), although it tended to take women veterans six days longer to obtain employment. At the time of placement, women veterans earned 22 cents per hour less than their male counterparts; after one year, the earnings disparity had grown to \$3.05 (\$18.15 per hour versus \$21.20 per hour). Thirty percent of women veterans remained employed 12 months after placement; only 18 percent of male veterans retained employment.

Women veterans who were white experienced a higher placement rate (59 percent) compared to their Black (52 percent) and Hispanic (51 percent) counterparts. The starting hourly wage for White women veterans was \$16.62, \$1.74 higher than Black women veterans, whose average starting hourly wage was \$14.88, and 40 cents lower than the \$17.02 average hourly wage of Hispanic women veterans. After one year, White and Hispanic women veterans earned almost the same (\$18.54 and \$18.62); Black women veterans remained lower-paid by almost \$1.50 per hour, with an average hourly wage of \$17.11.

Among all veterans, White veterans had a 59 percent placement rate, compared to 53 percent for Black veterans and 49 percent for Hispanic/Latino veterans. White veterans earned more per hour, and more White veterans remained employed at one year after placement compared to Black and Hispanic veterans.

Most outcomes were lower for both second-chance and older veterans than those who had not been involved with the justice system and those who were under 65 years old. For veterans with had justice-system involvement, placement rates were much higher than non-second chance veterans (69 percent compared to 53 percent), but an average wage at placement of \$11.65 was \$4.59 per hour lower than the \$16.24 per hour earned by non-justice involved veterans. After one year, the disparity had grown to \$6.94 per hour, with second-



chance veterans earning \$13.65 per hour compared with non-second-chance veterans earning \$20.59 after one year.

Among older veterans ages 65 and over, the placement rate was 47 percent compared with younger veterans' placement rate of 54 percent. Their starting hourly wage was \$12.08, \$4.08 less than the \$16.16 hourly starting wage for veterans under 65. After one year, the difference in average earnings had grown to \$6.17, with older veterans earning \$14.81 compared with young veterans earning \$20.98 per hour.

## Recommendations

1. Local Goodwill organizations should continue to provide veteran and military family services, with intentional outreach to diverse populations. Ensure referred veterans or military family members are not turned away unnecessarily.
2. Assess and evaluate participants to understand their needs and strengths; build upon the leadership skills and work ethic developed while they served in the military.
3. Provide holistic transitional support services in coordination with key partners, including services for women veterans and women military family members.
4. Provide career pathway mapping to help veterans understand the labor market and their career options, especially for those who have recently transitioned from active service.
5. Focus support on translating military service into market-valued skills and credentials.
6. Examine outcomes data to identify disparities among veteran populations and modify services to address them.
7. Provide upskilling opportunities by engaging partners such as community colleges.
8. Build business relationships to help employers understand the contributions veterans and military family members can make to their bottom lines.
9. Equip veterans and military family members with financial wellness services.
10. Provide diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) training to Goodwill team members to address unconscious biases and continuously expand upon their knowledge to deliver equitable services to achieve improved outcomes for all population groups.



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