

DISABLED & OTHER PROTECTED VETERANS

Article I

Purpose:

To reaffirm Merit Network's (Merit) continuing commitment to the principles of equal employment opportunity and to delineate the steps to be taken to ensure the successful realization of its obligation under the Vietnam Era Veteran's Readjustment Act of 1974, Merit hereby establishes this equal opportunity-affirmative action policy for qualified disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era.

Article II

General Policy of Merit – Individuals with Disabilities

"Merit will not discriminate in its employment practices against applicants who have a physical disability. Placement will be commensurate with ability to perform assigned work. Employees with disabilities will receive the same regular compensation as employees who do not have disabilities for like work.

1. Disabled veteran means "a veteran who served on active duty in the U.S. military ground, naval, or air service and is entitled to disability compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to disability compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability."
2. Veteran of the Vietnam era means "a veteran of the U.S. military, ground, naval, or air service, any part of whose service was during the period August 5, 1964 through May 7, 1975, who served on active duty for a period of more than 180 days and was discharged or released with other than a dishonorable discharge, or was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability. "Vietnam era veteran" also includes any veteran of the U.S. military, ground, naval, or air service who served in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975."
3. Recently separated veteran means "any veteran who served on active duty during the three-year period beginning on the date of such veteran's discharge or release from active duty."
4. Armed Forces Service Medal veteran means "a veteran who, while serving on active duty in the U.S. military ground, naval, or air service, participated in a United States military operation for which an Armed Forces service medal was awarded pursuant to Executive Order 12985."
5. Other protected veteran means "any other veteran who served on active duty in the U.S. military ground, naval, or air service during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized."
6. "Disabled veteran," "Veteran of the Vietnam era," "recently separated veteran," "Armed Forces Service Medal veteran" and "other protected veteran," as defined immediately above, are referred to collectively in this policy as "covered veteran."

Article III

Specific Policy:

Merit will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because he or she is a covered veteran in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. Merit agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment and otherwise treat qualified covered veterans without discrimination based upon their disability or veteran's status in all employment practices such as the following: Employment upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, recruitment advertising, lay-off or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation and selection for training, including apprenticeship.

DISABLED & OTHER PROTECTED VETERANS (CONT)

Article IV

Dissemination of Policy:

1. To ensure understanding, acceptance and support among the Merit's executives, managers, supervisors and all other personnel and to encourage them to take the necessary steps to aid Merit in meeting its obligations to covered veterans, Merit will communicate information on this nondiscrimination policy and affirmative action program on a periodic basis to all employees. Applicants for employment, as well as employees, will be informed of Merit's commitment to increase employment opportunities for qualified covered veterans. Merit will post its non-discrimination-affirmative action policy on appropriate bulletin boards, including a statement that all employees and prospective employees are protected from coercion, intimidation, interference, discrimination or other adverse treatment, for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation under the Vietnam Era Veteran's Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974.
2. All executive, managerial and supervisory personnel will be kept informed of Merit's commitment and Merit will give its obligation under the Act high priority at appropriate managerial, supervisory and other special personnel meetings and employee orientation and management training programs. It will be a basic item on the agenda of the executive officers and other managerial and supervisory meetings at least once a year and more frequently as needs dictate.
3. Merit will reproduce this policy in its Policies section of Merit's Web site and on Merit's internal iWeb.
4. Merit publications will publicize Merit's affirmative action program and will feature articles on the progress, promotions and accomplishments of covered veterans.
5. When appropriate, vendors, subcontractors, and suppliers will be informed about Merit's non- discrimination affirmative action program for covered veterans.

Article V

Implementation Responsibility:

A. Executive Officers:

1. Ultimate responsibility for the implementation of this policy and Merit's other affirmative action programs rests with the Executive Officers (the President and Vice-Presidents).
2. Each Executive Officer is responsible for the administration of this policy and Merit's affirmative action program within his/her area of responsibility.

B. Director of Affirmative Action Programs:

1. The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer is responsible to the executive officers for directing and coordinating Merit's affirmative action programs. The EEO Officer is to systematize the review and update the programs and provide advice, counsel, and assistance regarding equal opportunity matters. This will include the following:
 - 1.1) Review of employment records to determine (a) the availability of known promotable and transferable qualified covered veterans within Merit, and (b) whether their present and potential skills are being fully utilized or developed.
 - 1.2) Development of techniques for effectively communicating information about Merit's affirmative action program.
 - 1.3) Implement a procedure which systematically monitors the program. Monitoring will include:
 - a) evaluation of recruitment techniques and sources for covered veterans;
 - b) analysis of the hiring and training of known covered veterans;
 - c) review of promotions and transfers of known covered veterans;
 - d) identification of problem areas with specific recommendations for overcoming them.
2. Additionally the EEO Officer will:
 - 2.1) Ensure there is a continued liaison with governmental agencies, officials and organizations of and for covered veterans.
 - 2.2) Keep the Merit community informed of the latest developments in the entire affirmative action area.
 - 2.3) Coordinate data gathering, consolidate and analyze data and prepare any required reports.

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D. EEO Officer

1. The EEO Officer within his/her area of responsibility, shall review and develop personnel policies and practices that ensure careful, thorough and systematic consideration of the job qualifications of known covered veteran employees and applicants for employment.

E. Other Managers and Supervisors

1. All other members of management and supervision are responsible within each one's area of responsibility for conducting employment activities in a manner which will ensure compliance with this policy and the affirmative action programs.

Article VI

Recruitment:

1. Merit will not discriminate against a qualified applicant for employment because he or she is a covered veteran in any of its recruitment activities.
2. All recruitment sources will be advised of Merit's nondiscrimination--affirmative action policy and of its commitment to equal employment opportunities for covered veterans.
3. To attract qualified covered veterans, Merit will enlist the assistance and support of all recruiting sources, including the Michigan Employment Security Commission, appropriate offices of the Veteran's Administration, college placement offices and veteran's counselors, and local and national veteran's groups.
4. Merit will continue to use the following statement: "Merit Network is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer" on all recruiting, employment and advertising publications, job registries and other media effective in broadening the pool of covered veterans.
5. Merit will strengthen and develop new recruiting sources from among those specializing in the placement of and/or training of covered veterans and will establish meaningful contacts with other appropriate veteran's organizations which service covered veterans, for such purposes as advice, technical assistance and referral of potential employees.
6. Search or screening committees will employ methods which will most likely result in the inclusion of qualified covered veterans in the pool of candidates.

Article VII

Employment and Placement:

1. Qualified applicants for employment will be considered and placed without regard to their status as a covered veteran. Additionally, Merit will attempt to make a reasonable accommodation to the physical and mental limitations of a disabled veteran.
2. Selection for employment, training or promotions will be on the basis of valid objective criteria and free from stereotypical assumptions regarding covered veterans and their ability to perform assigned work. Only that portion of the military record, including release or discharge papers, relevant to the specific job qualifications will be considered in the placement or employment of a covered veteran.
3. Merit will arrange for career counseling for known covered veteran.
4. Merit will maintain in confidence, to the extent required by 60-300 of 41 CFR, information provided by any employees or applicants who identify themselves as covered veterans.

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Article VIII

Training:

1. Selection for, and participation in, all Merit training programs will be, insofar as possible, without regard to an employee's or applicant's status as a covered veteran, and consistent with a reasonable accommodation to the physical and mental limitations of the trainee.
2. Merit will cooperate with appropriate offices of the Veteran's Administration in the establishment of on-the-job training opportunities for qualified covered veterans.

Article IX

Promotions, Demotions, Layoffs, Recall and Transfers:

1. For the purpose of promotions, demotions, layoffs, recalls and transfers, an employee's qualifications and service will be considered without regard to his or her status as a covered veteran.
2. To ensure equal opportunity for promotion for covered veterans, Merit will continue to advertise the availability of all open positions on a Merit-wide basis.

Article X

Personnel Policies:

1. Personnel policies and practices, such as compensation and benefit programs, will be the subject of periodic review to ensure that they are consistent with applicable and current legal requirements and that they are administered without regard to an employee's or applicant's status as a covered veteran.

Article XI

Subcontractors:

1. All subcontractors on government contracts will be informed of Merit's commitments under the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Public Law 93-508.
2. Merit will include a non-discrimination--affirmative action clause in every subcontract or purchase order of \$10,000.00 or more, according to the provisions of the Act.

Article XII

Reports and Records:

1. Merit will provide such reports as may be required by the Act and will maintain, for a period of not less than one year, records regarding complaints and actions taken thereunder.

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