



News Release

Pat Quinn, Governor

Jay Rowell, Director

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Greg Rivara
Employment Security
Phone: 312.814.0095
www.ides.illinois.gov

Lt. Col. Tim Franklin
Illinois National Guard
ESGR Program Coordinator
Phone: 217.761.3642

State Employment Security Department Signs Statement of Support for the Guard and Reserve

Recognizes Importance of Guard, Reserve in Nation's Defense

SPRINGFIELD –Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) Director Jay Rowell today signed an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Statement of Support at the Department's Springfield headquarters. The statement reaffirms the critical role that Guard and Reserve soldiers serve in securing our nation's freedom.

"We are reminded on a daily basis that securing our country is of vital importance. By signing this Statement of Support, we also show our support for Illinois' brave citizen-soldiers and demonstrate that Illinois businesses value their sacrifice," Rowell said. "When called away to duty, our soldiers in the Guard and Reserve know the important role the business community plays in protecting employment positions and developing career opportunities."

The Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is part of our nation's Department of Defense. The ESGR develops and promotes a culture in which all American employers support and value the military service of their employees.

"On behalf of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, I would like to thank Director Rowell for signing this Statement of Support on behalf of the Illinois Department of Employment Security." said James Rebholz, National Chair of ESGR. "It shows that IDES and its leadership support our country's National Guard and Reserve service members and recognize the important role they play in the defense of our nation."

At the IDES, 501 employees – approximately 25 percent of the workforce – are Veterans. Additionally, nearly 60 IDES associates are Veterans specifically assigned to help Veterans return to work. In 2011, the IDES provided re-employment services to more than 45,000 Veterans. Nationally, the unemployment rate for Veterans post 9-11 remains higher than the general population.

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Veterans make loyal employees because they respect authority, embrace responsibility and thrive in a team environment. They emphasize group goals over individual accolades. Veterans understand technology, have the ability to learn, and already have experience in such fields as manufacturing, construction and logistics.

A state income tax credit of up to \$1,200 is available to businesses for each qualified Veteran who is hired. Additionally, employers might qualify for a federal tax credit of up to \$4,800 through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

Each year since 2005, Illinois has hosted the Statewide Veteran Job Fairs. This series of job fairs held in late October and early November coincides with Veterans Day. The effort recognizes the value that Veterans bring to the Illinois workforce. Success and attendance has grown each year. Invited businesses include those whose positions demand the skills military Veterans hone in the service. The job fairs remain open to everyone. Other job fairs also are held throughout the year.

The job fairs and special skills assessment efforts for Veterans emphasize the Department's efforts to be regarded as an employment agency and not the unemployment office. The Department connects qualified job seekers with ready-to-hire employers. For example, in 2011, the IDES collaborated with AON Corp. (NYSE: AON) to hire more than 100 benefits advisors. The positions paid between \$17 and \$20 an hour. The Department also worked with Ford Motor Company (NYSE: F) to hire approximately 150 individuals for newly created jobs.

Information to help job seekers improve their ability to be hired and assist business owners with increasing profitability is available at the IDES website. The website is organized to serve three key groups: individual job seekers, employers and workforce partners. Individuals can look for work, obtain career information and apply for unemployment insurance benefits. Employers can obtain tax incentive information, seek applicants to fill job openings, and obtain market information to help develop business plans and identify new markets and opportunities. Workforce partners can use wage data, commuting patterns and hiring trends to develop regional economic plans.

The IDES supports economic stability by administering unemployment benefits, collecting business contributions to fund those benefits, connecting employers with qualified job seekers, and providing economic information to assist career planning and economic development. It does so through nearly 60 offices, including Illinois workNet centers.

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