

The WorkSource Assists Veterans

Helping veterans enter or return to the nation's workforce is a priority at The WorkSource. Whether veterans left the armed forces 10 days ago or 10 years ago, their employment needs receive immediate attention by staff. The WorkSource has staff, most of whom are veterans themselves, available to help a veteran with his or her job search. They know what skills are currently in demand and they are able to assess how skills acquired in the military can be used in a civilian job.

The WorkSource also provides veterans with a resource packet of information specially designed for them. It contains job search tips on getting a job, keeping a job and getting a better job. It also outlines veterans' benefits and rights, as well as provides contact information for veterans' programs — education options, home financing, tax exemptions, personal counseling and advocacy, priority health care for disabled veterans, E-laws and employment protection rights.



Our Service Begins When a Veteran's Service Ends

On January 5, 2005, a young marine who had just left the military after two combat tours in Iraq came into The WorkSource's Woodlands career office. He appeared visibly shaken by his war experiences and told John Liang, the office veteran's representative, that he was having great difficulty adjusting back into civilian life.

Because John knew the young man needed personal counseling in addition to finding a good job, he contacted Lt. Col. Rod Long of the U.S. Marines Reserve, who is in charge of the "Marines for Life" program in Texas and five other states. Within minutes of his call, the young man was given several referrals to individuals who could provide him with personal support. In addition, John also escorted the young man to a business networking meeting held later in the month, where the young veteran was able to make several great contacts with potential employers. By January 31, the young Marine was working for one of the employers he had met through that meeting.

THE WORKSOURCE PROMOTES EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

The WorkSource has begun a campaign in the Gulf Coast region to promote awareness of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for low-income workers. Annually, millions of dollars available to workers through this tax credit go unclaimed.

During the current tax season, employment counselors at The WorkSource career offices have been informing customers about EITC and how to obtain free assistance in filing tax returns to receive up to \$4,300 in refunds. Advertorials have been placed in regional newspapers to urge those individuals receiving refunds to

ignore advertised offers from lenders for "fast cash" and "instant" refunds — loans that can cost them up to 10 percent of the refund. The WorkSource is urging recipients to file and wait a couple of weeks until 100 percent of their refunds are either deposited directly into bank accounts or mailed directly to their homes.

After the current tax season, The WorkSource will be working with the IRS and a number of community organizations on informational initiatives for the 2005 tax season.