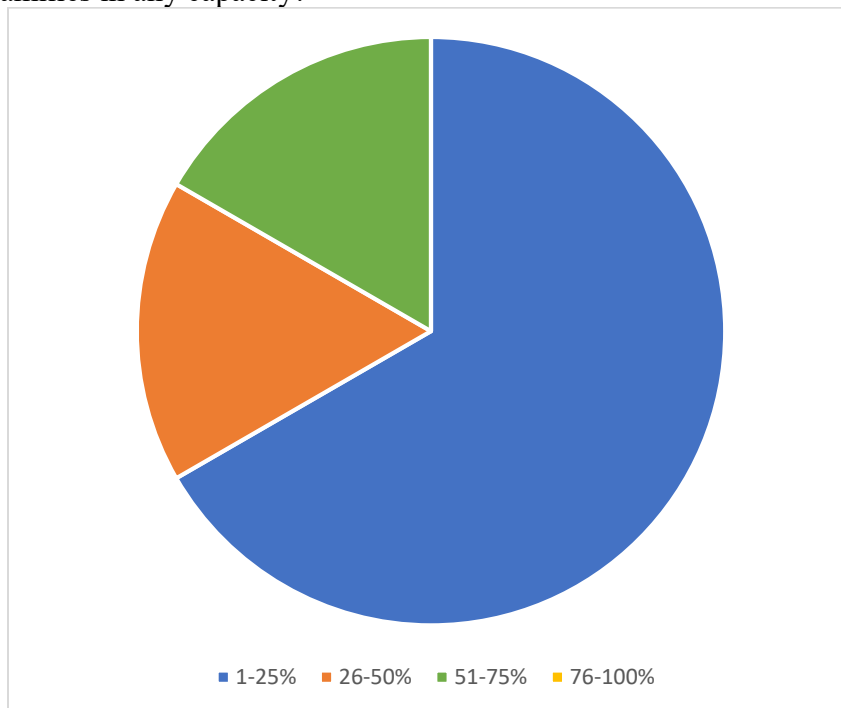


Member Meetup: Supporting Veterans & Military Families

March 26, 2025

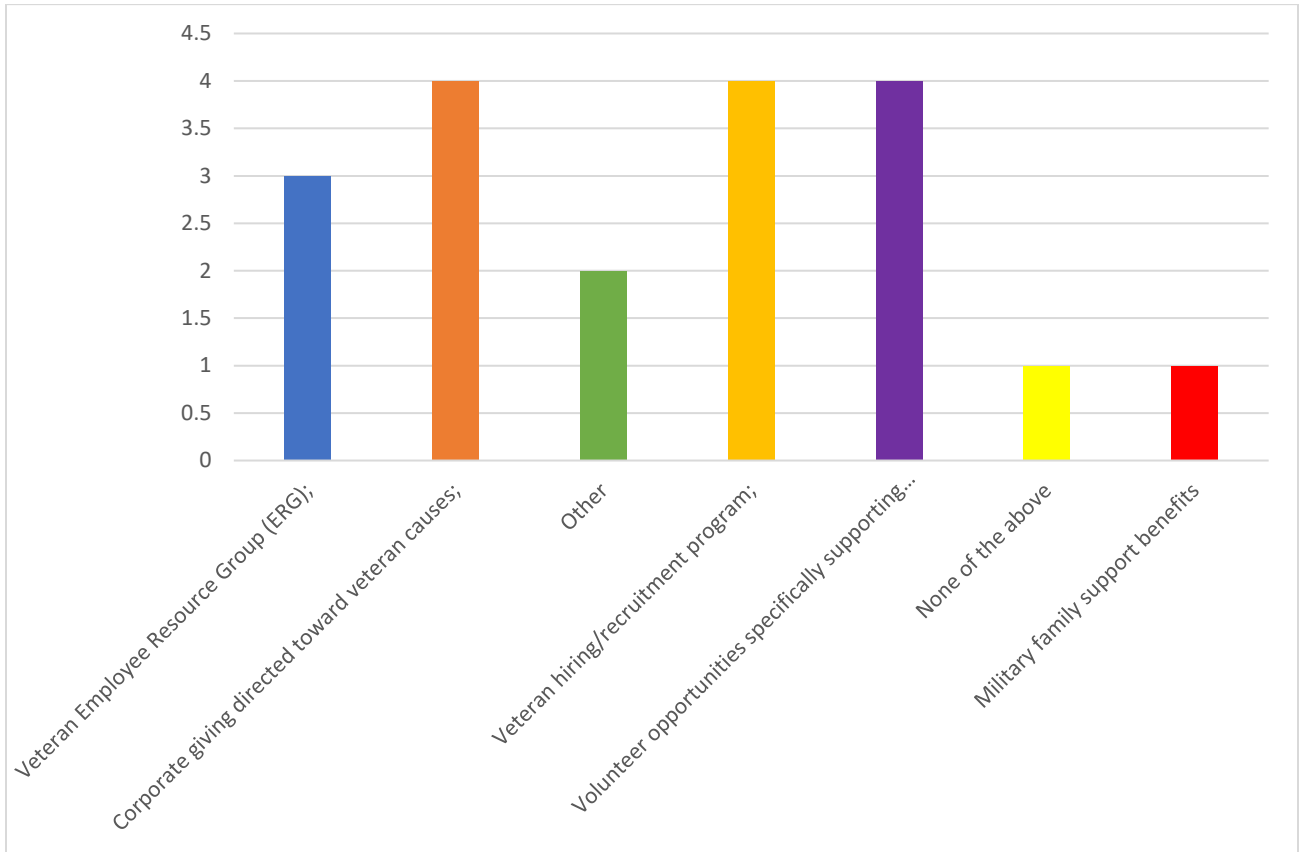
Polls:

1. What percent of your overall CSR initiatives are focused on supporting veterans and military families in any capacity?

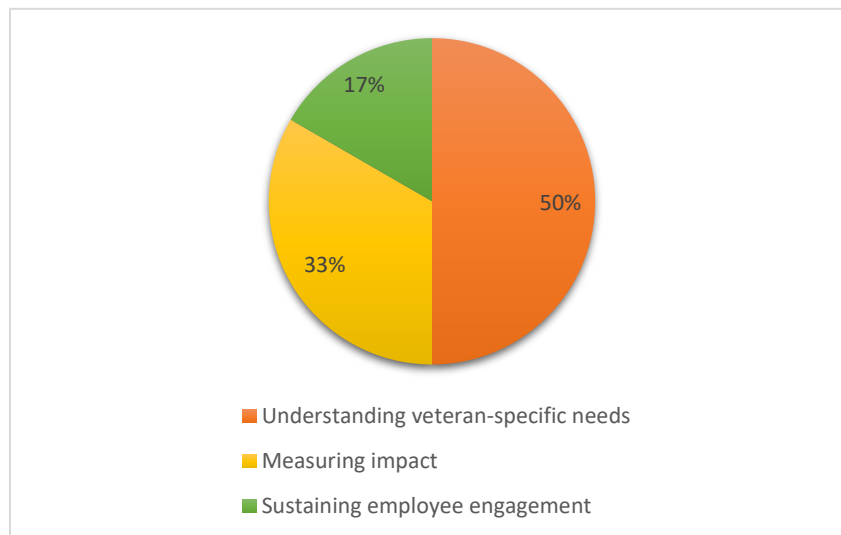


Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship | 140 Commonwealth Ave, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467 | t: 617 552 4545 | f: 617 552 8499 | ccc@bc.edu | ccc.bc.edu

2. Which of the following initiatives does your organization currently have in place?



3. What do you see as the biggest challenge in creating impactful veteran support initiatives at your company?



Background Information:

The March 2025 Member Meetup focused on corporate strategies for supporting veterans and military families through targeted programs. Organizations shared their approaches to developing veteran-ready cultures, creating dedicated veteran employment pipelines, and providing resources to help veterans transition successfully to civilian life.

The first organization discussed their journey from an informal veterans appreciation program to a structured, intentional approach with a dedicated veterans committee and focused support initiatives. With veterans making up approximately 10% of their workforce, they've centered their efforts on veteran pride, engagement, community partnerships, and resource access. Their culture of servant leadership aligns well with veteran values, creating natural synergies for their initiatives.

The second organization shared insights on their comprehensive military program, which operates as part of their corporate social responsibility department. With a multi-faceted approach that includes targeted recruitment, employee engagement, and entrepreneurship support, they've developed a nationally recognized program that consistently ranks among the top employers for veterans. Their initiatives extend beyond employment to include support for military spouses, veteran-owned businesses, and community partnerships.

Analysis:

Effective veteran support programs require thoughtful consideration of multiple factors, including:

- **Program Structure:** Determining the optimal placement within the organization (HR, DEI, CSR) and establishing clear objectives aligned with company values
- **Leadership Support:** Securing executive sponsorship, ideally from leaders with military connections who understand the unique experiences of veterans
- **Intentional Engagement:** Creating opportunities for veterans to connect with each other while also integrating them into the broader company culture
- **Resource Alignment:** Leveraging existing community resources and partnerships to maximize impact without duplicating efforts
- **Business Integration:** Aligning veteran initiatives with business goals to ensure sustainability and growth of programs

Organizations with mature veteran programs emphasize the importance of going beyond recruitment to address retention and professional development. When veterans feel valued for their unique skills and experiences, they become long-term assets to the company. The most successful programs view veterans as contributors to business success rather than simply as beneficiaries of support.

Challenges, Solutions, and Strategies:

• Identifying Veterans in the Workforce

- **Challenge:** Many veterans don't self-identify, making it difficult to know how many veterans are employed and what their needs might be
- **Solutions:**
 - Creating pride opportunities (special recognition, branded items) that encourage self-identification
 - Implementing improved self-identification processes during hiring and onboarding
 - Organizing visible events like Veterans Day activities that build camaraderie

• Understanding Veteran-Specific Needs

- **Challenge:** Corporate leaders may not understand the unique challenges veterans face when transitioning to civilian careers
- **Solutions:**
 - Establishing veteran committees led by veterans themselves to guide programming
 - Partnering with local veteran service organizations for insights and resources
 - Conducting on-site veteran resource fairs to connect veterans with benefits

• Bridging Military-Civilian Culture Gaps

- **Challenge:** Veterans and civilian colleagues often have different communication styles and work approaches
- **Solutions:**
 - Implementing mentor programs to help new veteran hires navigate company culture
 - Providing training for hiring managers and HR on translating military experience
 - Creating veteran resume review services staffed by veterans

• Supporting Guard and Reserve Members

- **Challenge:** Accommodating the unique needs of employees who continue to serve in reserve capacities
- **Solutions:**
 - Establishing military leave policies that go beyond legal requirements (USERRA)
 - Creating sponsorship programs for deployed employees
 - Implementing support systems for families during deployments

- **Measuring Program Impact**

- **Challenge:** Determining the effectiveness of veteran programs beyond basic recruitment metrics
- **Solutions:**
 - Tracking both qualitative and quantitative outcomes (retention rates, promotion rates, engagement)
 - Seeking external validation through recognition programs and benchmarking
 - Monitoring specific success metrics like benefits access and utilization

- **Scaling Programs Across Multiple Locations**

- **Challenge:** Maintaining consistent programming across various company sites
- **Solutions:**
 - Creating local chapters with standardized frameworks but local flexibility
 - Leveraging virtual events to connect veterans across locations
 - Establishing clear guidelines for regional implementation

Actionable Steps:

- **Start with Assessment**

- Determine how many veterans are currently in your workforce
- Identify existing initiatives that may already support veterans
- Understand what veteran-specific needs exist in your organization

- **Build the Foundation**

- Focus initially on employment and recruitment
 - Update job descriptions to include "or equivalent military experience"
 - Improve self-identification processes
 - Identify 1-3 strategic recruitment partners
- Secure executive sponsorship, preferably with military connections
- Create a cross-functional working group or committee led by veterans

- **Develop Strategic Programming**

- Create engagement opportunities around key military dates (Veterans Day, Memorial Day)
- Implement targeted onboarding for veteran new hires
- Establish networking opportunities for veterans within the company
- Consider implementing military leave policies that exceed legal requirements

- **Expand Your Impact**

- Explore transitional employment programs like Skillbridge or Hiring Our Heroes
- Provide specialized training for HR and hiring managers
- Consider military-focused mentorship programs
- Establish an official employee resource group for military members and allies

- **Align with Business Objectives**

- Identify how veteran initiatives can support broader business goals
- Consider industry-specific opportunities (entrepreneurship support, supply chain diversity)
- Measure and communicate business impact alongside social impact

- **Leverage External Resources**

- Partner with veteran service organizations in your community
- Explore recognition programs that can provide benchmarking and best practices
- Connect with peer companies to share lessons learned

Additional Resources:

- Board Report: [Supporting Military Families & Veterans Advisory Board Report](#)
- Advisory Board: [Advisory Board for Support of Military Families and Veterans](#)
- Bulletin: [Military Families and Veterans Advisory Board Report](#)
- Article: [Supporting veterans and military families in the workplace](#)