



Operation Warfighter

Matching qualified Recovering Service Members with Federal internships to gain valuable work experience during their recovery period

Operation Warfighter (OWF) is a Department of Defense (DoD) internship program that provides opportunities for Recovering Service Members (RSMs) to participate in internships with Federal agencies during their rehabilitation process. These Federal internships allow RSMs to develop and practice newly assessed and identified work skills in a nonmilitary work environment. More than 6,000 RSMs have been placed in Federal internships through OWF.

Goals and Objectives

The main objective of OWF is to place RSMs in supportive work settings that positively impact their recovery. The program represents an opportunity to facilitate RSMs development and employment readiness by providing assistance with resume building, exploring employment interests, and developing job skills through internship opportunities.

The OWF Model

OWF strives to demonstrate to participants that the skills obtained in the military are transferable to civilian employment. For RSMs who will return to duty, the program enables these participants to maintain active skillsets and provides the opportunity for additional training and experience that can subsequently benefit the military. OWF enables Federal employers to better familiarize themselves with the skill sets and challenges of RSMs, as well as benefit from the considerable talent and dedication of these individuals.

Best results for the OWF model are the RSM interning for 90 to 120 days during the IDES process timeline, at a minimum of 20 hours a week. This facilitates a balance of needs to the RSM, the Unit and the Interning Agency.

How OWF Works

The first step in the OWF process is to obtain “medical and command approval” from an RSMs recovery team and chain of command. Once an RSM is determined to be ready to participate, a Regional Coordinator assists the individual in identifying an internship opportunity based on their interests and capabilities.

The Regional Coordinator, along with the Service Member’s recovery team, stays in contact with the Service Member and the agency throughout the placement to collect monthly feedback and ensure that there is no negative impact to the Service Member’s medical profile. At the completion of a placement, feedback is gathered from both the Service Member and the agency. This information is used to continue to evolve OWF to meet the needs of RSMs and participating agencies.

For general information, contact the program office at OSD.OWF@mail.mil

Region Coordinator Information:

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