



## January 2011 Status of Forces Survey of Reserve Component Members: Employment Characteristics, Civilian Work, Employer Support, and Reemployment After Activation/Deployment – Los Angeles Times Data Request

### Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present the results from the *January 2011 Status of Forces Survey of Reserve Component Members (SOFS-R)* on the following topics in response to a data request from the *Los Angeles Times*: employment characteristics, civilian work, employer support, and reemployment after activation/deployment. The *January 2011 SOFS-R* was a Web-based survey administered over an 8-week period to 120,724 members from the Selected Reserve. These members are in Reserve Unit, Active Guard/Reserve (AGR/FTS/AR; Title 10 and Title 32), or Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) programs from the Army National Guard (ARNG), U.S. Army Reserve (USAR), U.S. Navy Reserve (USNR), U.S. Marine Corps Reserve (USMCR), Air National Guard (ANG), and U.S. Air Force Reserve (USAFR) who (1) have at least six months of service at the time the questionnaire is first fielded and (2) are below flag rank. This survey had a weighted response rate of 26%. Results are presented for Reserve component members overall for each question.

### Results by Topic

#### Employment Characteristics

- 85% of members reported being in the labor force.
  - 13% of members in the labor force indicated they were unemployed.
  - Of these members in the labor force, 82% indicated they were working for an employer, 3% were self-employed, and 2% were working for a family business.

#### Civilian Work

- When not activated, employed members worked an average of 39 hours per week at their principal civilian job.
- 69% of employed members have worked overtime at their principal civilian job.
  - These members worked overtime an average of 28 weeks per year.
  - 20% of these members reported they *always* lose overtime opportunities, 51% *occasionally* lose overtime opportunities, and 28% *never* lose overtime opportunities because of National Guard and Reserve obligations.

## Employment Characteristics, Civilian Work, Employer Support, and Reemployment After Activation/Deployment

- 19% reported working as either first responders or in emergency services in their civilian job, while 16% reported working as first responders, 13% reported working in emergency services, and 10% reported working as both first responders and in emergency services.
  - Of those working as first responders, 64% indicated their work was a *full-time paid job*, 27% indicated their work was *volunteer work*, and 11% indicated their work was a *part-time paid job*.
  - Of those working in emergency services, 73% indicated their work was a *full-time paid job*, 20% indicated their work was *volunteer work*, and 11% indicated their work was a *part-time paid job*.
- Employed members reported that *education and training* (59%), *health care benefits* (59%), *retirement benefits* (57%), *promotion opportunities* (51%), and *total compensation* (47%) were better in the military than in civilian work.

### Employer Support

- 65% of employed members indicated their civilian employer does not continue full pay during absence from work due to military duties.
  - 80% of these members reported their civilian employer also does not offer differential/partial pay when military compensation is less than civilian pay.
- 58% of employed members whose civilian employer offers full pay for a limited period of time reported their civilian employer does not offer differential/partial pay if military compensation is less than civilian pay.
- 79% of employed members reported their civilian employer provides health care benefits.
  - 44% of these members do not receive the benefits during absence from work due to military obligations.
- About one-third reported their employer continued *other company benefits* (34%) and *health care benefits* (32%) during their activation.
- 70% reported their civilian employer is supportive of their National Guard and Reserve obligations, 23% are neither supportive nor unsupportive, and 7% are unsupportive.

### Reemployment After Activation/Deployment

#### *Pre-/Post-Activation Employment*

- 64% of members demobilized since September 11, 2001, reported they worked for pay or profit in the month prior to their most recent activation.
  - 49% of these members were employees of a *private/public company*, 27% were *federal government employees*, 10% were *state government employees*, 7% were *local*

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*government employees, 4% were self-employed, 2% were employed at a non-profit organization, and 1% were working in a family business or farm.*

- 54% of employed members reported their principal civilian employers, prior to activation, had a total of *1,000 or more persons* working at their locations in the United States, 14% had a total of *100 to 499 persons*, and 11% had a total of *1 to 9 persons*.
- 86% of demobilized members who worked for an employer prior to activation returned to the same employer in the 3 months after their deactivation; 80% had planned to return to the same employer.
  - 13% of these members reported the return to their employer was *better* than they expected, 68% reported it was *about what they expected*, and 19% reported it was *worse* than they expected.
- 59% of members demobilized since September 11, 2001, reported they worked for pay or profit in the 3 months after their most recent deactivation.
  - 45% of these members were employees of a *private/public company*, 31% were *federal government employees*, 9% were *state government employees*, 8% were *local government employees*, 4% were *self-employed*, 2% were employed at a *non-profit organization*, and 2% were *working in a family business or farm*.
- 92% of demobilized members who were self-employed or worked at a family business prior to activation returned to the same self-employment or family business in the 3 months after their deactivation; 68% had planned to return to the same self-employment or family business.
  - 23% of these members reported their return to self-employment or family business was *better* than they expected, 48% reported it was *about what they expected*, and 29% reported it was *worse* than they expected.
- Of the 3% of members who reported they did not return to work for their pre-activation employer but instead worked for a different employer,
  - 55% found a better job.
  - 27% disliked their pre-activation job.
  - 18% indicated they had other reasons for working for a different employer, such as they moved or were reactivated.
  - 16% indicated layoffs occurred.
  - 13% reported changes in employer circumstances while they were away.
  - 12% returned to school.
  - 8% indicated their employer did not give them prompt reemployment (i.e., within 2 weeks).
  - 6% reported their employer went out of business.
  - 5% were recuperating from an illness/injury.

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- Of the 21% of members who reported they did not work for pay during the 3 months after their most recent deactivation,
  - 42% needed a break after activation.
  - 28% indicated they had other reasons for not returning to work, such as their inability to find a job or being on military leave.
  - 25% decided to attend school.
  - 17% reported changes in employer circumstances while they were away.
  - 17% disliked their pre-activation job.
  - 17% indicated layoffs occurred.
  - 12% were recuperating from an illness/injury.
  - 12% indicated their employer did not give them prompt reemployment (i.e., within 2 weeks).
  - 5% reported their employer went out of business.
- 23% of members demobilized since September 11, 2001, paid for employer health benefits while eligible for the Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP) after their most recent activation.
- 22% of members demobilized since September 11, 2001, were wounded or injured during any of their activations.
  - 35% of these members reported that the wound or injury they sustained limits their working ability in their principal civilian employment.
  - 11% of these members reported that their civilian employer was unable to accommodate their disability.

### *Unemployment*

- 14% of members demobilized since September 11, 2001, received state Unemployment Insurance (UI) and 2% received Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemen (UCX).
  - Of these members, 40% received unemployment benefits continuously since their most recent deactivation.
  - Members who received unemployment benefits received them for an average of 24 weeks.
- 34% of members activated in the past 24 months had some periods of unemployment after their most recent deactivation.
  - 25% of these members' most recent unemployment lasted *3 months to less than 6 months*, 23% for *6 months to less than 1 year*, 23% for *1 month to less than 3 months*, 17% for *1 year or more*, and 12% *less than 1 month*.
  - 54% of these members reported their most recent unemployment had a *negative effect* on their mental/emotional wellness, 37% reported *neither a positive nor negative effect*, and 9% reported a *positive effect*.

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- 55% of these members who were married/separated or had children or other legal dependents indicated their most recent unemployment had a *negative effect* on their family’s mental/emotional wellness, 38% reported *neither a positive nor negative effect*, and 7% reported a *positive effect*.
  - Members and/or their families who experienced a negative effect on their wellness sought assistance from *family and/or friends* (72%), *church or other religious establishment* (18%), *unit leadership* (18%), *Military OneSource* (13%), *chaplain or other religious representative* (10%), and *other*, including programs associated with veterans (12%).
- Members were aware to a large extent of the resources and expertise available within their *Military Service* (24%), at the *federal level* (24%), at the *state/local level* (22%), and in *other associations* (14%) to assist them in finding meaningful career and employment opportunities within the civilian job market.
- Members who were unemployed after their most recent deactivation used the *Internet* (92%), *networking with friends, associates, etc.* (79%), *newspaper* (64%), *local employment center/agency* (46%), *state employment center/agency* (43%), *Department of Labor* (24%), *Transition Assistance Program* (13%), and *other associations* (11%) to find employment.
- 46% of members indicated they would like to receive information to assist them in obtaining or changing their civilian employment.
- 39% of members who were unemployed after their most recent deactivation were enrolled in any health insurance benefits program.
  - Of these members, 68% were enrolled in *TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS)*, 26% in *Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP)*, 15% in their *spouse’s health insurance benefits program*, 13% in *other programs*, and 2% in *Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)*.

### ***Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)***

- Members reported they had been informed of their Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) rights and responsibilities *only when mobilized* (36%), while 25% had been informed *once a year* and 22% *more than once a year*.
- More than two-fifths of members briefed about USERRA wanted additional information on *medical protections* (47%), *bonuses* (46%), *retirement protections* (46%), *pay* (45%), *job placement* (43%), *enforcement of the USERRA law* (41%), *termination protection* (41%), *changes in employer circumstances while away* (40%), and *employers granting military leave* (40%).

## Employment Characteristics, Civilian Work, Employer Support, and Reemployment After Activation/Deployment

- 41% of members reported the best time to receive information concerning USERRA was *no specific time*, preferring to *access information online*; 15% reported the best time was *immediately prior to activation*.
- Of the 18% of members demobilized since September 11, 2001, who worked for an employer prior to activation and who experienced employment problems protected by USERRA, 24% sought assistance.
  - Top sources of information/assistance outside the chain of command were *Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)* (70%), their *civilian employer* (68%), and *Department of Labor/Veterans' Employment and Training Service* (39%).
  - 25% of members who sought information/assistance with employment problems protected by USERRA reported it was easy to get assistance.
  - Top reasons for not seeking assistance for employment problems covered by USERRA:
    - 52% reported being unsure of whom to contact/how to file a complaint.
    - 51% indicated it was not worth the fight.
    - 48% did not have confidence that seeking assistance would result in a resolution of the problem(s).
    - 38% expressed fear of reprisal from their employer.
    - 36% indicated they took care of the problem themselves.
    - 21% did not want assistance.
    - 11% reported other reasons, such as their employer laid off many employees, making it difficult to prove USERRA protections were violated.

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Prepared by: Kimberly Williams  
Lead Analyst, Reserve Component Surveys  
Survey Design, Analysis, & Operations Branch  
Human Resources Strategic Assessment Program  
Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC)