



MN Yellow Ribbon Recognition Program - Company

What is a Yellow Ribbon Company?

A Yellow Ribbon Company is a broad, organizationally structured company with national, regional or statewide influence. In addition, a Yellow Ribbon Company needs to contain essential areas including a HR Recruiting and HR Policy and Procedure Department, Training and Development and Community and Employee Outreach and Support Departments. A Yellow Ribbon Company unites all key areas within a company structure to create a network that connects and coordinates these areas throughout the company for the purpose of proactively supporting and meeting the needs of service members, veterans and military families.*

Why Become a Yellow Ribbon Company?

Thousands of Minnesotans have served and continue to serve our country. By developing a Yellow Ribbon Network within a company, key areas unite to honor and embrace those affected by military service. The outward showing of support enables successful transition into the workplace for deployed service members, recognition and honor for all veterans and provides support systems for military-connected employees. The company's efforts demonstrate a public business commitment to supporting military-connected employees and connecting with local communities. This has resulted in an enhanced public image and the creation of stronger, more compassionate workplaces throughout Minnesota.

How to become a Yellow Ribbon Company?

Each company will partner with the State of Minnesota Director of Military Outreach to develop a sustainable, formal Action Plan that meets minimum requirements demonstrating their long-term commitment to service members, veterans and military families. The company will identify and connect leaders in key areas across the company, leverage existing support activities, build awareness throughout the company and take action to support our nation's military.

Companies without broad organizational structures to include the above key areas or national, regional or statewide influence should partner with local **Yellow Ribbon Communities to make a difference and demonstrate their support to service members, veterans and military families.*

***Yellow Ribbon Company Key Areas:**

- Company Leadership
- Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee
- HR-Recruiting
- HR-Policy and Procedure
- Training/Development and Communication
- Community Outreach and Support
- Employee Outreach and Support

**Company Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee made up of representatives from all key areas*

Below are the state of Minnesota Minimum Requirements for approval as a Yellow Ribbon Company. Yellow Ribbon Best Practices have been provided as examples of possible support commitments in each key area.

Company Leadership

Minimum Requirement	Yellow Ribbon Best Practices
Executive-level sponsor visible and active on Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee	Representative from leadership committed to the Yellow Ribbon Program and responsible to engage and communicate support activities to all company leaders.
Commitment of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Statement of Support for Military Employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a formal ceremony signing event • Leader commitment of ESGR support • Full support of ESGR support recommendations • ESGR Training provided to HR and leader staff
Full support of service members, veterans and military families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated full support in all areas of Yellow Ribbon Company Action Plan • Leader involvement on Steering Committee • Build relationships with local military leaders • Support and develop military-friendly policies and procedures for service members, veterans and military family employees and customers/clients • Provide leader mentors to service members, veterans and military leaders • Provide quality employment opportunities • Develop and support job description for military support representative role in organization • Create employee Wall of Honor at company headquarters • Create loan program for technical devices (laptops/computers/phones) during military employee deployments • Create recognition program for leaders who demonstrate over and above support to military employees • Recognize military employees at company events/meetings • Full support of veteran hiring initiatives • Provide access to counseling and financial planning resources • Provide leader volunteer opportunities to military specific organizations • Sponsor military specific client/customer events/discounts
Defined, sustainable and ongoing training/awareness program for all company leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide annual military awareness training for company leaders • Support and encourage company internal and external military recognition or veteran appreciation events • Support a company condolence care plan for dealing with a military loss/injury • Ongoing awareness training in company communication (newsletters, emails, etc) • Host military-specific speakers or movie events
Participation in annual Steering Committee Yellow Ribbon Company Annual Review Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review goals and objectives annually with all leadership teams • Recognize accomplishments of Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee • Assist with barriers to goal achievement • Suggest new support ideas according to employee/community needs • Provide recognition for volunteers supporting steering committee events

Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee

Representatives from all key areas, veteran employees and military family employees at large

Minimum Requirement	Yellow Ribbon Best Practices
Establishment of ongoing and sustainable centralized Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee with representation from all key areas coordinating support efforts throughout the company	Representatives from all key areas committed to the Yellow Ribbon Recognition Program responsible to engage and communicate support activities to all key areas.
Full support of service members, veterans and military families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings with all key area representatives to provide oversight and coordination of all Action Plan activities • Create support groups (ie: Military Parents, Veterans, Service Branches) • Host large group educational presentations from military support organizations • Host company events to recognize military related holidays • Host Military Appreciation week/month featuring a wide variety of recognition/educational events • Nominate company leaders and programs for national military support awards • Benchmark with other Yellow Ribbon Companies for best practices • Create sustainable networks of support for military spouses during deployment (ie; meal prep, childcare, gift baskets, household assistance) • Create database of volunteer skills as a resource for military families during deployment • Develop Welcome Home recognition and transition plans for returning military employees • Build relationships with local military groups • Create central communication repository for Steering Committee communication • Provide opportunities for family members to communicate with deployed loved ones • Plan events to recognize veterans from all eras • Host a Welcome Home parade or appreciation event for Vietnam Veterans
Plan to identify service member, veteran and military family employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host events to identify service members, veterans and military families throughout the company • Host veteran/military family recognition and educational events • Create central communication repository for military resources • Host informational/resource tables at company events • Add a Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee section in all employee communication materials
Annual review of Yellow Ribbon Company Action Plan and Steering Committee activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal annual review with company leaders • Annual published reports of support activities, accomplishments and lessons learned • Set future goals and objectives based on employee, community and military family needs • Recommend exceptional volunteers for leader recognition

HR Recruiting

Recruiting Representatives and Leaders

Minimum Requirement	Yellow Ribbon Best Practices
HR Recruiting representation on Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee	Representatives committed to the Yellow Ribbon Recognition Program responsible to engage and communicate support network activities to all HR recruiting staff.
Ongoing recruitment strategy for veteran recruiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide quality employment opportunities • Develop sustainable internal and external veteran recruiting strategies • Host and participate in veteran job fairs • Enhance veteran-friendly hiring opportunities • Benchmark with other Yellow Ribbon Companies on best practices for veteran recruiting strategies • Provide volunteers to review resumes and interview prep for returning veterans • Provide volunteers to teach career planning or job seeking skills at local Work Force Centers • Develop communication/marketing hiring plan to target military audiences • Train recruiters on benefits of hiring veterans • Train interviewers on military experiences and how to translate skills to the corporate environment • Partner with veteran job seeker programs • Partner with local Workforce Centers and secondary educational facilities for position openings and internship opportunities • Develop process to interview returning veterans for promotional opportunities based on their deployment experiences • Present potential openings or skill sets needed at local veteran networking groups or colleges • Create recruiter role specific to veteran recruiting and establishing military connections • Leverage current veteran employees to review veteran applicant resumes • Build relationships with local military leaders or veteran clubs to identify skill set match to potential openings • Discuss future employment needs with local Veteran Employment and college representatives • Host a "Career Day" for veterans or new recruits
Connect with MN Local Workforce Center Veteran Employment Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule a Meet and Greet for all recruiters with local Veteran Employment Representatives • Participate in local Veteran Networking Groups • Identify future openings and communicate to Veteran Employment Representatives assisting veterans with career choices • Create mentoring or shadowing opportunities with veterans seeking employment

HR-Policy and Procedure

Generalists, Compensation and Policy Representatives and Leaders

Minimum Requirement	Yellow Ribbon Best Practices
HR policy and procedure representation on Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee	Representatives committed to the Yellow Ribbon Recognition Program responsible to engage and communicate support activities to HR leaders.
Plan to create military-friendly organizational policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance military leave policies and procedures • Enhance military family support policies and procedures • Enhance communication of all military leave policies and procedures to military employees • Create military leave subject matter experts available to military employees • Host annual military employee feedback forums to gather feedback on military leave process • Partner with local ESGR (Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve) and the Dept of Labor representatives to become educated on USERRA laws and regulations • Ensure Employee Assistance Program provides resources and trained counselors specific to military related issues • Enhance paid leave policy for Gold Star family employees • Develop a vacation donation program for families impacted by a military injury/death • Provide free financial counseling for military families • Offer company transportation for military families experiencing injury/death • Create process to interview employees returning from deployment to assess skills acquired for potential promotional and/or additional leadership opportunities
Provide pay differential for activated reservists over and above legal requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create consistent pay process for military leave employees • Create generous pay policies and procedures for military leave employees • Provide pay differential for at least one year

Training/Development and Communication

Training/Development and Communication Representatives and Leaders

Minimum Requirement	Yellow Ribbon Best Practices
Training and Development/Internal Communication representation on Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee	Representatives committed to the Yellow Ribbon Recognition Program responsible to engage and communicate support network activities to all training and development leaders.
Plan to provide training/communication throughout company in support of service members, veterans and military family employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train leaders on best practices to support service members, veteran and military family employees • Offer free professional development classes to local military leaders or veterans • Create best practice repository for military employee support activities • Create and provide additional, just- in-time training for Leader and HR representatives of deployed employees • Create and provide training for all employees who work/communicate military policies and procedures to other employees • Create reintegration training for returning employees and their leaders to ease transition into the workplace • Offer curriculum development skills to veteran reintegration programs • Create training for newly returned veterans on goal setting and self development • Create training for veterans and military family members to enhance career planning and job seeking skills • Create training for veterans and military family members to enhance proactive financial planning skills • Create training for veterans and military family members to enhance parenting and relationship skills • Create articles in internal communication materials to increase awareness of military-specific issues or to highlight military connected employees • Create “brown bag” sessions of military-related speakers/topics • Offer internal company leadership training to local military leaders • Add military support opportunities to new employee orientation curriculum • Create marketing plan to highlight military support policies • Provide military specific information in internal and external communications • Highlight military support policies in marketing materials • Create “Military Corner” in intranet or newsletters with changing military related topics/information

Community Outreach and Support
Community Relations, Employee Volunteer Networks

Minimum Requirement	Yellow Ribbon Best Practices
Community Outreach representation on Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee	Representatives committed to the Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee responsible to engage and communicate support network activities to all community outreach areas.
Plan to create ongoing community outreach support for service members, veterans and military families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donate to local or national military support organizations • Create military appreciation events • Create volunteer corps of employees to support military events/support needs • Company representatives active on local community/county Yellow Ribbon Network Steering Committee • Waive/reduce fees for goods and services to military families • Provide ways for employees to demonstrate a visible sign of appreciation to military servicemembers, veterans and their families • Provide opportunities for military families to come together and network • Develop partnership with local military leaders to identify the needs of military families • Partner with local school administrators to provide support to military children • Enhance community awareness of needs of military families • Host an armory/air base picnic for local military groups • Host local Family Readiness Group support meetings and provide childcare • Incorporate military support in marketing and PR projects • Partner with local military support organizations/military leaders for resources • Adopt and support a local military unit or family • Participate in local Welcome Home events • Coordinate a company leader visit to a local drill weekend to build relationships with area military • Host a Yellow Ribbon Company seminar to share best practices with other YR Companies • Create care packages for military families left behind • Company participation with local recognition and honor events (IE Memorial Day) • Host military leaders to share best practices in leadership with organizational leaders • Invite local veterans to lunch with employees
Connect with local Yellow Ribbon Community Network(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide representative from organization to be on YR Community Steering Committee • Recognize local Yellow Ribbon leaders • Create employee volunteer groups that local YR Network's can call upon to meet requests • Partner with local YR Network Community on event support or sponsorship • Host a YR Network community event • Encourage employees to reach out to YR Networks in their local communities

Employee Outreach and Support

Employee Outreach Representatives or employees at large

Minimum Requirement	Yellow Ribbon Best Practices
Representation of Employee Outreach staff on Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee	Representatives committed to the Yellow Ribbon Recognition Program responsible to engage and communicate support network activities to all employees.
Plan to identify employee service members, veterans and military families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host military family events • Hold military recognition and appreciation at company events • Offer discounts or executive leader perks (sporting events or concert tickets) to military employees • Develop internal PR/marketing strategy to find military employees and educate them on their benefits • Partner with HR to develop identification process • Offer self identification at new employee orientation events • Host Steering Committee booth in cafeteria to highlight support efforts
Full support of military service member, veteran employees and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host veteran recognition and educational events • Provide career planning education to veteran and military families • Create support procedures for employees before, during, and after deployment • Create opportunities for employees to communicate with deployed peers (video conferencing, letter writing brown bag sessions, Skype connections) • Create Welcome Home event for returning employees • Provide access to local military specialized counseling resources • Host military family or veteran resource tables • Hold educational sessions for employees to speak about deployment before, during (via teleconference) and after. (ie: bring in uniform and supplies and showcase what they will be doing during deployment. Bring in pictures upon their return to talk about experience) • Create Condolence Care Plan for employees impacted by wounded or killed in action • Allow employees to highlight their service and tell their military story • Allow military connected employees to showcase/provide updates on their deployed loved one (bulletin board, story in newsletter, internal site postings) • Show military specific movies or host military specific book clubs • Create employee volunteer groups to assist local military specific organizations • Encourage employees to connect with local YR Community Networks