**Army Civilian Brand Focus Groups**

**Discussion Guide – Revision 2**

**Setup & disclosures**

* Thank and welcome; moderator introduction
* Reading of OMB Control Number, expiration date, and Agency Disclosure Notice
* Purpose of group discussion; role of respondents
* Observers may be present in viewing room; microphone/audio recording to ensure the discussion fully and accurately captures, all questions asked, any issues noted for future refinements of discussion items.
* Assurance of confidentiality; no personal information will be used or shared; respondents are identified with first name only
* Ground rules: participate, speak one at a time, no wrong answers
* Oral Consent form and Agency Disclosure Notice distribution and consent

**Topic I: Introductions & warm-up 5 minutes**

Respondent introduction:

* Name (first name only)
* Principal activity:

Student – full/part time, school attend, major,

Work – full/part time, position held, years in position

**Topic II: Mind Map – employment goals/aspirations 10 minutes**

Adapted for student vs. professional respondents

* Everything that comes to mind about employment goals, expectations, aspirations in terms of tangible and intangible benefits and personal satisfaction/development
  + Probe any generalizations, organize as needed – tangibles/intangibles
  + Probe if not mentioned: compensation (pay and benefits), job security, geographic flexibility, possibility & speed of career advancement, opportunities for advancement and personal growth, opportunities for leadership positions, ability/need to travel, exposure to range of exciting challenges, flexibility to change positions/careers, retirement plan
  + Take hand count or 3 – 4 most important

**Topic III: Current occupation & employer 15 minutes**

Specifically for professional groups

* How got current position; was it position of choice, employer of choice
* Degree to which current employer delivers/exceeds on expectations and benefits previously mentioned, focusing on top 3 – 4
* Likes and dislikes regarding current employer
* Likelihood of staying with current employer; reasons
* How would search for another job if was necessary
* Probes: networking (where and how), information sources, preparation; importance of specific employer

**Topic IV: Awareness & perceptions of different employer types 10 minutes**

Discussion of different employer types come to mind: private companies, government agencies, own business.

* Expectations of which employer types will deliver best against personal goals. Reasons why.
* Which goals and expectations will each deliver best against? Differences across employer types.

**Topic V: Exploration of current perceptions of US military/Army as an American Institution 5 minutes**

* Perceptions of US military and Army in particular; on a personal level, what do these institutions represent
* What thoughts come to mind about the US military/Army?
* What feelings do these institutions inspire? Probe: admiration, respect, aspiration, gratitude.
* Differences between perceptions/thoughts/feelings about US military vs. the Army in particular?

**Topic VI: Awareness & knowledge of civilian employment in military/Army  
 20 minutes**

Awareness of civilian employment opportunities in the military/Army

* Immediate reactions to civilian Army employment
  + Probe: positive and negative aspects
  + Perceptions of Army as employer
* Knowledge of the types of jobs/occupations available
* Knowledge of job commitment requirements as a civilian vs. enlisted officer/active duty service member
* Comparison/expectations of Army civilian vs. private jobs/careers across goals/benefits
  + Probe list generated earlier: compensation (pay and benefits), job security, geographic flexibility, possibility & speed of career advancement, opportunities for advancement and personal growth, opportunities for leadership positions, ability/need to travel, exposure to range of exciting challenges, flexibility to change positions/careers, retirement plan
* Most important reasons to seek civilian employment in the Army; which would Army civilian employment deliver better than private employer/other govt. agency

- Probe: compensation (pay and benefits), retirement, ability/need to travel, job security, geographic flexibility, possibility and speed of career

advancement, exposure to range of exciting challenges, flexibility to

change positions/careers

- Probe separately: importance/relevance of sense of purpose, service to

country/community, contributing to national defense

* Perceived negative aspects of Civilian Army Employment

- Probe: need to sign contract, duration of contract, nature of employment

contract, geographic transfers against will, transfers to dangerous locations

**Topic VII: Reactions to facts about civilian Army employment 10 minutes**

Respondents will be presented with a list of facts about Army civilian employment followed by discussion on reactions to these facts.

* Probes: compensation relative to private sector, ability to refuse transfers to dangerous locations, exposure to exciting challenges, speed of career advancement

**Topic VIII: Army civilian positioning messages & concepts 15 minutes**

Expose a few concepts and discuss

* What is the main message; what trying to communicate?
* Who is this message intended for? Who are they trying to reach? Are they talking to you (relevancy)?
* Does this idea succeed in making you more aware of civilian employment with the Army? In what ways; what does it tell you about Army civilian employment? What does it tell you about the benefits of Army civilian employment; does it say enough about this?
* What ideas do you connect with most? What ideas/messages are most relevant to your personal situation?
* Anything not relevant to you? Something in particular that you don’t like about this concept?
* Anything confusing, difficult to understand, or difficult to believe? Why?
* Rank order the concepts in terms of their appeal to you

**Wrap up**