

Helmets to Hardhats

To Whom it may concern...

My Name is Zach Johnson and I am writing this letter on behalf of the Helmets to Hardhats program and it's Minnesota Director Justin Rost. I met Justin in 2018 while working for the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) as a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) member. My job was to work in the veterans employment program to assist veterans with reintegration and employment needs. Justin would attend a lot of the same meetings I was at from Battle Buddies USA, to Eagle Group of Minnesota veterans and our Monday veterans networking meeting at the CareerForce center in Bloomington. His role was pivotal in helping DEED and myself achieve the numbers we had in assisting many veterans to get into the trades. When I moved to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans Justin was right there beside the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program team. HVRP was used around the state and Justin's role with Helmets to Hardhats made him so incredibly useful to know what jobs were available, where we could get them into a construction careers, and a lot of the times doing it within a week or two. The veteran was then back on their feet, excelling in life. By now we had become friends, and as a United States Marine myself, the comradery kicked in. Every Job I have had in the veteran's service realm Justin has been a part of it. We bounce Ideas off of each other, we share best practices, we hand veterans off to each other for various needs. In the 6 years I have known and worked with him, I have lost count of how many veterans we have both worked with and he has gotten back to work. This program in the state of Minnesota is a lifeline for those to get back to work, for obtaining stability in their lives, and to build a foundation so they can find their version of Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my input. If further information from me is needed please contact me at [Zach@davmn.org](mailto:Zach@davmn.org) or 612-364-5358

Thank you again

Zach Johnson

Department Service Officer – Disabled American Veterans