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Unlocking Global Talent: Supporting Foreign-Born & OCONUS Military Spouse Employment

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Today's Presenter



Lydiah Owiti-Otienoh

Founder & CEO
Foreign-Born Military Spouse Network

- Lawyer and Consultant
(Project Management, International Development, Social Impact)

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Learning Objectives

1. **Differentiate** the key employment challenges faced by OCONUS spouses versus foreign-born spouses residing in the U.S., including legal, cultural, and credentialing barriers.
2. **Design** targeted career support interventions, such as credential translation guidance, bilingual résumé clinics, or host-nation job search strategies to meet these needs.
3. **Leverage** existing community resources (e.g., Military OneSource, state licensing boards, nonprofit peer networks) to reduce employment gaps and isolation.
4. **Engage and educate** employers on the unique value of military spouse talent, including the benefits of hiring foreign-trained or internationally experienced professionals.

Where Are You Joining Us From?

Any of the following:

Organization/Position

State

Town

Installation



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Definitions:

Who Are Foreign-Born Military Spouses?

Foreign-born military spouses are individuals who marry U.S. service members but were born and raised outside of the United States.

Who Are OCONUS Military Spouses?

OCONUS (Outside the Continental United States) military spouses, are spouses living overseas with their service member due to a military assignment. They can be U.S.-born or foreign-born.



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The Unique Challenges for OCONUS Spouses

- **Specific Employment Considerations:** SOFA myths, taxes, visas, etc.
- **Host-Nation Barriers:** Language and credential requirements unique to overseas labor markets. Adjusting to host-nation workplace norms, limited bilingual opportunities.
- **Access to U.S.-based Opportunities:** Time zone challenges for remote jobs, fewer on-base employment options.

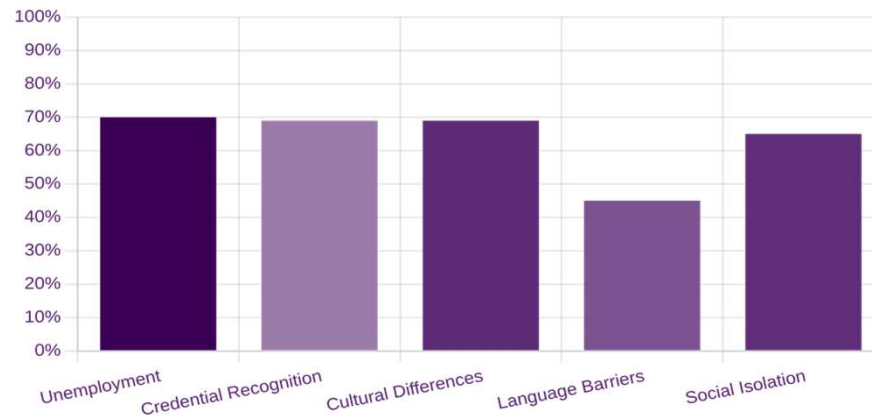
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Understanding Foreign-Born Spouses

- **Population:** They make up **20-25%** of the military spouse population.
- **Countries:** Represent over 100 countries.
- **Largest groups:** England, Germany, France, Mexico, Philippines, Korea, and Japan.
- **Military Branches:** Represented in all branches of service.
- **Education:** 78% hold college degrees.

The Unique Challenges for Foreign-Born Spouses

Foreign-Born Military Spouses in the Workforce



Owiti (2023)

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Legal and Cultural Barriers

Understanding the Complex Challenges



Legal Barriers

- Lengthy work permit application process (6-9 months)
- Visa restrictions limiting employment options
- Citizenship requirements for certain positions
- Security clearance limitations for non-citizens



Cultural Barriers

- Different workplace communication norms
- Unfamiliarity with American interview practices
- Challenges with self-promotion and networking
- Social isolation in new communities

USCIS, Foreign-Born Military Spouse Network (2024)

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Credentialing Barriers

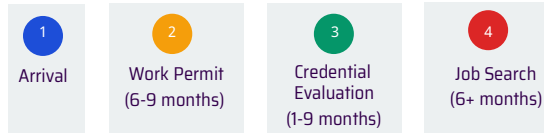
Understanding the Complex Challenges



Credentialing Barriers

- Foreign degree evaluation costs (\$100-\$500)
- Recertification requirements for professionals
- State-specific licensing requirements
- Limited recognition of international experience

Typical Employment Timeline



Mentimeter Poll



What are some of the challenges you know that foreign-born and OCONUS spouses face?

Targeted Career Support Interventions

Designing Effective Support Programs: Key Support Interventions



Credential Translation Guidance

Specialized assistance with foreign credential evaluation.



Bilingual Résumé Clinics

Workshops focused on translating your skills into job market language for the U.S. or your host country—for example, knowing when to use a CV instead of a résumé.



Host-Nation Job Search Training

Guidance on navigating local job markets and practices.



Peer Mentorship Programs

Connecting spouses who have navigated similar challenges.

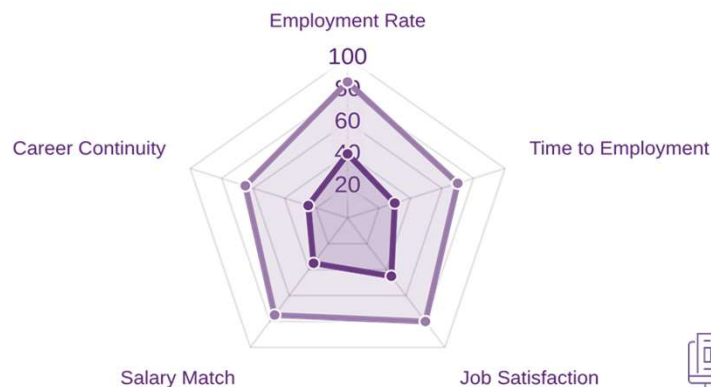
Remote Work Enablement (training spouses for portable careers when local jobs aren't accessible).

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Targeted Career Support Interventions

Intervention Effectiveness

With Targeted Support Without Targeted Support



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Credential Translation & Bilingual Resume Support

Credential Evaluation Process

1 Document Collection

Gather original transcripts, diplomas, and course descriptions.

2 Translation Services

Obtain certified translations of all educational documents.

3 Evaluation Agency

Submit to credential evaluation agencies for U.S. equivalency.

4 Licensing Requirements

Research state-specific licensing requirements for regulated professions.

Pro Tips:

Military OneSource offers free credential translation services.

If qualified, there are free credential evaluations through World Education Services, Upwardly Global, and Foreign-Born Military Spouse Network.

Some states and employers may also offer reimbursements for evaluation costs, depending on the sector and internal policies.

Reciprocity of Licenses.

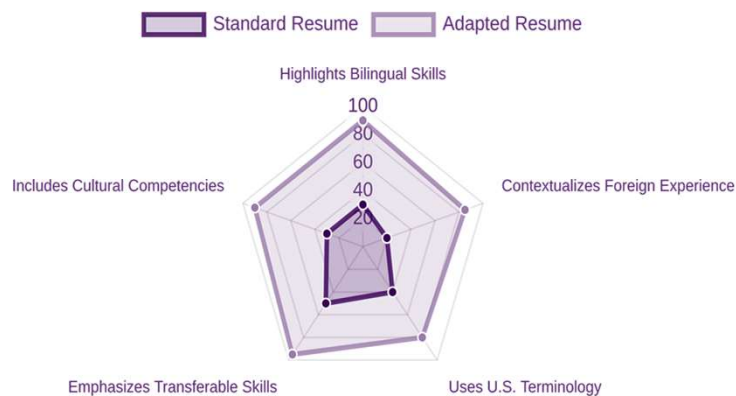
Reimbursement of license transfers due to military moves.

Military OneSource (n.d.a; n.d.b), Veterans' Employment and Training Service (n.d.), World Education Services (n.d.)

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Credential Translation & Bilingual Resume Support

Bilingual Resume Strategies



Key Resume Adaptations

- ✓ Highlight bilingual skills
- ✓ Explain international experience
- ✓ Translate job titles
- ✓ Emphasize transferable skills

Goble (2023); Foreign-Born Military Spouse Network (2024); Porras et al. (2014)

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Job Search Strategies

Effective Approaches for Foreign-Born and OCONUS Military Spouses

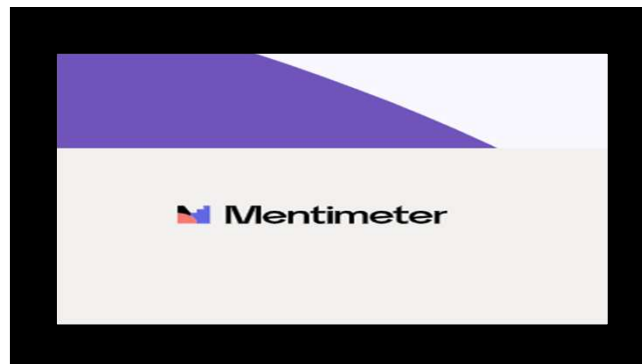


 **Interaction**
Any questions?

- 1 **Leverage International Experience**
- 2 **Target Global Organizations**
- 3 **Build Specialized Networks like ERGs**
- 4 **Adapt Job Search Techniques**
- 5 **Consider Alternative Paths**

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Mentimeter Poll

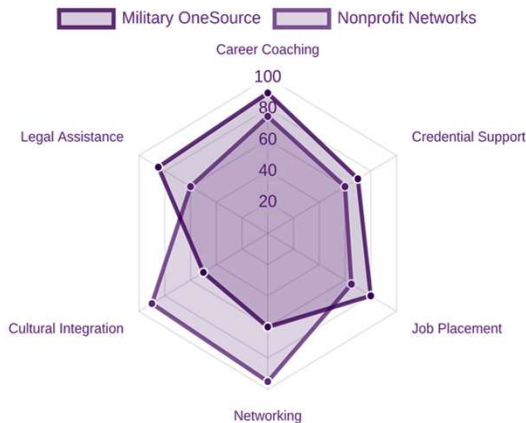


Share your experience with foreign-born or OCONUS spouses and questions they've asked.
What has worked best for them?

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Leveraging Community Resources

Support Networks for Foreign-Born Military Spouses



Where To Start

Foreign Born Military Spouse Network

Immigration, Cross Cultural Training, Community, Career Transfer, Free Credential Evaluation, Database of immigrant specific resources

Military OneSource (MySECO)

Free Credential Translation, Career Coaching and resume review, Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP) Job Portal, 24/7 support at 1-800-342-9647

Embassy/Consulate Programs

(some offer spouse employment support)

Hiring Our Heroes

Paid 12-week fellowship, job fairs, Amplify

Hire Heroes USA

Personalized career coaching, job fairs

ACP Free one on one mentorship for a year

Installation Family Centers

OCONUS (M&FRC, ACS, etc.)

DOD: Military OneSource

State Resources

Nonprofit Networks

Foreign-Born Military Spouse Network (2024)

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Engagement Strategies

Strategies

Partner with MSEP

Host employer workshops

Create employer certification

Develop fellowship programs

Success Story: Military Spouse Career Accelerator Pilot (Will become a permanent program January 2026)

The DOD's MSCAP program connects military spouses with companies for 12 weeks paid employment fellowships.

Result: 86% secure permanent positions after completing the program.

Benefits of Hiring Foreign-Born and OCONUS Spouses

Multilingual Skills

Valuable language abilities for global business

Cultural Intelligence

Enhanced cross-cultural communication

International Education

Diverse educational backgrounds

Adaptability

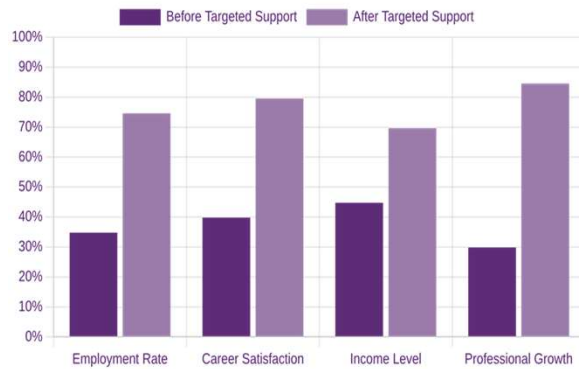
Proven resilience in changing environments

Spouse Employment and Career Opportunities (n.d.), U.S. Department of War (2023)

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Actionable Strategies & Conclusion

Implementing Support for Foreign-Born and OCONUS Military Spouses



Key Actionable Strategies

- For Organizations**
 Develop specialized programs for credential evaluation, bilingual resume support, and cultural integration.
- For Employers**
 Create welcoming hiring practices that recognize international experience and provide mentorship opportunities.
- For Communities**
 Strengthen partnerships between military installations, local businesses, and cultural organizations to create support networks.
- For Foreign-Born and OCONUS Spouses**
 Leverage specialized resources, connect with peer networks, and highlight international experience as a unique asset. Explore remote opportunities, engage with embassy/host-nation resources, and advocate for SOFA reviews that support spouse employment.

D'Aniello Institute for Veterans & Military Families (n.d.); Foreign-Born Military Spouse Network (2024); Peck et al. (2021); Posard et al. (2021)

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Together we can unlock the global talent of foreign-born military spouses!

Connect With Us:

info@fbmnetwork.com

lootienoh@fbmnetwork.com

Thank you!

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What Are Your Questions?



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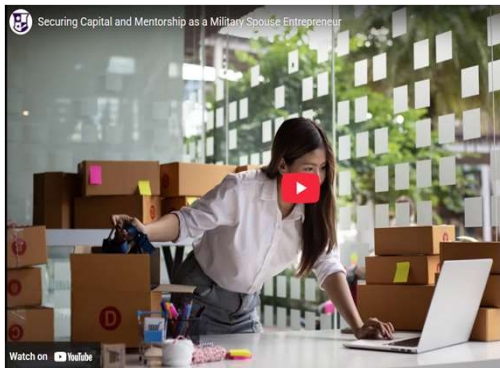


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On-Demand Webinar



Securing Capital and Mentorship as a Military Spouse Entrepreneur

<https://oneop.org/learn/160086/>

In this insightful on-demand webinar, you will learn how to support military spouses as they overcome the unique challenges of military life to build thriving businesses.

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Upcoming Event



Creating Safe Pathways: Employment Advocacy for Military Spouses in Crisis

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

This webinar explores how employment can serve as a protective factor for military families affected by domestic abuse. Join us for an engaging discussion on strengthening support for these families and helping them respond effectively during critical moments.

Continuing education credit will be available for this session!

<https://oneop.org/learn/160113/>

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- The American Association for Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS)
- The Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC)
- The National Council on Family Relations (NCFR)
- The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work (UTSW)
- Certificate of attendance

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