

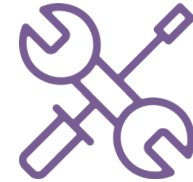
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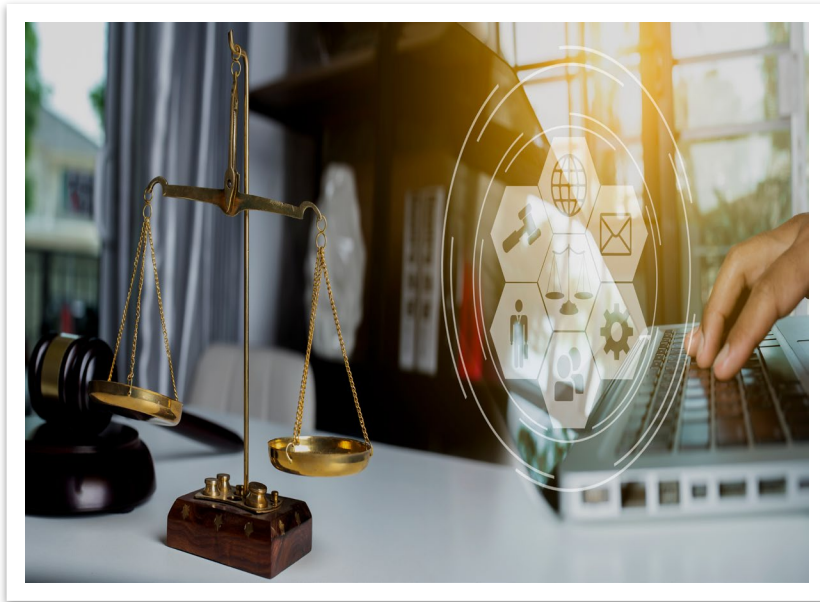


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Military Spouse Employment: Empowering and Inspiring Self-Advocacy

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Event Materials

Visit the **event page** to download a copy of the presentation slides and any additional resources.



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OneOp

Readiness. Knowledge. Network.

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This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Office of Military Family Readiness Policy, U.S. Department of Defense under Award Number 2023-48770-41333.

Learning Objectives

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape of military spouse employment.
- Explore the human resources function and acquire tips for successfully navigating it as both an applicant and an employee.
- Utilize practical tools to effectively communicate with and educate employers about the challenges and opportunities related to military spouse employment.
- Find inspiration to continue advocating for the personal and societal importance of expanding career opportunities for military spouses across all branches of service.

Today's Presenter



Alice Riethman, Esq. SHRM-CP

Employment Attorney + HR Consultant
Kilborn Riethman Consulting, LLC

- Human resources professional
- Employment attorney
- SHRM volunteer leader
- Military spouse to an active-duty Air Force flying squadron commander
- Commander's Key Support Liaison Mentor
- Located in Spokane, WA (Fairchild AFB)

Tell us about you!

Please let us know your job title and location.



Share your answers with us in the chat pod.

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Agenda

By the Numbers - Understanding the current state of military spouse employment.

Understanding HR Processes - What military spouse providers need to understand about HR training and function.

Practical Tools - Practical tools for self-advocacy during the hiring process and throughout employment.

Licensure – Navigating resources to support licensure.

By the Numbers

Service Branch	Male		Female		Unknown		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Army	18,419	8.1	209,788	91.9	0	0.0	228,207	100.0
Navy	14,745	10.5	125,278	89.5	1	0.0	140,024	100.0
Marine Corps	2,335	3.8	58,384	96.2	0	0.0	60,719	100.0
Air Force	20,077	13.8	125,618	86.2	0	0.0	145,695	100.0
Space Force	526	12.2	3,781	87.8	0	0.0	4,307	100.0
Total DOD	56,102	9.7	522,849	90.3	1	0.0	578,952	100.0

Note: Displayed percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: DMDC Active-Duty Military Family File (September 2022)



When prompted,
please respond using
the poll pop-up feature.

By theNumbers (2)

- **21%** - Reported unemployment rate of active-duty military spouses.⁽¹⁾
 - Roughly **121,580** unemployed individuals ⁽¹⁾
 - Does not include those who have opted-out of the workforce
 - **4%** - current national unemployment rate (Feb 2025)⁽²⁾
- **19** - Average number of weeks spent looking for employment. ⁽¹⁾

(1) DOD Office of People Analytics. (2023). *2021 Active-Duty Spouse Survey*. (Report No. 2023-045)

(2) USDOL Bureau of Labor Statistics. (March 7, 2025). *The Employment Situation* – February 2025

By the Numbers (3)

- A PCS move, especially in the past **12** months, increases the odds of unemployment significantly.^(1&2)
- Those who are employed:
 - Only 62% employed within area of education/training⁽¹⁾
 - Earn an average of **38%** less than their peers who are married to civilians ⁽¹⁾
 - **34%** work in occupations that require licensure ⁽¹⁾

(1) DOD Office of People Analytics. (2023). *2021 Active-Duty Spouse Survey*. (Report No. 2023-045)

(2) Burke et al. (2017). Evidence from military change of station moves. *Economic Inquiry*, 56(2), 1261-1277

By the Numbers (4)

- In 2018, approx. **15.4%** of active-duty personnel considered (USDA) as having low food security. Another **10.4%** as having very low food security. (1&2)
- **1 in 4** active-duty spouses reported experiencing low or very low food security; linked to unemployment and underemployment. (3)
- Loss of self-sufficiency (divorce, care-giving, survivor)

(1) RAND. (2023). *Food insecurity among members of the Armed Forces and their dependents*

(2) DOD Office of People Analytics. (2022). *2020 Status of Forces Survey of Active-Duty Members (SOFs-A)*

(3) DOD Office of People Analytics. (2023). *2021 Active-Duty Spouse Survey*. (Report No. 2023-045)



Share your answers with us in the chat pod!
Remember to select **'Everyone'**

By the Numbers (5)

- Personal attainment and identity
- Nearly **1 in 5** military families cite challenges with spousal employment as a reason when considering leaving active-duty service. ⁽¹⁾
- In 2020, only **23%** of Americans age 17-24 qualify for military service. ⁽²⁾
- **<0.5%** of the US population serves in the military. ⁽³⁾

(1) Executive Order 14100. *Advancing Economic Security for Military and Veteran Spouses, Caregivers, and Survivors*. (June 9, 2023)

(2) DOD News. *Military Recruiting is Looking Up*. (December 22, 2023)

(3) DMDC. *Profile of the Military Community*. (2023)

Understanding HR Processes

- Hiring/resume screening flags:
 - Gaps in employment
 - Leaving one job before having the next
 - Long-term
 - Inconsistent career progression
 - Frequent geographic relocation
 - Frequent job change/short tenure
 - No/very little job history



How can providers help spouses prepare?

- Spouses can be communicative!
 - Explain in the cover letter
 - Explain in the resume
 - Include volunteer and community work
 - Be prepared to advocate in an interview



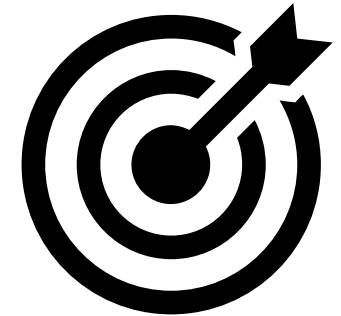


Share your answers with us in the chat pod!

Remember to select ***'Everyone'***

How can providers help spouses prepare?

- Spouses can be strategic!
 - Seek out volunteer and community work
 - Target virtual or transferrable jobs
 - Begin with Military Spouse Employment Partnership
 - Federal employment
 - Look for military spouse friendly employers (jobs page, radio button in application process, etc.)
 - ... yet!



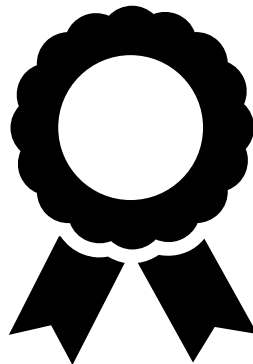
How can providers help spouses prepare?

- Approach PCS strategically!
 - Can the spouse stay with their current employer?
 - Can current job be made virtual?
 - Can the spouse be transferred?
 - Proactively seek employment for next duty station
 - How can we help them make those connections?



How can providers help spouses prepare (4)

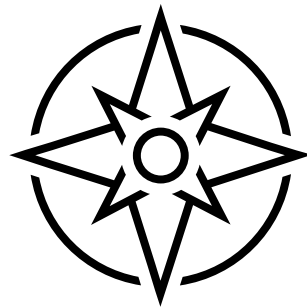
- Spouses can be the best applicant!
 - All the things on Military OneSource – Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO)!
 - Practice interviewing (especially discussing potential flags and military spouse-related issues)



Share your ideas with us in the chat pod!
Remember to select **'Everyone'**

Knowledge is Power

- “Military spouse” status is only a protected class in one state (Virginia). (Arguably in other states but not as directly).



Knowledge is Power (2)

- Help spouses be prepared to address the spoken or unspoken expectation that a military spouse is “just going to leave.”
 - Nationwide median tenure age 20-24 = 1.4 years ⁽¹⁾
 - Nationwide median tenure age 25-34 = 2.7 years ⁽¹⁾
 - PCS frequency is generally every 2-4 years ⁽²⁾

(1) USDOL Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2024). Economic News Release: *Employee Tenure, 2014-2024*

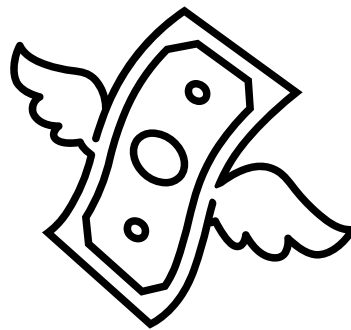
(2) DOD, Military OneSource. *PCS: The Basics About Permanent Change of Station*. (January 8, 2025)

Knowledge is Power (3)

- The Family and Medical Leave Act
 - **Unpaid job-protected leave** for eligible employees.
 - **Qualifying Exigency Leave** - spouse, parent, child of a military member who is deployed, has been notified of an impending deployment, or has returned from deployment to a foreign country. Up to 12 weeks.
 - **Military Caregiver Leave** – spouse, parent, child, or next of kin to care for a covered servicemember or veteran with a qualifying serious injury or illness. Up to 26 weeks (combined).
- Paid job-protected leave may also be available in some states.

Navigating Licensure

- Guide military spouses to look for rules in the new jurisdiction
- Advocacy groups in their field
- Don't forget reimbursement up to \$1,000!





Share your ideas with us in the chat pod!
Remember to select ***'Everyone'***

Parting Thoughts

- Your work in this area matters deeply to the individuals and families involved!
- Please share what you know!
- For those on installations, please consider reaching out to lead spouses such as Air Force Key Support Liaisons, Navy Family Ombudsmen, Army Key Spouses, etc. who are often the first to know of spouse employment challenges and PCS.

Access a list of resources
on the event page!

Spouse Employment Resources

Spouse Education and Career Opportunities - <https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal>

Military Spouse Employment Partnership - <https://msejobs.militaryonesource.mil/msep>

Federal Employment - <https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/article/federal-jobs>

Licensure Reimbursement - <https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/article/licensure-reimbursement-pcs-moves>

Career Coaching Packages - <https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/article/seco-career-coaching-services>

Resume Building - <https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/topic/resume-building>

Mock Interviews - <https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/article/mock-interviews>

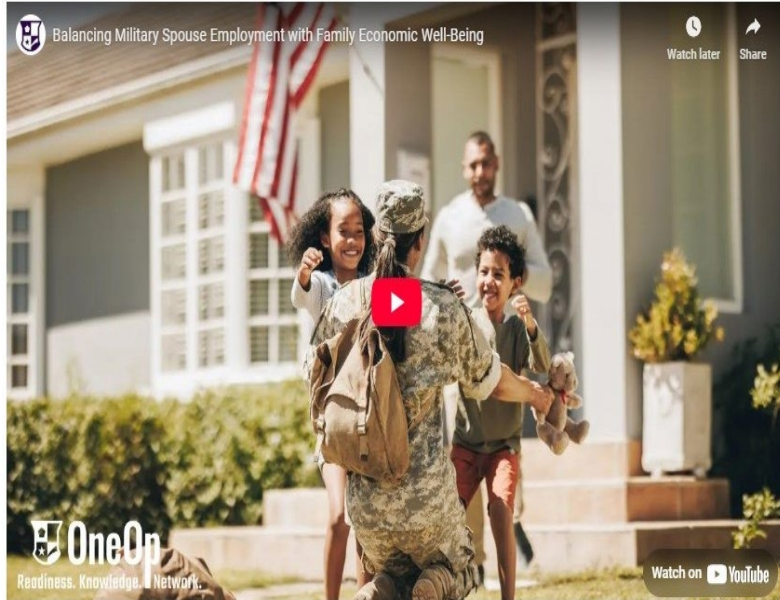
Hiring Our Heroes Spouse Resources - <https://www.hiringourheroes.org/career-services/military-spouse-resources>

Questions?

On-Demand Webinars

Balancing Military Spouse Employment

<https://oneop.org/learn/160050/>



About This Webinar

Empowering Military Spouses to Maintain Employment

<https://oneop.org/learn/160063/>



About This Webinar

Upcoming Event

Securing Capital and Mentorship as a Military Spouse Entrepreneur

Thursday, May 29, 2025, at 11 am to 12 pm ET



Continuing education credit will be available for this session!

In this webinar, participants will learn how to support military spouses in overcoming the unique challenges of military life while building successful businesses. Attendees will explore military-specific funding sources, strategies for business continuity during relocations, and mentorship communities for military spouse entrepreneurs. They will gain a deeper understanding of the military spouse entrepreneur landscape. Participants will leave with actionable resources to implement right away.



RSVP on the webinar event page!

Continuing Education



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- The American Association for Family and Consumer Sciences
- The Commission for Case Manager Certification
- The National Council on Family Relations
- The Society for Human Resource Management
- The University of Texas at Austin, Steve Hicks School of Social Work
- Certificate of Attendance

Evaluation Link

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