SECO
SPOUSE EDUCATION & CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Fact Sheet

# Spouse Education and Career Opportunities

Military spouses are a tremendous source of strength and talent with the ability to navigate the unique challenges of military life. They work to maintain a home and keep their families strong and resilient, often while pursuing an education or striving to build a meaningful career. Frequent relocations and extended deployments make this pursuit challenging. While military spouses are well educated and highly qualified for a wide range of careers, military spouses face a 26 percent unemployment rate and military wives face a 25 percent wage gap compared to their civilian counterparts.

### SECO PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ *Since June 29, 2011 members of the Military Spouse Employment Partnership have hired more than 40,000 spouses and listed more than 1,000,000 jobs on the MSEP Career Portal.*
- ✓ *Current MSEP Partners include 162 companies, non-profit and federal agencies. Additional Partners will be inducted on November 5, 2013.*
- ✓ *In 2012, the SECO Career Center fielded more than 100,000 calls from military spouses.*
- ✓ *Seventeen states have passed spousal licensing legislation since February 2012, bringing the total to 36 states. Fifteen additional states have active spouse licensure bills in progress. This work is accomplished through the USA4 Military Families initiative which facilitates streamlining state occupation licensing requirements for military spouses.*

## Military Support Programs:

To help military spouses reach their education and career goals as they balance work-life priorities and interests, the Department of Defense established a comprehensive, holistic, spouse-centered program called SECO: Spouse Education and Career Opportunities.

SECO provides career exploration opportunities to help spouses worldwide understand their skills, interests and goals; education and training to help them identify academic, licensing or credentialing requirements that can help them reach their career goals; employment readiness assistance to optimize their self-marketing skills; and employment connections that help them find and maintain a rewarding career. Resources include:

- The Military OneSource SECO Career Center where certified counselors provide comprehensive counseling services at no cost to all eligible military spouses.
- The Military Spouse Employment Partnership, a targeted recruitment and employment solution that creates employment connections by providing companies with direct access to military spouses seeking career opportunities and connecting spouses with employers who are actively recruiting.
- The My Career Advancement Account Scholarship, a workforce development program that provides up to $4,000 of financial assistance to eligible military spouses who are pursuing a license, certification or associate degree in a portable career field and occupation.
- SECO works with Installation Employment Readiness Programs where spouses receive face-to-face assistance and advice on career readiness, employment opportunities, educational and scholarship opportunities, and job search strategies.

**COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS –** Each military service plays a major role in supporting a military spouses' education and career progression and provides Installation-based programs and services to any spouse from any service. To find the contact information for any of the installation employment readiness programs, spouses can visit the MilitaryINSTALLATIONS website. On the site, spouses can search by the specific program (Spouse Education, Training and Careers) and an installation or postal code to find the office closest to them. Program names may vary from service to service but they all provide quality services.

- Navy Family Employment Readiness Program
- Marine Corps Family Member Employment Assistance Program
- Army Employment Readiness Program
- Air Force Employment Assistance Program

## SECO Outlook:

**SPOUSE AMBASSADOR NETWORK –** Educating, empowering, and mentoring military spouses to encourage career fulfillment is key to the mission of the Spouse Ambassador Network. By leveraging MSEP Partners and their existing community networks, the Spouse Ambassador Network will connect with fellow military spouses, community leaders, and local Chambers of Commerce and other stakeholders in their communities to increase awareness about career and education resources, such as the Military Spouse Employment Partnership and the Military OneSource SECO Career Center.

**INDIVIDUAL CAREER PLAN –** Military spouses have the opportunity to develop an individual career plan with the help of a certified SECO Career Counselor. Counselors work one-on-one with spouses and discuss their career goals and objectives, the steps they need to take and what tools, resources and information are available to them for each phase of the SECO lifecycle. The plan integrates the spouse's work-related experiences, education and job preferences and provides a clear career path to help spouses arrive at their ultimate career goal.

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