



## 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 25 percent unemployment rate<sup>1</sup> and military wives face a 25 percent wage gap<sup>2</sup> compared to their civilian counterparts.

### SECO program highlights

- ✓ Since June 29, 2011, members of the Military Spouse Employment Partnership have hired more than 55,000 spouses and listed more than 1.3 million jobs on the MSEP Career Portal.
- ✓ Current MSEP Partners include more than 220 companies, nonprofit and federal agencies.
- ✓ In 2013, the SECO Career Center fielded more than 110,000 calls from military spouses.
- ✓ Forty-two states have passed spousal licensure legislation as of February 2014. The remaining eight states have active spouse licensure bills in progress, along with six other states which are considering legislation to improve their existing statutes. This work is accomplished through the [USA4 Military Families](#) initiative, which facilitates streamlining state occupation licensing requirements for military spouses.

### Key program resources

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.

The SECO program 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 following:

- The [Military OneSource SECO Career Center](#) where SECO Career 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 [Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts Program](#), a workforce development program that provides a maximum education benefit of \$4,000 with an annual fiscal year cap of \$2,000 to eligible military spouses who are pursuing a license, certification or associate degree in a portable career field and occupation
- [MySECO](#) website provides eligible military spouses 24/7 access to online education and career information, resources, tools and assessments. This website is a one-stop source where spouses can research occupations, search for schools and scholarships, find employment and education information and develop their Individual Career Plan to set goals and chart progress in building a meaningful career path.

**Community connections**—Each military service plays a major role in supporting a military spouse's education and career progression and provides installation-based programs and services to any spouse from any service. At Installation employment readiness programs, spouses can receive face-to-face assistance and advice on career readiness, employment opportunities, education and scholarship opportunities, and job search strategies. 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 the mission of the Spouse Ambassador Network. By leveraging MSEP partners and their existing community networks, the Spouse Ambassador Network connects military spouses, community leaders, 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**—Working independently or with a SECO Career Counselor, spouses can use the MyICP Wizard on [MySECO](#) to build a customized, interactive career plan targeted to their specific needs and current lifecycle stage. Spouses choose their persona type, occupation of interest and identify their challenges and growth opportunities. When they click 'view MyICP', they receive a personalized list of tools, resources and activities designed to help them reach their individual career and/or education goals. Spouses can track their progress, store information or create additional myICPs throughout their service member's career.

## Connect with us

### MSEP

-  <https://facebook.com/MSEPOnline>
-  <https://twitter.com/MSEPjobs>
-  <http://linkedin.com/groups/Military-Spouse-Employment-Partnership-MSEP-4159976>

### MilitaryOneSource

-  <https://facebook.com/military.1source>
-  <https://twitter.com/Military1Source>
-  <http://pinterest.com/military1source>
-  <http://militaryonesource.tumblr.com>
-  <http://militaryonesource.mil/rss>

### MC&FP

-  <https://facebook.com/MCandFP>
-  <https://youtube.com/user/mcandfp>
-  <http://flickr.com/photos/mcftp>

<sup>1</sup> 2012 Demographics Report, Profile of the Military Community, Military OneSource.mil, [http://militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2012\\_Demographics\\_Report.pdf](http://militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2012_Demographics_Report.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Kniskern, M. K., & Segal, D. R. (2010), Mean Wage Differences between Civilian and Military Wives, College Park, MD: Center for Research on Military Organization, University of Maryland, College Park, Military OneSource.mil, [http://militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/FY2012\\_Report\\_MilitaryFamilyReadinessPrograms.pdf](http://militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/FY2012_Report_MilitaryFamilyReadinessPrograms.pdf).

