

Senior Spouse Update Summary

Current as of March 11, 2024



On March 5, 2024, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy Patricia Montes Barron provided a quarterly update to 170+ senior military spouses. In the meeting, Mrs. Barron and members of her leadership team provided information on activities of the Defense State Liaison Office and on the department's efforts to promote food security in the military.

Mrs. Barron underscored the importance of participating in the Active Duty Spouse Survey, which is currently open to all active-duty military spouses. She emphasized that spouses' responses make a difference, as this survey is your chance to be heard on issues that directly affect you, your spouses and your children. Weigh in on topics such as employment opportunities, health benefits and overall satisfaction with military life at dodsurveys.mil. The survey is open until April.

Mrs. Barron announced that while the DOD's work in community support and quality-of-life programs is ongoing, she is proud of their progress, as well as the "cradle to grave" service MC&FP provides to service members and their families.

The next Senior Spouse Update will occur in summer 2024.

Defense State Liaison Office

DSLO Program Analyst Meredith Smith, also a military spouse, provided an overview of DSLO, including how it educates and works with state policymakers to improve the well-being of service members and their families.

DSLO is an entity within the DOD charged with working at the state level (both executive and legislative branches) to advance the department's policy priorities to advance the department's military community and family policies and quality of life. DSLO was created in 2004 in response to the department's need for a formal presence and engagement on these issues.

Every year, eight regional liaisons (each representing five states) collect feedback from the military families they work with and collaborate across the services to identify 10 policy priorities to advance.

To learn more about the department's policy priorities, track legislation and get the latest military state policy news, go to StatePolicy.MilitaryOneSource.mil.



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Food security update

Next, Dave Julian, senior advisor to the deputy assistant secretary of defense for Military Community and Family Policy, provided an update on the DOD's efforts to promote food security among military families. Mr. Julian said that the DOD is modernizing its methods and its approach to food accessibility. The team was tasked with a complex challenge: providing a strategy and road map to tackle food insecurity. The team recognized six lines of effort: increasing access to healthy food, addressing pay and compensation, increasing financial readiness, empowering military families by boosting spouse employment and access to child care, breaking down barriers to resources, and helping service members feel comfortable reaching out for assistance.

Mr. Julian emphasized that food insecurity impacts readiness, resilience and retention. He discussed possible root causes, but also stated that it isn't always a compensation issue.

To truly "Take Care of Our People," we must address two subpopulations reporting the most food insecurity: single-earner junior military families with children who live off installation, and unaccompanied junior service members living on installation.

How you can help

As trusted leaders in the military community, you — senior spouses — are uniquely positioned to share these and other important military spouse-related resources with your networks. Do you know someone who can benefit from MC&FP resources? Please guide them to [MilitaryOneSource.mil](https://militaryonesource.mil) for resources such as our [Office of Financial Readiness](#) and [Military Leaders Economic Security Toolkit](#).

Help us reach and educate spouses and military leadership by sharing the resources discussed in the webinar on social media platforms. **Download** the [My Military OneSource app](#) and **subscribe** to our SECO and Military OneSource [eNewsletters](#).

Great news! We have created a landing page on Military OneSource just for [the Senior Spouse Roundtable updates](#). You'll find links to all of the resources discussed in the webinar, summaries from each session, and other spouse resources you can share with your key spouse groups and installation spouses.

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Links discussed by Mrs. Barron

- **Active Duty Spouse Survey:** <https://www.dodsurveys.mil/>
- **Taking Care of Our People fact sheets:**
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/financial-legal/personal-finance/taking-care-of-people/>

Links discussed by Ms. Smith

- **Defense-State Liaison Office:** <https://statepolicy.militaryonesource.mil/>

Links discussed by Mr. Julian

- **Military Leaders Economic Security Toolkit:**
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/leaders-service-providers/economic-security/>
- **Economic Security Toolkit (Financial Well-Being):**
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/leaders-service-providers/economic-security/#financial-well-being>
- **Food Security Resources and Support Program MilLife Guide:**
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/millife-guides/food-security-resources-and-support-programs/>
- **FSAFEDS Uniformed Services landing page:**
<https://www.fsafeds.com/explore/usmdcfsa>
- **Defense Commissary Agency:** <https://corp.commissaries.com/>
- **DOD Office of Financial Readiness landing page:**
<https://finred.usalearning.gov/DCFSA>
- **Military OneSource Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account Benefit page:**
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/benefits/dependent-fsa/>

Links shared in chat:

- **Podcast episode: Commissary CLICK2GO:**
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/podcasts/military-onesource/commissary-click2go/>
- **Senior Spouse landing page:**
<https://militaryonesource.mil/resources/millife-guides/food-security-resources-and-support-programs/>