

## Military OneSource Podcast — Finding Seasonal Job Opportunities as a MilSpouse

### Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Program

#### Episode transcript

##### Intro voiceover:

Welcome to the Military OneSource Podcast. Military OneSource is an official program of the Defense Department with tools, information and resources to help families navigate all aspects of military life. For more information, visit [militaryonesource.mil](http://militaryonesource.mil).

##### Bruce Moody:

Welcome to the podcast, I'm Bruce Moody. Today we're going to talk about tips and advice to help military spouses who are looking for seasonal job opportunities.

And to do that, we're going to welcome our guest, who is Jennifer Matsuda. And Jennifer is a Spouse Education and Career Opportunities career coach with Military OneSource. Jennifer, welcome to the podcast.

##### Jennifer Matsuda:

Thank you so much, Bruce. It's great to be here.

##### Bruce Moody:

We're glad to have you with us today. This is going to be a really interesting conversation. So, what we did to get ready for this particular episode is we posted a poll on our SECO Military Spouse Career Network LinkedIn group, and we asked military spouses, "What are your questions about seasonal work?"

So, the no. 1 majority of the questions that we got was this, and we can start off here. The question is, "Where do I find seasonal jobs?"

And before you answer, I want people to understand a little bit about yourself. So, tell us a bit about who you are and also let people know "what is a Spouse Education and Career Opportunities career coach?"

##### Jennifer Matsuda:

Great question. So, like you mentioned, I am a career coach with the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program. A career coach is someone who works one-on-one with a military spouse to help them work towards their goals.

So, some spouses are really focused on completing education, whether that's a certification or a degree, while other spouses are looking for employment. And then what we see often is spouses working towards both goals.

So, we're really here to support, share resources, and be that source of information and encouragement.

**Bruce Moody:**

That sounds great. So how do people find you? How do people get in touch with you?

**Jennifer Matsuda:**

Great question again. So, spouses can call Military OneSource to set up a free coaching package. They can also use the chat feature on the SECO website.

**Bruce Moody:**

So, the website and the phone number are going to be in the program notes. So, you can just go down there and have a look and you'll be on your way.

All right, let's get right to it.

Again, we posted a little poll on our LinkedIn group, and we said, "Hey, what are your questions about seasonal work?" Folks came back and the majority of folks said, "Hey, we want to know, where do I find seasonal jobs?"

**Jennifer Matsuda:**

Absolutely. So, there's a few places spouses can go to look for seasonal jobs. SECO has on our website the Military Spouse Employment Partnership. This is a partnership with over 800 employers. Spouses can go and look for jobs, but they can use the filter section on that website, on that page, to select for seasonal and temporary jobs.

Another great place that they can look for jobs is with FlexJobs. And that's something that they can reach out to a career] coach for.

So, they can call, get an appointment, they can get that access to FlexJobs, which also has seasonal, temporary, and flexible work posted.

**Bruce Moody:**

Really, really important stuff. I'm a retired Navy chief, so I have been around the military community for a long time, and the spouse employment for military spouses, not the sort of thing you have to sell. Everybody knows how important it is.

I'm really curious about your perspective on this. I mean, how did you become a SECO career coach and how did you choose to do that?

And do you have any personal connections to the military community?

**Jennifer Matsuda:**

So, I have actually been a military spouse for 11 years now. I like to joke that my hobby is looking for jobs and applying for jobs. So that's my connection.

And so, before I was a career coach, I worked with service members transitioning out of the military.

And when I found the opportunity to work with SECO, I was really excited because that's a chance for me to support my fellow military spouses as they work towards their goals.

**Bruce Moody:**

You get it. I'm really glad that we're having this conversation with you. So, we're really pretty much in the holiday season. If a spouse is looking for seasonal employment, where should they look?

**Jennifer Matsuda:**

Great question. So, the first thing I'd recommend is for them to go to the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities website.

They can create an account for free. And by making an account they'll see all the full details of those jobs listed in the Military Spouse Employment Partnership.

So again, that's a really great place because those are the employers who are really dedicated to hiring military spouses. The other thing that they can do is they can upload a resume to their SECO account, and they can make that searchable to those employers.

**Bruce Moody:**

You mentioned that the organizations that are hiring, some are companies, some are organizations, some are agencies — they're in the partnership, and they're dedicated to hiring military spouses. But really it goes beyond that. I mean, they sign, and we hold them to it.

And maybe you could just talk about this for a little bit. When people see a company who has signed into the partnership, what are the sort of things that we're holding them to, with regard to supporting a military spouse and their career?

**Jennifer Matsuda:**

That's a great question. So, like you mentioned, all of these companies and organizations, they have signed that agreement. They have made that formal dedication.

And they do go through a vetting process, and they also do go through a continuing engagement process to ensure that they are reaching those spouses. So that's on their side. They do get that support on their side to help them hire these military spouses.

They get that education in terms of the advantages to hiring military spouses, because we've lived all over the place, we've adapted, we've had to learn all these new skills just by being a military spouse.

So, they have access to that education, that knowledge of really how important it is and how beneficial to them it is to hire a military spouse.

On the spouse side, the great thing is that because these organizations recognize the advantages, the spouses don't have to feel as though they need to disguise their military spouse status.

So, looking at a resume, sometimes you can see certain locations of employment at certain time intervals, and it can be pretty obvious that, "Oh, that's a military spouse there."

And a lot of times we feel a little anxiety because there was that traditional bias against military spouses in the employment field, in terms of employers thinking that military spouses won't be dedicated or that they'll be moving.

So, this is really a great place for military spouses to look for work because they don't have to hide who they are. They don't have to feel anxious about that. Because these employers are recognizing the advantage, and they are really eager to hire military spouses.

**Bruce Moody:**

You mentioned a really important point, and I just want to mention that in a little bit of detail. The employers who are part of MSEP — the Military Spouse Employment Partnership — value military spouses.

So, one might think that they're becoming part of this partnership because it's patriotic or it's the right thing to do, and maybe that's the case, but I'll tell you the bottom line, the real reason, what they get out of this, is that they understand the value of military spouses.

For them, and we talk to them over and over again, they say it's good for their bottom line; it's good for their mission. They want military spouses on their team.

So, I want folks listening to have that understanding as they put together their mindset when they go out and they're searching for a seasonal job.

And maybe Jennifer, what you can do is add to that and just provide any tips that you have in mind for spouses who are seeking a seasonal job.

**Jennifer Matsuda:**

Absolutely. So, when they're applying for positions in the Military Spouse Employment Partnership, they can go ahead and identify themselves as military spouses. Oftentimes there will be a section in the application, or they can address that in their cover letter.

Apart from that, it's really important for them to tailor their resume to the job they're applying for. Just like with any job that you might apply for. With seasonal, it's the same thing.

So, it's important to look through that job announcement, look at the company, research the company, and really tailor the resume to make sure that it's reflecting your most relevant experience in relation to that job.

**Bruce Moody:**

So you work with a lot of military spouses and you're helping them find jobs. Do you have any success stories that you can share with us?

**Jennifer Matsuda:**

Yeah, I do actually. So, recently I've been working with a spouse for a few months now, and just like with a lot of military spouses, she's had a lot on her plate. She recently PCS-ed to a new state. She also has a newborn baby. And amongst all of that, she's looking for work.

So, during our coaching sessions, we've gone over all kinds of resources available to her. We've talked about her short and long-term career goals. We've gone over her resume, updated it, talked about interview techniques and after all of this, she shared that she was recently offered a seasonal job.

**Bruce Moody:**

Nice. It's interesting, and I wonder if you have yourself any experiences to share with regard to finding and working a seasonal job?

**Jennifer Matsuda:**

Right. So just like with any job search — this is me personally — it's always nerve-racking sending out those applications and waiting to hear back. But it is a great way to get experience. So, I was able to get a seasonal job early on in my career to help me gain that experience after finishing my education. And then later on I had a career break, actually more recently.

So, seasonal work was a great way for me to get back into the workforce. And at that point I knew I wanted a long-term job, a long-term career, but having that seasonal job gave me a little bit of financial flexibility. So, I was able to take my time and search carefully.

**Bruce Moody:**

Mm-hmm. Can a seasonal job lead to a year-round position?

**Jennifer Matsuda:**

That can be a possibility. So, the spouse that I mentioned earlier, she actually shared that the role she was offered, it starts out as seasonal, and it does have the potential to become a year-round job.

**Bruce Moody:**

Okay. So, if there is that potential, how can a spouse make that happen?

**Jennifer Matsuda:**

Great question. So even though seasonal positions are temporary by definition, they can be a great way to get your foot in the door.

So, if switching to year-round is an option, it's going to be important for the spouses to be the best employees that they can be, go into it with a positive attitude. But in addition to that, networking can be a really important tool.

So, networking will allow spouses to learn about year-round roles in that organization or that company. It also shows that they're engaged in the workplace.

And networking can be intimidating, but SECO — the Spouse Employment and Career Opportunities program — has several resources to help spouses build their networking skills. That includes access to on-demand learning with Udemy and also LinkedIn Premium.

**Bruce Moody:**

Yeah. Let's talk more about that — the SECO career coaches. How does somebody get started? How can they find additional information and support, like the courses? What's the first step for them?

**Jennifer Matsuda:**

Great question. We have a lot of information on our website. It's all on our website, but there's so much there that I do recommend spouses call in for a free coaching session, because the coach can really walk through the whole website, explain the most relevant resources to the spouse, and then the spouse can come with any questions that they have as well.

**Bruce Moody:**

Two things that come to mind. Can a career coach help with a resume, tailoring the resume? And can a career coach help to prepare for an interview?

**Jennifer Matsuda:**

Absolutely. Great questions, Bruce. So, a career coach can help with both of those. With the resume, there's a few ways a spouse can get help with their resumes.

They can work with a coach over the phone, one on one, and go over their resume. They can also send their resume to the on-demand resume review service.

And with both of those options, they can also include a job posting that they're interested in. That way the coach can really help them tailor that resume. And then you also asked about interviews.

So, in these career coaching sessions, the career coach and the spouse can talk about interview techniques, how to answer those really difficult interview questions.

But another service that SECO offers is mock interviews.

So, the spouse would basically go into the call with another career coach who has prepared questions based on what kind of job the spouse is looking for, and the spouse can have a practice interview. And then they get feedback on how they did after the interview.

**Bruce Moody:**

So, when we began our conversation, we referenced that we did a little mini poll on our LinkedIn group. Maybe you can give a brief description. Again, this is the SECO Military Spouse Career Network LinkedIn group.

**Jennifer Matsuda:**

So, the LinkedIn group is a great place for spouses to engage with each other. There's a lot of power in hearing about others' experiences.

They can engage with the MSEP employers. And we'll be including a link to that group in the show notes.

**Bruce Moody:**

Okay. Yes, we will. Jennifer Matsuda, it's been great talking to you. Before we wrap up, because you are a career coach, I want to offer you to just give a pitch of encouragement to military spouses before they go off and pursue seasonal job opportunities.

**Jennifer Matsuda:**

Right. So, my main pitch is that as military spouses, we get used to doing everything alone.

We might not literally be alone, but we get used to that idea. Like, it's on us. The service member has to do their job or they might have to leave for different things while they're in service.

So, I want everyone to remember that the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program is here to be a support for you. Specifically, for you, the spouses.

You don't have to go through this process alone. And there are resources that a lot of people don't know about. We don't know what we don't know. So, SECO is here to help you learn about those resources and support you.

**Bruce Moody:**

Fantastic. Thank you so much for joining us today.

**Jennifer Matsuda:**

Thank you so much, Bruce.

**Bruce Moody:**

Absolutely. I want to remind everybody that Military OneSource is an official resource of the Defense Department.

We always like to hear from you. Click on the link in the program notes to send us a question, a comment, maybe an idea for a future episode.

And be sure to subscribe to this podcast wherever you listen to your podcasts, because we cover a wide range of topics to help military families navigate military life.

I'm Bruce Moody. Thank you for listening. Take care. Bye-bye.