

Defense-State Liaison Office Program Content Guide

The following established style guidelines reflect the longstanding practices of developers and editors of content for the Defense-State Liaison Office Program area. They are consistent with rules and guidance outlined in the Associated Press Stylebook and reflective of Office of Military Community and Family Policy style and usage preferences.

Do

- Use a hyphen when referring to the Defense-State Liaison Office.
- Make “service member” and “service members” two words, except when referencing the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.
- Use “softening” or qualifying words, such as “generally,” “may be,” “can be,” or “might,” to avoid making blanket statements about how people feel, react, etc., in different circumstances. See the following examples:
 - **Wrong:** “Payday, vehicle title and refund anticipation loans **are** damaging to your financial well-being.
 - **Better:** “Payday, vehicle title and refund anticipation loans **can be** damaging to your financial well-being.”
- Pay attention to the overall organization and flow of an article. Information and ideas should be logically organized and there should be some sense of continuity or flow from one idea to the next.
- Avoid redundancy.
- Write in gender-neutral terms, except if appropriate (for example, gender-specific services/groups).
- Write in relationship-neutral terms, such as “partner” or “couple.”

Do Not

- Make assumptions.
- Tell people how they feel.
- Tell people what they should/need to/must/ought/can’t/won’t do.
- Tell people what they always/never do.
- Use the term “lobby/lobbying” or imply lobbying.
- Use a hyphen when referring to the Defense-State Liaison Office as opposed to an en dash or em dash. (For example, it is incorrect to write “Defense—State Liaison Office.”)

Formatting

- Less is more — be concise.
- Use bulleted formatting for clarity when appropriate.
- For DSLO Best Practice documents, be sure to left justify all state code quotations.

Preferred Terms

Preferred	As opposed to
Army Community Service	Army Community Services
augment	adding to
can or may or might	will or are
career	job
child care	day care
child, children	kids
drafting bills	shepherding bills
eligible surviving family members	gold star eligibility
eliminating barriers	improves quality of life
knowledge	expertise
military life	military lifestyle
military service departments	service branches
often or generally	always
partner, spouse	husband, wife
provided at no cost for service members and their families	free
Purple Star Schools Program	Purple Star School Program
some or many	most or all
tend to	usually
works with policymakers	partners with policymakers; helps policymakers

Definitions

Term	Definition
Absent uniformed services voter	This is a member of a uniformed service on active duty who, by reason of such active duty, is absent from the place of residence where the member is otherwise qualified to vote; or a spouse/dependent of a service member who, by reason of the active duty or service of the member, is absent from the place of residence where the spouse/dependent is otherwise qualified to vote.
Best practice	This is a method or technique used by other states that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means and is used as a benchmark.
Child care accreditation	This is an evaluation and certification from a nationally recognized organization that the child care facility demonstrates a higher level of quality than is required by licensing based on program standards.
Child care fee assistance	This is financial aid for eligible families (typically moderate- or low-income families) through vouchers or contracted slots with service providers to help offset the cost of child care.
Comprehensive background checks for child care employees	These screenings consist of fingerprint identification of a prospective child care employee’s history to include a review of criminal history, a child abuse registry check and a sex offender registry check, to ensure the safety of the children under the care of the facility.

Term	Definition
Defense-State Liaison Office	This Defense Department program office works with state leaders across the country who are concerned for the welfare of the active-duty, Guard, and reserve service members and their families living in their state. The office seeks to educate and work with state leaders on key quality of life issues. Liaisons are knowledgeable about military issues as well as the policymaking process.
Federal Voting Assistance Program	This federal program provides U.S. citizens worldwide a broad range of nonpartisan information and assistance to facilitate their participation in the democratic process.
Licensing law implementation	The vast majority of states enacted laws to accommodate license portability for military spouses; however, not all boards have implemented these new rules. DSLO is working with policymakers and regulators to ensure the laws are implemented.
Licensure	Licensure is a mandatory credentialing process established by a government entity, usually at the state level, which makes it illegal for an individual to practice the profession without a license.
Medicaid waivers-based services	These services can assist military families with special needs to obtain Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Waivers at the time the sponsor retires/separates from military service.

Term	Definition
Memorandum of understanding	A memorandum of understanding is a formal document between multiple parties describing agreed-upon terms typically setting forth the basic principles and guidelines under which the parties will work together to accomplish their goals.
Military Student Identifier	Required by the Every Student Succeeds Act, this additional data field in student information systems allows educational institutions to recognize where military-connected students attend school; their academic performance in reading, math and science; graduation rates; and how they perform over time.
Military spouse teacher certification	Military spouse teacher certification is a solution to an issue that includes the adoption of flexible credentialing procedures for spouses so that kindergarten through grade 12 teachers can become certified efficiently.
Military State Policy Source, statepolicy.militaryonesource.mil	The MSPS website is part of the Defense Department’s initiative to identify and address the most pressing needs of service members and military families affected by state policies. The site is aimed at state policymakers and their staffs.
Overseas voter	This is an absent uniformed services voter who, by reason of active duty or service, is absent from the United States on the date of the election involved; a person who resides outside of the United States and is qualified to vote in the last place in which the person was domiciled before leaving the United States; or a person who resides outside of the United States and (but for such residence) would be qualified to vote in the last place in which the person was domiciled before leaving the United States.

Term	Definition
Predatory lending	This is the practice of loaning money to consumers using unfair, deceptive or fraudulent practices by some lenders during the loan origination process. Predatory lending generally includes loans with excessive cost (high interest rates, unreasonable fees, etc.), equity stripping, failure to report borrower credit information, steering to higher-cost mortgages and credit insurance products that are financed upfront.
Pro bono legal representation	This is the establishment of programs to connect service members and families with pro bono legal representation.
Regional liaisons	These liaisons provide background information to state leaders and policymakers on key issues that remove barriers, smooth transitions and enhance quality of life for military families. They help write draft legislation and find constituents to testify at hearings. Liaisons do not enact bills.
State employment protections	Protecting employment for Guard members who mobilize in a state other than the one where they work.
State Servicemembers Civil Relief Act and consumer protection	State-level legal and consumer protections covering state mobilizations and establishing protections for service members while on active duty.

Term	Definition
Transcript	This is an official report supplied by an educational institution on the permanent academic record of an individual student. A transcript typically includes a listing of subjects studied/courses taken, grades received, all honors received and degrees conferred to a student.
Unemployment compensation	Insurance benefits from a program funded by employers to workers who involuntarily become unemployed through no fault of their own as determined by state law. Payments continue for a limited period or until the unemployed worker finds new employment.
Veterans Treatment Court	This is a hybrid drug and mental health court for military veterans that combines rigorous treatment and accountability for veterans facing incarceration.

Current Key Issues and Definitions

Term	Definition
<p>Child Abuse Identification and Reporting</p>	<p>2023 Key Issue:</p> <p>DOD has a statutory obligation to address child abuse and neglect within the military. States can assist the department by requiring local jurisdictions to identify military families and develop reporting and information-sharing procedures between civilian child protective services and military child advocacy.</p>
<p>Concurrent Juvenile Jurisdiction</p>	<p>2023 Key Issue:</p> <p>Exclusive federal jurisdiction on military installations can send juveniles through an adult judicial system. Access to state juvenile and family courts may allow for more suitable outcomes. State lawmakers can remove these barriers and pursue solutions that support military families.</p>
<p>Defining Armed Forces in State Policy</p>	<p>2023 Key Issue:</p> <p>Recent force structure changes require updates to ensure that states’ definitions of military service comport with federal law. States can minimize disruptions in benefits and services for eligible service members and dependents by clearly defining “armed forces.”</p>
<p>Enhanced Military Spouse Licensure Portability</p>	<p>2023 Key Issue:</p> <p>Military spouses are disproportionately affected by state-specific licensure requirements that can cause delays and gaps in employment. States can streamline state licensing processes for relocating military spouses by providing them with a license within 30 days with minimal initial paperwork.</p>
<p>Licensing Compacts</p>	<p>2023 Key Issue:</p> <p>Many military spouse professionals must relicense each time they move to a new state with their active-duty spouse. States can facilitate the ability of professionals, including military spouses, to work across state lines by enacting occupational licensure interstate compacts.</p>

Term	Definition
<p>Licensure Exemptions for Military Family Child Care Providers:</p>	<p>2023 Key Issue: In many cases, military family child care providers must be licensed or registered by the state in addition to the military. By exempting providers already certified through the military, states enhance the economic status of both the providers and families.</p>
<p>Military and Family Life Counselor Licensure Waiver:</p>	<p>2023 Key Issue: The state licensure process can be a barrier to providing timely mental health support to service members and families. States can provide a licensure waiver for military and family life counselors to allow for mental health care as needed.</p>
<p>Military Spouse Occupational Licensure Access</p>	<p>2023 Key Issue: Accessing applications for military spouses is often a barrier to making use of the state laws that are designed to ease license transfer. States can reduce obstacles spouses experience when applying under state laws by posting easily accessible website content specific to military spouses.</p>
<p>Open Enrollment Flexibility</p>	<p>2023 Key Issue: Military families are at a disadvantage when it comes to the enrollment options available to their children due to military-directed reassignments. States can provide military families with increased flexibility through access to district open enrollment policies.</p>
<p>Purple Star Schools Program</p>	<p>2023 Key Issue: Military children experience many challenges as they relocate to new schools due to a parent’s change in duty station. By establishing statewide Purple Star Schools programs, states can encourage local education agencies to implement practices that assist military children with transitions/deployments and also recognize military service and civic responsibility.</p>

Emeritus Key Issues and Definitions

Term	Definition
Advance Enrollment	<p>2022 Key Issue:</p> <p>Military children are often limited in their school and course registration options due to the timing of military-directed moves. States can help by waiving proof of residency requirements until the student arrives in the new state on military transfer orders.</p>
“Ask the Question” Campaign	<p>2022 Key Issue:</p> <p>State agencies may not provide referrals to service members, veterans and their families due to lack of identification. State agencies can connect service members, veterans and their families with local, state and federal resources by asking the question, “Have you or a family member ever served in the military?” on all intake forms.</p>
In-State Tuition Continuity	<p>2022 Key Issue:</p> <p>Military dependents may lose in-state tuition classification due to the timing of reassignments or changes to the service member’s military status. States can deem a dependent of a service member a resident despite changes in the service member’s military status following acceptance.</p>