

Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Program Content Guide

The following established style guidelines reflect the practices of developers and editors of content for the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program. They are consistent with the rules and guidance outlined in The Associated Press Stylebook and reflective of both the SECO program and the Office of Military Community and Family Policy and usage preferences.

Do

- Use “employer partners” to describe Military Spouse Employment Partnership partners.
- Use “Military Spouse Employment Partnership companies and organizations.”
- Use “corporations, small businesses, federal agencies and nonprofits” to describe Military Spouse Employment Partnership partners.
- Use “SECO Career Center.”
- Use “CareerOneStop” as one word with each word in the name capitalized.
- Use “Foundation” when referring to the “U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation” and its Hiring Our Heroes program.
- Write the terms “appropriated funds” and “nonappropriated funds” (one word) in lowercase.
- Pay attention to the overall organization and flow of articles. Organize information and ideas logically and provide some sense of continuity or flow from one idea to the next.
- Avoid redundancy.
- Write a concluding paragraph of two or three sentences.
- Direct readers to contact the SECO Career Center at the end of articles, when applicable.
- Write in gender-neutral terms.
- Flesh out and clarify statements and ideas.
- Use softening or qualifying words, such as “generally,” “may be,” “can be” or “might,” to avoid making blanket statements about how people feel or react in different circumstances.
- Use second person to offer a sense of conversation.
- Use “Military Spouse Employment Partnership Job Search” rather than “Career Portal.”

- Use “more than” rather than “over” with numbers (Example: *We currently have more than 700 partners.*)
- Use “transferable skills.”
- Spell out “Spouse Education and Career Opportunities,” “Military Spouse Employment Partnership” and “My Career Advancement Account” on first use, then abbreviate for subsequent uses.
- Break articles up into short, easy-to-consume paragraphs.
- Be concise.
- Keep sentences short.
- Make sure headings match body text.
- Insert transitions between paragraphs.

Do Not

- Capitalize “partners,” even when it is following “Military Spouse Employment Partnership.”
- Refer to the SECO Career Center as a call center.
- Use “MSEPJob.”
- 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 “portable careers” in the context of an actual occupation.
- Use statistics without citations.
- Use “over” with numbers (example: over 12,000 jobs).
- Use military “lifestyle.”
- Capitalize career coach.
- Abbreviate Military OneSource to MOS; spell it out in all instances.

Formatting

- Less is more — be concise.
- Use bulleted formatting for clarity when appropriate.

Preferred Terms

Preferred	As opposed to
Spouse	husband, wife
mobile military life	military lifestyle
some or many	most or all
Can, may or might	will or are
often or generally	always
tend to, typically	Usually, normally
provided free to service members and their families	no cost
employment readiness	career readiness
career coach	certified Career Counselor
resume	résumé
career	job
armed forces	Armed Forces (capitalize in this usage – U.S. Armed Forces)
child care/health care	childcare/healthcare
internet	Internet
SECO Career Center	Spouse Career Center/call center

Definitions

Term	Definition
Career coach	Career coaches provide education and career guidance to military spouses worldwide. These certified master’s level career coaches work with spouses to provide information, resources and assessments to help spouses plan for and obtain jobs they love that fit their mobile military life. Spouses can also work with career coaches to create a plan of action that considers targeted educational programs, financial aid options, training program resources and credentialing or licensing information.
Career Advisor	Spouses who call the SECO Career Center will first be connected with a career advisor to triage the call and can then schedule a consultation with a SECO career coach.
SECO Career Center	The SECO Career Center connects military spouses with expert support from career professionals. They provide personalized attention and support and can target spouses’ specific issues, questions or requirements to make sure they meet their education and career goals.
Employment readiness specialists	Installation employment readiness specialists are familiar with local area employers and education institutions. They can help spouses develop a network and connect with employers in their local communities. Employment readiness specialists offer face-to-face assistance with employment needs, interview skills, resume assistance, federal employment, child care and transportation planning, and more. They can help you with a wide range of employment-related areas through workshops, classes, small group instruction and one-on-one support.

Military OneSource	Twenty-four-hour services are available free to all active-duty, National Guard and reserve members (regardless of activation status) and their families. Consultants provide information and make referrals on a wide range of issues related to military life.
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Term	Definition
Military Spouse Employment Partnership	<p>The Military Spouse Employment Partnership, or MSEP, is an employment and career partnership connecting military spouses to hundreds of partner employers who have committed to recruiting, hiring, promoting and retaining military spouses in portable careers. Spouses are encouraged to self-identify when applying with or contacting these employment partners.</p>
Military Spouse Employment Partnership companies and organizations	<p>Hundreds of Military Spouse Employment Partnership companies and organizations have committed to recruiting, hiring, promoting and retaining military spouses.</p>
Military Spouse Preference Program	<p>*PLEASE NOTE – This program is in the process of changing and new messaging has not been approved. Established under the Military Family Act of 1985 and offering employment placement preference in Defense Department civilian personnel positions to military spouses who meet certain criteria, the program applies to DOD vacancies only.</p> <p>Variations and exceptions exist allowing local hiring authorities to tailor policies to meet their requirements.</p>
My Career Advancement Account Scholarship	<p>The My Career Advancement Account, or MyCAA, Scholarship is a workforce development program that provides up to \$4,000 of tuition assistance to eligible military spouses to help pay for licenses, certifications, national testing, certain continuing education credits or associate degrees to pursue an occupation or career field.</p> <p>Spouses of active-duty service members in pay grades E-1 to E-6, W-1 to W-2 and O-1 to O-3 who have the ability to request tuition assistance while their military sponsor is on Title 10 military orders, including spouses married to members of the National Guard and reserves in these same pay grades, are eligible for the scholarship.</p>

Military Spouse Transition Program	The Military Spouse Transition Program, or MySTeP, is a self-directed, mobile-friendly online resource specifically designed for military spouses preparing for and navigating separation from military service. Videos, downloadable resources and specific links guide spouses toward programs and services on a wide range of topics, including making smart financial decisions, finding social support resources, managing moves and more.
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Term	Definition
Spouse Education and Career Opportunities	The Spouse Education and Career Opportunities, or SECO, program provides military spouses with free, comprehensive resources and tools to assist spouses throughout all stages of their career progression, helping them meet their education and career goals.
The Spouse Education and Career Opportunities website: MySECO	The MySECO website is a one-stop online career and education toolbox filled with valuable information, resources and interactive features to assist military spouses in navigating the challenges of finding education and building a portable career path.
Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Coaching Packages	Spouse Education and Career Opportunities coaching packages offer specialty consultations with career coaches designed to help military spouses succeed in the job market. Spouses can work one-on-one with SECO career coaches to explore interests, refresh their resumes and jump-start their careers.
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation Hiring Our Heroes	Hiring Our Heroes – a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation – is a nationwide initiative to help veterans, transitioning service members and military spouses find meaningful employment opportunities. Throughout the year, Hiring Our Heroes hosts exclusive military spouse hiring fairs and transition summits in hundreds of communities across the United States, focusing on career opportunities for spouses of active-duty, National Guard and reserve service members. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is a Military Spouse Employment Partnership organization. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation is the nonprofit arm of the chamber.

Term	Definition
Military State Policy Source	The Defense-State Liaison Office works to provide state policymakers with expert insight on issues affecting military families and their quality of life. This initiative is part of the Defense Department’s efforts to identify and address the most pressing needs of service members and military families – offering a trusted resource, reliable information and research, knowledge of policies and processes, and assistance with legislation at the state level.
USAJOBS	USAJOBS connects job seekers with federal employment opportunities across the U.S. and around the world. As the federal government’s official employment site, USAJOBS provides resources to help the right people find the right jobs. Spouses can now use the MSEP Job Search to access federal employment opportunities pulled directly from USAJOBS daily.

Program Names

Name	Usage
Spouse Education and Career Opportunities	Spell out the name of the program on first use on each page of multipage articles and in headlines, graphics and social media posts. Use “program” as necessary after the name.
SECO	Use the acronym on the second and subsequent uses of the program name. The acronym may be used in social media posts, such as headlines and Twitter posts, and subject lines, where character counts are limited.
Defense Department Spouse Education and Career Opportunities	Use in initial descriptions of the program and in footer content when addressing non-DOD audiences. Use “program” as necessary after the name. Spell out “Defense Department” on first usage and abbreviate with subsequent uses.
Defense Department Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Team	Spell out the name of the program and use “Team” when signing off/in closing on correspondence to military spouses, for example, an eBlast.

Name	Usage
Military Spouse Employment Partnership	Spell out the name of the program on first use on each page of multipage articles and in headlines, graphics and social media posts.
MSEP	Use the acronym on the second and subsequent uses of the program name.
Use of the program name by audience	<p>Audience: Military spouses (Suggestions clarify the makeup of the partnership — companies and organizations, as well as potential employers for military spouses.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military Spouse Employment Partnership companies and organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Military Spouse Employment Partnership companies and organizations have committed to recruiting, hiring, promoting and retaining military spouses.</i> • Partner employer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Military spouse working for a partner employer</i> • Military Spouse Employment Partnership employers <p>Audience: Companies and organizations of the Military Spouse Employment Partnership (Suggestions emphasize the makeup of the partnership and create naming conventions that provide clarity without redundancy.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military Spouse Employment Partnership companies and organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Military Spouse Employment Partnership companies and organizations have committed to recruiting, hiring, promoting and retaining military spouses.</i> • Partnership companies and organizations — to avoid redundancy like <i>Military Spouse Employment Partnership partners</i> • The partnership — to replace MSEP partners

Name	Usage
My Career Advancement Account Scholarship	Spell out the name of the program in articles, headlines, graphics and social media posts. The acronym “MyCAA” may be used on a limited basis in Twitter posts and subject lines due to character count restrictions.
Use of the program name by audience	<p>When referencing this program, make sure to identify the audience being addressed and use the correct name consistently. A single collateral may reference multiple audiences depending on the content included in the document.</p> <p>Audience: Spouses Referencing the tuition assistance eligible spouses may receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Find out how the My Career Advancement Account Scholarship can help you get the education you need for a portable career.</i> • <i>Eligible military spouses are encouraged to use the My Career Advancement Account Scholarship to assist them in paying for their continuing education.</i> • <i>The My Career Advancement Account Scholarship covers tuition costs only.</i> <p>Referencing the account a spouse must have to start the process to receive tuition assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Register for a My Career Advancement Account — Log on to the My Career Advancement Account Scholarship Spouse Portal.</i> <p>Audience: Schools Referencing the tuition assistance that spouses will use to obtain a degree, license or certificate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>School’s education and training programs will provide My Career Advancement Account Scholarship spouses with a certificate or associate degree (excluding</i>

Name	Usage
	<p><i>general studies and liberal arts), which will assist spouses with obtaining careers in their field of choice.</i></p> <p>Referencing the school approval process and the tuition assistance spouses may use at an approved school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Instructions to complete this process and request proper permissions are sent to all who attend My Career Advancement Account Scholarship orientation. Until an account is created, spouses using the My Career Advancement Account Scholarship will not be able to select the school.</i> <p>Referencing the account a spouse must have to receive tuition assistance and store school information about the scholarship funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Schools are not authorized to add or change a spouse’s account in the My Career Advancement Account Spouse Portal.</i> • <i>The Education, Training and Licensing team is able to search for students by My Career Advancement Account ID number, last name or email address.</i>
<p>Summary of usage</p>	<p>Summary</p> <p>For spouse references:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Career Advancement Account Scholarship: Tuition assistance • My Career Advancement Account: The account a spouse must have to begin the scholarship process • My Career Advancement Account Scholarship Spouse Portal: Where a spouse begins the scholarship process and stores scholarship information <p>For school references:</p>

Name	Usage
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="607 281 1382 352">• My Career Advancement Account: Program name used when referring to a spouse’s account<li data-bbox="607 401 1292 472">• My Career Advancement Account Scholarship: Tuition assistance for military spouses<li data-bbox="607 520 1398 592">• Academic Institution Portal or AI Portal: Where schools submit invoices and program completion information