



Key Message

By including members of the military community, states can ensure that unique operational requirements and military family priorities are considered across pertinent policy areas.

Analysis

State boards and councils can be mandated by executive order of the Governor or by state law. These boards and councils represent installations and their communities, which include military families. States have enacted changes to the composition of their relevant boards and councils to ensure that installation mission readiness and family readiness concerns are considered.

Best Practices

Candidates for military representatives could be professionals in the board or council's focus area who work for the National Guard, perform research on the military, are recognized authorities in the military community, or who have direct, lived experiences as military spouses.

Three examples of ways for states to meet this policy priority are:

- Include military-connected representation on applicable state boards and councils.
- Include military-connected representation on a newly created or existing statewide defense-focused board that serves as a resource for state policymakers; and/or
- Allocate existing resources and/or staff as a military family liaison or adviser to such boards, councils and policymakers (states and state agencies may designate a staff member who has military cultural competence as a liaison or adviser).

1. Include members of the military community on state boards and councils.

EXAMPLE:

Washington House Bill 1009 (2023)

<https://legiscan.com/WA/bill/HB1009/2023>

Military Spouses – professional licensing and employment

Revised Code of Washington, 18.340, Section 5

“(1) Each authority must identify a contact or coordinator within the authority to assist military spouse applicants and licensees.

(2) Each authority must provide training to each board or commission member on the culture of military spouses, the military spouse experience, and issues related to military spouse career paths. Board or



commission members appointed on or before October 1, 2023, must complete the training by January 1, 2024. Board or commission members appointed after October 1, 2023, must complete the training within 90 days after appointment. The department of veterans affairs shall create an internet-based training that may be used by 1 each authority to satisfy this requirement.

(3) Each authority is encouraged to:

(a) Appoint a military spouse to serve on its licensing board or commission;

(b) Conduct a review of the authority's licensing application process for military spouses and identify barriers to military spouse employment; and

(c) Review licensing fees and related expenses and identify possible ways to reduce costs for military spouses."

2. Include military-connected representation on a statewide defense-focused board that serves as a resource for state policymakers.

EXAMPLE:

Illinois Senate Bill 2844

<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/fulltext.asp?DocName=002028050K15>

20 Illinois Compiled Statutes 2805/15

"Sec. 15. Veterans advisory council.

(a) A veterans advisory council shall be established in the State of Illinois. The council shall consist of at least 21 members as follows:

(1) Four members of the General Assembly, appointed one each by the President of the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, preferably from a legislative or representative district in which a State-operated veterans home is located.

(2) Six veterans appointed by the Director of Veterans' Affairs.

(3) One veteran appointed by the commander or president of each veterans service organization that is chartered by the federal government and by the State of Illinois and elects to appoint a member.

(4) One person appointed by the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard.

(5) One person appointed by the Illinois Attorney General.

(6) One person appointed by the Illinois Secretary of State.

(7) One person appointed by the Director of the Illinois Department of Employment Security.



(8) One person appointed by each military family organization that is chartered by the federal government.

No member of the council shall be an employee or representative of the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Members of the council shall serve without compensation or reimbursement.

(b) At the initial meeting of the council, the members shall elect from among themselves a chairman. The members shall draw lots to determine the length of their terms so that 9 members have terms that expire on July 1, 2005 and the remaining members have terms that expire on July 1, 2006. Thereafter, all members of the council shall be appointed for terms of 2 years.

The appointing authority may at any time make an appointment to fill a vacancy for the unexpired term of a member.

(c) The council shall meet quarterly or at the call of the chairman or at the call of the Director of Veterans' Affairs or the Governor. The Department shall provide meeting space and clerical and administrative support services for the council.

(c-5) The council shall investigate the re-entry process for service members who return to civilian life after being engaged in an active theater. The investigation shall include the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder, homelessness, disabilities, and other issues the council finds relevant to the re-entry process. By July 1, 2018 and by July 1 of each year thereafter, the council shall present an annual report of its findings to the Governor, the Attorney General, the Director of Veterans' Affairs, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Secretary of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The council's investigation and annual report responsibilities of this subsection shall be a continuation of the investigation and annual report responsibilities of the Illinois Discharged Servicemembers Task Force created under Section 20 of this Act.

(d) The council has the power to do the following:

(1) Advise the Department of Veterans' Affairs with respect to the fulfillment of its statutory duties.

(2) Review and study the issues and concerns that are most significant to Illinois veterans and advise the Department on those issues and concerns.

(3) Receive a report from the Director of Veterans' Affairs or the Director's designee at each meeting with respect to the general activities of the Department.

(4) Report to the Governor and the General Assembly annually describing the issues addressed and the actions taken by the council during the year as well as any recommendations for future action.

(e) The council established under this Section replaces any Illinois Veterans Advisory Council established under Executive Order No. 3 (1982)."



3. Allocate existing resources and/or staff as a military family liaison or adviser to such boards, councils and policymakers.

EXAMPLE:

Virginia Senate Bill 1150 (2021)

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/2.2-2002.2/>

Military Spouse Liaison; position created; duties; report.

Code of Virginia 2.2-2002.2

"A. There is created in the Department of Veterans Services the position of Military Spouse Liaison to conduct outreach and advocate on behalf of military spouses in the Commonwealth.

B. The Military Spouse Liaison shall:

1. Provide assistance and information to military spouses seeking professional licenses and credentials or other employment in the Commonwealth;
2. Coordinate research on issues facing military spouses and create informational materials to assist military spouses and their families;
3. Examine barriers and provide recommendations to assist military spouses in accessing high-quality child care and developing resources in coordination with military installations and the Department of Education to increase access to high-quality child care for military families;
4. Develop, in coordination with the Virginia Employment Commission and employers, a common form for military spouses to complete, highlighting specific skills, education, and training to help military spouses quickly find meaningful employment in relevant economic sectors; and
5. Perform any other duties or responsibilities assigned by the Commissioner.

C. The Military Spouse Liaison shall submit an annual report, including any legislative recommendations, through the Commissioner to the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, the Governor, and the General Assembly on or before December 1 of each year and other reports to the Commissioner as required by the Commissioner."