

MILITARY SPOUSE CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Visit www.dva.wa.gov/militaryspousetraining for this presentation deck with links to resources and sources.

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WHAT WE'LL COVER

- The culture of military spouses
- The military spouse experience
- Issues related to military spouse career paths



SUPPORTING MILITARY SPOUSES IN WASHINGTON

- On May 13, 2019, Governor Jay Inslee signed [Executive Order 19-01](#) outlining **Washington State Veteran and Military Family Transition and Readiness Support (established in 2013)**.
- In 2019, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs and Employment Security Department held a series of **Listening Sessions** with military spouses at each of Washington's major military installations.
- The Washington State Legislature passed [SB 6626](#) during the 2020 legislative session, creating the **Military Spouse Liaison** position ([RCW 43.60A.240](#)) and making Washington the first state in the nation with this position.
- The Washington State Legislature passed [HB 1009](#), the **Military Spouse Employment Act**, during the 2023 legislative session.

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MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS

All military spouses are female.

All military spouses are stay-at-home parents.

Military spouses don't need to work; the military takes care of everything.

Military spouses move too much to get hired.

Child care, housing, and food are free for military families.

All military families live on base.

Military pay is so high that military spouses don't need to work.



Some items from this list were compiled from the article [“4 Crazy Myths About Military Spouse Employees”](#), Military Times.

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MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER DEFINITIONS

Source: [Active Duty vs. Reserve or National Guard \(va.gov\)](#), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

- **Active Duty:** Armed forces service member who works in the military full-time, not including training duty. Active-duty members include all service branches: **Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard**. Programs limited to Department of Defense Service Branches do not generally include the Coast Guard which falls under the Department of Homeland Security.
- **National Guard:** The **Army National Guard and the Air National Guard** are not generally full-time but drill weekends and two weeks per year; Can be activated and serve in an active-duty status, also can deploy overseas and see combat. Type of activation impacts benefits.
- **Reserve:** The **Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard each have a Reserve component**, and the Reserve are under the command of their respective military branch. Their presence can be called upon to serve either stateside or overseas. Members of the Reserve are generally required to participate in training drills one weekend a month and two weeks per year and can be activated to either stateside or overseas full-time active duty.

“The last decade of war has affected the relationship between our society and the military. As a nation, we’ve learned to separate the warrior from the war. But we still have much to learn about how to connect the warrior to the citizen...We can’t allow a sense of separation to grow between us,”

General Martin Dempsey, Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013



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VETERAN AND RETIREE DEFINITIONS

Sources: [Definition of Veteran](#), University of Washington and [“U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: Who Is A Veteran?”](#), Congressional Research Service, Nov 2022.

Veteran:

- Merriam-Webster: A former member of the armed forces
- United States Veterans Administration (VA): Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations defines a Veteran as “a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.”

Military Retiree:

- Generally refers to a Veteran who served at least 20 years and was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and is eligible for military retirement benefits, including military ID and retirement pay. Requirements differ slightly for Reservists and members of the National Guard. Service members may be medically retired.

Disabled Veteran:

A “Disabled Veteran” is a Veteran of the military who is entitled to compensation because of a service-connected disability under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. A service-connected disability is a disability, disease, or injury incurred or aggravated during active military service.

- Disabilities are rated in percentages: 0-100%.
- Important to remember that not all wounds are visible.
- Many Disabled Veterans continue to work.
- A Disabled Veteran is not necessarily a Combat Veteran.
- A Veteran may have a disability that is not service-connected.



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MILITARY SPOUSE DEFINITIONS

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Military Spouse:

There is not one formal definition of “military spouse”. Various programs, agencies, and organizations may define a military spouse differently. Program eligibility may be impacted if a spouse remarries following divorce from or death of the service member. Generally, a program’s definition of a military spouse is based on the military status of the service member or Veteran.

- Active-Duty Spouse
- National Guard Spouse
- Reservist Spouse
- Veteran Spouse
- Retiree Spouse
- Caregiver Spouse
- Spouse of a Disabled Veteran (may have percentage requirements)
- Gold Star Spouse: spouse whose service member died while serving
- Surviving Spouse: spouse of a Veteran at the time of the Veteran’s death
- A person who was married to someone during their military service

Office of Financial Management

defines military spouse as a **“military spouse or registered domestic partner of a military service member during the service member’s time of active, reserve, or National Guard duty”** for tracking of state employees.

Washington State House Bill 1009, the Military Spouse Employment Act,

defines military spouse as someone **“whose spouse is the subject of a military transfer to Washington”** for expedited professional licensure.

HB 1009 defines military spouse as **“any person married or previously married to a military service member, irrespective of the length of the marriage, during the military service member’s service in any branch of the United States armed forces as an active-duty service member, reservist, or national guard member”** for purposes of a demonstration campaign to increase military spouse employment.

WASHINGTON STATE MILITARY SPOUSE POPULATION

Veterans in Washington State

- 533,346 Veterans*
- 318,941 Veteran Spouses** (estimated)

Active-Duty Military in Washington State

- 65,325 Active-Duty Service Members***
- 30,206 Active-Duty Spouses***

Reserve & National Guard in Washington State

- 17,565 Reserve/National Guard Members***
- 9,304 Reserve and National Guard Spouses***

*[Veteran Population](#), National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, as of September 2022

**[Veterans By the Numbers - National Conference of State Legislatures \(ncsl.org\)](#) (59.8% marriage rate generated for spouse data).

***DoD Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard data from <https://demographics.militaryonesource.mil/>, plus 1,554 Coast Guard reported in the DMDC Website Location Report for March 2023 [DMDC Web \(osd.mil\)](#), Spouse data from <https://demographics.militaryonesource.mil/>, applied 52.6% marriage rate from DoD to Coast Guard data to generate spouse estimate of 817.

MILITARY BASES IN WASHINGTON

There are five major Active-Duty military installations in Washington:

- **Fairchild Air Force Base**
(Spokane)
- **Joint Base Lewis-McChord**
(Lakewood – Air Force/Army)
- **Naval Air Station Whidbey Island**
(Oak Harbor)
- **Naval Base Kitsap**
(Bremerton)
- **Naval Station Everett**
(Everett)

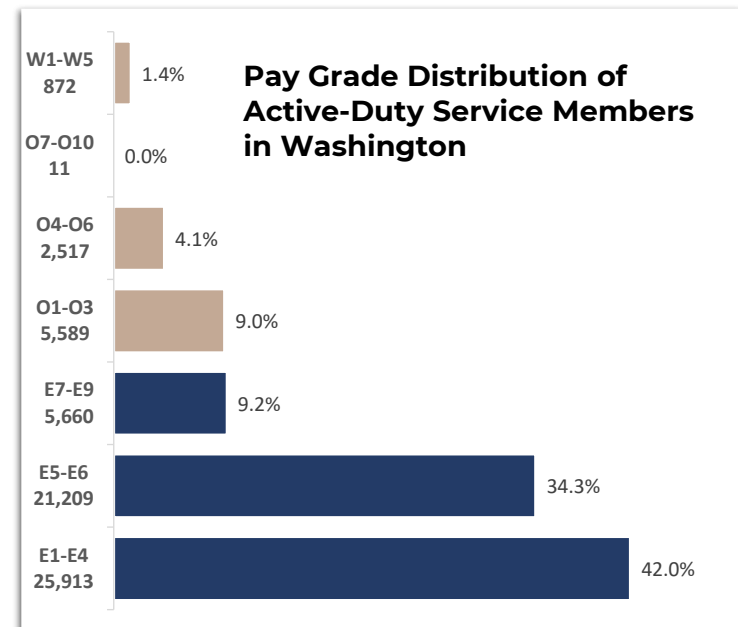
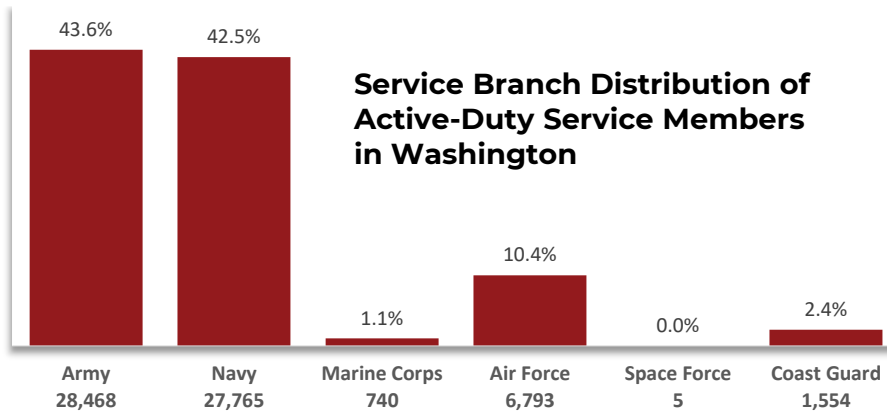


Coast Guard Base Seattle oversees the Coast Guard presence across Washington. There are training centers and other military facilities across the state as well as National Guard drill centers and armories, including Camp Murray in Lakewood.

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Army and Navy comprise **86.1%** of the active-duty population in Washington with nearly identical populations.

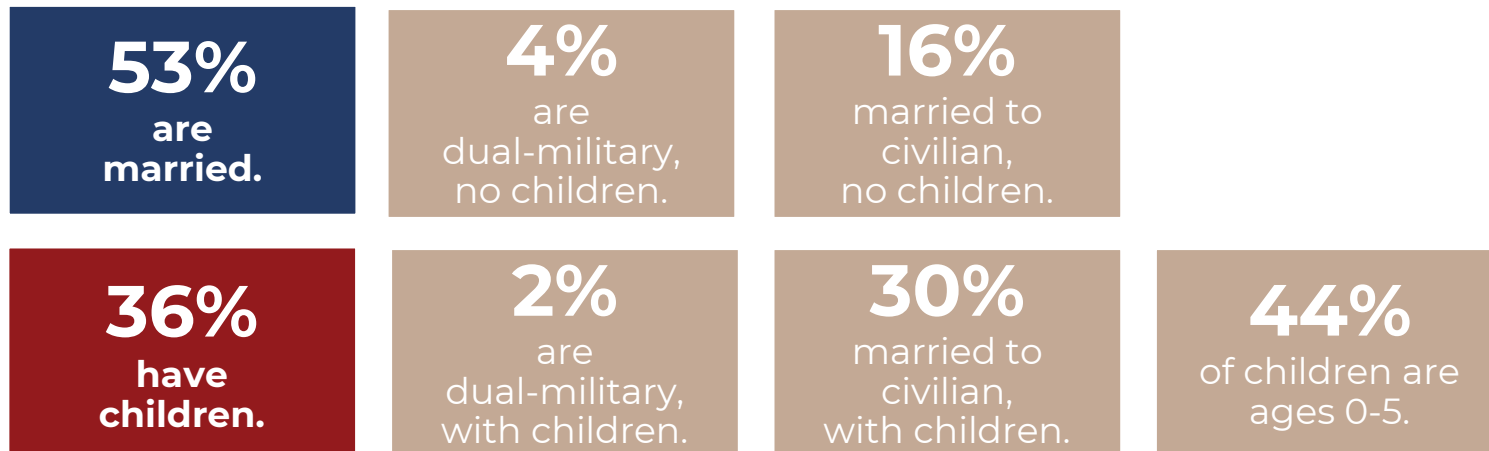
Enlisted service members comprise **85.5%** of the active-duty population in Washington with **E1-E4** the largest group.



DoD data from <https://demographics.militaryonesource.mil/>, plus 1,554 Coast Guard reported in the DMDC Website Location Report for March 2023 [DMDC Web \(osd.mil\)](https://dmdc.web.osd.mil/). Pay Grade Distribution does not include Coast Guard data.

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OF THE **61,771** ACTIVE-DUTY* SERVICE MEMBERS IN WASHINGTON



*Department of Defense active-duty service members, data from <https://demographics.militaryonesource.mil/>, does not include Coast Guard.

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WASHINGTON'S **29,389** ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY SPOUSES

92% are
women.

74% are
35 years
or younger.

50% are
employed in the
civilian labor force.

21% are
unemployed and
seeking civilian work.

84% have
some college
education.

34% of
employed military
spouses work in jobs
that require licenses.

Sources: Department of Defense active-duty service members, data from <https://demographics.militaryonesource.mil/> (Data above do not include Coast Guard.) and [The Military Spouse At a Glance](#), 2021 Department of Defense Survey of Active-Duty Spouses

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QUALITY OF LIFE

- Nearly 63% of military and Veteran family respondents would **recommend military life** to someone considering it.
- “A greater proportion of active-duty family respondents who had **used civilian resources** in the 12 months prior to survey fielding reported feeling a sense of belonging to their civilian community compared to their peers who had not used any civilian resources.” – *Blue Star Families*
- 86% of military and Veteran family respondents reported **moderate or excellent family health**. Family health is measured in six key areas of family well-being: health care, family relationships, financial readiness, housing, food insecurity, recommending military life.
 - Ratings of poor family health increase for enlisted ranks.
 - Post-9/11 Veteran families report poor family health at a higher frequency than post-9/11 retiree families.

Sources: [Military Family Support Programming Survey 2021 Results](#) and [Support Needs of Post-9/11 Veterans, Retirees, and Families](#), Military Family Advisory Network; [Military Family Lifestyle Survey 2022 Comprehensive Report](#), Blue Star Families, page 28.

WOULD Recommend



Element of public service, protecting the country, pride & respect



Job security and financial stability



General and retirement benefits



Healthcare and housing support



Travel and work in different countries



Friendships and lifelong camaraderie

Source: [Military Family Support Programming Survey 2021 Results](#), Military Family Advisory Network, page 60.

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Top Military Family Issues

	Active-Duty Spouses (n=3,173)	Active-Duty Service Members (n=466)	Veteran Spouses (n=889)	Veterans (n=2,433)	National Guard Families (n=285)	Reserve Families (n=212)
Spouse employment	50%	33%	30%	12%	19%	26%
Time away from family	45%	42%	29%	32%	48%	42%
BAH/Off-base housing concerns	40%	38%	10%	8%	10%	16%
Military pay	40%	44%	25%	33%	38%	28%
Relocation/PCS issues	37%	34%	14%	14%	7%	15%
Impact of deployment on family	28%	22%	30%	29%	46%	40%
Concerns about transition from military to civilian life	20%	25%	33%	29%	20%	17%
Access to military/VA health care system(s)	19%	26%	46%	45%	31%	32%
Military benefits	12%	21%	27%	26%	24%	27%

Blue Star Families' Military Lifestyle Survey, published in 2023, noted the Top Military Family Issues for various military family categories.

Spouse employment, time away from family, BAH/Off-base housing concerns, Military pay, and Relocation/PCS issues ranked as top five issues for active-duty military families.



Source: [Military Family Lifestyle Survey 2022 Comprehensive Report](#), Blue Star Families, page 11.

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FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

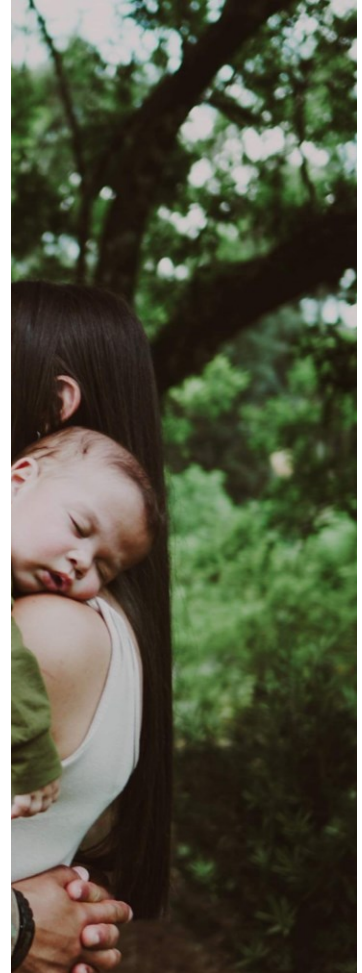
Military family relationships are impacted by the military lifestyle.

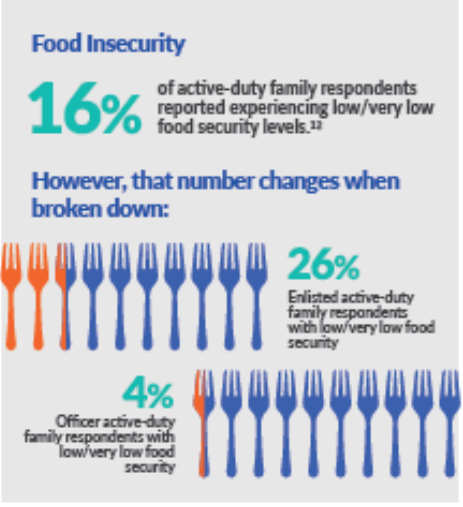
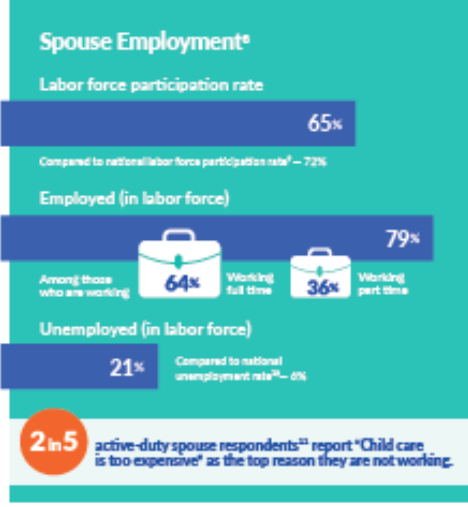
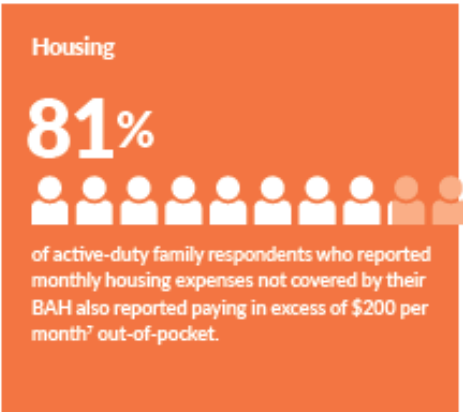
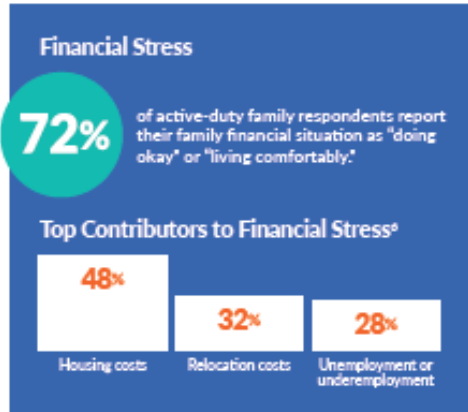
- Loneliness
- Military Lifestyle and Frequent Moves
- Distance from Extended Family

[Military Family Support Programming Survey 2021 Results](#), Military Family Advisory Network

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Top Military Family Issues, including Housing and Child Care, are closely connected to Financial Stress and Food Insecurity.

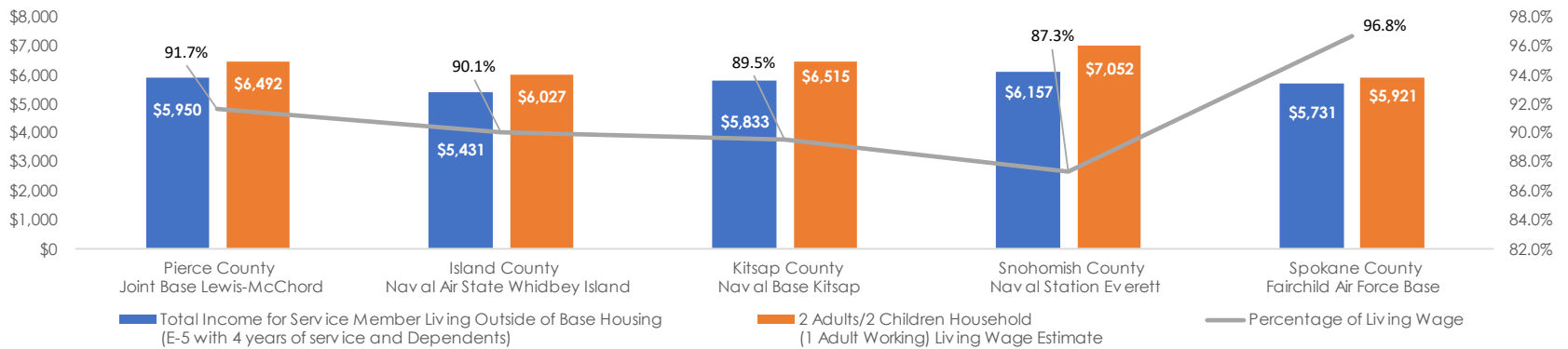


Sources: [Military Family Lifestyle Survey 2022 Comprehensive Infographic](#), Blue Star Families, page 2 and [Military Family Support Programming Survey 2021 Results](#), Military Family Advisory Network (Washington data)

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Most military families with two or more children require a second income (generally from a working military spouse) to have financial stability in Washington.

**Active Duty E-5 Household Income as a Percentage of Living Wage*
Two Parent Household with Civilian Spouse Who Is Not Working, Representing an Estimated 2,304 Households in WA**



Source: [Supporting the Child Care Needs of Military Families in Washington](#), 2023, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs

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MILITARY SPOUSES IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND WORKFORCE

- **CIVICALLY ENGAGED** - 71% of military families volunteer (83% of them in civilian communities).
- **RESILIENT** – Military spouses show resiliency as they face and overcome challenges, including separation from friends/family, frequent relocations, and finding employment. In fact, spouses report better coping than civilians.
- **ADAPTABLE** – Military spouses manage the uncertainty of military family life through deployments, moves, and healthcare, education, housing, employment, and child care changes connected to each relocation.
- **ENTREPRENEURIAL** - 11% of employed military spouses are primarily self-employed.
- **EDUCATED** 84% of military spouses have some college education (18% an advanced degree, 31% a bachelor's degree, 13% an associates degree, and 22% have some college with no degree) while 6% have a vocational or technical diploma.

Source: "The Force Behind the Force, A Business Case for Leveraging Military Spouse Talent", Syracuse University Institute for Veterans and Military Families, July 2016.



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Source: "The Force Behind the Force, A Business Case for Leveraging Military Spouse Talent", Syracuse University Institute for Veterans and Military Families, July 2016.

MILITARY SPOUSES IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND WORKFORCE

- **RESOURCEFUL** – Military spouses use resources available to them as well as create innovative solutions to problems to overcome obstacles.
- **DIVERSE** – There is a larger proportion of ethnic and racial minorities in the military spouse community compared to the civilian population. Many have lived/worked overseas and speak foreign languages.
- **TEAM-ORIENTED** – Separation from family, friends, and familiar resources often leads military spouses to utilize teamwork for networking and support.
- **MULTI-TASKERS** – Military spouses report high confidence levels in their ability to handle problems. They frequently play multiple roles, juggle many responsibilities, and face change without notice.
- **SOCIALLY AWARE** – Living in a variety of locations helps military spouses have high levels of cultural sensitivity and experience engaging in a variety of social situations.
- **WORKFORCE OF IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS** – Many military spouses work in professions that have workforce hiring needs, including healthcare, teaching, and child care.

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FINANCIAL SECURITY

- Military families spend an average of **\$1,913 in out-of-pocket expenses** when they move for PCS orders.
- Families with **working military spouses who contribute less than 50%** to household income had increased odds of food insecurity.
- “*Military families’ financial well-being lags behind civilian peers*” according to Blue Star Families.
- 58% of active-duty military spouses who have access to employer-sponsored retirement plans indicate their **employer matching contributions rarely or never vest** due to frequent military moves and not being with an employer long enough to qualify.
- **Low financial wellbeing** and/or financial stress for military families increased due to:
 - Housing costs (according to Blue Star Families)
 - Spouse unemployment
 - Geo-batching (living separately from service member)
 - Spouses needing to acquire new credentials after last PCS move
 - PCS moves during member’s career (ADSS Survey) and Relocation costs (Blue Star Families)

Sources: [2021 Active-Duty Spouse Survey \(ADSS\)](#), 2023, Office of People Analytics;
[Military Family Lifestyle Survey 2022 Comprehensive Report](#), Blue Star Families, page 16, 71;
[The Hidden Financial Costs of Military Spouse Unemployment](#), Hiring Our Heroes, September 14, 2022.



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Life/Work are strongly connected for the service member, which impacts the family.



The military determines where a military family lives.



The military lifestyle requires frequent moves (usually every 2-3 years), 14% more than civilians.



Between one-third and half of active-duty military families live on base.



Prolonged and multiple deployments have significant impacts.



Lack of child care has far-reaching impacts, particularly on employment and financial security.



Financial insecurity/basic needs security are significant stressors.



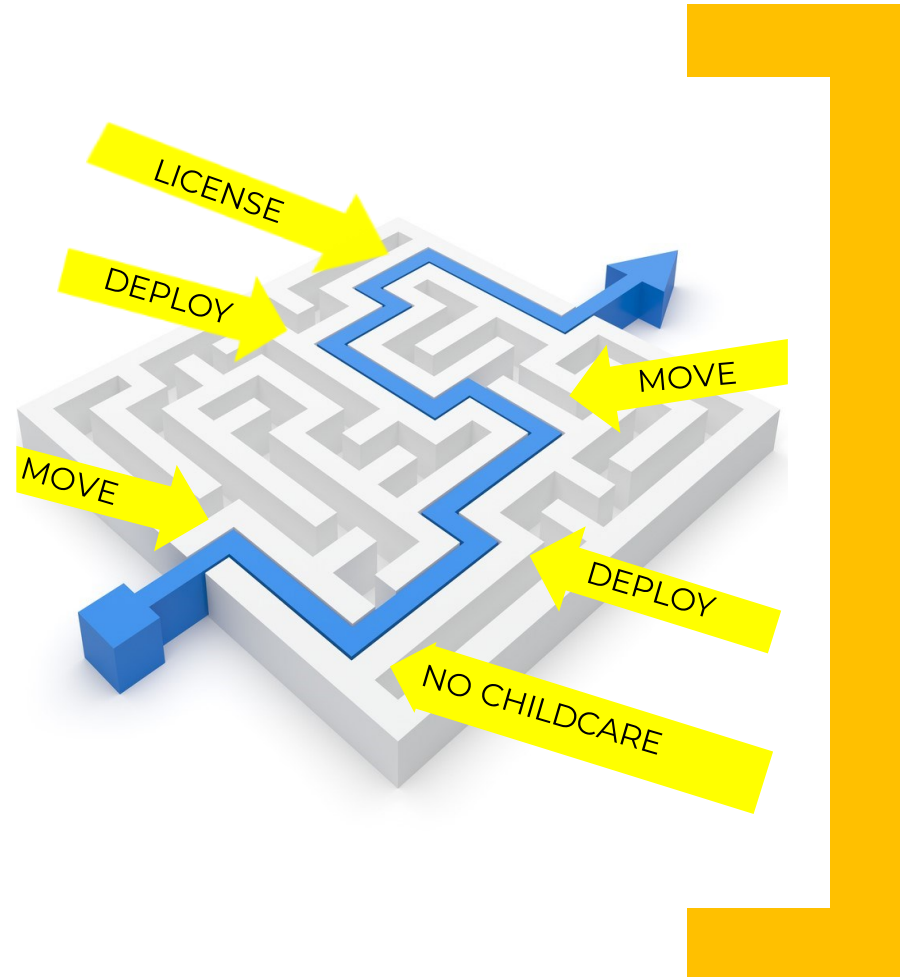
Some military families don't live with their service member sponsor for reasons that may include, spouse employment, housing, and cost of living.



Military spouses are highly educated –
84% have some college, 25% have a bachelor's degree, and 10% have an advanced degree.

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The reality of a **MILITARY SPOUSE** career path



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PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE

- The **Washington State Military Spouse Professional Credential/Licensure Portability Workgroup** meets six times per year to collaborate on best practices, communication, and policy/legislation implementation.
- WDVA is coordinating **collaborative efforts between state licensing agencies/boards/commissions to implement federal legislation** requiring reciprocity of professional licenses for military spouses.
- **Washington State HB 1009 – Military Spouse Employment Act – passed in April 2023.** Requires temporary and expedited licensure for military spouses in Washington and military spouse cultural competency training for members of licensing boards and commissions. State licensing agencies must also identify a military spouse staff person and create a webpage for military spouse information.
- Active-duty spouse respondents in the **Military Family Advisory Network 2019 Survey reported that transferring professional licenses** is an obstacle (38.3%) and many gave up (34.3%) due to too many hurdles (29.8%) of education requirements needed (15.3%) and exams challenging to complete (12.9%). These issues created delays finding work.



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WASHINGTON STATE MILITARY SPOUSE PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIAL/LICENSE PORTABILITY WORKGROUP

A collaborative effort between Federal, State, Installation, Nonprofit, Corporate Partners and others to address military spouse professional credential/license portability in WA, meets six times per year.

- WA Department of Veterans Affairs
- WA Department of Health
- WA Department of Licensing
- WA Department of Labor & Industries
- WA Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
- WA Employment Security Department
- WA Office of Financial Management
- Installation Leadership and Employment Staff
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Economic Development Organizations
- Higher Education and Vocational Programs
- U.S. Department of Labor



Strategies:

1. Collaborate on informing credential portability legislation.
2. Develop unified information materials. Convene subgroup on marketing credential-related education programs.
3. Promote an “Ask the Question” initiative.
4. Outreach to the major military installations across Washington to potentially include resource/hiring fairs, speakers, and town-hall style conversations.

Washington also has similar workgroups focused on Military Spouse Employment and Child Care.

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LICENSURE REVIEW

Table WA1
Washington Application Processing Times

	Processing time	Temporary/ Provisional	Expedited for military spouses
Accounting	•		▷
Cosmetology			▷
Dental Hygiene			▷
Massage Therapy	•	•	▷
Pharmacy Technician	•	•	▷
Teacher (Education)			▷

Legend	
•	Military spouses can work within 30 days
▲	License processing takes over 30 days
-	Variable processing time
✓	Board approves applications at board meetings
▷	Expedited for military spouses
★	Applicable if spouse has an employment offer
	Data unknown

Note: Temporary/Provisional column is marked when these licenses are issued by a board.

Table WA4
Washington Application Process

	Process was defined	Instructions were clear	Number of steps to complete
Accounting	•	•	4-6
Cosmetology		•	1-3
Dental Hygiene	•	•	4-6
Massage Therapy	•	•	1-3
Pharmacy Technician	•	•	4-6
Teacher (Education)	•	•	4-6

Legend	
•	The board meets the listed criteria
	Data unknown or cannot access the information

Information Accessibility

Figure WA1 illustrates how easily one can locate specific licensing information that pertained to military spouses on examined occupational board websites. See page 38 for information on how this result was determined.

Figure WA1
State-Wide Website Information Accessibility



The Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness released a report on Military Spouse Licensure Portability, an assessment of state processes, in August 2021.

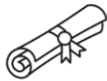
MILITARY SPOUSE LICENSURE BARRIERS



- **Cost** of transferring licenses, including application fees and additional classes/education.
- The military **reimburses** limited costs associated with transferring professional licenses due to military orders, but spouses must complete and file additional paperwork.
- Some spouses **maintain their licenses in states** after they leave without reimbursement.



- Military spouses rely on their **outgoing state to verify documents** and respond in a timely fashion to their incoming state licensing agencies.
- **Documentation requirements** in addition to proof of previous license are burdensome.
- **Official transcripts** from all previously attended schools can be time consuming and costly.



- **Educational, testing, training, and continuing education requirements** can be difficult to obtain during temporary licensure timeframes, particularly for classes that are not offered virtually for spouses connected to some military installations or are only offered occasionally.
- Some first-issue professional licenses require **education to be completed in the license-issuing state**, making obtaining a first license in some fields difficult for military spouses.
- Military spouses face issues receiving a first-issue license that requires **in-field hours** when classwork was completed at an institution in another state.



- **Navigating licensing regulations and website information** across states and understanding different names of licenses and policies can be complex and time consuming.
- **Delays in background checks** can lengthen the time to receive a license.
- Sometimes, military orders may not be long enough to **justify the time** it will take to get licensed in a state.



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MILITARY SPOUSE LICENSE ISSUANCE

Washington State Department of Health
Fiscal Year 2022

1,705 credentials issued to military spouses (increased from 1,520 in 2021)

8.5 average days for Routine Applications.

Pharmacy Assistant, Dental Assistant, Licensed Practical Nurse, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Licensed Practical Nurse, Registered Nurse, Nursing Assistant, Medical Assistant comprise 65% of all credentials.

Washington State Department of Licensing
11/1/21 to 10/31/22

281 licenses issued to military spouses (increased from 240 in 2021)

Average number of days to license was 21.5 days.

Notary Public and Cosmetology comprise 63% of all licenses.

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE COMPACTS IN WASHINGTON STATE

Washington State has joined 7 of 14 Licensing Compacts,
placing in the top 13 of all states.

**Audiology/
Speech-Language
Pathology
Interstate
Compact (2023)**

**Dental and
Dental Hygienist
Compact
(2023)**

**Licensed
Professional
Counseling
Compact
(2023)**

**Nurse
Licensure
Compact
(2023)**

**Occupational
Therapy
Licensure
Compact
(2022)**

**Physical
Therapy
Licensure
Compact (2017)**

**Psychology
Interjurisdictional
Compact
(2022)**

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MILITARY SPOUSE UNEMPLOYMENT & JOB SEARCH

Sources: [2021 Active-Duty Spouse Survey \(ADSS\)](#), 2023, Office of People Analytics; [Military Family Support Programming Survey 2021 Results](#), Military Family Advisory Network

UNEMPLOYMENT

- Since 2015, no significant change in the unemployment rate for military spouses (approximately 21%) – estimated 3-4x higher than the civilian unemployment rate.
- Relationship between military spouse unemployment and child care unavailability, military moves, and service member job duties.

LOOKING FOR WORK FOLLOWING A PCS MOVE

- Unemployed spouses had been looking for work for an average of 19 weeks.
- Just over half of spouses who experienced a PCS move and found employment were employed at 4 months; Nearly half took longer than 4 months.
- 31% of military spouse had to acquire a new professional credential to work

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MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

CAREER FIELDS

- 62% of employed spouses are employed within their area of education or training.
- 51% of employed spouses work for private companies, 27% for the government, 12% are self-employed, 8% for nonprofits.

JOB FLEXIBILITY

- Employment flexibility, including self-employment, remote work, schedule, location, and part-time options are important for military spouses.
- Of employed active-duty spouses, 64% work full-time and 36% work part-time.
- 65% of employed active-duty spouses have flexible scheduling and 40% of their employers offer remote work.

Sources: [2021 Active-Duty Spouse Survey \(ADSS\)](#), 2023, Office of People Analytics; [Military Family Support Programming Survey 2021 Results](#), Military Family Advisory Network

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MILITARY SPOUSE UNDER-EMPLOYMENT



UNDER-EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS PENALTIES

- Military spouses face underemployment (where they are overqualified, underpaid, or under-utilized in their current position) and employment mismatched with their field-of-study relative to their non-military-connected civilian counterparts.
- Lifetime earning potential for military spouses is reduced for military spouses due to high unemployment and underemployment as well as reduced job-related benefits (career development opportunities, vesting of retirement funds, promotions/bonuses, vacation/sick leave).
- Military spouses have an average \$3,100 reduction in earnings in years they move.
- There is a 26% wage gap between employed military spouses and their civilian counterparts, earning on average \$12,000 per year less and \$190,000 less over a 20-year career.

Sources: “[Military Spouse Employment](#)”, Congressional Research Service, August 27, 2020; [Military Spouse Employment Policies](#). National Conference of State Legislatures, Updated February 1, 2021, [Professional Military Spouse Data](#), Military Spouse Chamber of Commerce

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MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS AND REASONS FOR NOT WORKING



- Preparation and recovery time connected to military moves
- Lack support system and/or network
- Service member's unpredictable work schedule



- Parenting responsibilities
- Availability of child care
- Cost of child care



- Gaps in employment
- Career re-start with every move
- Licensure transferability



- Overqualified or underqualified for available jobs
- Earning potential is too low
- Lack of job portability



- Employers lack awareness of military spouse culture/resumes
- Underestimate skills/accomplishments
- Bias against hiring military spouses

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INCLUSIVE TERMS

SERVICE MEMBER is inclusive of the following:

Air Force – Airman
Army – Soldier
Coast Guard – Coast Guardsman
Marine Corps – Marine
Navy – Sailor
Space Force – Guardian

MILITARY SPOUSE

includes all military spouses vs. the term “wife” which excludes the male spouse community.

ELIGIBILITY DEFINITIONS & REQUIREMENTS

Critical to understand eligibility requirements for your programs and those you refer to as your definitions are not necessarily how others perceive themselves – and how different programs define the same population.

Your program eligibility requirements may not be the same as another program or service.

- ❖ Be very clear who is eligible for programs serving the military-connected community: Veterans, Active Duty, National Guard, Reservists, Spouses, Family Members?
- ❖ What is needed (if anything) to verify eligibility?

PROGRAM DESIGN AND ACCESS

- Veterans and military spouses may be included under the same programs but often have **different needs and engagement styles**.
- Many military spouses will not find the appropriate resource if it means they need to click on terms like Veteran, Service Member, or Military to get there. Consider **Military-Connected, Military/Veteran Spouse, or Military Families**.
- Simply adding Military Spouses to the list of people who may attend events or who are eligible for services doesn't **welcome military spouses** to a program.
- Ensure military spouses don't feel like **an afterthought**:
 - ❖ Is the environment military spouse friendly?
 - ❖ Is "Military Spouse/Veteran Spouse" an option for self-identification?
 - ❖ Is "Military Spouse" located near the top of the eligibility checklist or self-identifiers?
 - ❖ Did a military spouse vet the content and participate in planning?
- When you ask military spouses to disclose their **military affiliation**, are the options you offer suitable for your program?
 - ❖ Gold Star Spouses
 - ❖ Reserve/Guard Spouses
 - ❖ Veteran Spouses
 - ❖ Military Spouses

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HOW CAN YOU HELP?

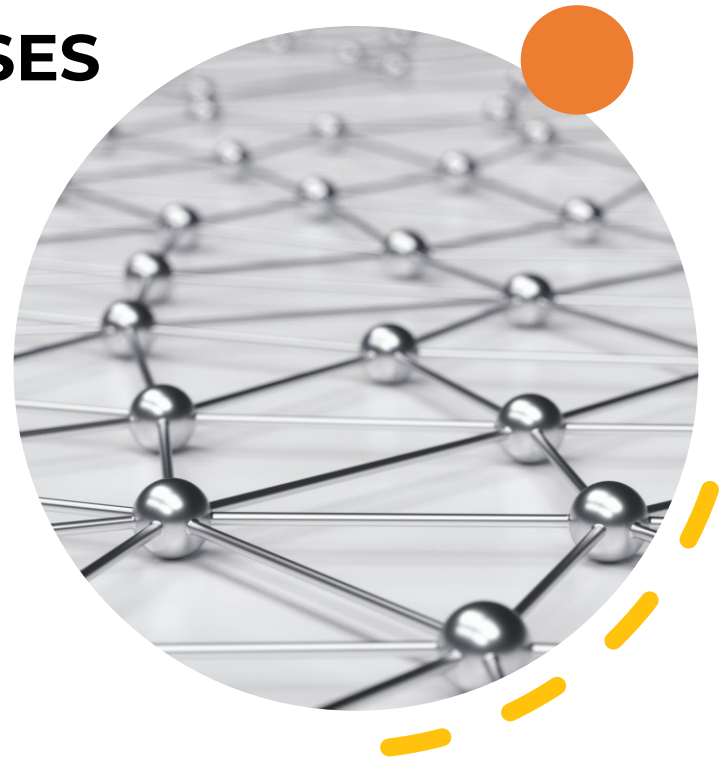
- Remember that military spouses serve with their service member.
- Veteran spouses have been impacted by military service.
- Seek out resources for cultural awareness of the community.
- Are military spouses seated at tables where decisions are being made?
- Ask the Question: *Did you serve in the military or are you part of a military family?*
- Use inclusive references to service members and their families.
e.g. service member vs. soldier; military spouse vs. military wife
- Participate in community events that support the military family community.
- Use military spouse-friendly language on websites and marketing materials.

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RESOURCES TO LEARN ABOUT MILITARY SPOUSES

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs	Military OneSource	MilLife Learning
Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness	YesVets	OneOp
PsychArmor	Military Child Education Coalition	Blue Star Families
American Corporate Partners	Military Spouse Employment Partnership	Hiring Our Heroes
Department of Labor	Institute for Veterans & Military Families	National Military Family Association



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Questions?

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Presentation Slides

The slides from this presentation with resource links
may be found at
www.dva.wa.gov/militaryspousetraining

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Survey & Participation Confirmation

Please complete the brief survey at this link to help us improve this training and receive your participation confirmation:

<https://forms.office.com/g/dQvnuHn0tv>

Or visit

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