Leading Practices for Identifying and Supporting Military Spouses

To recruit, hire and provide employment continuity for military spouses at the time of relocation, hundreds of employers have joined the Military Spouse Employment Partnership to share information, strategies and connections. Some of the leading practices used by Military Spouse Employment Partnership companies and organizations to reach their goals are listed below.

Spouse Ambassador Network

The Spouse Ambassador Network is a collection of organizations within the partnership that have established community networks and want to leverage these networks to broaden knowledge about military spouse employment resources.

Military Spouse Employment Partnership employers successfully connect with Spouse Ambassador Network organizations. These organizations are strong advocates for the needs of military families and spouses. They offer job readiness, career coaching and mentoring services for career-minded spouses from all military services and pay grades. Spouse Ambassador Network organizations promote spouse education and training, licensing and credentialing portability, and career advancement opportunities for spouses in portable career fields and occupations. They also promote “hot job” leads through their social media channels and refer spouses to partner employers who are committed to recruiting, hiring, promoting and retaining them. Spouse Ambassador Network organizations are an important bridge to the military spouse community. As a Military Spouse Employment Partnership company or organization, you will want to work with the Spouse Ambassador Network organizations to promote your company and job opportunities.

Spouse Ambassador Network organizations have extensive military spouse communication networks and help Military Spouse Employment Partnership companies and organizations in the following ways:

- Reach directly into the military spouse community to deliver the latest education, career and employment opportunity information
- Provide military spouse employees with career coaching, mentoring services and referrals to time-sensitive job information, helpful career resources and employment support programs
- Refer potential mentors to Spouse Ambassador Network spouse mentoring programs like Military Spouse eMentor Program

Spouse Ambassador Network organizations are listed below:

- Air Force Association
- Association of the United States Army (information sharing and advocacy)
- Blue Star Families (Blue Star Networks and Blue Star Job Programs)
★ Easter Seals – Vet Staffing Network
★ Hiring Our Heroes (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation hiring fairs, military spouse business alliance mentoring services and military spouse networking and hiring events)
★ In Gear Career
★ LiftFund
★ Military Officers Association of America (information sharing and job connections)
★ Military Spouse Advocacy Network
★ Military Spouse Corporate Career Network (career services and networking)
★ Military Spouse eMentor Program
★ Military Spouse Foundation (military spouses providing one-on-one mentoring, community discussions and expert forums with a focus on career planning and entrepreneurship)
★ Military Spouse JD Network (network of military spouse legal professionals, mentoring and job connections)
★ Military Spouse of the Year (Military Spouse of the Year award)
★ National Military Family Association (scholarships, information sharing and advocacy)
★ Navy League of the United States
★ The Milspo Project Inc.
★ The Other Side of Service
★ The Rosie Network
★ Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, or TAP
★ United Service Organizations, or USO
★ U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Veterans Business Development

Strategies for reaching out to the military spouse community

Currently, Military Spouse Employment Partnership companies and organizations are using the following strategies to identify military spouses during the recruitment and onboarding processes. These strategies will help partner employers support their military spouse employees and meet their partnership reporting requirements.

Walgreens Co., Member of the Boots Alliance and Volt Workforce Solutions asks the following questions on their job applications in an effort to identify qualified military spouses for recruitment, retention and promotion purposes.

★ Are you a veteran? Disabled veteran? Military spouse? (yes/no)
★ How did you learn about this job opportunity? (One answer option for this question is MSEP.)
★ “Source” check box and “Referred by” check box. One answer option for this question is MSEP.

Volt Workforce Solutions uses a survey tool to identify military spouses in their current workforce. Survey results help the company identify pay, location and job title information, so they can more effectively promote portable, transferable careers.
Dozens of partner employers participate in U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation Hiring Our Heroes hiring fairs, including events that are designed specifically for military spouses. At these special events, partner employers provide resume assistance, interview advice, dress for success tips, one-on-one career consultations and employment tips that tell spouses what partner employers are looking for and how they want spouses to self-identify. The partner employers are also referring military spouses to other partner employers when they do not have suitable open positions.

AT&T Inc. established a Business Exchange for referring talented individuals to industry and MSEP employers.

Strategies for providing employment continuity for military spouse employees

AT&T Inc. established affinity groups and business resource units that facilitate networking among military spouses. These groups are formed around common interests and goals. They support and promote career advancement, mentoring, and business and community service opportunities for group members. They also recognize the contributions members are making to their employer, local communities and national defense.

Apollo Education Group/University of Phoenix offers scholarships for military spouses.

Columbia Southern Education Group offers distance education and on-campus scholarships specifically for military spouses. They encourage their network of higher education partners to do the same. Partner employers can submit financial assistance resources for military spouses to the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Scholarship Finder located at https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/Portal/Content/General/295.

Blackstone Career Institute offers tuition reimbursement as a benefit of employment for military spouses.

Sykes Enterprises Incorporated offers a Talent Sprout Program that provides free training to military spouse employees in an effort to prepare them for the new knowledge economy. Talent Sprout is a fast-track path to upward mobility opportunities.

Navy Exchange Service Command, Army and Air Force Exchange Service and Defense Commissary Agency have long-standing employment continuity programs that help military spouses find and maintain career opportunities at their facilities worldwide. Their goal is to keep high-performing military spouses in their workforce despite the challenges of relocation and deployment.

More and more partner employers believe military spouses are ideal for their virtual business models because modern technologies have made it possible for employees to perform their duties from a variety of geographic locations using flexible work schedules, including work from home. The shift to a virtual workforce is resulting in less recruiting, less training, retention, travel and facilities costs for many employers.

The Military Spouse Employment Partnership companies and organizations with facilities on or near military installations acknowledge the contributions military spouses make to their workforce, their community and national defense during special events, such as career, family and resource fairs. Some make donations (for example, food, beverages, products and free services) to support military command events that welcome troops home from deployment. Others give their military spouse employees the flexibility they need to spend time with their families both before and after deployments.
Some partner employers host special events that recognize and thank their military spouse employees for their ongoing sacrifices and service to the nation. Some events are held on the following days:

- Military Spouse Appreciation Day (celebrated in May on the Friday before Mother’s Day)
- Memorial Day (celebrated on the last Monday of May)
- Veterans Day (November 11)
- National Military Family Appreciation Month (November)

**Strategies for sharing partnership leading practices**

The LinkedIn MSEP Partner Group is an online networking group open only to partner employers (http://linkedin.com/groups/Military-Spouse-Employment-Partnership-MSEP-4445979). New and enduring Military Spouse Employment Partnership employers come together to share partnership leading practices, lessons learned, recruitment strategies, resources, tools and our latest collateral materials. They engage in discussions on hot topics of interest, including the following:

- Social media, LinkedIn 101 and other webinars
- Promoting “hot jobs” on the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities social media platforms
- Participation in military installation events
- Hosting local and regional networking events
- Job fair display table resources and information about resume translations – bridging the gap between military and corporate work experience
- Tips for interviewing a military spouse
- Navigating the Military Spouse Employment Partnership Career Portal
- Portable careers and transferable skills
- Branding your organization as a partner employer and using the partnership logo on your websites and materials
- Keeping valued military spouse employees within your organization at the time of relocation
- Military spouse referrals to industry and partner employers
- Support for military spouses during their service members’ deployments
- Military spouse-nominated employer awards
- New Military Spouse Employment Partnership and Spouse Education and Career Opportunities resources, collateral materials and toolkits
- The partnership account managers’ assistance to partners

**Strategies for staying connected**

The Military Spouse Employment Partnership account manager is your primary point of contact for staying connected to the latest information and support resources needed to leverage the power of the partnership. The account managers are ready to help partner employers reach military spouse recruitment and retention goals. Call 877-940-6737 for support.