



SECO

SPOUSE EDUCATION &
CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Program



Talking Points — Updated March 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the latest information on the military Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program. The SECO program supports the needs of over 1.1 million military spouses throughout their career lifecycle as they relocate with their service member around the world.

Military spouses – a profile



Population

93% of 1.1 million spouses are women

639,332 active-duty military spouses – over half are younger than 31

391,383 National Guard and Reserve Component spouses – over half are older than 36

Employment

85% want or need to work

25% unemployment rate among active-duty spouses

Education

84% have some college

25% have a bachelor's degree

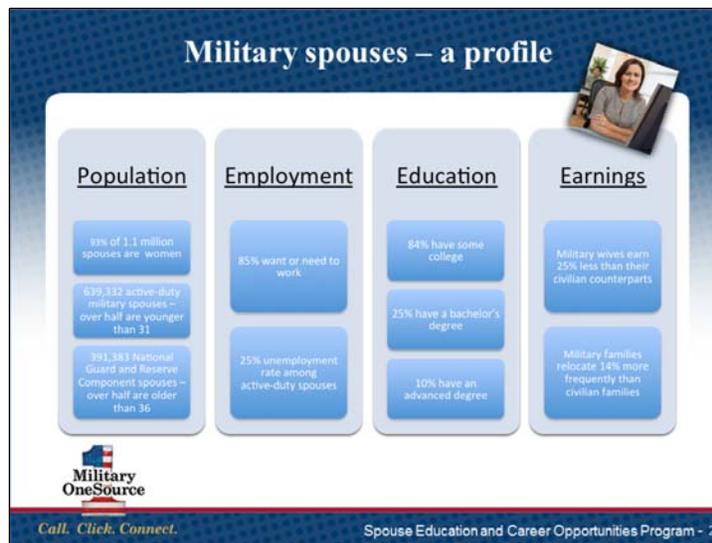
10% have an advanced degree

Earnings

Military wives earn 25% less than their civilian counterparts

Military families relocate 14% more frequently than civilian families





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As you can see, our military spouse population is a very diverse group.

- Ninety-three percent of our military spouses are women.
- They are young, energetic, career-minded and actively seeking employment because they either need or want to work.

Our military spouse population is also a very diverse group in their education levels.

- They are highly educated and, in fact, more educated than their civilian counterparts with 84 percent of them having some level of college.
- Despite their high level of education and work experience, our military spouses are experiencing a 25 percent unemployment rate and a 25 percent wage gap compared to their civilian counterparts. This is primarily due to the challenges and barriers presented by their mobile military life, which requires them to relocate to new duty stations every two to three years. This represents a relocation rate that is 14 percent higher than those experienced by civilian families.

Briefer notes

Source: The 2013 Demographics Report: Profile of the Military Community, Military OneSource.mil - <http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2013-Demographics-Report.pdf>

The challenge

- Deliver a comprehensive education and career solution for military spouses pursuing training, jobs and sustainable careers by providing career services and connecting them to employers seeking employees with the 21st century workforce skill sets possessed by military spouses.



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Military OneSource

Call. Click. Connect. Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Program - 3

Talking Points — Updated March 2016

The challenge has been to develop a responsive, effective, “lifecycle” solution that addresses all ages and stages of military spouse education, employment and career opportunity needs.

The program helps military spouses achieve the following:

- Identify their career interests and goals.
- Find the education and training they need to pursue the professional licenses, credentials and degrees to achieve those successes.
- Get connected to the support services that will help them become “job ready.”
- Find employers who are seeking the 21st century workforce skill sets and attributes possessed by our talented, hard-working military spouses.

Access education and career resources

Career Exploration

Assists spouses in identifying career interests and aptitudes and obtaining information about today's job market and work opportunities, including portable skills and careers, entrepreneurship and federal employment options.

The Military OneSource SECO Career Center

800-342-9647

Comprehensive career counseling and assessments

Interest and skills inventories

Education, Training and Licensing

Provides assistance in identifying education, training, licensing and certification opportunities, as well as financial aid resources and scholarships for spouses.

My Career Advancement Account Scholarship — MyCAA

Non-DoD financial aid (Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, university scholarships, Pell Grants)

Post 9/11 GI Bill®

Career Connections

Assists spouses in connecting with corporations, government organizations and nonprofits to gain meaningful, long-term, portable employment.

Military Spouse Employment Partnership

<http://msejobs.militaryonesource.mil>

Regional and local employers

Employment Readiness

Connects spouses to the service-led employment readiness efforts that assist spouses in preparing to join or re-enter the workforce.

Job search strategies

Resume writing

Interviewing

Networking and mentoring



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Military OneSource
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Talking Points — Updated March 2016

Let's take a closer look at the details of the comprehensive, "spouse-centric" SECO program.

For spouses who are just beginning to think about which career paths might be right for them, counselors help them explore the world of work, learn something about themselves in the process and make careful, well-thought-out career decisions. This is done through **Career Exploration** support.

The SECO Career Counselors offer free, assessment tools (including skills, values, personality and career interest inventories); job market information; and assistance in developing individualized career plans, complete with specific action steps that ensure success.

In order to help spouses find the education, training and development they need to pursue their chosen career paths, SECO offers a full range of **Education, Training and Licensure** information and support.

Through SECO specialty consultations, counselors help military spouses compare the costs of schools and programs of study, including their potential returns on investment. For example, some occupations

have higher salaries and better benefits than others in different geographic locations. Some occupations have more employment openings and faster growing employment than others. These are important for military spouses to know as they make portable career decisions.

Spouses can learn about “license portability” — In other words, which states have adopted model legislation that will allow them to use their current professional licenses in the new state while they work to meet new state requirements.

In order to be successful in a job search, military spouses have to be “job ready.” This takes careful planning and specific preparation. The SECO Career Counselors help spouses learn how to conduct an effective job search, identify themselves to potential employers, write resumes and develop interview skills, learn about flexible and virtual work opportunities, and plan for child care and transportation. All these services are part of the **Employment Readiness** lifecycle stage.

Once spouses have honed their “self-marketing skills,” they are ready for the final stage: **Career Connections**. Here, counselors help spouses connect with mentors who can help them “open doors” and meet employers who have pledged to recruit, hire, promote and retain them.

Today’s employers know the value of the military spouse “talent pool.” They know the attributes that military spouses have developed BECAUSE of their mobile military life. Highly sought attributes include the following:

- Mature, loyal and dependable
- Flexible, hard working and resilient
- Excellent communication and technical skills
- Savvy with information technology and social media
- Excellent team players and leaders

These are the skills, work experiences and attributes that today’s employers are seeking, especially the employers who have joined the Military Spouse Employment Partnership, which is part of SECO’s **Career**

Connections lifecycle stage. The partnership includes more than 240 national and global public and private sector employers.

It all starts here at the Military OneSource SECO Career Center: 800-342-9647.

Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program

Military Spouse Career Center at Military OneSource

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/> and <https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil>

- Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program's comprehensive counseling service — available to all eligible military spouses
- Career exploration and discovery — interest, skill, aptitude assessments
- Education, training, licensing and credentialing requirements — financial aid information and referral
- Career readiness — interview skills, resumes, transportation, child care needs
- Career connections — links to Military Spouse Employment Partnership partners, USAJOBS.gov, U.S. Department of Labor



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Talking Points — Updated March 2016

Review the content on the slide. The information below is for your reference.

Here are the website URLs and a couple of important points about the cornerstones of the SECO program:

- **Military Spouse Career Center at Military OneSource**
- Military Spouse Employment Partnership
- My Career Advancement Account Scholarship program

These are the associated subcomponents of SECO. They are worth remembering and learning more about, so visit our websites for more details.

And remember, if you have a question or need assistance, just call our certified career counselors at 800-342-9647. They will provide you with the information and support you need for career success based on your career interests and career lifecycle stage.

Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program, continued

Military Spouse Employment Partnership

<http://msejobs.militaryonesource.mil>

- › Web-enabled employment and career partnership connecting military spouses with more than 295 partners
- › Partners' Statements of Support to increase employment, provide career promotion opportunities and ensure pay equity for military spouses
- › Spouse Ambassador Network

To speak with a certified career counselor, call
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Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program, continued

My Career Advancement Account Scholarship program

<https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa/>

- › Tuition assistance for spouses of service members on active duty in pay grades of E1 to E5, W-1 to W-2, and O-1 to O-2
- › Up to \$4,000 for education, training, licensing and credentialing requirements in a portable career
- › In fiscal 2014, 24,000 military spouses used My Career Advancement Account scholarships, enrolling in approximately 50,000 courses, achieving a 90 percent completion rate

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Call. Click. Connect. Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Program - 7

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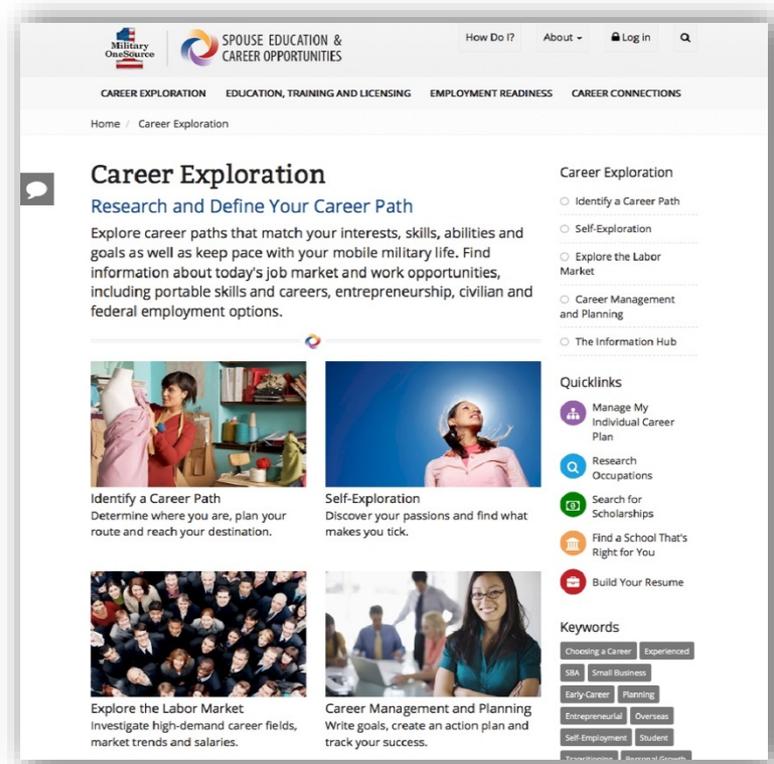
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MySECO website

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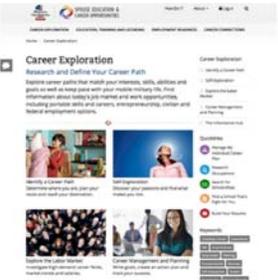
- My Individual Career Plan
- The SECO Scholarship Finder
- LinkedIn integration
- Resume Builder
- Allows spouses to easily research occupations across a wide range of industries
- Integrates user feedback



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Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Program - 8

Talking Points — Updated March 2016

The SECO program never stops listening to the needs expressed by military spouses and SECO partners. Because of their valuable feedback, SECO is currently developing the next wave of support services, website functionality and online tools.

- The MySECO Web presence features career information, tools and resources.
- Spouses can search the SECO Scholarship Finder, which features scholarships that spouses may not be aware of, import their LinkedIn profile, build a resume and research occupations.

Access

- <https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil>
- Access: Login to your MySECO account to use MyInbox, a secure messaging feature to connect with a certified career counselor. Ask questions, get advice or follow up on both your MySECO and My Career Advancement Account Scholarship accounts.

The MSEP Career Portal

- Job search to filter job opportunities
- Step-by-step resume builder
- Distinct partner profile pages to connect directly with company websites
- Resources for spouses and partners

<https://msejobs.militaryonesource.mil>



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Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Program - 9

Talking Points — Updated March 2016

When it comes time to finding that “dream job,” the MSEP Career Portal is the place to be! For spouses AND employers!

- Spouses can search for employers who are participating in the Military Spouse Employment Partnership and link to those companies’ Human Resources landing pages to apply for jobs. Partnership employers want military spouses to self-identify during the job application process, so they can more easily recruit, hire, promote and retain them at the time of military relocation.
- Partners in the MSEP want to keep military spouses within their corporate family, but when that is not possible, many are referring spouses to other employers for continuity purposes. Partnership employers are offering all types of employment: full time, part time, flexible hours and locations, seasonal work and virtual work opportunities in a full range of occupations.

SECO progress to date

(as of October 2015)

- **More than 4 million** employer jobs have been posted on <https://mseppjobs.militaryonesource.mil> since June 29, 2011.
- **More than 80,000** spouses have been hired since the June 29, 2011 launch of Military Spouse Employment Partnership, or MSEP.
- **More than 295** companies and organizations are current MSEP partners.
- **More than 169,000 career counseling sessions** were conducted, in fiscal 2014, by Military OneSource spouse career counselors.



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Talking Points — Updated March 2016

Here are the amazing results of their efforts:

- More than 3 million jobs have been posted on the MSEP Career Portal since MSEP was launched on June 29, 2011.
- More than 75,000 military spouses have been hired.
- There are more than 270 companies and organizations in the MSEP Partnership, with more being added every month — more than 95 of which feature telework opportunities.
- The SECO Career Counselors are serving huge numbers of spouses through the call center.
- These numbers are expected to continue to grow in the days ahead, and the SECO program is prepared to meet that demand with a full array of self-service, peer-to-peer assistance, networking activities and direct services available.

Spouse Ambassador Network

Mission

To educate, empower and mentor military spouses to encourage career fulfillment by promoting and sharing resources while facilitating effective relationships with local and national stakeholders



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Military OneSource

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Talking Points — Updated March 2016

The Spouse Ambassador Network has pledged to help military spouses make the education and career connections that best meet their needs.

This “network of networks” is made up of talented, high energy, career minded military spouses who are:

- Leading their military support organizations
- Advocating for military spouses
- Providing a full range of support services

Spouse Ambassador Network, continued

- › The Spouse Ambassador Network will:
 - **Leverage** existing networks of MSEP partners.
 - **Share** information across multiple platforms.
 - **Create** a unified message and source of accurate information about SECO and partner resources.
 - **Build** a foundation from which additional networks can grow.



Spouse Ambassador Network, continued

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Military OneSource

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Talking Points — Updated March 2016

The Spouse Ambassador Network has pledged to do the following:

- Use the power of their extensive networks to share accurate, timely information from trusted sources regarding key resources and activities designed specifically to support and assist military spouse education and career needs
- Use traditional and social media to reach out to military spouses where they live and work
- Create a “unified message” about sources of support and information that lead to career success
- Help military spouse networks grow
- Serve as a potential model for all military family programs

Spouse Ambassador Network, continued

➤ Core group of MSEP partners launched the network and include the following:

- Air Force Association
- Association of the United States Army
- Blue Star Families
- Easter Seals Veteran Staffing Network
- Hiring Our Heroes (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation)
- In Gear Career
- Military Officers Association of America
- Military Spouse eMentor Program
- Military Spouse Foundation
- Military Spouse JD Network
- Military Spouse of the Year
- Military Spouse Corporate Career Network
- National Military Family Association
- The Milspo Project
- The Navy League of the United States
- The Rosie Network
- Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors



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Talking Points — Updated March 2016

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Spreading the word

MSEP Twitter

<https://twitter.com/msepjobs>



MSEP Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/#!/MSEPOnline>



MSEP LinkedIn

<http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Military-Spouse-Employment-Partnership-MSEP-4159976>



SECO eNewsletter

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/seco/enewsletter>



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Military OneSource

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Talking Points — Updated March 2016

Regardless of whether you are a military spouse, partner employer or military support organization, you too can help spread the word about SECO support services and the networking activities of interest to SECO participants.

Here are some of the social media links that will keep you connected to the latest, most accurate information currently available.

Information is also posted on other social media:

- YouTube
- Flickr
- Pinterest
- Storify
- Instagram
- Tumblr

And more information can be found on Military OneSource's Blog Brigade, discussion boards, webinars, mobile websites, live chats and podcasts.

Sign up for the SECO eNewsletter today by clicking on the Subscribe to ePublications link located in the footer of the SECO eNewsletter. Published quarterly for military spouses, service providers and Military Spouse Employment Partnership partners, this eNewsletter ensures you are the first to know about military spouse education and career resources as they become available.