

BLUF: Department of War (DoW) Military Spouse Appointment Authorities

The Department of War (DoW) has several Military Spouse hiring authorities to Summarize specific efforts the DoW supports Military Spouse Programs, initiatives, hiring and employment.

IMPACT:

- Increasing military spouse hiring is a critical component of achieving a highly skilled civilian workforce.
 - Employment of our military spouses is a critical factor in the quality of life and retention of our service members.
 - Agencies must actively advertise and promote military spouse hiring authorities/tools.
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DISCUSSION:

1. **EO 14100, “Advancing Economic Security for Military and Veteran Spouses, Military Caregivers, and Survivors” June 9, 2023.** Military and veteran families, military caregivers, and survivors face many of the same challenges as their neighbors, but they can carry the additional strains of multiple deployments; frequent moves with little control over their geographic location; caring for wounded, ill, and injured service members or veterans; time apart for training and other demands of military life; and more. The unique demands of military life continue to affect veteran families, military caregivers, and survivors for years after a service member’s time in uniform.
 - o The Office of Personnel and Management (OPM) led an interagency working group tasked to develop and issue a government wide military connected strategic plan.
 - Plan will include:
 - Measures of success for recruitment, hiring and retention.

- Enhanced support for the retention of military spouses in Federal careers, consistent with merit system principles as defined in 5 U.S.C. 2301.
 - Strategies to eliminate barriers to employment.
 - Strategies for marketing talent and experience to agencies.
 - Data driven approach increasing transparency and accountability in hiring and retention.
- Guiding principles:
 - Leadership support and accountability for recruiting, employing, developing and retaining military and veteran spouses, military caregivers, and survivors in the government.
 - Commitment to employing military spouses by including the noncompetitive hiring authority for certain military spouses on positions announced on USAJOBS and other job posting sites.
 - Recognize that military and veteran spouses, military caregivers, and survivors possess skills and the public service motivation needed in the Federal workplace.

2. National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), FY 2022, Section 625, Pilot Program on Direct Hire Authority for Spouses of Members of the Uniformed Services at Locations outside the United States. This NDAA provides a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of a direct hire authority to hire spouses of members of the uniformed services at locations outside the United States.

- A spouse of a member of the uniformed services stationed at a duty location outside the United States may be appointed at a duty location if:
 - The Spouses are authorized to accompany the member to the duty location at Government expense.
 - The duty location is within a reasonable commuting distance.
- Military spouses of active uniformed service members may be appointed to positions in the commuting area of the service members permanent duty station.
- Initial appointments are for a term of years and may be extended for two additional terms, not to exceed a total of six years.

- o Appointments terminate on the date the member of the uniformed services relocates back to the United States in connection with a permanent change of station.
- o The pilot expires December 31, 2026.

3. **E.O. 13832. Enhancing Noncompetitive Civil Service Appointments of Military Spouses 5 USC 3330d: Appointment of military and Department of Defense, Department of State, and intelligence community spouses. Noncompetitive hiring authority for certain military spouses (Part 315.612, Title 5, Code of Federal Regulation).** Spouses may apply to job opportunity announcements on USAJOBS using the noncompetitive hiring authority for certain military spouses (5 CFR 315.612)

- o Temporary authority allows appointments of military spouses of a member of the armed forces serving on active duty, without the requirement to relocate.
- o DoW recently endorsed permanently removing the need for spouses to relocate with their military sponsors, the requirement to have married prior to receiving permanent change of station orders, and the requirement to have received permanent change of station orders in order to be eligible to apply for vacancies using this authority.
- o Allows appointments of spouses of 100 percent disabled service members,
- o Allows for the appointment of un-remarried widows or widowers of a service member killed while performing active duty.
- o The spouse of a member of the armed forces must be currently married to the member serving on activity duty.
- o Allows for appointments to temporary, term or permanent positions in the competitive service.
- o There is an annual reporting requirement to provide data on the use of this authority to appoint military spouses of active duty member by December 31st each year.

4. **DoW Military Spouse Preference (MSP) Program (Section 1784, Title 10, United States Code).** This program is intended to provide career opportunities for spouses of active-duty military members who relocate to accompany their sponsor on a PCS move.

- a. The MSP program provides best qualified (BQ) spouses of active-duty members, priority preference status for temporary and permanent positions.
- b. MSP may be used for permanent positions once per each permanent change of station move and only applies to positions available in the active-duty member's permanent duty station (PDS) or remote positions.
- c. Spouses who relocate with the active-duty member may apply to job opportunity announcements to exercise their MSP eligibility.
- d. Best qualified spouses block consideration of other candidates when competitive procedures are used.
- e. MSP eligibility terminates upon the acceptance or declination of permanent Federal employment in the commuting area of the sponsor's PDS or a remote position.
- f. The total number of Military Spouses that were selected under MSP in FY25 was 9,585.

ACTIONS TAKEN - ADVERTISE AND PROMOTE HIRING OF MILITARY SPOUSES:

In August 2024, DoW emphasized the requirement to include the military spouse noncompetitive hiring authority on all external hiring announcements by issuing a Recruiting and Retaining Military Spouses Fact Sheet. The issuance of the fact sheet, which was disseminated via a Defense Civilian Personnel Management (DCPAS) numbered message, aims to enhance the recruitment of military spouses, which may lead to an increase in job announcements in the future, despite the current decrease in available positions.

To promote the hiring of military spouses, Department of War (DoW) Components reported that they continue to include information about the military spouse hiring authority in their supervisory training and strategic recruitment discussions with hiring managers.

Additionally, DoW Components reported holding training events with human resource professionals to discuss the latest information and initiatives related to military spouse programs. Tested and proven reliable methods include:

- o Utilizing flyers and attending local job fairs to advertise the hiring of veteran and military spouse candidates.
- o Attending Command General and Command Team briefings that welcome military members and their spouses.
- o Human resource offices holding briefings for new spouses as the first opportunity to provide employment information directly to family members.

- Explaining the noncompetitive hiring authorities while highlighting the military spouse hiring authority for consideration when filling vacant positions.

Components reported partnering with local community military spouse organizations and partnerships like “Hiring Our Heroes” to provide informational webinar sessions for military spouses to increase exposure to employment opportunities beyond the USAJOBS website. Several DoW Components reported using social media (e.g., LinkedIn and Facebook) as platforms to increase spouse awareness of employment opportunities to include by participating in monthly Facebook live events for military members and their families and posting information to local Military Spouse Facebook Group pages.

DoW has participated in military spouse recruitment expos and targeted events where subject matter experts met with spouses to answer questions on resume writing, military spouse preference, and specifically on the noncompetitive hiring authority.

The Department has an interagency working group tasked with developing and issuing guidance based on the “Government-wide Military Connected Strategic Plan” published in February 2024. The plan requires tracking milestones geared toward eliminating barriers to employment, developing strategies for marketing the talent, and increasing transparency and accountability in the hiring and retaining of military spouses. Milestones achieved thus far are issuance of numbered messages on military spouse administrative leave policy and military spouse fact sheet, identified a Domestic Employees Teleworking Overseas program manager within DCPAS, identified spouse relocation assistance within DoW non-appropriated fund programs and use of the Guide to Recruiting and Hiring Military Spouses Tool Kit for Hiring Managers and Supervisors across DoW.

As a result of the FY 2019 initiatives implemented at the Department of War (DoW) Enterprise level to advertise and promote military spouse employment, as well of the Secretary of War memorandum, “Taking Care of Our Service Members and Families,” issued September 22, 2022, encourage consideration of candidates under the noncompetitive military spouse hiring authority to the greatest extent possible, stress awareness of employment opportunities for military spouses through printed and social media, and expand remote-work and tele-work options. This demonstrates that DoW Components have taken the initiative in their recruitment strategies and highlighted the importance of hiring under the noncompetitive hiring authority for certain military spouses.

The Department is also a participating member of the EO 14100, “Advancing Economic Security for Military and Veteran Spouses, Military Caregivers, and Survivors” working group.

The interagency working group is tasked with developing and issuing a government-wide strategic plan. The plan must be geared toward eliminating barriers to employment, developing strategies for marketing talent, and increasing transparency and accountability in the hiring and retaining of military spouses. Once the strategic plan is published, the resultant awareness of the talent military spouses possess is expected to help increase employment opportunities.