



Blue Star Spouse Employment Toolkit

*Translating Military Spouses'
Lived Experience into Strong Resumes*



Background

The requirements upon both the service member and the military spouse—for example frequent household moves, prolonged periods of geographic family separation during deployments, and long and unpredictable work hours while service members are not deployed—often present serious employment challenges to military spouses. These obstacles caused by the uniqueness of a military lifestyle can impede military spouses from maintaining employment and establishing career tenure. These barriers have resulted in high unemployment and a wage gap that adversely affect readiness, retention, and the wellbeing of the military community.

For a variety of reasons, a significant portion of service members' spouses choose to participate in command-sponsored "Family Readiness" initiatives in order to better equip themselves for the challenges of life as a military family. According to the United States Marine Corps, "Family readiness directly affects the fundamental purpose of the Marine Corps to make Marines and win battles by building commitment and raising morale, thereby increasing unit readiness." Put another way, military commands rely upon military spouses to facilitate their family readiness objectives through volunteer activities.

An active military lifestyle provides spouses numerous military-affiliated volunteer opportunities. *Blue Star Families'* 2013 Military Family Lifestyle Survey findings reveal 66 percent of military spouse respondents volunteered in the past year. However, 45 percent of those spouses did not consider their volunteer experience relevant to their job search.

To bridge this gap of understanding, *Blue Star Families* has created the initiative, "Blue Star Spouse Employment Toolkit" to encourage spouses to take advantage of military-affiliated volunteer opportunities when paid positions are unavailable or unrealistic while simultaneously helping them showcase the value of their lived experiences and volunteer work on resumes when they are able to return to the paid workforce.

We hope that you are able to utilize this document to aid in your employment search and welcome your feedback to continue to develop and adapt it to best fit the needs of today's military spouses!

General Resume Tips

- Resumes are designed to highlight skills and achievements. Potential employers review resumes to see what kinds of results new employees may bring to their new companies.
 - Accordingly, think about your background, skills and work in terms of action verbs and results that you have achieved. Then write bullets about your experience in that type of format using the material below as an example.
 - Add numbers to as many of your bullets as possible to help recruiters and hiring managers understand the scope of your experience. For example, they will probably not know how large a company, battalion, ship, squadron or wing is, so insert numbers to demonstrate what size audiences you work with on a regular basis.
 - Spell out all acronyms; civilians will typically not know what a PCS, FRG, AFB, PX are, be sure to explain all phrases, but only use words that are relevant to your professional job search
 - For example,
 - “Led 10 volunteers in 2 month fundraising effort; resulting in \$10,000 in funds, a 15% increase over prior years.”
 - “Organized six large scale events for 250+ military family members during six month deployment resulting in high participation and community engagement levels.”
 - “Coordinated five key volunteers to train community members in life skills resulting in improved community member readiness in addressing military life-cycle events.”
 - Focus on what your activities enable you to do in a job setting, not what they mean to military families. For example, preparing family members for deployments might include the following “transferable” skills: training, oral & written communications, managing/leading volunteers, motivating volunteers, organizing people and events, managing projects (by setting dates, organizing materials, publicizing the event, reserving the rooms, gathering feedback, etc.) and coordinating with disparate offices to produce communication materials (bringing together unit leadership, family readiness, medical, transportation, etc. to provide family briefings).
 - Translate your military language into civilian, professional language.
 - Remember, it is not the responsibility of recruiters and hiring managers to understand the military lifestyle; it is the job of hiring managers and recruiters to find the most qualified individuals to fill their job openings. By translating your experience, we hope you will become the most qualified candidate!
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Resume Translator

Translating Volunteerism and the Military Life Experiences into Strong Resumes

Military spouses possess a wealth of knowledge and experience that is developed and practiced through their participation in the military family lifestyle. The following chapter identifies common volunteer and life experiences and provides specific examples of how those experiences can be translated into successful resumes.

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Army

Army Family Readiness Group (FRG) Leader

Likely Duties Performed:

- Distribute information related to activities and support resources to targeted groups
- Act as a vocal liaison for communicating needs and concerns of family members to the unit/ship/squadron commander
- Support the commander's family readiness goals
- Serve as a member of the battalion-level steering committee
- Maintain telephone tree and e-mail list with accurate family and contact information for each soldier's family
- Recruit key callers to disseminate information during deployments
- Plan FRG social activities and meetings
- Arrange for care packages to send to soldiers in theater
- Update the Virtual FRG webpage with information regarding unit movement, unit training schedule, family events, etc.
- Oversee the publication and distribution of FRG Newsletters
- Planned social events and philanthropic initiatives to boost morale

Potential Resume Phrasing:

Family Readiness Group Leader, 1st Company, U.S. Army

Ft. Campbell, KY

- Served as customer service liaison and advisor between senior management and 500 service members' families
- Developed and implemented a strategic communication program to ensure effective messaging between organizational leadership and 500 service members' families
- Planned and executed meetings, social events and philanthropic initiatives resulting in high levels of community engagement throughout stressful 18 month deployment



Army FRG Treasurer

Likely Duties Performed:

- Maintain FRG's account, keeping an accurate log of any and all transactions
- Manage the receipt and deposit of all funds submitted from fundraisers
- Prepare a treasurer's report showing income, expenses, and account balance to be presented to the commander and to the FRG leader at each FRG meeting

Potential Resume Phrasing

Treasurer, 1st Company Family Readiness Group, U.S. Army

Ft. Campbell, KY

- Administered financial controls for \$15,000+ for family nonprofit organization
- Developed annual budgets, produced financial reports and reported on organization's financial status during monthly meetings
- Transitioned organization's financial records from paper to electronic media resulting in increased efficiency and decreasing errors
- Prepared annual audit review resulting in good standing
- Recognized for excellent service and unanimously elected to second term as treasurer

Army Key Caller

Likely Duties Performed:

- Responsible for being a point of contact for families, answering questions and providing accurate and timely information
 - Disseminate official, accurate information from command to the families
 - Report any information gathered during scheduled call-outs to the FRG leader
 - Maintain a log of all calls
-



Potential Resume Phrasing:

Communications Officer, 1st Company Family Readiness Group

Ft. Campbell, KY

- Ensured effective communication between organizational leadership and military family community members during 18 month period deployment
- Disseminated critical leadership information in a timely and reliable manner resulting in increased community engagement for personnel overseas and their families at home
- Served as key information and resource for family members to ensure community engagement

Marine Corps

U.S.M.C. Family Readiness Officer (FRO)

Likely Duties Performed:

- Actively manage, coordinate and promote all matters pertaining to unit family readiness
- Serve as the military point of contact for unit family readiness issues
- Serve as the military protocol subject matter expert for family readiness events
- Learn about all available resources to promote family readiness
- Arrange for all appropriate KVN (Key Volunteer Network) administrative and logistical support
- Ensure command policy regarding information flow to families of single Marines is established and supported
- *Salaried position for qualified civilians. Originally was a billeted position for active duty USMC officers.*

Potential Resume Phrasing:

Family Readiness Officer, Marine Corp Air Base Kaneohe Bay

Kaneohe Bay, HI

- Conducted proactive outreach, rapport development, and multifaceted communication efforts to facilitate meaningful two-way communication between the organizational leadership and community members (service members' families)
- Managed a staff of five Family Readiness Staff Members; motivated team to successfully support 900+ community members
- Trained and prepared Marines and their families in life-skills and stress management strategies
- Developed and implemented a strategic communication program to ensure effective communication between organizational leadership and community
- Planned and executed meetings, social events and philanthropic initiatives resulting in high levels of community engagement during 6 month deployment



U.S.M.C. Family Readiness Assistant (FRA)

Likely Duties Performed:

- Assist with information and referral services to families
- Assist the FRO with family readiness communications, as needed
- Publicize morale support events
- Assist the FRO in evaluating and assessing communication quality and overall effectiveness
- Conduct unit outreach as determined appropriate by the commander or the FRO

Potential Resume Phrasing:

Family Readiness Assistant, U.S. Marine Corps

Kaneohe Bay, HI

- Led collaboration effort for disparate federal organizations to develop and implement policies among community members (military personnel and their families) resulting in improved life skills and stress management strategies.
- Organized and managed six volunteer staff to achieve organizational and community readiness goals established by senior leadership
- Served as assistant customer service manager and liaison between senior leadership and 300 community members resulting in improved, accurate communications and community engagement

U.S.M.C. Family Readiness Advisor

Likely Duties Performed:

- Serve laterally with the Family Readiness Command Team leadership to support the Unit Family Readiness Program
- Act in concert laterally with the Family Readiness Officer, Executive Officer, Sergeant Major, Chaplain, and other Family Readiness Advisor(s) in support of the commander
- Serve as an additional feedback mechanism from the families to the Command Team and attend all Unit Family Readiness Program meetings
- Contribute content to family readiness communications and assist in development of unit communication strategies
- Serves in conjunction with the FRO in execution of official communication. May assist with Information and Referral services.

Potential Resume Phrasing

- Trained and prepared clients in life skills and stress management strategies improving community preparedness for addressing challenging military life-cycle events
- Ensured quality customer service through providing feedback from unit families to organizational leadership concerning the quality of communication and overall organizational effectiveness
- Served as subject matter expert to community members in need of information and referral services for a wide array of social service, employment and leadership information
- Planned and executed meetings, social events and philanthropic initiatives resulting in high levels of community engagement during 6 month deployment

U.S.M.C. Morale Support Volunteer

Likely Duties Performed:

- Serve on the Family Readiness Command Team for specific, event-driven, short-term unit morale events
- Morale Support Volunteers serve to assist the FRO in the planning, coordination, and execution of unit morale support events (unit family days, Return and Reunion events, holiday parties, etc.)
- Provide informal information and referral services to the families

Suggested Resume Phrasing:

- Worked as part of a six person team to plan and foster personal connections between the organization and its targeted audience increasing cohesion and facilitating feedback from the audience to organization
- Advanced leadership objectives by providing quality support and customer service through accurate and timely information and referral services to target audience members



- Planned and executed meetings, social events and philanthropic initiatives resulting in high levels of community engagement during 6 month deployment

Navy

Navy Family Readiness organizations are not universally similar and vary with each command. Below please find the various volunteer positions that exist, sometimes many exist within one command. Despite different names and divisions in responsibilities all of the positions are understood to serve the command's family readiness objectives.

Navy FRG

Family Readiness Group leadership similar to Army structure: FRG Leader, Assistant, Treasurer and Key Caller. See above Army section for applicable descriptions.

Navy Ombudsman

Likely Duties Performed:

- Serve as a liaison between the command and command families
- Keep the command informed regarding the overall health, morale, and welfare of command families
- Regularly communicate and distribute information to and from the command and command family members
- Provide information and referral to assist command families with any concerns or issues
- Coordinates and executes care-based plans for families affected by individual and group deployment activities
- Establish and maintain an up-to-date and timely telephone tree/email to distribute and/or gather information
- Develop and distribute a command-approved monthly or quarterly newsletter, or if not possible, contribute to a command-approved column in appropriate publications
- Represent the command at Ombudsman Assembly meetings
- Maintain well-organized and up-to-date communication records on the performance of ombudsman duties

Potential Resume Phrasing:

- Served as a liaison between organization's leadership and its members (military family members)

- Advanced organization's objectives by determining and providing appropriate information referral and services to targeted members of organization
- Established and maintained a communication system ensuring accurate and timely information dissemination for over 300 members of organization
- Served as organization's representative on community-wide executive board requiring frequent interface and teamwork in order to achieve consensus among numerous and disparate stakeholders
- Serve as primary point of contact for emergency and crisis information for organization and community members

Spouse Club President/Vice President/CO & XO Spouse Advisor

Likely Duties Performed:

- Manage activities related to spousal support for squadron
- Plan and facilitate monthly meetings
- Serve as liaison for spouse issues and needs to military and community organizations
- Writes and publishes monthly newsletter
- Counsels spouses on family issues as related to military readiness
- Manages group finances in coordination with Treasurer to ensure short and long-term organizational needs are funded
- Develops monthly and quarterly activities calendars, including event development to ensure balanced opportunities for all family types

Potential Resume Phrasing:

- Conducted proactive outreach, rapport development, and multifaceted communication efforts to facilitate a meaningful two-way information flow between the organization and its families
- Provided leadership to a 50-member non-profit organization by emphasizing teamwork, mutual respect and cooperation among a diverse membership



- Planned and executed fundraising activities, including solicitation of community groups and businesses for financial and in-kind donations
- Planned and executed meetings, social events and philanthropic initiatives resulting in high community and organizational engagement enabling the successful deployment of 300 personnel for 6 months

Air Force

Key Spouse Program

Likely Duties Performed:

- Selected by the Squadron Commander for the volunteer position
- Served as the primary liaison between the Commander and 300+ Squadron families
- Informed the Commander of the overall health, morale, and welfare of Squadron families
- Regularly communicated and distributed information to and from the Squadron and Squadron family members
- Provided information and referral to assist Squadron families with concerns, issues or family emergencies
- Established and maintain an up-to-date and timely telephone tree/email to distribute and/or gather information
- Maintain well-organized and up-to-date communication records on the performance of Key Spouse duties
- Provided leadership and direction of other unit Key Spouses during emergency response situations

Potential Resume Phrasing:

- Selected as a primary liaison between organizational leadership and its 300+ military family community members
- Provided information and referral to assist community members with concerns, issues or family emergencies.
- Created communication system ensuring accurate and timely information dissemination for 300+ community members.
- Serve as primary point of contact for family emergency and crisis events for community members.
- Provided crisis response support to community members including organizing 20+ volunteers on short notice on five occasions in the past year.

Spouse Club President/Vice President/Commander & Deputy CC Spouse

Likely Duties Performed:

- Plans and facilitates monthly meetings for squadron/wing spouses
- Plans and leads spouse and family support activities
- Serves as liaison for spouse issues and needs to military and community organizations, including military leadership
- Writes and publishes monthly newsletter
- Counsels spouses on family issues as related to military readiness
- Manages group finances in coordination with Treasurer to ensure short and long-term organizational needs are funded
- Serves as Key Spouse Mentor

Potential Resume Phrasing:

- Led a 50-member non-profit organization through teamwork, facilitation and leadership of a diverse membership.
- Planned and executed fundraising activities, including solicitation of community groups and businesses for financial and in-kind donations. Raised \$10,000; an increase of 50% over prior year events.
- Provided written and oral communications to organization members to boost activity participation and achieve organizational goals.
- Coordinated thirty-five volunteers to produce seven events for 300+ participants in the past year.
- Coached and mentored junior volunteers to boost leadership and volunteer management skills.

Coast Guard

Coast Guard Ombudsman

Likely Duties Performed:

- Serve as a liaison between the command and command families
- Keep the command informed regarding the overall health, morale, and welfare of command families
- Regularly communicate and distribute information to and from the command and command family members
- Help new members of organization transition to activities and special interest groups
- Provide new members a resource for guidance in acclimatizing to new area and occupation

Potential Resume Phrasing:

- Served as a liaison between organization's leadership and 50 military family members
- Advanced organization's objectives by determining and providing appropriate information referral and services to targeted audience members
- Conducted proactive outreach, rapport development, and multifaceted communication efforts to facilitate meaningful two-way information flow between the leadership and its families
- Advanced leadership objectives by determining and providing appropriate information referral and services to targeted members of organization

Assorted Volunteer Positions

USO Center Volunteer

Likely Duties Performed:

- Greet guests at USO airport locations
- Assist visitors to USO location in signing in and check IDs
- Dispense snacks and beverages
- Issue games, movies, cell phones, and equipment
- Manage the Wi-Fi password for visitor laptops
- Implement waiting lists/time limits for all center equipment during busy hours
- Restock snacks, ice, soda syrup, CO2, paper goods, etc., as needed
- Answer the center telephone and take messages for USO staff
- Provide information and referral to visitors and callers
- Give tours to first-time visitors
- Accept donations and properly log them
- File registration sign-in and sign-out forms

Potential Resume Phrasing:

- Advanced leadership and organizational objectives by determining and providing appropriate and high-quality customer service
- Conducted outreach and rapport development initiatives among target clients resulting in higher client satisfaction and increasing the number of repeat clients by 30 percent
- Trained, supervised and led a team of 8 volunteers
- Developed and implemented a more efficient re-stocking system for snack-food sales component of organization
- Managed guests' online wireless access and usage to ensure high levels of client satisfaction
- Employed technical skills to effectively manage and troubleshoot internet access problems reducing the number of required service visits and costs

USO Administrative and Special Event Volunteer

Likely Duties Performed:

- Plan, coordinate and implement special event activities
- Run errands and pick up supplies and donations
- Create scrapbooks of USO activities, to include photos, newspaper clippings
- Tally USO statistical information (such as number of center visitors, volunteer hours, etc.) and enter
- into appropriate spreadsheets
- Troubleshoot computer, XBOX, electronics, and networking issues
- Speak to community groups about supporting the USO
- Brief military units about USO programs
- Man booths at information fairs and other public outreach events
- Record videos of troops reading for the United Through Reading® Military Program
- Coordinate drives for books, toiletries, snack foods, etc.
- Welcome home troops and celebrate with their families at homecoming flights

Potential Resume Phrasing:

- Conducted outreach and rapport development initiatives among organization's targeted audience resulting in increased customer service and satisfaction
- Planned and implemented special projects at the discretion of USO director including fundraising events and community outreach initiatives
- Established and maintained spreadsheet records of USO statistical information that contributed to the successful application for additional grant funds

USO Team Leader Volunteer

Likely Duties Performed:

- Primarily responsible for opening and closing the center
- Notify USO staff of any issues or concerns
- Act as stand in supervisor during absence of USO Staff
- Alert USO staff to volunteers' problems or concerns
- Provide leadership to encourage and facilitate the success of USO center operations and larger USO mission
- Employ excellent customer relations practices
- Ensure the center is appropriately staffed and volunteer capacity is evenly distributed throughout center
- Receive orders and packages, reconcile invoices, and store shipments as necessary

Potential Resume Phrasing:

- Coordinated with USO staff in operational support activities by serving as a liaison between USO management and staff in the resolution of day-to-day administrative and operational problems
- Motivated, managed and scheduled a staff of 6 USO volunteers to ensure optimal service to USO patrons
- Trained all new volunteers regarding proper USO policies and procedures
- Ensured USO center opened and closed appropriately and safely per Baltimore-Washington International airport authority's security requirements and guidelines

American Red Cross Community Outreach Intern

Likely Duties Performed:

- Develop, work with, support and promote the regional Speakers Bureau and coordinate outreach to local government officials for the American Red Cross in the National Capital Region
- Support Red Cross workplace giving campaigns
- Organize and support regional Speakers Bureau

- Screen speaking/presentation requests and schedule speaker, equipment and space requests

Potential resume phrasing

- Supported and improved the community outreach process within the National Capital Region American Red Cross chapter
- Cultivated, built and grew relationships with United Way, the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) and other federated groups
- Collaborated with regional management representatives to grow relationships with the American Red Cross and local advisory boards, committees, city councils and legislative bodies through outreach to and effective communication with elected officials
- Ensured stewardship of campaign donors through acknowledgements, recording donors in Raiser's Edge database, and monthly newsletters

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Caseworker

Likely Duties Performed:

- Evaluate client needs and requests and determine if they meet society policy
 - Conduct interviews with clients and make informed decisions with limited guidance
 - Complete required verifications
 - Assess spending plans and review previous casework history
 - Assist client in determining required documents for interview and guide the client through NMCRS policies and procedures
 - Distribute resources to clients and complete data entry
-

Potential Resume Phrasing

- Provided financial and budget counselling to service members and their families by developing family budgets and improving financial self-sufficiency
- Facilitated process for registration and interviews of new clients and assisted in completion of required documentation
- Determined appropriate level of client assistance by independently assessing and responding to needs of clients in a professional and timely manner
- Maintained confidential client information and ensured accuracy of data input into NMCRS CAP system

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Thrift Shop Manager

Likely Duties Performed:

- Manage NMCRS Thrift Shop operations and donor collections
- Maintain cash register, daily deposits, and reconciliations
- Supervise Thrift Shop employees
- Develop ability to appraise and accurately price items to maintain desired income and inventory levels

Potential Resume Phrasing

- Trained, supervised, and led a team of sales associates, including staffing and scheduling
- Developed and managed internal control procedures for inventory, cash proceeds, deposits, and reconciliations that ensured accuracy and accountability of shop revenue
- Maintained high standards for donor and customer relations resulting in high sales performance, customer satisfaction, and increased repeat customer sales

- Managed systems to facilitate collection, sorting, merchandising, and pricing donated items

Operation Homefront Chapter Website Content Manager

Likely Duties Performed:

- Maintain website for Operation Homefront chapter
- Manage web content
- Writing, editing and proofreading website content

Potential Resume Phrasing

- Utilized advanced knowledge of HTML and EKTRON CMS systems to establish and maintain a professional, effective, and dynamic online presence for a chapter of a national non-profit organization
- Worked closely with the non-profit organization's technical team to maintain site standards and comply with new development demands
- Underwent rigorous content management software system training in order to ensure a consistent and accurate look and feel throughout all web properties
- Worked cooperatively with key team members of the chapter and national organization

Protestant Women of the Chapel (PWOC) President

Likely Duties Performed:

- Work with a designated chaplain who serves as the advisor to the PWOC Executive Board
 - Assemble a team of leaders; mentoring, supervising and training board members
 - Establish and maintain the fiscal viability of the organization
-

Potential Resume Phrasing

- Interfaced with senior management to ensure effective daily functioning of a 320-member non-profit community organization
- Established a leadership training program in order to serve needs of organization, including mentoring, supervising and training 10 board members
- Managed an annual budget of \$12,000; maintained a balanced budget with no issues following annual audit
- Developed annual goals and objectives with local board members in support of organization's national goals and objectives

Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) Area Developer

Likely Duties Performed:

- Works in cooperation with Community Outreach Strategists to assist individuals or organization interested in starting a MOPS chapter or raising funds for MOPS
- Provides training and support to Area Field Leaders
- Reports to the Regional Developer for meeting the needs of assigned MOPS group leadership

Potential resume phrasing

- Managed ongoing training of 3 Area Field Leaders in support of 75 families through 8 local chapters, including training for new Field Leaders and annual training for established Area Field Leaders
- Ensured the effective functioning of 8 local chapters and was responsible for expansion of the national organization through the successful establishment of 2 new local chapters
- Generated and implemented new regional strategies ensuring the successful achievement of annual national goals

Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) Community Event Planner

Likely Duties Performed:

- Plan community events
- Supervise volunteers
- Schedule speakers for area events

Potential Resume Phrasing

- Identified, contracted and scheduled speakers and entertainment for organization events and area meetings
- Managed event planning, local production, and technical needs in support of organization functions ensuring the desired event outcome
- Employed excellent organization and planning skills to successfully supervise a team of 16 area event staffers

Military Chapel Wedding Coordinator

Likely Duties Performed:

- Schedule weddings to be performed at chapel
- Assist in planning and organizing chapel weddings

Potential Resume Phrasing

- Successfully organized and scheduled over 160 wedding requests annually; ensured superior customer service by employing high-level conflict management and communication skills with chapel's staff and wedding party members
- Effectively scheduled chapel weddings and ensured that appropriate chapel resources were available while minimizing any potential conflicts with other chapel functions
- Served as central contact for all chapel wedding inquiries and requests



Blue Star Families Chapter Director

Likely Duties Performed:

- Build and expand partnerships with military and community leaders
- Recruit, manage and mentor local volunteer team
- Maintain assigned Facebook page & email for chapter identify events, resources, and National level information to local members/volunteers
- Work with Program Manager(s) to identify events that will benefit BSF members and local chapter (host quarterly event)
- Oversee all local Blue Star Families events and event planning; participate in community events

Potential Resume Phrasing

- Managed monthly event planning, budgeting and expense reporting as senior local liaison to national nonprofit organization
- Established and expanded partnerships with diverse regional stakeholders as senior liaison for national nonprofit organization serving a local community of 38,000
- Established a strategic communication plan and maintained multiple social networking platforms in order to publicize nonprofit's events, resources, and disseminate national level information to local members
- Managed and mentored a team of 12 to ensure effective representation and desired outcomes for national nonprofit

Frequently Developed Skills as a Military Spouse

Leadership/Management Skills

Examples of activities where this skill is employed:

- Permanent Change of Station (PCS) moves
- Family Readiness Executive Board membership
- Organizing a “Walk for the Cure” fundraising group

Suggested Resume Phrasing:

- Successfully interacted with and employed practices of U.S. Department of Defense and U.S. Navy bureaucracy in order to achieve desired outcomes; coordinated and interfaced with numerous stakeholders including government and private providers during 8 relocations
- Managed a team of 6 moving company employees to encourage/ensure superior job performance, safety, and accuracy of administrative paperwork
- Employed superior communication skills to interface with numerous and significantly varied stakeholders in order to determine and ensure appropriate levels of support were provided to a non-profit organization serving 1600 military families
- Provided leadership in order to assure Executive Board members remained motivated to perform their duties resulting in optimal outcomes for U.S. Navy Family Readiness Group successfully serving 280 members during a high-stress, 8-month deployment period
- Worked at an optimal level of efficiency in planning and executing household relocation plans under high levels of stress and uncertainty during 14 household moves in 10 years
- Employed high levels of interpersonal and resiliency skills to connect with others and locate new resources in the course of 15 geographic military relocations during a 20 year period

Administrative Skills

Examples of activities where this skill is employed:

- Front office volunteer at a child's school
- Maintaining a file system for one's personal records
- Library volunteer
- Parent-Teacher Association member

Suggested Resume Phrasing:

- Ensured effective and accurate telephone communication between school administration and the wider community which it served
- Coordinated with school staff in support of the resolution of day-to-day administrative problems
- Successfully implemented and administered new online website for Thunderbolt Elementary school that increased school to parent communication and reduced the volume of incoming phone calls to the school's main telephone line
- Generated new display system for featuring newly received books that increased knowledge and interest at Brunswick City Library
- Provided administrative/secretarial support for various departments by answering telephones, assisting visitors and resolving a range of administrative problems and inquiries
- Operate desktop word-processing software to compose and edit correspondence and memoranda
- Prepared, transcribed, composed, and edited agendas and minutes of meetings

Child Care

Examples of activities where this skill is employed:

- YMCA Childwatch, Kid Zone, or afterschool program volunteer
- Nursery/child care volunteer during religious services
- Veterans Administration (VA) hospital childcare volunteer

Suggested Resume Phrasing:

- Ensured safety, well-being, and development of multiple toddler-age children
- Instructed children in personal habits and health practices
- Support children's social and emotional development, encourage understanding of others and enhance positive self-concepts
- Established and maintained records of each child comprising regular observation, information about activities, medications administered, and meals served

Training/Tutoring

Examples of volunteer activities where this skill is employed:

- Classroom parent volunteer
- Assisting children with homework
- Training new family readiness volunteers
- Tutoring fellow high school/college classmates in a subject in which you excel

Suggested Resume Phrasing:

- Instructed children in personal habits and health practices
- Generated and refined personalized education strategies to achieve learning outcomes in children of varied educational backgrounds and abilities

- Recognized for outstanding academic performance and asked to lead a study period for students requiring supplementary assistance

Healthcare/Nursing/Patient Advocacy

Examples of volunteer activities where this skill is employed:

- VA Nursing Areas volunteer
- Caring for a wounded spouse
- Caring for a family member with special needs
- End of life/hospice care for family member

Potential Resume Phrasing:

- Successfully managed administrative and medical healthcare records for VA patients
- Coordinated patient care from a team of 6 different specialists in order to ensure optimal healthcare for patient
- Ensured healthcare providers' orders were carried out promptly and accurately
- Provided a clean, safe and healthy environment for hospital/hospice patients
- Established a new filing system that increased administrative effectiveness within the Radiology Department
- Ensured effective telephone communication between the Oncology department and its patients

Frequently Asked Questions

Real Advice for Military Spouses Seeking Employment from Military Spouses Who Have Been There!

I'm not quite ready to start actively looking for a job as we've just moved here/are about to move somewhere new. What can I do to increase my chances of finding a job once I actively start looking?

In a word: network.

If you are not yet in the geographic area where you will be job hunting, look for online networks of both job hunters and military spouses in your geographic area. Another great resource is online groups related to the type of job you will be looking to obtain. Try LinkedIn, professional or trade associations in your field, and your university's career services and alumni association if you've attended college.

Look for Chamber of Commerce or other online local resources like the local paper that describe the area's largest employment industries—figure out how your particular skill set could be applied in your new area's local context. Try <http://us.jobs> to find state-specific labor information and job openings listed by state and local governments. Search out employers that you'd like to work for and start familiarizing yourself with those websites.

Identify and leverage existing connections you might already have. Use a job search engine like www.simplyhired.com to identify your LinkedIn connections and Facebook friends who already have relationships with employers in your new area.

It's been suggested that up to 80% of available jobs are "hidden" from most job seekers because they are unadvertised or only internally advertised. Knowing who your ideal potential employers are—and what kinds of workers they hire—will help you focus on who you should be getting to know.

If you are already residing in the area you will be job hunting, use all the long-distance networking techniques suggested above and add in attending similar in-person events. Make an appointment with your local base's Employment Assistance Program. This person can point you to immediate job openings, put you on a mailing list of upcoming job search training, networking events, and more job openings. If for no other reason, talk to your base's employment assistance professionals because odds are they have that local insight that you need to develop. They might not have a job opening in your field of expertise, but now you have alerted them to what you are looking for and often they will be able to refer you to other local individuals in related fields that will further broaden your local employment network.



Another great strategy if you are already in the area is to continue identifying potential employers and monitoring their websites. Use this information to identify people who are doing jobs you would like to do or who work in an industry or organization for which you would like to work. Attend networking events or join a committee supported by the local Chamber of Commerce or other civic organizations. Consider asking for informational interviews with some of those people, or if you're not ready for that, look for public events the employer holds that you could attend or volunteer opportunities within the organization. Once you've made a personal connection, your chances of networking with other employees and of learning about job openings vastly increases.

Should I mention that I am a military spouse status on my application, cover letter or during an interview?

In a nutshell, it depends.

Most often it depends on what type of job you are applying for and the workplace culture. Keep in mind that a job application should illustrate how you are well-suited for a specific job—not about your lifestyle or to whom you're married.

After reviewing a job advertisement and the employer's corporate culture, you are likely in a good position to determine whether it is a good idea to include information that indicates you are part of a military family on your application or resume. Use this Toolkit to fill in employment gaps if you have performed sustained and meaningful volunteer work. In rarer cases, such as employers that desire long-term commitments or higher-level corporate positions, it might be wise to omit all references to your military spouse status. Use your own judgment here, but as a basic guide unless you know the employer is military-friendly, it is generally best not to identify yourself as a military spouse before you are offered an interview.

If you prefer not to reveal your military spouse status during an interview, ensure you can effectively convey your work experience in a way that highlights your successes, and explains common questions employers might have about your job history, in a way that does not reference the military directly. Keep in mind that it is illegal for employers to ask you if your spouse is a military member, but lying about your relationship to the military is unlikely to help you win the job.

If you do decide to discuss that you are a military spouse, present your experience as a positive—because it is! You certainly don't want to suggest being a military spouse makes you any less able to do the job! Instead of focusing on the challenges that military life might present to employment, highlight the assets that experience as a military spouse has brought to you—and could bring to your potential employer. As compared to the general public, military spouses are better educated, more travelled, and often possess a maturity



beyond their age. They tend to know how to work well in teams, under pressure, and how to overcome adversity and be resilient.

While it's important not to expect everyone will appreciate your status as a military spouse, during an interview it is reasonable to mention specific skills or character traits you have developed as a military spouse as long as you relate them back to the job requirements.

How long will you live here?

It's pretty difficult to get through an interview without giving away the fact that you are a military spouse—and it's increasingly likely that your military spouse status is not the obstacle to employment that it once was. As we have talked about in this Toolkit, the nature of the workforce is changing and so too is society's perception of military spouses. Thus, in most employment interviews you are probably better off to mention your military spouse status if it sufficiently answers an interviewer's concern with your employment history. However, the growing awareness among employers of the value of military spouse employees does not overcome their legitimate concerns about the frequent relocations of military families.

The good news is that the answer to this question is changing as the nature of civilian and military jobs change. Civilians are decreasing the amount of time they stay in each job while the military is looking to extend times between geographic relocations in order to cut costs. Military leaders are considering using home basing and back-to-back orders in the same area to save money, and joint-basing and base consolidations are expected to increase as military budgets decrease.

Your overall strategy for answering this question is threefold:

1. provide a firm commitment for a minimum time period you are committed to the job, this is likely the amount of time left in your tour according to current orders
2. minimize the likelihood of your departure in the interviewer's mind
3. keep reinforcing how your military lifestyle makes you MORE qualified for the job

Describe the connections you have made and how much you enjoy living in the area, perhaps you have purchased a house or are planning to retire to this area. In short, show the interviewer how you are more rooted than transient when it comes to the job's geographic area.

Second, mention that the myriad changes going on in the military means tours are getting longer while also narrowing your spouse's chances for remaining in the military. Mention that the large number of jobs on the local base mean that since you like this area your spouse plans to stay here for the next set of orders. Even if your spouse is planning on



making a career of the military, very large personnel cuts and early retirement deals are coming so if you like the area it may be where you end up staying for quite some time. Also, the job just might be good enough that you will consider staying should your spouse be reassigned. If this is the case, let the interviewer know.

When it comes to how to reinforce the fact that your military lifestyle makes you more qualified rather than less, use a personal example of a skill you have developed as a military spouse that is applicable in the workplace. If you are young, you can discuss the maturity required of military spouses. If you are inexperienced, discuss how quickly military spouses learn a new area, skill, or how to integrate into a new social or workplace setting. If you have the skills but have been out of the job market for a while, discuss the changes in your military lifestyle that make what was impossible now possible. For example, perhaps your children are now school-aged or your spouse is in a tour that does not deploy or requires less of your support. Alternately, perhaps your spouse is in a very busy tour and you prefer to cope with that by working sixty hours a week. If you are “overqualified,” discuss how being a military spouse means you would love a job that is in your field that does not require the type of commitment under which you previously worked.

How might I discuss the advantages of military spouse experience in an interview?

In most cases, if your potential employer is aware of your military spouse status, an interview is a great place to present your relationship to the military as an asset rather than a potential disadvantage. It is not a good idea to refer to your personal life—military-related or otherwise—when interviewers are asking questions to determine your professional abilities and experience; however, most interviews include at least one question about your personality or character. Your life experiences as a military spouse mean you already have excellent answers to these questions. Remember to point out how the military spouse skills you’ve identified are job assets that relate to the specific position for which you’re interviewing.

Here’s an example:

“Being successful in a military community requires a belief that the greater good is achieved via the group rather than the individual. I have a lot of experience working with new and varied groups, and I know the importance of—and how to be—a team player. This means I will adjust quickly to the position and quickly integrate into the requirements of the office. It’s not the easiest lifestyle I could have chosen, but as a result I am more experienced and responsible than many of my peers.”

While your relationship to the military may cause some concern to employers regarding your prospects for long-term retention, most employers place a higher value on employee competence, character and motivation.

Are there certain types of jobs that are better for military family lifestyles or more likely to offer future employment to military spouses? What if I work in a field that isn't traditionally considered "portable?"

Technology, globalization and the worldwide economic slowdown has changed the nature of the job market and altered traditional employment trends. If you are trained in or can get trained in a portable job—that's great. That said, if you work in a profession that tends not to be portable, ask yourself how you can rebrand your existing skill sets to work in a more portable way.

People change jobs with increasing frequency—for example, members of the millennial generation are projected to change jobs every 2-3 years. This means most of the jobs out there are becoming more portable. This is very good news for military spouses who tend to PCS about that often—and minimizes the necessity of a portable career.

Other good news for military spouses include increasing numbers of telecommuting positions—which means you're more likely to be able to take your next job with you. Consultancy also continues to be on the rise. Employers often look to hire consultants on a short-term or project-by-project basis, which means they are less likely to be concerned about the frequency with which you move. This may also prove beneficial to spouses who, given military health and retirement benefits, would prefer to maximize their paychecks than receive benefits already available to families through the service member.

Resources by Career Type

The following section is organized by 4 career sectors: Federal and Public, Nonprofit, Private and Corporate, and Retail and Service. In each section you will find job searching resources and advice by career sector that is tailored specifically for military spouses. It is meant to be used as both an educational guide that assists spouses in choosing a specific career sector and a practical resource for military spouses seeking helpful strategies enabling them to continue in their chosen career sector.

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FEDERAL and PUBLIC SECTOR RESOURCES

WHAT KINDS OF JOBS?

Federal employment, often called GS jobs, can be an excellent choice for military spouses as they tend to pay well, are often portable, and your status as a military spouse can actually help rather than hurt your hiring prospects. The Federal Government hires in just about every field from housekeeping to health care, secretarial to social work.

WHERE TO START

www.usajobs.gov-- to search for specific federal job openings

www.opm.gov-- for detailed advice on federal hiring

www.fedshirevets.gov – federal hiring advice specifically for vets and military families

<http://.us.jobs> – to search for state and local jobs. Click on “states” or “cities” tabs in the upper left of the homepage for links to individual states’ Job Workforce Exchanges and state employment listings.

GENERAL APPLICATION ADVICE

US Federal agencies do their own hiring, but most of the jobs are posted on the www.usajobs.com website. You can search without creating an account, but you’ll need an account to apply to a job and in order to indicate your status as a military spouse. Use the “Advanced Search” option for better results. You can also set up an alert that will email you when specific types of jobs you’ve indicated become available.

Pay attention to the “occupational series” or job number that accompanies each type of job. Once you figure out the series number for each type of job you’re interested in applying for, you can do a “series number search” to find specific results tailored to the job type in which you’re interested. If you don’t know what type of job you’re looking for, you can also search by other options like location, federal agency, or pay grade.

TIPS SPECIFIC FOR MILITARY SPOUSES APPLYING TO FEDERAL JOBS

1. Familiarize yourself with how the Military Spouse Hiring Executive Order/Military Spouse Appointing Authority may apply to you.



The Military Spouse Hiring Executive Order established a Military Spouse Appointing Authority designed to help open the door to federal employment for military spouses. This isn't a hiring preference, but gives those doing federal hiring the ability to consider you for a wider array of jobs. This is because many federal job openings come with stipulations about how they are filled. Being a military spouse conveys a "special hiring authority" status that you must indicate when creating your profile on www.usajobs.gov.

This spouse appointing authority applies if you have recently PCS'ed with your active duty spouse, have a spouse who is 100% military disabled, or are a surviving spouse of a member killed on active duty.

Military spouses eligible under this appointing authority do not have a hiring preference just because they meet the eligibility requirements. Military spouses meeting the requirements benefit because this allows them non-competitive entry into the competitive service.

*Note—US Dept. of Defense's Military Spouse Hiring Preference is different as it helps existing federal employees obtain jobs within the DoD after a PCS.

2. Consider a Federal Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF) Job.

There are over 100,000 Department of Defense NAF jobs. While it's a federal job, salaries are paid by money generated from the Department of Defense programs where you'll be working, rather than from funds directly appropriated by Congress.

Examples of NAF-staffed programs include childcare centers, military exchanges, commissaries, community services, and morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) programs. NAF DoD jobs include fitness instructors, cashiers, accountants, counselors, managers, childcare workers, and tradespeople.

Benefits in NAF jobs are not the same as GS (Congressionally appropriated) Federal jobs. However, NAF jobs include a military spouse hiring preference and, unlike the Military Spouse Hiring Preference for DoD appropriated funds (see *note above), you do not have to be previously employed by the Federal government to use the preference. Further, in NAF jobs your military spouse preference even trumps some veteran preferences, may assist you in getting an Appropriated Fund job later on, and allows you to count your NAF years towards retirement should you eventually obtain a GS job.

See a helpful page of FAQ's about NAF jobs here:

www.mynavyexchange.com/command/employment/h-FAQs.html

For specific information on how the Military Spouse Preference applies to NAF jobs:

<http://www.nafjobs.org/preferences.aspx#msp>.



Searching for NAF jobs can be a bit confusing as there is no specific search engine, however usajobs.com does include NAF jobs. Start with an internet browser search including “NAF” and the base or geographic area where you wish to work. NAF job sites specific to military service branch are also searchable and listed below:

Air Force

www.usafservices.com

Army and Air Force Exchange Service

www.shopmyexchange.com/AboutExchange/Careers/index.htm

Army, Morale, Welfare and Recreation

www.usajobs.com or

www.fmwrctraineeprogram.com for the Army’s NAF management training program

Navy Exchange Service Command

www.mynavyexchange.com/work4us/index.html?#Section2

Navy, Morale, Welfare and Recreation

<https://qol.navyaims.net/personnel/employment.aspx>

Marine Corps Community Services

www.usmc-mccs.org/careers/

Geographically-specific NAF job sites

www.nafjobs.com offers a search engine for NAF jobs throughout the many bases in Hawaii and is not service-specific.

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Military Spouse FAQ’s

www.opm.gov/hr_practitioners/lawsregulations/appointingauthorities/MilitarySpouses.asp

U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Military Spouse Hiring Webcast

www.opm.gov/mediacenter/videos/OPM-Media-Center/Military-Spouse-Hiring-Webcast.aspx

Avue Central

www.avuecentral.com

Military OneSource, Federal Civil Service Employment for Military Spouses



www.militaryonesource.mil/MOS/f?p=MOS:CONTENT:0::::SV,UT,LG,CID,TID,SID,XID,COHE,MTYPE:Army%20Active,Member,EN,23.50.40.0.0.0.0.0.0,23.50.40.10.50.10.20.0.0,23.50.40.10.50.10.20.0.0,261817,Articles

Federal Resume Help from USAjobs Resource Center
<https://help.usajobs.gov/index.php/Most Effective Resumes>

Nonprofit Sector Resources

WHAT KINDS OF JOBS?

Nonprofits are mission or issue-oriented organizations that work to advance a cause rather than produce profits. They tend to be more flexible than corporate workplaces and generally prefer to hire staff with a wide range of experience and skills rather than very specific skill sets, making nonprofits a good fit with many military spouse work histories.

Pay is unlikely to be commensurate with corporate employers; however, nonprofits offer opportunities to learn new skills and gain new types of work experience, again suggesting a good fit with the many military spouses returning to the workforce after prolonged absences. Nonprofits may also be a good fit for you if it is important that you work for an organization that shares your values or advances an issue in which you believe.

Development/fundraising, marketing, grant writing, research, administrative and office management skills are common employment needs at nonprofits.

WHERE TO START

Military Spouse Employment Partnership is a joint initiative between the US government and private employers to increase opportunities for military spouses to obtain private sector careers. It serves as a web portal through which military spouses can search over 100,000 jobs listed by private and non-profit employers who have indicated a commitment to hire and retain military spouses.

<https://msejobs.militaryonesource.mil/>

Idealist.org is a nonprofit job search engine. You can look for nonprofit jobs, internships and nonprofit career advice.

www.idealist.org

NonProfit Job Seeker-offers nonprofit career advice as well as a nonprofit job search engine and resume uploader where nonprofit employers can search for you.

<http://www.nonprofitjobseeker.com>

TIPS FOR MILITARY SPOUSES APPLYING FOR NONPROFIT JOBS

1. Consider how your lived experience relates to a specific cause you are passionate about.

You might begin by asking yourself why you are drawn to nonprofit work. Often the types of causes you wish to advance are based on personal experience. Often that personal experience means you have advanced knowledge of the issue and possess a network of connections related to that cause.

2. Identify nonprofits near you.

National nonprofit organizations will have local chapters you can identify by going to the national homepage or online searching its name and your city.

[Http://greatnonprofits.org](http://greatnonprofits.org) allows you to search by city and state or zip code in order to find smaller nonprofits that focus on issues important to you. Visit the organization if it has an office that is open to the public. Join their social media sites and attend events sponsored by the nonprofit. Ask for an informational interview with a staff member.

3. Identify and use your networks.

Who do you know who has also been influenced by the cause you wish to advance? Who do they know? Join cause-related social networks and other online groups. See the Frequently Asked Questions section of this Toolkit for more advice on how to successfully network.

4. Consider volunteering or interning.

One of the best ways for military spouses to get “a foot in the door” at companies or organizations is by volunteering or interning. Nonprofits rely heavily on volunteers and interns. While volunteering may not mean an immediate paycheck, it often opens doors at that organization or for networking in a specific nonprofit issue area that can lead to a job a few months down the road. A great volunteer or intern who has proven to be a valuable asset is also more likely to be promoted from within or offered an unadvertised position.

CORPORATE and PRIVATE SECTOR RESOURCES

WHAT KINDS OF JOBS?

Private sector employment centers around privately-owned businesses. Though they range in size from small businesses with a few employees to large corporations, nearly all private sector jobs exist to support the development, manufacture, or sales of a product or service. Most corporate-level careers require an undergraduate degree are in fields like business management, information technology, marketing, and accounting, while smaller businesses are more likely to employ individuals with a wider range of experience ranging from businesses professionals described previously to sales clerks, laborers, and skilled tradespeople.

Common employment challenges for military spouses, such as periods of unemployment, short tenures at each job, and varied types of work experience, might not be the traditional path to corporate success—but they can be successfully overcome! And once you have secured a position and established yourself as a valuable worker, larger corporations are some of the most likely to help you transfer to a different office or telecommute should you have to move.

WHERE TO START

Military Spouse Employment Partnership—a joint initiative between the US government and private employers to increase opportunities for military spouses to obtain private sector careers. It serves as a web portal through which military spouses can search over 100,000 jobs listed by private and non-profit employers who have indicated a commitment to hire and retain military spouses.

<https://msejobs.militaryonesource.mil/>

Hiring Our Heroes/Military Spouse Business Alliance Career Fairs--A national campaign led by the US Chamber of Commerce organizing job fairs across the country, including job fairs with job search training exclusively for military spouses.

<http://www.uschamber.com/hiringourheroes>

TIPS FOR MILITARY SPOUSES APPLYING FOR CORPORATE JOBS

1. Identify military-friendly corporations and hiring assistance.

Try applying to one of the corporations that has identified itself as supporting veterans and military spouses, such as those participating in programs listed above like MSEP and Hiring Our Heroes.

2. Identify and leverage existing connections.

Use a job search engine like www.simplyhired.com to identify your LinkedIn connections and Facebook friends who are connected to a potential employer.

3. See the Frequently Asked Questions section of this Toolkit.

Use the Toolkit to ensure your resume, cover letter, and interview skills are at their best. The FAQ's section offers in-depth details on how to overcome military spouse biases and present yourself in the best possible light.

Service and Retail Sector Resources

WHAT KINDS OF JOBS?

The job searching resources and advice in this section focus on military spouses looking for more immediate employment. Some military spouses prefer not to commit to a specific career path or a full time career; however, they desire the numerous and varied benefits of employment. Others may feel that the best job is one that requires a shorter application process, enabling them to start working right away.

Many jobs offering more immediate employment are in the service and retail industries. Many employers in these industries have outlets all over the country, making it easier to accrue seniority and promotions despite moves. If healthcare benefits and 9 to 5 schedules are less important than part-time work and flexible hours, service and retail sector employment opportunities might be right for you.

WHERE TO START

Two types of strategies are most effective when looking for work quickly: top-down and bottom-up. To maximize your likelihood of finding employment, consider using both techniques. Both techniques require showing up in person, dressed professionally, with a resume. Bring along a separate piece of paper that lists your personal and professional references, their addresses and phone numbers. Many jobs will require you to fill out their own job application form and you can use your resume and contact list to quickly complete these forms. Always call your references before you begin your job hunting to ask them if it is ok for you to use them as references and to gently confirm they are willing to provide you with an exceptional reference.

A top-down strategy entails doing some research on the internet to familiarize yourself with local businesses and organizations in order to identify possible employers and to determine who is hiring. Then, make a list of potential employers to visit in person. If appropriate, you can create a few separate versions of your resume that are tailored to specific positions or types of employment. For example, if you are applying for a bartending job but have spent the past few years in a different sort of job, you will want to highlight past restaurant and bartending experience rather than listing your past employers chronologically. See the sample resume section of this Toolkit for examples of this and more resume strategies.

To begin your search using the top-down strategy try:

<http://local.yahoo.com> – Type in your town or city to familiarize yourself with the types of services, businesses, and organizations operating in your area. Identify attractive potential employers and determine who is hiring. Apply online, call to request an interview, or apply in person based on the instructions cited in the ad. If the hours for applying aren't given, or



if you are not sure whether the establishment is hiring, never go during peak hours or just before closing. Try to identify quieter, less busy periods to maximize the attention you and your application will receive.

In contrast to the top-down strategy, often the fastest way to find service or retail sector employment is to hit the pavement in areas filled with these types of businesses. Taking a few hours to walk through local shopping malls and higher-end outdoor shopping precincts enables you to identify businesses advertising employment opportunities in their shop windows. As you identify businesses who are hiring, you can stop in to observe what is required of the employees and test out the work environment to determine whether or not to apply. A variation on the bottom-up strategy is to brainstorm all the service and retail establishments you frequent—chances are you already have existing relationships with sales or management staff and are familiar with the product or service offered.

As noted above, contact your references in advance, dress professionally, and bring along your resume and reference sheet. In both top-down and bottom-up strategies, applying in person for most service and retail sector jobs tends to be the fastest way to get hired—unless the employment advertisement specifically requests an alternate application method. If you've decided to apply, take a few moments to speak with an employee before asking for an application. Try to build a bit of a relationship, ask how that person likes the job. A brief conversation with a staff member often results in a better understanding of a businesses' employment needs and challenges. This provides an opportunity to tailor your responses on the application or in an interview to highlight how you are a good fit for the position.

It is usually a good idea to complete the application immediately. Find a quiet spot outside of the business to complete the application and when returning it gently ask if there is a manager available to speak with you now. If the manager is unavailable, find out when the manager works, thank the staff member, and let them know you will follow up in person when the manager will be working. If the staff member tells you they are not hiring—but you feel you are a good fit at the establishment—ask if you can leave a resume, find out when the manager will be working, and follow up in person after a few days.



1. Make an appointment to see a military family employment assistance professional on your base.

These offices usually maintain searchable databases of local job openings and are staffed with professionals who are familiar with the local employment situation. You can often sign up for regular emails that include job openings, upcoming employment fairs, and other employment resources. Additionally, these people are a great resource to obtain insight on which local employers are currently hiring.

The names of family member employment assistance programs vary by branch of military service; however, you can find a phone number and location by doing an internet search that includes the phrase “military family employment assistance” and the name of the base where your service member is stationed.

2. Familiarize yourself with different types of job search engines.

There are broad search engines like www.indeed.com that search numerous job posting locations like company websites, associations, and newspapers, listing all the job openings in one place. You can also save your job search and it will send you new jobs that fit your search parameters. When available, your search results will include workplace reviews from current and past employees—a very valuable asset to military spouses who are often new to an area and unfamiliar with each potential employer’s workplace culture.

Specialized job search engines will enable you to narrow your results to specific fields. Enter “retail jobs search engine” or “restaurant jobs search engine” to find numerous sector-specific job search engines and online job hunting resources tailored to these sectors.

3. Consider Federal Non-Appropriated Funds Jobs

There are often many service and retail employment opportunities on your local base. Benefits and wages tend to be higher, and military spouses are eligible for a hiring preference. See the Federal and Public Sector Resources pages in this Toolkit for details.

Sample Resumes

Below please find two resumes that effectively incorporate volunteer work as professional experience. The resumes also highlight how to use volunteer work as a strategy for ameliorating the impact of absences from the professional workforce. Blue Star Families has found that these absences—frequently resulting from the demands of a military-family lifestyle—are one of the greatest, and most often cited, challenges to military spouse employment.



555 Germantown Road, Annapolis, MD 55555 • 555.555.5555 • Sophia_Spouse@gmail.com

Sophia Spouse

Objective

To advance an established career in sales and management.

Professional Accomplishments

Management

Chairman of a 5 member Scholarship Committee
Family Services Coordinator responsible to 700+ families
Supervisor of 9 volunteer leaders
Founder of Career Coaching Home-based business
Advised Senior Executives on Family Support, Policy, and Implementation of Programs

Fund Raising/Fiscal Management

Raised \$2000+ for non-profit in support of families of deployed soldiers
Raised \$500+ for Scholarship Fund
Distribute \$10,000 for Scholarship Fund
Manage Budget for Small Business

Training and Development

Facilitated training for volunteers at various locations; Approximately 100+
Developed Leadership workshops for Volunteers
Developed a Reunion Workshop for Spouses of returning Soldiers
Facilitated a Financial Planning program

Project Management

Managed bi-monthly Volunteer/Family activities for 29 months
Developed a Haunted House; 250+ attended
Facilitated Leadership change for Family Services organization

Employment History

2011 to present	Chairman, Scholarship Committee	United Way, Annapolis, MD
2005 to present	Owner	Military Spouse Job Solutions, Annapolis, MD
2009 to 2011	Family Services Coordinator/Advisor to Senior Management	Army Emergency Relief, Ft. Hood, TX

Education

2003	Master of Arts, Organizational Leadership	Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA
1989	Bachelor of Science, Administration of Justice	Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA

References

References are gladly provided upon request



Jane Joe

555 Mariners Road ■ Portsmouth, VA ■ 555-555-5555 ■ jane.joe@gmail.com

Summary

- Experienced finance professional seeking employment with desire to further career in financial counseling.
- Diverse international and cultural experience. Fluent Spanish speaker.
- Excellent communicator and project manager with strong ability to quickly adapt to new situations.

Experience

Navy/ Marine Corps Relief Society - Portsmouth, VA

Caseworker, 01/11-present

Supported Relief Society's efforts to provide financial counseling and assistance to members of the Navy and Marine Corps and their families. *Selected Achievements:*

- Provided financial and budget counselling to service members and their families by developing budgets and teaching skills to improve financial self-sufficiency
- Assessed and delivered appropriate level of client assistance by independently assessing and responding to needs of clients in a professional, thorough, and timely manner
- Mastered and improved existing registration process for interviewing new clients and provided professional and clerical support to senior management

FINRA Foundation Military Spouse Fellowship

Accredited Financial Counselor Certification (pursuing), 12/10-present

Selected for fellowship program that provides education and training for financial counselor certification. Currently pursuing certificate requirements with expected completion date of 06/12.

U.S. Bank - San Diego, CA

Credit Analyst, 05/08-08/10

Used finance and analysis skills and knowledge to perform credit evaluations on new and existing loans.

Selected Achievements:

- Conducted thorough credit analyses by gathering, analyzing and interpreting multiple forms of information on existing and prospective customers and portfolios
- Made detailed lending recommendations to loan officers and committees regarding the extension of credit on new, renewal, and extension loans
- Proactively monitored customer accounts and loan portfolios for signs of risk or potential loss the result of which maximized credit quality and decreased losses



- Maintained control over credit standings of accounts and furnished timely information relative to credit inquiries

Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society - Rota, Spain

Client Services Assistant, 12/05-03/07

Supported Relief Society's efforts to provide financial counseling and assistance to members of the Navy and Marine Corps and their families. *Selected Achievements:*

- Greeted clients in a professional, friendly, and objective manner and guided them in initial registration and intake process
- Assisted clients with Quick Assist Loans and in determining appropriate paperwork required for interview
- Effectively and calmly managed incoming phone calls and answered general questions in a fast-paced environment

USAA – Jacksonville, FL

Mortgage Loan Advisor, 09/03-05/05

Managed large volume of loan applications and served as primary contact with all involved parties on individual loans from the origination to closing. *Selected Achievements:*

- Ensured that all loan applications were complete and accurate through verification of income, employment, assets, down payments, debts, and property values
- Reviewed and evaluated title examination reports to determine loan eligibility and proper ownership
- Coordinated and prepared pre-closing files by effectively collaborating with title companies, clients, and attorneys

Claims Adjuster, 08/02-08/03

Quickly and thoroughly learned claims processes and procedures for providing service to USAA members with auto and property claims. *Selected Achievements:*

- Investigated auto and property claims presented by or against insured clients to ensure claim validity, legal liability and to determine settlement value
- Assisted with establishing appropriate claims reserves, evaluating settlement of claims, and completing loss reports

Education

University of Tampa-Tampa, FL

Bachelor's Degree – International Business (May 2002)

Minor – Spanish

References are gladly provided upon request.

Get Involved!

We realize that this list of volunteer positions is not exhaustive and will continue to develop it with input from our members and military spouses just like you! If you would like to suggest a position that is not currently listed, provide feedback, or if you have questions please email our Blue Star Careers Program Manager Cristin Orr Shiffer at cristin@bluestarfam.org