

MILITARY SPOUSES

FACTSHEET

About VETS

DOL VETS Prepares, Provides, Protects and Promotes

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) is the federal lead for employment and training programs. Within DOL, the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) mission is to prepare America's veterans, service members, and military spouses for meaningful careers, provide them with employment resources and expertise, protect their employment rights, and promote their employment opportunities.

Military Spouses

Service members make significant sacrifices in service of their country, and their spouses and families play a vital role in supporting them and sharing in these sacrifices. Military families often experience frequent relocations, which can present challenges for military spouses in finding and sustaining meaningful careers. More than one-third (35.1%¹) of active-duty service families have children. Due to deployments, geographical separations, or unpredictable work schedules, military spouses regularly assume the role of primary caregivers which may limit their employment opportunities.

During a service member's career, 81%² of military families experience a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move. The most significant challenges encountered during these relocations are finding employment and loss of income. Furthermore, 67%³ of spouses report that a lack of childcare has impacted their ability to pursue employment or educational opportunities. Unemployment significantly increases the likelihood of experiencing food insecurity and economic instability. Research indicates that spouses contributing less than 50% of the household's income are at greater risk of experiencing food insecurity.⁴ Military spouses face a variety of challenges, such as securing full-time employment, accessing childcare services, and navigating employment resources (e.g., professional license portability), all of which impact their economic well-being.⁵ This factsheet provides an overview of military spouses in the labor force, along with resources available to support them.



¹ [2022 Demographics Profile of the Military Community](#) (militaryonesource.mil)

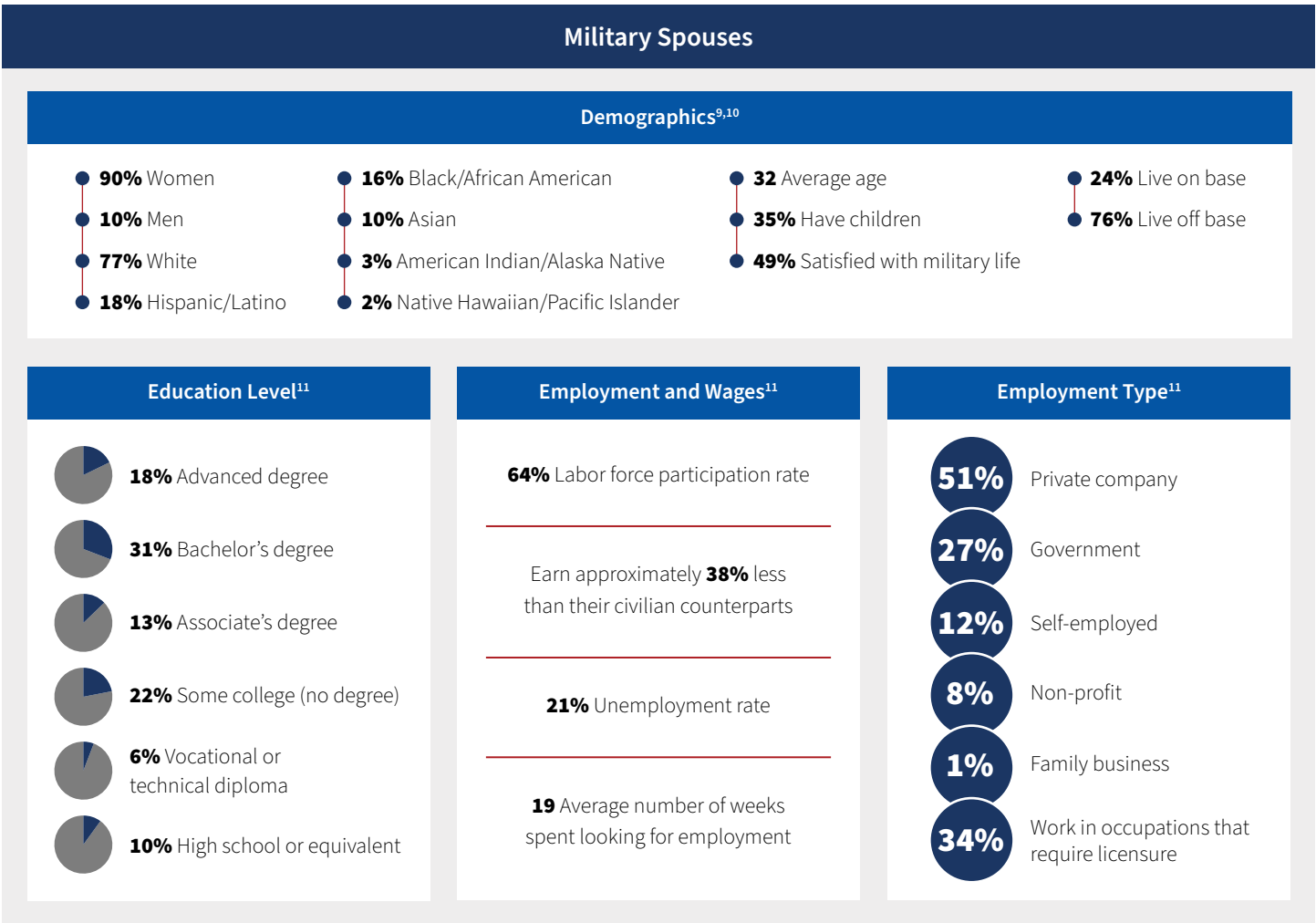
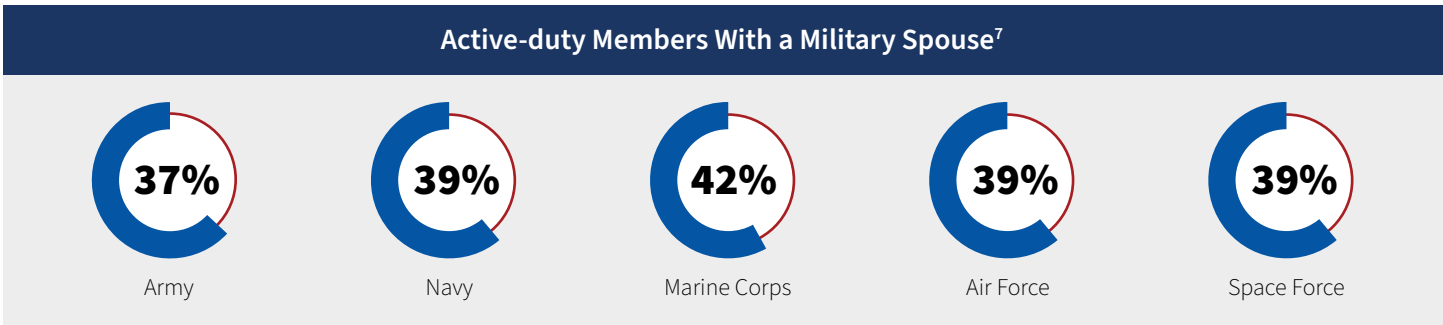
² [2021 Active-duty Spouse Survey \(ADSS\): Results](#) (defense.gov)

³ [THE FORCE BEHIND THE FORCE - A Business Case for Leveraging Military Spouse Talent](#) (syrr.edu)

⁴ [2021 Active-duty Spouse Survey \(ADSS\): Results](#) (defense.gov)

⁵ [2021 Survey of Active Duty Spouses](#) (militaryonesource.mil)

Active-duty Military Spouse Statistics⁶



⁶ These statistics specifically focus on Department of Defense branch active-duty spouses, as they constitute the majority of military spouses and have the most comprehensive data available.

⁷ [2022 Demographics Profile of the Military Community](#) (militaryonesource.mil)

⁸ [2022 Demographics Profile Data](#) (militaryonesource.mil)

⁹ [2022 Demographics Profile of the Military Community](#) (militaryonesource.mil)

¹⁰ Spouses may identify as multiple race groups. Hispanic/Latino ethnicity may include any race. Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.

¹¹ [2021 Survey of Active Duty Spouses](#) (militaryonesource.mil)

Resources

Below is a list of resources offered by the Department of Labor (DOL) that can assist military spouses.

VETS

Transition Employment Assistance for Military Spouses and Caregivers (TEAMS)

[TEAMS](#) is a series of instructor-led DOL employment workshops that extend DOL's [Transition Assistance Program](#) (TAP) to assist military spouses and caregivers as they transition with their service member out of the service or to another installation, while they plan and prepare for their job search in pursuit of their employment goals. These workshops offer training on essential employment skills specifically tailored to the unique circumstances of military spouses and caregivers. VETS offers these instructor-led, virtual workshops at various times to accommodate the diverse schedules of military spouses and caregivers stationed worldwide.

Off-Base Transition Training (OBTT)

[OBTT](#) provides TAP to veterans, including those veterans currently serving in the Reserve Component (National Guard and Reserve members), and their spouses at locations other than active military installations to improve employment-related outcomes in areas with high veteran unemployment. OBTT offers ten two-hour and three one-hour instructor-led employment skills and workforce development workshops, available in both classroom and virtual formats.

Employment Navigator and Partnership Program (ENPP)

[ENPP](#) provides one-on-one career assistance to transitioning service members (TSMs) and their spouses at select military installations worldwide. Provided outside of the formal DOL TAP classroom instruction, Employment Navigators assist TSMs and their spouses in securing meaningful and lasting post-separation careers.

Employment Navigator staff, in collaboration with partner organizations, work with ENPP clients to assist them with their resumes, provide career direction, and provide additional employment-related personalized support. ENPP partners are required to select a primary service from nine possible categories, which include: digital employment opportunity matching, training services, employment mentorship, hiring events, employment networking, Registered Apprenticeship opportunities, referrals to employment opportunities, placement services, and wrap-around services. Services are provided at no cost to TSMs or their spouses through no-cost agreements between DOL and partner organizations.

Additional DOL Resources

American Job Centers (AJCs)

Military spouses can access direct assistance at approximately 2,250 Department of Labor-funded [AJCs](#) located throughout the country. Additionally, military spouses who have experienced job loss or unemployment as a result of a spouse's relocation may qualify for dislocated worker services offered through AJCs. Further, AJCs can provide access to assistance for military spouses in understanding their state's Unemployment Insurance (UI) Trailing Spouse laws and helping them determine if they qualify for UI benefits. AJCs can provide access to personalized guidance that can help spouses navigate state-specific regulations and ensure they meet eligibility requirements during relocation.

CareerOneStop

[CareerOneStop](#), sponsored by the Department of Labor, provides a comprehensive platform for accessing free online tools, information, and resources related to career development, training, and job search assistance.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

[WOTC](#) is a federal tax credit available to employers who invest in American job seekers who have consistently faced certain barriers to employment. Employers may meet their business needs and claim a tax credit if they hire an individual who is in a WOTC [targeted group](#). Military Spouses aren't directly addressed under WOTC; however, if they fit into any of the targeted groups, then the business which employs them may qualify.

Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program (OFCCP)

[OFCCP](#) supports veteran spouses in employment through the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act (VEVRAA). VEVRAA's implementing regulations prohibit federal contractors from discriminating in employment on the basis of veteran status – a protection that includes not only protected veterans but also their spouses and other family members.

Wage and Hour Division (WHD)

[WHD](#) offers information and resources to help workers understand their rights under federal labor laws. This includes key protections related to minimum wage, overtime pay, family and medical leave, farmworkers, and workers employed on federally funded or assisted service and construction projects. WHD also provides resources for workers who believe their rights have been violated. It offers guidance on how to file complaints, access back wages, and navigate employment rights as outlined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and other worker protection laws.

[FMLA](#) provides protections for military families by allowing eligible employees to take Qualifying Exigency Leave. This enables eligible employees to access up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave to handle specific needs arising from a family member's active-duty status, such as managing childcare or attending military events. Additionally, employees may also take up to 26 weeks of Military Caregiver Leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness incurred during active-duty. These provisions are designed to help employees balance work and family obligations while maintaining job security and health benefits

Women's Bureau (WB)

WB's [childcare resources](#) page highlights the importance of affordable, quality childcare in supporting working families. It provides information on initiatives and policies aimed at expanding access to childcare, which is essential for military spouses who often face additional employment challenges due to relocations and caregiving responsibilities.

Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations Grant Program (WANTO)

[WANTO](#) provides funding to help recruit, train, and retain women in high-demand, nontraditional careers, including construction, manufacturing, and cybersecurity. The grants support organizations that provide technical assistance to employers and labor unions, including supporting the development of women-focused apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, aiming to close the gender gap in industries where women are underrepresented. This initiative is especially beneficial for military spouses seeking to enter or advance within these fields.

