



The Veterans & Military Spouses Licensure Online Dialogue

May 29 to June 15, 2018
Final Report



Women's Bureau
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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Introduction to the Dialogue

The following report outlines the results of the ePolicyWorks' "[Veterans & Military Spouses Licensure](#)" [National Online Dialogue](#). The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy (OASP), and the Women's Bureau (WB) partnered to host this dialogue to gather information and input on the effects of occupational regulation and licensing requirements on the employment opportunities for veterans, including disabled veterans, and military spouses and what can be done to ease those requirements.

This dialogue was divided into two topics areas:

1. Veterans
2. Military Spouses

Dialogue participants were asked to share their ideas and comments on how to lessen the burden of occupational regulations and ensure that veterans and their spouses are able to successfully pursue their careers.

The results of the "Veterans & Military Spouses Licensure" online dialogue can be found at [VETS.ePolicyWorks.org](#).

Outreach Efforts

The Veterans & Military Spouses Licensure" Online Dialogue looked to veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses to share their perspective. In order to ensure a broad range of participants, ePolicyWorks engaged in a multitude of strategic outreach efforts, including emails and social media posts. Email blasts were sent to previous ePolicyWorks dialogue participants, along with a large number of organizations that represent veterans, such as Veteran Service Organizations. In addition, ePolicyWorks emailed employer groups, disability advocacy groups, and other stakeholder groups, along with vocational rehabilitation and other service providers, including veteran transition training program providers that help veterans and military spouses find and retain work. Employers that have hired veterans and military spouses were also targeted and sent numerous correspondences encouraging them to participate.

Total Dialogue Outreach Emails

- Email Blasts: 15
- Emails Delivered: 24,137

- Emails Opened: 4,154 (17.2 percent open rate)
- Total number of clicks on links in emails (excluding multiple clicks of the same link): 556

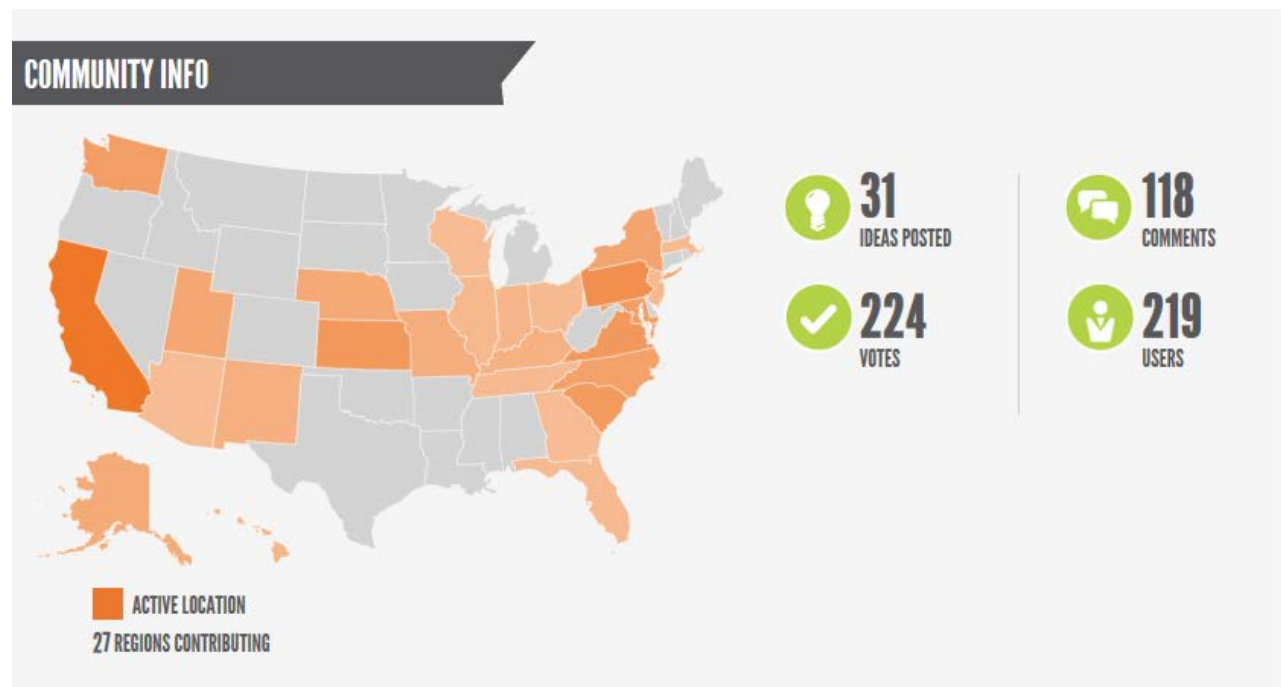
Total @ePolicyWorks Dialogue Tweets

- Approximately 20% of the traffic to the dialogue came from social media outreach including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.
- ePolicyWorks Tweets promoting the dialogue: 17
- Number of retweets of ePolicyWorks VETS dialogue promotions: 14
- Number of likes of ePolicyWorks VETS dialogue promotions: 18
- Number of impressions of ePolicyWorks VETS dialogue promotions: 3,116

Participant Summary and Dialogue Activity

The “Veterans & Military Spouses Licensure” Dialogue opened for participation at 8 a.m. ET on May 29, 2018 and closed at midnight on June 15, 2018. Below are the community map of participants, statistics on the number of dialogue visitors, users and participants, and personal information provided by registrants.

Map of Active Participants across the United States



*Users are the number of individuals who registered during the dialogue period.

Visitor and Participants during the Dialogue

- Total VETS community members (including those that have participated in past ePolicyWorks VETS dialogues): 260
- Registrants for the Veterans & Military Spouses Licensure Dialogue: 219
- Registrants who submitted ideas, comments or votes: 89
- Total unique visitors* during the dialogue: 2,001
- Total page views: 7,373
- Average pages per visit: 2.9
- Average visit duration: 2:49
- Returning visitors: 87 percent
- Bounce rate (percentage of participants who leave after viewing the first page of the dialogue): 5.81% percent

**Visitors are individuals who have viewed the dialogue but may have not registered.*

Dialogue Registrant Profiles

Registrants were asked to answer a series of questions. The following is a breakdown of their responses.

Stakeholder Group	Number of Participants	Percentage of Dialogue Participants
Veteran	88	30%
Other	58	20%
Spouse of Active Duty Military	58	20%
Federal Government Representative	36	12%
State Government Representative	24	8%
Transitioning Service Member	18	6%
VSO	10	3%
Total Participants by Stakeholder Group	292	

Current Employer Type	Number of Participants	Percentage of Dialogue Participants
Federal Government	46	22%
Private Business	38	18%
State Government	31	15%
Unemployed	31	15%

Current Employer Type	Number of Participants	Percentage of Dialogue Participants
Other	30	14%
Non-profit Organization	30	14%
Student	3	1%
Total Participants by Employer Type	209	

Current State	Number of Participants	Percentage of Dialogue Participants
California	19	9%
Virginia	12	6%
Maryland	11	5%
Georgia	10	5%
District of Columbia	10	5%
Florida	10	5%
North Carolina	10	5%
Washington	9	4%
Texas	8	4%
New York	6	3%
Alaska	6	3%
Tennessee	6	3%
Illinois	6	3%
South Carolina	6	3%
Michigan	5	2%
New Jersey	5	2%
Massachusetts	5	2%
Pennsylvania	4	2%
New Mexico	4	2%
Ohio	4	2%
Colorado	4	2%
Hawaii	4	2%
Maine	3	1%
Louisiana	3	1%
Kansas	3	1%
Oklahoma	3	1%
Arizona	3	1%
West Virginia	3	1%
Mississippi	3	1%
Utah	3	1%
Connecticut	2	1%

Current State	Number of Participants	Percentage of Dialogue Participants
New Hampshire	2	1%
Iowa	2	1%
Idaho	2	1%
Delaware	2	1%
Wisconsin	2	1%
Missouri	2	1%
Indiana	1	0%
Oregon	1	0%
Rhode Island	1	0%
Montana	1	0%
Nevada	1	0%
Nebraska	1	0%
Arkansas	1	0%
Minnesota	0	0%
Vermont	0	0%
Alabama	0	0%
Kentucky	0	0%
South Dakota	0	0%
Wyoming	0	0%
North Dakota	0	0%

Number of Ideas, Votes and Comments per Topic

In total, 31 ideas, 224 votes, and 118 comments were left by 89 registrants throughout the duration of the dialogue.

Veterans

- Total Ideas: 14
- Total Comments: 44
- Total Votes: 86

Military Spouses

- Total Ideas: 17
- Total Comments: 74
- Total Votes: 138

Top Ideas by Vote Contributed by Dialogue Participants

Participants in the “Veterans & Military Spouses Licensure” online dialogue enjoyed a robust discussion on ways to ease occupational licensing requirements. Listed here are the top ideas by number of votes. To view the comments for these idea or the full list of ideas, visit <https://VETS.ePolicyWorks.org/a/ideas/recent/campaign-filter/active>.

Veterans Topic

1. Veteran credentials upon military separation or retirement

14 votes and 6 comments

I believe that every position held while on active duty directly correlates to its civilian counter parts. The military needs to take an active role in ensuring that a line of credentials is established for every known position titles. These credentials must be convertible and acceptable in all work environments.

Comments on this idea:

Moderator Dan: This is an interesting idea; I would like to study it more. I think that some military training for various tasks is different from civilian training for the same task. So, for instance, someone who is trained to drive a truck in the military is trained to do slightly different tasks from a civilian truck driver. One related matter you may find interesting is that the Department of Labor is giving out grants to fund what is called a "bridge curriculum" -- education for vets that bridges the gap between military credentials and civilian credentials, so as to provide that missing piece.

Jacqueline Blaydes: Not all states have the same criteria for transferring skills and/or credentials from the Military into the civilian sector. A few examples are Heavy Equipment Operators, CDL drivers and Medical professionals. I agree that there needs to be some standardized way across the country to allow transitioning veterans and their qualified spouses to find sustainable employment without the loss of income and time it takes to meet recerts/requals.

Stephen Lew: SL - Back in the day, it was said that if you retired from the military with 20yrs or more that's equivalent to a BA degree. Today, you're lucky to get credit for BCT at a college.

Darcia Perini: Mike - the construction trades - electrical journeyman license exam application eligibility requirements vary between States, some require documented minimum number of hours worked under Master Electrical license holder to apply to take the State Journeyman License exam while other States such as Oregon require specific number of related-instruction (formal in-class school approved by DOL) hours plus a specific number of on-the-job training hours - upon inquiry with OR electrical licensing board regarding Veteran application credits

learned veteran would need 16,000 hours of related military electrical building experience with written documentation from military detailing type and years of electrical building experience - DOL approved apprenticeship training school programs typically require 4 calendar years of related-instruction school attendance nights mainly (some have allowances for skip-test to start apprenticeship school at 2nd or 3rd year level) - would be great to see a defined veterans experience "skip test" allowance to meet JM license application requirements and/or to see establishment of have accelerated/compressed training school programs focusing on low test result areas of the skip-tests.

2. Vet Licensing

13 votes and 10 comments

Upon transitioning out of the military, every veteran should receive the civilian license(s)/certification(s) equal to their military training. (This should be part of TAPS). I would take this one step further. Since the federal government is the country's largest employer, each veteran should also be provided a list of federal job, for which they are qualified, and asked to select one. They should be given 6 months to change their mind if they choose not to accept a federal position at the time of discharge.

Comments on this idea:

Moderator Mike: Shannon, Thank you for your comment. You bring up a couple of great ideas. Upon your transition, were you ever offered the opportunity to take the optional 2 day Career Technical Training Track? I would be very interested in other comments from the field on this topic.

Shannon Eidem: @moderatormike No, a 2-day Career Technical Training Track was never mentioned.

Aliya N. Jenkins: @moderatormike When I got out of the AF I was never even told about the VA benefits I was entitled to or how to claim injuries while on active duty! This is something that should be done in TAPS, which sadly STILL isn't being done!

Moderator Mike: @divaliya Good afternoon Aliya...First Thank you for your service. I am thankful for your comment. This dialogue is specifically about Licensing Portability challenges but your comment is very appreciated. I am not sure when you went thru TAP but the VA has a day within the 5 TAP and they do talk about VA Benefits and Claims...I would encourage you to reach out to the VA now and see what can be done for you...Again I appreciate your comments and your Service.

Nancy Shafer: Many of the federal and/or contract positions require a bachelor's degree (or higher) when in reality the duties and KSA required do not require the B.A. The pay is often lower than what a transitioning service member expects. Better education of the civilian culture during TAPs would be very beneficial.

Shannon Eidem: @nancy.shafer Actually, most federal jobs ask for a Bachelor's OR experience OR a combination. The feds usually have the ability to higher at or above the grade level posted, depending on your qualifications. I have assisted several veterans apply for federal jobs where their experience has qualified them for a hirer GS than posted.

Nancy Shafer: Shannon: Thanks for your comment. I most definitely encourage all job seekers to look at the "or" and preference does NOT mean required. Unfortunately, many of the contractor jobs in our local area require a Master's when a Bachelor's degree (or less is sufficient.) and pay very poorly in relation to civilian positions. The civilian positions quite often require a degree and years of experience (in my and co-worker's opinions) above of what is really needed to perform the essential duties of the position.

Shannon Eidem: @nancy.shafer Hi Nancy, providing a federal job to discharging service members doesn't have to follow the current hiring practices. The jobs offered to the veterans should be based on years of service and skill sets. I expect OPM could devise a special hiring authority that would address the higher degrees and pay issues. The point is, if the federal government really wants to put an end to veteran unemployment and homelessness, they should step up to the plate and set the example. The military trained us in our "craft" and taught us to be leaders; the federal agencies (and civilian businesses) should acknowledge our training and experience (as well as the sacrifices of many of our service members and their families to this nation). I don't think a decent paying job is too much to ask.

3. Transitioning Military Program

10 votes and 4 comments

As a previous US Army Recruiter, I learned of the US Army Partnership for Youth Success program (PaYS). Now, working at VA, we are reaching out to those with healthcare occupations transiting to build a bridge to work at VA. An example is Waste Management and Trucking Companies, until recently, Truck Drivers would exit the military without a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). I learned to drive a 44 Passenger Bus in 1987 in Panama, but received no equivalent certification. If Waste Management desires to hire truck drivers upon their completed tour, then we owe it to the service member to provide a means to the CDL. That should be done for Medics, Corpsmen, engineers, etc. If there is a civilian equivalent, it is the government's responsibility to guide the young member to a proper career path that improves

success after service. Revamp PaYS, connect Transition Assistance Office, Education Centers and all service equivalents to meet this need.

Comments on this idea:

Darren Sherrard: I hate to be negative, but it seems to me that DoD has never shown a desire to do anything but retain members. Every incentive at local level is about retention. Only when commanders are accountable for transition success, also, will results be seen.

Moderator Mike: Darren... You are not being negative and what this dialogue requires is transparency and honesty in a professional manner. I appreciate that you are doing that. We understand there is some frustration, but we are looking for where the challenges are and where we may be able to address those challenges. Thank you for being responsive and I would encourage others to join this and share their successes or their issues they are facing.

Michelene M Manion: My 24-yr-USMC-LtCol (Retd 1964) father, Thomas A. Manion (1919-1991) & his wife/my mother, Mary Margaret Grabus Manion (1919-1998), served U.S. during WWII, Korean & Viet Nam conflicts, while they raised son & 3 daughters having special needs. Our family moved about every 2-yrs. into about a dozen states & Italy.

My parents needed more transition services for the family in the military & the following 25-yrs. that my dad returned for court reporter & teacher certifications.

This would have empowered my parents to further help themselves through trauma & stresses with resources they needed, but was not affordable, accessible or available, of peer support groups and counselors for the consequences of: "self-medicating" from PTSD/"Shell-Shocked" (instigated from 1944 Saipan campaign & hospitalization); moving away from immediate family support; alcoholic & mental illness denials; sexual molestation by family member, &; unmet medical/therapeutic children services.

4. State Agencies

6 votes and 4 comments

What you shouldn't do is put it in the hands of a State agency, for some reason they step outside the "spirit" of what the program is geared towards and find ways to make it benefit themselves or waste the funding all together.

Comments on this idea:

John O'Brien: In Kansas City, the City is authorized to validate and enroll people into the DBE program (Disadvantaged Business Enterprise) in many, many cases because the city has a mandated percentage of DBE businesses to award on contracting they have awarded

companies DBE status claiming they are American Indian and they are not and in some cases have openly admitted they were not American Indian, Flick Seeds, Reynolds Electric are just two examples(both remain DBE certified), they have given MBE and DBE status to several Veteran owned companies one just recently indicted under a "rent a Vet" scheme, another was recently sent to prison. It's not that the City is not aware, its simply that they don't act on these issues because like the MCI Airport construction project they have set the goals under pressure of the local Chambers at 40% minority MBE, DBE, WBE participation knowing full well that those numbers cannot possibly be obtained

Moderator Mike: John....Thank you for providing this very detailed example. It is important in this dialogue that we gain an understanding of some the challenges that are out there...Do you have a recommendation on how to fix an issue like the one you presented?

John Obrien: Put together a panel of community organizations that are knowledgeable when it comes to certification and ALL races should be represented, we are not being "all inclusive" or "Diverse" simply because we invite one or two blacks or Hispanics to the table.

KCMO believes that community recognition for American Indians simply means they hold themselves out as American Indian to the community, we tried very hard to explain that a CDIB is simply that: A certificate (piece of paper) of degree (how much) Indian blood. It's just a document proving you have Indian blood and tells you how much you have. This is important for contracting purposes because you should be at least 1/4 blood quantum and in most cases come from a Federally recognized tribe. That does not happen here.

Tribal Membership or what is referred to as "Community recognition" means you have a card from the Nation you claim citizenship in, that is community recognition.

Missouri does not recognize State Tribes and yet they give people DBE status that say they are, the Federal Govt. is not aware of this because it is left in the hands of the City HR person to certify for the Feds. They believe that "Indians" are just "Indians" much like African Americans are simply Africans, they don't understand there are numerous differences in the American Indian community

5. Transition out of Military

6 votes and 5 comments

We all agree that many veterans acquire multiple marketable skills that will translate into the civilian workforce. The military to civilian skills translators is a good start so the transitioning veteran will have some idea of what kind of job they can apply for once they transition. What is the military did the heavy lifting? I know that transitioning units assist in identifying the translatable workforce skill set. However, what if the military confers related certification to the

transitioning veteran so they do not have to waste important time in their life gaining that certification. As an example. A soldier is working as an HR specialist in the military for a number of years. Why can't the military work with an organization such as SHRM to confer an appropriate certificate to the soldier upon his/her release? At least there will be standardization. Just a thought!

Comments on this idea:

Moderator Mike: Thanks for your comment are greatly appreciated. The Coast Guard, Marine Corp, Navy and just recently the Army are using United Service Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP). The only requirement is for the Service Member to sign up, put in the MOS and this will generate applicable apprenticeships. Once they sign up, the only requirement is to log their hours. When they complete the program, they will receive a Journeyman Certificate from Department of Labor. Your comments bring up a topic that is being discussed not only at DOL but also within the DOD. I look forward to seeing other comments on this topic.

Moderator Dan: It is worth noting that the Department of Labor recently announced a grant opportunity for educational organizations to design "bridge curricula" -- that is, education which is supposed to serve as a bridge from military training to civilian careers. So, for instance, if a member of the military is taught 90% of the material they need for a licensed civilian profession, the bridge curriculum is supposed to provide the other 10%. I do not know how many educational organizations applied for these grants.

Jessi: Dan - Thank you - where would I find this information? And do you know what criteria the institution must meet? Over 6 years ago I launched the USA's First CCE, BCC-Approved Coach Certification Program and CEU program that trained individuals to assist Service Members and Veterans in transitioning from the military career to a civilian setting. It was initially designed for civilians who were working with veterans yet over the years I find my classes mostly veterans.

Nereida: One of places that I worked was ABC Chapters, I know for a fact that we all need to have a stable pay check and most important to be able to apply our skills on jobs. I do believe that <http://www.abc.org/> will be a great place to start, the labor commission have a record of the skills and the certifications of our veterans to whom they have trained with dedications, and now are ready to apply their knowledge in the companies that have the need for professionals. I know they all have to take State Test to be certified for their trade. I think that is the Department of Labor have the responsibility for their certifications. Service members and their families have the right to exercise the same responsibilities as any other certified electrician, welder, plumber, pipe fitter, nurse, Dr. Counselor, therapist, etc. I think is only fair to provide the families the options to continuing their careers without the struggle of staring

over another path. Most important to provide a list of this local organizations, so they can recognize a best job placement for their certifications.

Michelene M Manion: My 24-yr-USMC-LtCol (Retd 1964) father, Thomas A. Manion (1919-1991) & his wife/my mother, Mary Margaret Grabus Manion (1919-1998), served U.S. during WWII, Korean & Viet Nam conflicts, while they raised son & 3 daughters having special needs. Our family moved about every 2-yrs. into about a dozen states & Italy.

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This would have empowered my parents to further help themselves through trauma & stresses with resources they needed, but was not affordable, accessible or available, of peer support groups and counselors for the consequences of: "self-medicating" from PTSD/"Shell-Shocked" (instigated from 1944 Saipan campaign & hospitalization); moving away from immediate family support; alcoholic & mental illness denials; sexual molestation by family member, &; unmet medical/therapeutic children services.

Military Spouses Topic

1. How we talk about military spouse licensing

18 votes and 6 comments

I'm really encouraged to see this issue given attention! I think it's important consider how we talk about military spouse licensing and how much we talk about it. I see a lot of materials that talk about the unemployment rate, moving a lot, and making it easier for us to transfer our licenses. But I'm not sure that they do a good job of communicating to states and agencies about WHY these changes are necessary. In the work I've done, we are often viewed as asking for special treatment or a handout and treated as an inconvenience. I think the DOD, DOL, etc. have an opportunity to use their platforms to bring the states and local communities into shared service and supporting our national defense. I would love to see a campaign to educate those with the power to make these changes on why military spouse employment matters: recruiting and retaining quality service members is easier when the spouse doesn't have to sacrifice a career; transitioning veterans is easier when the spouse is employed; food stamp and assistance levels are decreased when the spouse is employed. Instead of making it a charity case, I think it should be communicated as an opportunity to contribute to our common defense. I've met with too many folks in charge of licensing who don't have any idea about why military spouse licensing matters - we need to have our stories told and communicate to these folks that an all-volunteer force requires these changes to be sustained going forward. I think it would also be helpful to loosen the reins at the base level - when we have asked for letters of support from local commands during advocacy campaigns, it's many times been difficult to garner that support. Since the service secretaries have now published a letter to the National Governors Association stating that milspouse licensing is a priority, I hope local commands will be more willing to support efforts like the Military Spouse JD Network work on attorney licensing rules.

Comments on this idea:

Jamie: Thanks for your comment Elizabeth. I think you made great points about how we should frame the issue moving forward. Any resource you could provide on the benefits of hiring mil spouses like the ones you listed above would be helpful. Thank you.

Elizabeth Jamison: @moderatorjamie IVMF has put together a really good series on military spouse employment, including making the business case for hiring military spouses: <https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/research/topics/employment/military-spouse-employment-series/>. I know the DOD's MSEP does a really good job of connecting employers and military spouses - they could probably also share stories from those participating employers about the benefits. I think it's key to convey that by providing licensing accommodations and hiring military spouses,

the regulators and employers are contributing to our national defense. That seems to be lost on many of them, in my experience.

Laura: There are two antiquated ideas out there that negatively affect the conversation about military spouse employment -- one is public and the other is internal to the military service community.

First, too often the public and employers believe military spouses are stay-at-home mothers with limited higher education and job training. I find the spouse community represents the spectrum of education levels, job training, desire to parent or not parent, and desire to stay home or work out of the home as the general population. We have to break the myths about spouses (which of course are tied into myths about women generally).

Second, too often military leadership expects the spouses to forego their own careers and professional pursuits in support of their active duty spouses. Like my spouse, I have multiple degrees and am a licensed professional. The idea that my investment in my education and career is less important than my spouse's is SO offensive. My spouse had a job that required extensive travel for the last two years and we have two pre-K/K aged children. Therefore, I was left solo-parenting continuously while my spouse could focus fully on the mission, which resulted in me missing significantly more days of work and having to use annual leave not for rest, but to care for the family's needs. And what do spouses get from the military in return, a certificate that says "thanks" and a PCS assignment that makes life increasingly challenging (and often less rewarding) for them.

I also want to point out the financial hardship it is on families to have these licensing woes. We are PCSing in a month and I am again in a position where I am regretfully hoping to be offered a job that will pay me below market rate and require me to take a step back in my career. I am currently in a management role, but to have any career continuity, I am again applying for jobs that require me to go back to a more entry level position. This means we have less income to support our family, which includes young children and aging parents with health issues, and provide for our own needs and save for retirement and unexpected expenditures.

Katherine Lee Goyette: @buchsl I completely agree with your comments. I would generally like to point out that just because someone is able to obtain licensure in a jurisdiction does not automatically mean a job comes with it. Licensure is just half the battle when it comes to military spouses with professional careers- actually obtaining full time employment is very difficult and at times cannot even be applied for without a license to begin with. I think that it is too often the case that employers, especially in the private sector, can take advantage of military spouses' positions in that they can under employ the spouse despite prior years of experience (though piecemeal due to multiple PCS moves).

Timing with licensure and subsequent employment is problematic as well. Applying for a professional license--then waiting to receive it--then getting a job--in certain states for law licensing, this takes over a year and a half, which for a lot of active duty families--this is HALF the time we would spend at a duty station. So then the employer, in a military community, will see the writing on the wall when you've been stationed in the area for a year and a half already, and then they know they can low-ball a salary offer or benefits since you're seen as a temporary employee that really, really needs employment.

I also echo comments regarding financial hardship for licensing woes. Every time we PCS, I have to decide whether to maintain my license in the state or "give it up". If it's "given up", then I have to report it to subsequent licensing entities and that usually comes with a negative affiliation. With law licensing, there are certain states that provide military spouse law licensing accommodations--they are temporary licenses based on the active duty spouse's orders, so expiration of the license is usually based on that and then the spouse doesn't have to "give it up" and then report that it was "given up"; it naturally expired as a temporary license for the time period that the family was in the jurisdiction due to the spouse's active duty orders. That being said, there's a fee for application, continuing education, etc., and if licensed in other states, this gets INCREDIBLY expensive.

2. Base Commanders must hire spouses

13 votes and 6 comments

Base-level commanders need to make a sincere commitment to hiring spouses in the area. They need to continually remind hiring managers and hold them accountable when "outsiders" are hired: was there really not a qualified spouse?

Army TJAG made this commitment a couple years ago that Army legal offices with civilian positions would strive to fill them with spouse attorneys/paralegal/etc. It works, and it means meaningful, gainful, professional employment for spouses. I'd like to see every service, every chain of command make a similar commitment to military families.

I see so many programs set up that just spawn new bureaucracies and more headaches as I try to navigate the system. What I need is a job.

Comments on this idea:

Moderator Mike: Kristen, thank you for your comment...This is a critical issue and as we have discussions on reducing the unemployment rate for our Military Spouses this comment is great way to bring awareness to this topic. Can you share where your challenges have been? and

provide a potential recommendation. I would be also interested in others who may be experiencing similar challenges.

Kristen Jones: I am an attorney, and for the jobs I seek a state license is required. I've just applied for my fourth license, and the process takes on average six months and \$2-3k. If there were a true hiring preference on base—meaning a commitment from base leadership, rather than another paperwork-generating program—I might be able to secure a federal professional position, which doesn't require a state license. I realize this solution does not come from DOL; I'm suggesting the military take care of its own.

Lindsey Boland: With every PCS move I have made a point to go the “office identified -usually through ACS” to apply for spouse preference when applying for VA or on post position at our new location. I'm regularly told that I have to attend classes, have my resume reviewed, and apply for the positions that are sent to me via email. I have done this at every post. I have never been interviewed. I understand that part of this issue is that I don't have an independent/clinical license— which with all of our moves I've never lived anywhere long enough to obtain. But, outside social workers are usually filling these positions. I don't think I will even apply for spouse preference at our next move due to this. It's time consuming to go the classes and re-do my resume to this new person's specifications and never get an interview.

Laura: This is also an issue when moving overseas. I was thinking about trying to secure employment that would allow me to work remotely from anywhere, but then I was reading online that many of the agreements with countries where our bases are located do not allow military spouses to work remotely without losing benefits of the agreement. This is a huge problem particularly where working remotely is becoming more common and often promoted to the spouse community.

Shellaine Kiser: I have encountered this same problem as a veterinarian. In the nine years my husband has been active duty, there have been positions open at the VTF only twice. Once the position was opened and closed so quickly (maybe two days) they clearly had someone in mind to hire. The second position just opened a few weeks ago to fill a vacancy, but was rescinded due to lack of funding. I usually hear how long it takes to get an appointment for a pet, but they never want to hire more staff.

3. License ideas for spouses with good standing

13 votes and 12 comments

I am a speech-language pathologist that dreads every PCS due to licensing applications and the time, anxiety, and cost related acquiring a new license in each state. What would help me is this: 1) reciprocity granted to active duty military spouses coming from one state to another who are within good standing in their old state, 2) a six month temporary license with each PCS

order if I am in good standing from my previous state so that I can get to work and have time to collect all the letters, biometrics, and applications that are due in the new state and/or 3) expedited review of letters of good standing from previously worked in states (this is currently only available to active duty speech pathologists) or expedited review of my application at the state level, which was supposed to occur through the Joining Forces effort but word never trickled down from the federal level and every time I ask a board for it, they reply that they've never heard of it and that I may wait my turn like everyone else. I should be able to serve my profession while my spouse serves our country but there are still too many lines of red tape that prevent that from occurring in a timely and low-cost manner. Thank you for listening!

Comments on this idea:

Lindsey Boland: Some states do allow a temporary license for social workers. I actually applied for one in GA since I knew we were only going to be there a year. It was the easiest process I've ever had and I received my new license in three weeks- which is super fast! I do like your idea of getting a temporary license so we can apply for jobs while processing the complete application for our specific license.

Moderator Mike: Sarah/Lindsey: Thank you for sharing your comments and recommendations. It is your comments that will help us to look at best practices, potential blind spots in ideas that we did not think of and to ensure we find the ways in which to ease the burden of a license portability for our Military Spouses. I look forward to comments from others that will continue to help us identify a trend.

Sarah: @moderatormike Thank you for your interest and time with this topic as it is a very important and timely one. Shaw AFB just had a focus group on it this week as our highest leadership is trying to figure out how to get its current AF members to remain active duty and spouses employment plays a huge factor into this decision. I know this has been an ongoing discussion for years, but I am hopeful through measures like this that the current administration can pass some tangible measures that support our licensed spouses.

Kimberly Fallen: @sarah.blake, great ideas. I like the temporary license aspect while you gather all required info or additional requirements for the new state. Maybe also being able to apply for a license as soon as you know where you are going would help as well. I know most states require you to actually be residing in the state before application. Perhaps a military waiver for this policy? And I hear you on the expedited processing matter, I am hearing the same thing in our state.

Moderator Mike: Sarah I am greatly appreciative of this dialogue...The recommendation you make in reference to a potential military waiver is a good one. I would like to see how this could

be applied and what states in may be applicable in. I would like to hear other recommendations...This has been a very good dialogue.

Sarah: @moderatormike it would have to be a military waiver because individual boards and states will NEVER give up their money-making practices on taxing licensing, fees for letters of good standing, fees for applications, fees for fingerprints, blood tests, urinalysis, etc. The thing with bio-metrics is that they are usually only accepted if done in state you are applying to, which means if you're OCONUS or not within driving distance, then you're paying out of pocket to get there to get a jump start on the application process. It's not worth the cost to do this but then this delays the application process once you arrive because most state boards only meet one time per month to vote in new licensees. So, if my application hasn't arrived in-sync with my bio metric results and my letters of good standing (which can take up to 30 days to arrive), then I time-out and have to wait another whole month till the next vote. This is why we need a waiver. Too much time is lost in the process and time = money, on top off all the craziness that occurs with each move. My spouse is an officer and we're usually at a base no more than 2 years tops...it's a crazy tempo to keep up with.

Moderator Mike: @sarah.blake Great points made and understanding these challenges make it clearer with personal examples like yours. And the challenge of being Overseas is another area that must be addressed so thank you for bringing this up...We are very aware of the moves that Military Families make and that is why this discussion is crucial and we can find ways in which to address these concerns by your participation. So, thank you for taking the time to participate and that goes for all of our Military Spouses.

Kandi Hughes: In Ohio, the Board of Nursing website explains that for any public, licensees, certificate holders, nursing employers, other state boards or organizations can obtain verification of licensure through Ohio eLicense. The list for Ohio eLicense includes the Speech and Hearing Professional Board. Developing a primary source of verification for Veterans/Military Spouses in the States would mean the individual's reported credentials and qualifications would be verified through the original organization or governmental entity that issued the document or through a designated equivalent source (Board of Nursing/eLicense, 2018). Example: Nursing uses Nursys.

All States function differently in how they process licensure applications and turnaround time for those seeking a license varies. Not all states have a "Military Section" to their licensing Board. All States would benefit in having a Veterans/Military Spouses licenses application process outside of the normal process/population. I like the waiver idea however it would be easier if a licensure application in the states had an access code on the application that flags the system to move the application into a priority category.

We need a Veteran/Spouse ALL State system used by all “States” – so applicate can apply for desired licensure and gaining State would log-in and start application. There would be links into the licensure boards for “States to check States” licenses history in this system. Results of background checks could be linked to the “All States system” decreasing time for licensure if applicable.

Pam Winslow: Sarah, I too am an SLP married to an active duty military member. I also dread PCS time. I agree with all the points you made and hopefully the process will continue to improve and get easier. Just to share my story a bit... I was licensed in New Mexico in the early 2000s. I did not keep up my license because I never expected to be stationed back in that state. Two years ago, we ended up moving back to NM and the SLP licensing board not only required me to pay an application fee of over \$200 but also a late penalty for never keeping my license active! I was so angry and frustrated! The only thing they told me I could do was write a letter to the board, but they were 99% sure they would dismiss it because "once they made an exception for me, they would have to make an exception for everyone!"

We Just moved to Florida and the licensing board is still trying to figure out the VALOR act, My application got confused and not processed... I ended up calling weekly to track it down. I was finally put in touch with someone who was extremely helpful and willing to figure it out with me. They also waived the processing fee, but I still had to pay the \$125 for finger-printing.

This discussion board is a great idea and I hope good things continue to come!

4. Allow Licensing to Carry Based on State of Legal Residence

12 votes and 8 comments

I'd like to see licensing requirements be treated like driver's license/taxes (per MSRRA) currently are for military spouses and allow professionals to work in any state utilizing their state of legal residence licensing. Then teachers, nurses, physicians, lawyers, etc, could begin employment immediately in any state, as long as they remained in good standing and completed whatever requirements/payments/cont'd education their state of legal residence/licensing state required. This would encourage states to align their licensing tiers, would facilitate hiring, enable skilled professionals to stay in their professions and enjoy building a career, and would support families and the economy with stable employment opportunities.

Comments on this idea:

Moderator Mike: S Nunes...Thank you for taking the time to make your comment. License portability is a concern and one that is making a lot of progress both within the DOL and DOD.

You can find information located through the Military Spouse Employment Program and here are a couple of web addresses that you may find useful:

https://usa4families.militaryonesource.mil/MOS/f?p=USA4:ISSUE:0::::P2_ISSUE:10

www.veterans.gov/milspouses

Your comment is greatly appreciated, and I look forward to other comments in reference to your recommendation.

Maria Mc: I agree that if a professional military spouse is licensed and in good standing in their home state of record, there should be a reciprocity in other states. I understand that states likely don't want this because that is how they make their money. In my case, I've been licensed in 5 states and in order to get licensed in the new state I move to, not only do I have to pay a fee (and do fingerprints, background checks, get letters of recommendation - all of which cost time and money) to the new state, I have to pay the other 5 states to process my "good standing" verifications.

It would make sense to pay the new state a processing fee but wave the other unnecessary costs.

Lindsey Boland: @m.mcconville5 yes!!!! This is exactly my problem with my LMSW. I'm shelling out over \$1,000 to get my license switched for our move to Arizona. Whereas, SC and GA were not comparable price-wise or time-wise under the spouse waiver. Not only am I going to be unemployed, but I have to pay all of this money while I'm moving to apply for a license that I already have. It would have been cheaper for me to actually apply and sit for the exam again.

Moderator Dan: Something like this approach was attempted in South Dakota earlier this year. The idea, speaking loosely, is that a group of states could all agree on reciprocity rules and recognize each other's credentials. Technically, this is called a compact (it functions a lot like a contract). However, despite the SD governor's support, it was not supported by the legislature. Obviously, for this idea to work, it will have to be passed by at least two state legislatures.

Maria Mc: @moderator.dan Yes, I'm familiar with state compact agreements and obviously several professions including Nurses have achieved some interstate compacts. I thought this was the work that Michelle Obama and Jill Biden were working on and supposedly that Ivanka Trump is working on...or am I mistaken? Every spouse event I attend with the VIPs, they always say they are working on spouse career portability. Where's the progress??

Cyndy Anzek: The United States is very unique in that it allows its States to run with minimal interference, however, with regard to issues like this when clearly a military spouse can provide

documentation that they are attached to a military branch of service, then maybe the federal government should way in.

Laura: Unfortunately, my state of residence has changed over the years and my home state (where my license remains) is no longer my state of residence. But it would be good for those spouses coming behind those of us already dealing with this issue.

Elliot Vice: The idea of reciprocity is great. The Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact actually already creates a system similar to reciprocity for RNs and LPNs/VNs known as "mutual recognition," that allows a nurse to obtain a multistate license in his/her state of residence and practice in any other state that is a member of the compact without having to obtain additional licensure. This is a great solution for the licensure issues that face military spouses as they move from location to location.

5. Utah Passes a Portability Bill for Military Spouse Licensure

11 votes and 7 comments

In the area of spouse employment and professional license portability, in March 2018, Utah codified into law the exemption of virtually all state professional and occupational licensing requirements (the one exception was insurance) for service members and military spouses provided they have and maintain a license in another state. Simply put, professional licenses from other states are good in Utah. This includes the teaching profession with its significant military spouse participation. Military spouses transferring to Utah can be hired directly into job openings without any of the burdensome steps or administrative delays typically associated with moving from one state to the next. The effort came about by listening to military spouses, work by the various licensing agencies and departments and terrific leadership by the Utah state senator who sponsored the legislation. The spouses are very appreciative and we are happy to share the legislation with anyone who wants it.

Comments on this idea:

Maria Mc: Thank you, Utah, for setting the standard and to @gharter for the information. How do we get other states to follow suit?

Moderator Dan: When Utah passed this legislation (SB 227 of 2018), that state became a national leader in advancing the career prospects of military spouses.

Lindsey Boland: This is fantastic news!

S Nunes: This is excellent. Now if we could get this passed in states with much larger military presence!

Cyndy Anzek: Hmm...perhaps systems advocacy is called for to help educate our legislators on what a huge need this is and that they already have a template from Utah to work from.

Sharo Browne: This is so fantastic. I agree that the goal now should be determining how other states with a significant military presence can follow.

Conclusion

The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) and Women's Bureau (WB) teamed up with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy (OASP) to conduct the "Veterans & Military Spouses Licensure" online dialogue in an effort to gather feedback on the issues veterans, including veterans with disabilities, and military spouses face in regard to occupational regulation and licensing requirements.

In total, the dialogue gathered 31 ideas, 224 votes, and 126 comments. These ideas, votes, and comments were viewed by more than 2,000 visitors to the dialogue. At the conclusion of the dialogue, representatives from the team of DOL agencies conducted an initial review of all of the ideas and comments, which will be followed by a more thorough analysis. Moving forward, the contributions to the dialogue and the results from the analysis will be used by policymakers to enhance employment opportunities for veterans, including those with disabilities, and military spouses.