

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING MILITARY SPOUSES

A REFERENCE FOR MANAGERS

So, you have an employee on your team who is also a military spouse. You should treat them just like everyone else, right? Well, yes and no. Most military spouses face geographic relocation every few years due to their spouses' service to our country. This, along with the high operational tempo of military lifestyle (frequent deployments, trainings, etc.) can cause stress and uncertainty. On the flip side, the military lifestyle also breeds flexibility and ingenuity. There are some things you can do as their manager to make them feel supported and maximize the value they bring to the team.

RECOGNIZE THEIR UNIQUE VALUE AND SITUATION

Because of their lifestyle, filled with unpredictability and frequent moves, military spouses are especially flexible, adaptable, loyal, educated, committed, and self-motivated. Many may also have international experience. Take advantage of these qualities when assigning work and assessing team dynamics.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DIALOGUE

Let your employee know that early and frequent communication is best when it comes to relocations or other military events (deployments, training, etc.) that may affect their work. Many military spouses are uneasy talking about these things for fear of a negative perception or impact on their career. Reassure them that you will do everything you can to help them stay with the organization and continue to build their career no matter what military life brings.

CONNECT THEM TO OTHER MILITARY SPOUSES

Whether you have a formal employee resource group or not, refer your employee to other military spouses who

can serve as mentors or as an internal support system.

KNOW WHAT BENEFITS MAY APPLY

It's likely there are existing benefits that apply to all employees that also have unique uses for military spouses. For example, the Family and Medical Leave Act offers a "qualifying military exigency" by which employees can take unpaid leave prior to or following a spouse's deployment. Make yourself familiar with these benefits and direct your employee to where they can find out more.

REFER THEM TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE EARLY

If you don't know the answer, be sure to point your employee in the right direction early. Finding the official answers from human resources or other corporate entities can take time. This is particularly true if the employee is moving internationally. There can be a substantial amount of analysis, coordination, planning, and approvals to go through to stay with the organization when moving abroad, so connect with the right people as early as possible.

The Military is a Part of Our DNA

At Booz Allen, we have formal programs and support for military spouses to build their careers, no matter where military life takes them. Booz Allen was founded by a veteran, has continuously supported the military since working with our first Department of Defense client in 1940, and one-third of our employees have a military background. With those credentials, it's easy to understand why Booz Allen invests in helping its veteran, reservist, and military spouse employees thrive.

**TO LEARN MORE, VISIT
[BOOZALLEN.COM/MILITARYSPOUSE](https://boozallen.com/militaryspouse)**

DON'T ASSUME

Don't assume you know what a military spouse wants to achieve while working for you. When they are facing a relocation, don't assume that a military spouse is going to want part-time work or to take a leave of absence. Work with them to develop a win-win situation for the employee and organization.

HELP SET GOOD GOALS

Good goals shouldn't just relate to a specific project or client. They should speak to career aspirations beyond the work at hand, allowing your employee to continue to work toward achieving those goals regardless of their location or which project they are supporting.

ADVOCATE FOR YOUR MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYEE NOW

If you have a rock star, don't wait to share their story with colleagues who may be able to staff them when they relocate. The more you socialize this person's talents, the more likely we are to retain the employee and their knowledge and skill set, as well as their client relationships and access to their military-related network.

PROVIDE SUPPORT DURING THE SERVICE MEMBER'S DEPLOYMENT

Hopefully, you've encouraged an open dialogue between you and your staff and your military spouse employee has

shared this information with you. If you know your employee's spouse is deployed, on an extended TDY or away at training, be aware that they may not be able to travel for work during this time (especially if they have children). Take interest in this aspect of the employee's life and offer local support resources such as support services on a local base/installation, if appropriate.

GET CREATIVE

When your employee is facing a relocation, it can mean a lot of work for you, but it's worth it! Keeping this all-star employee at the company is better than losing them even if they can't stay on your team. If you help them find another opportunity, they may come back to your team in their next move, so help them find opportunities on different teams or even on the internal corporate team where there may be more opportunities for remote work.

HELP THEM PCS-PROOF THEIR CAREER

Encourage your employee to take training and get certifications that can help them stay relevant and in demand beyond what they are currently working on. This will not only prepare your employee for a permanent change of station (PCS), it will also benefit your team now and help your employee in the long run.

About Booz Allen

For more than 100 years, business, government, and military leaders have turned to Booz Allen Hamilton to solve their most complex problems. Together, we will find the answers and change the world. To learn more, visit BoozAllen.com.