

# The Military Spouse Unemployment Crisis

## The Top 15 Challenges

By Dana Manciangli, Top National Military Spouse Career Expert

- 1. Unemployment | Jobless** - And it found that up to 42 percent of military spouses -- or as many as 95,000 -- are jobless, compared to about 25 percent of a comparable civilian spouse population. Unemployment rate of up to 18 percent, compared to last month's national jobless rate of 5 percent. Defense Department data from surveys comes up with different numbers, finding that 23 percent of military spouses identify themselves as unemployed.
- 2. Underemployment:** Low pay: military spouses with a bachelor's degree earn 40 percent less than their civilian counterparts. More likely to work for less pay or in positions below their education level. In a 2013 review, the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University found 90 percent of female spouses of active-duty service members reported they were underemployed or had more education and experience than the jobs they had required.
- 3. Frequent moves due to deployments.** Not only do most military spouses have to quit jobs because of a move, they face long periods of unemployment after the move. The current PCS system is detrimental to military spouse careers.
- 4. No Network** - With every PCS, it's a new house, new school, new geography, new everything. And one of the hardest things to find in a new location? A new network.
- 5. Often being the single parent** while their military spouse is deployed.
- 6. Can't find jobs that are flexible enough** to compensate for the long hours, absences and irregular schedules of their spouses while still meeting any child care needs.
- 7. Not knowing what's possible** – Which companies hire Military Spouses, what types of jobs can I do, what are my marketable skills?
- 8. A resume gap – or multiple jobs**
- 9. Their own head:** Many military spouses view elements of military life as a hindrance to their careers and pursuit of education. (Rand Study) “The longer I was out of the workforce, the more I seemed to feel stuck and isolated”
- 10. They desire two incomes.** Like most American families, military families want and need two incomes – something that is much harder for military families to achieve.
- 11. Devastating blows** to their dignity, identity, and overall well-being.
- 12. High stress:** The lack of employment opportunities creates stress and influences a family's decision to stay in or leave the military – factors that ultimately hurt military readiness, retention, and recruiting. Financial stress, too.
- 13. Base locations not optimal for best jobs:** There's also the reality that their new homes on military bases are often located 50 miles or more from the cities that tend to generate the greatest number of, and highest-paying, available jobs.

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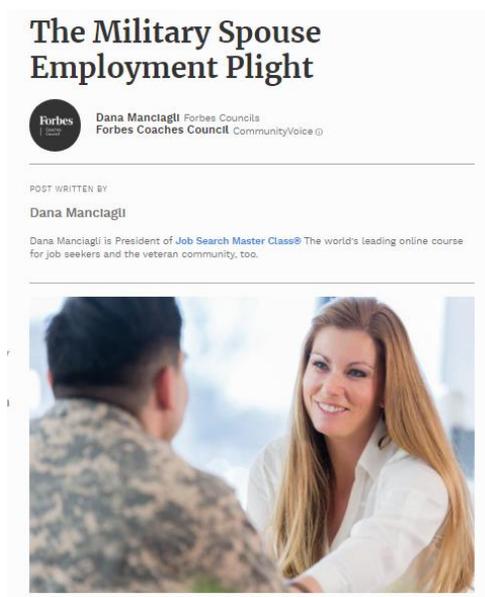
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14. **Some certificates don't transfer:** If spouses have education certifications or licenses, such as those required for employment as a teacher or lawyer, those credentials often don't transfer between states or countries.

15. **Job Discrimination:** Some employers are reluctant to hire them – biases due to the constant movement. A whopping 41 percent of military spouses said the greatest employment challenge was employers not wanting to hire them because of their mobility.

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Recent Forbes article [here](#), describing the Military Spouse employment challenge



Dana Manciangli, President of Job Search Master Class® is one of the industry's most highly-regarded career experts, with an innovative system to instruct on all aspects of the Veteran community's transition to civilian employment. She is the leading instructor on job search skills specifically for Military Spouses and provides her curriculum and services to Microsoft Corporation and other top organizations.

A senior tech executive for more than 30 years, ex-Microsoft and IBM, Dana leveraged her employee hiring and management experience into that of a career coach, speaker, columnist and curriculum master.

Named a top "Women of Influence" in Seattle, Dana lives and works in the Puget Sound where she serves on the Worldwide Board of Junior Achievement. She is also a breast cancer conqueror and received her MBA at the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Arizona.