**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Military Spouses - A Priority Customer: What Your AJC Can Do**

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JON VEHLOW: Hello and welcome to today's webinar. My name is Jon Vehlow and I'm here if you need anything technically speaking. Hopefully, you won't need to hear too much from me. But if you do have any technical questions, please let us know in that chat window on the bottom left hand side of your screen.

That chat window is also where we'd like you to introduce yourself now. So please go ahead and type into that chat, your name, your organization, how many are joining you today? And if you're attending in a group. You may also use that chat box to ask our presenters any questions you may have during the webinar.

You'll also notice that we have a copy of today's presentation in additional files, uploaded in the file share window on the bottom right hand side of your screen. There's also a web links window with a few web links that you can navigate to at any time throughout the day in this webinar. Also a copy of today's presentation as well as a transcript recording and executive summary will be made available on WorkforceGPS in about two business days.

Additionally, to continue producing quality content, we will be sending out an anonymous survey concerning today's event. Please take a few minutes to fill that out once the webinar concludes. We will also be sending up a follow up survey in a month's time. Again, if you haven't already done so, or if you are just joining us, please introduce yourself in that welcome chat.

Again, we'll have that chat up throughout today's webinar where you can type in your questions, or comments at any time. Welcome to Military Spouses a priority customer, what your AJC can do. So without further ado, I'd like to turn things over to our moderator today Pam Frugoli, workforce analyst, Office of Workforce Investment, U.S. Department of Labor.

PAM FRUGOLI: Thank you, Jon. As he said I'm Pam Frugoli, your moderator today. And I've been with the Employment and Training Administration for over 19 years. I work on disseminating career and employment and training information through ETA's occupational information network, or O\*NET and CareerOneStop websites, among other things. And we see from the polling results that –

MR. VEHLOW: One second, Pam. I'm just going to bring those up right now.

MS. FRUGOLI: You can continue to enter your results as we're pulling that up for those of you who have just joined. Great. So more than 80 percent of you say that you do actively conduct outreach and provide services to military spouses we're really glad to hear that. Thank you. And two thirds of you say you would like to know more and a third of you say you know some.

So that's great because this webinar today will help you with resources for military spouses. So today's presenters we have three speakers who will be introducing themselves in greater detail later. For now, let me just say welcome. And that I'm very pleased that we're joined today by CC Gallagher, Kevin Williams and Debbie Medlen.

And if each of them are speaking, if you have questions for them please be sure to enter them in the chat as we will be pausing for questions at the finish of each of their portions of the presentation. So this slide review is what we plan to accomplish today. The focus is on how American Job Centers, or AJCs as we often refer to them, can help military spouses with employment issues and with special emphasis on support for military spouses in licensed occupations.

I would note that this is an important part of a broader initiative the ETA is sponsoring through several grants that provides the fourth estate to review occupational licensing requirements for the focus both on increasing portability of licenses and reducing barriers to entry. As CC will describe more fully, military spouses are one of the key populations that are particularly impacted by occupational licensing.

So this slide, the next slide quote from – language from the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act. This is just the highlight that there are both congressional and administration emphasis on military spouse employment and on licensing portability. And the reason for this is that the quality of life and the employment prospect for military families has an impact on recruitment and retention for our all-volunteer military.

So our technical assistance on this project is directed to three primary stakeholder groups. Military spouses themselves to help them learn about and take advantage of state policy to support license recognition; to AJCs and career coaches to ensure that Workforce professionals having information and skills they need to appropriately support military spouses. For seeking assistance with license recognition and other employment needs.

And finally also the state licensing board and relevant state regulatory agencies that implement policy to improve military spouse license recognition. We've been able to reach these stakeholder groups through the grant projects with states and organizations. But just the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments and the National Governors Association were all partners in a major grant.

And now I would like to turn it over to CC Gallagher, who can report from the frontlines.

CC GALLAGHER: Hi, everyone. Good afternoon. My name is CC. Thank you so much, Pam. I am a military spouse and our family is currently stationed in Fort Bliss, Texas. We are so far from this community and arrived about two weeks ago. So if anyone out there is from El Paso please let me know, I'd love to come visit you. So to give you a little bit more about my background, I married my active duty Army soldier right after graduate school.

For me I was looking for corporate America and I landed in farm fields on the Tennessee border. So through six moves in the last 10 years of marriage, coast to coast and some places definitely more desirable than others, I've had the opportunity to work across multiple industries including teaching in higher education, running national nonprofit programs and government relations efforts for two of the nation's leading military service organizations.

I served as an IT project manager and defense contractor supporting spouse employment and transition for the defense department. And because maintaining meaningful and fulfilling employment has been so extremely difficult for me through our military moves, I've also added entrepreneur to my résumé.

So four years ago based on a forced and involuntary resignation to a position I wasn't necessarily ready to leave due to military orders for my spouse, my husband, I launched Military Quality of Life Consulting, where I equip professional organizations to greater fulfill their mission of serving our military community. So for this project and team, I've developed a lot of the virtual engagement, outreach plans with the goal of informing spouses of licensing recognition resources; while also providing that military (spouses lend ?) to many of the project deliverables that you all will see later on in the presentation.

So I'm always curious to know who is in our audience and, are there any military connected folks out there? Active duty, veteran, guard reserve component. A spouse, a veteran spouse. Baby or a military child. Or your parent who has children serving in the military. Oh my goodness. Wow, 55 percent of you have – 56 and it's growing.

Well, just thank you so much for those of you who – for your service. And obviously thank you to those for your interest in today's session. I'm honored to be here with you today, so that we can collaboratively assist the hundreds of thousands of doctors who face challenges with employment and licensure recognition in their designated profession, with this extremely transient military lifestyle. OK. Next slide, please. Thank you.

So I've outlined a few high level statistics in the next couple slides that hopefully paint the picture of our community in the employment landscape. So we have over 630,000 military spouses within the United States embedded in your communities. Military spouses are 10 times more likely to have moved across state lines in the past year due to those government issued orders; and on average military families move on average about one to three years.

Once every one to three years. Approximately 30 percent of employed military spouses work in license occupations. And while moving is necessary for our service member's career, with the high demands of how often our population moves again, based on the needs of the military's mission it can be extremely time-consuming and costly to obtain licensure in a new state for a spouse.

And all too often each state has different procedures. They have different requirements for a spouse to obtain that occupational licensure, even within the same occupation. Next slide please. A few other statistics that I wanted to highlight that are sourced from the 2018 Blue Star Families military family lifestyle survey which yielded responses from about 10,000 military connected community members.

Where that they found from their population and their dataset that 30 percent of military spouses reported that they were unemployed and that they were actively seeking work. National unemployment rate right now is hovering right under 4 percent, based on a Bureau of Labor Statistics. The other statistic I wanted to highlight were that those 56 percent of employed spouses that are employed stated that they were underemployed. So that means that they're being paid less than their education and their experience, or a combination of both.

So to be honest. and not only from a spouse's perspective with boots on the ground, but also from a professional perspective supporting efforts to make the community thrive, I've lost track of the countless stories I've been told from fellow spouses who've abandoned careers they love because of the obstacles of this life. So our population can often be an overlooked element of the military community, which makes your presence here today so incredibly valuable to our armed forces and their families. Next slide. please.

So we know that these employment challenges and especially within licensure recognition they contribute to gaps in resumes and also to that under employment statistic that I just briefed on. These challenges often lead to additional stress. They lead to financial strain. And ultimately that can affect a military family and especially a spouse's wealth and wellbeing A military family shouldn't have to choose between maintaining a dual income household if they so desire, or putting on the uniform to serve our country.

So one of the most crucial aspects with the barriers of self-employment is that it can negatively affect the readiness and retention of our service members. So military spouses we look at them as such an asset to national defense and really the backbone of our military community. So Pam said if we want to retain and maintain the best all volunteer fighting force, we want to ensure that spouses have the proper support in place, so that they can thrive and all of the communities that are out there.

And then on a final note as I wrap up my talking points, what I want to express to you is that we know American Job Centers provide such valuable services. But from our discussion sessions and focus groups with military spouses we also learned that our spouse community may not be aware of the service that you all provide. So they may not see them as useful because they have a lack of knowledge about the great work that you do. So we want to ensure that spouses know you are there.

And I'm going to field a few questions here for you all that I see that are populating in this chat box before I pass it over to Kevin and Debbie to discuss their integration efforts in the city of Spokane.

So first question I saw, "CC, do you know the unemployment rate for military spouses?" So according to the 2018 Blue Star Families survey 30 percent of spouses reported that they are unemployed.

MS. FRUGOLI: This is Pam. I would just add that there isn't an official statistic for military spouses because of the sample size; they're not able to publish it. But it is three to four times higher than the national unemployment rate at least.

MS. GALLAGHER: Perfect. Thank you, Pam. And how many AJCs do outreach on military installations? Pam I might ask if maybe you could answer that question if you have an idea? Or it's something we could circle back on?

MS. FRUGOLI: Yeah. I don't think we know that. In fact, that's one of the reasons we had the pole at the beginning, so that we could at least find out from all of the participants who do formal outreach on military bases, we would have to follow up on that.

MS. GALLAGHER: The second one. "How can we find out the number of military spouses that are there?" Well, I would – that third question is how – another question we had was how can we find out the number of military spouses in our respected areas. I think once Kevin and Debbie hop on the line to discuss their efforts in the Spokane area, I believe they're going to give you some great ideas on how you can discover what that number is and how you can add directly to that military community in your specific location.

So with that if it is okay, I'm going to pass it over to Kevin to discuss his efforts. Oh, back to Pam. Sorry.

MS. FRUGOLI: That's okay. I'm going to just talk about the resources that you can use. So make sure we get that in before the end. Since you're all joining this webinar via WorkforceGPS we just want to make sure that there's a page within that site where our team has assembled various technical assistance products on this subject. So you just log in to WorkforceGPS and you can search for the phrase military spouse, license recognition resources and I think it might also be in the web links here.

And so on that page you'll find links to relevant webinars, websites and products, some of which I will briefly introduce now. So this main resource is a two-pager called License Recognition for Military Spouses. This is a guide for military spouses themselves. But it is also a resource that AJC staff can use when working with military spouses in license occupations.

It lays out a step-by-step process to help military spouses understand and take advantage of the state laws that have been passed to facilitate license portability for military spouses. And I think you know that that can vary quite a bit between states. And if you'll notice in this image, the map in the lower left hand corner, that's actually an interactive map that's available at the website at the bottom veterans.gov/milspouses.

So you can click on a state and find out what the applicable law is for military spouse license recognition. And in addition there are 10 states that really have the highest population of military spouses. So in addition to the general information, the team has developed specific and more detailed information on the licensing provision for military spouses in those 10 states. Because they're going to be the most commonly used and needed.

And as I've noted these resources and more can be found on the WorkforceGPS page indicated just a moment go.

So now I will turn the discussion over to Kevin Williams who will describe Workforce Spokane and how they were able to establish a strong relationship with Fairchild Air Force Base. Kevin, take it away.

KEVIN WILLIAMS: Pam. Thank you very much. I appreciate it and hello from Spokane. For those of you who are listening who have never been to the amazing State of Washington, we are on the eastern side; our brothers and sisters at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, the other large military installation around the Tacoma-Seattle side, but we're far more on the eastern part of Washington here.

I wanted to start a little bit, but I did have a couple of polling questions that we threw out there. If those can get pulled up at all to take a look at. We're trying to see whether or not folks they're within 50 miles of the military installation to see how they're sitting. So we could discuss that a little bit. And then I'm secondly taking a look at folks who actually, if you're not 50 miles then how are you coordinating?

Or are you coordinating with the military installation in some form or fashion? So it's great to see by looking at it that well over 65 percent of folks are pretty close to a military installation. And a little over about half of the folks out there right now are able to have their services on a local military installation. And that's what we're going to talk about a little bit today myself and Debbie. I'm going to talk a little bit of the strategy of how we got to where we are from this perspective.

And then Debbie who is actually the boots on the ground on Fairchild Air Force Base is going to talk about some of the great things that she has done over the last couple of years for that relationship that we have there. So first I wanted to tell you a little bit about Spokane American Job Center I'll give you some numbers with that.

So our American Job Center, in case we happen to reference it several times, is called WorkSource. So we'll try as best we can to call it the American Job Center. But here in the state of Washington we call that WorkSource. And we have here in Spokane one comprehensive center, an adult center and then we also have a campus.

So right here at the same area within a block radius of each other we have the adult campus. We also have our youth center. And then we just recently opened right above us we have the Spokane Resource Center, which is a HUD Envision center, and it is a OneStop social services center.

And after that we have just split away our business services team, now called the talent solutions team, which is also in a separate building right here on our campus to serve the entirety of the campus with the business services that we have. We also have 23 connection sites throughout Spokane County. Those include the libraries, YWCA, Goodwill and some other amazing partners that we have with that.

Our campus serves about 12,000 per year in person. And then we have an amazing online platform with WorkSource Washington, if you checked it out, which is a job – primarily a job matching, but it has some other amazing tools on there. We serve about 10,000 online that way. And then locally we've created, if you want to go out and check it out, worksourcespokane.com.

And on there we have a great tool called our CareerQuest tool, which helps individuals even if they're not in our sensor. They could be at one of the connection sites, or at home that offers a lot of information on there; also helps them build a guide of what they should do as they're going through this. We use that of course as well in Fairchild Air Force Base as Debbie goes ahead and leverages that tool when she's working with spouses.

And as I mentioned before, we have a separate business services team and they serve about 10,000 employers annually as well. Now, Fairchild Air Force Base is very significant to us here in Spokane. It's about 12 miles west of Spokane out in this area, and Team Fairchild itself encompasses more than about 5,100 active duty Air National Guard tenant unit members and civilian employees as you can see from those numbers that they have there.

They are the number one employer in Spokane and their economic impact at this present moment to include the 17,000 retirees that go through there is currently sitting at 13 to 16 percent of our total income that we have coming in – our economy that we have coming in to Spokane. So as you can see they are our number one employer and they have a huge economic impact with that, and of course, coming with that is the military spouses as well.

So we recognize that we needed to have leverage in that and making sure that we were doing something when it came to military spouses that was helping it be understood that that was an important part of our mission that we had out there. So some of the things that we've done with this is, of course, with base leadership that we have out at Fairchild Air Force Base from the Airman and Family Readiness Center; also the base leadership in general; and a local partnership, of course, with our local workforce development council coming together and doing that.

Now several years ago, a decade ago or so we've had a DVOP, or a disabled veterans outreach program coordinator who has been on the base. But there's limitations there to who a DVOP can serve. For those of you who are very familiar. And by looking at who's on the chat today, I can see quite a few of you are very familiar with our DVOP.

So recognizing that we knew that in order to serve military spouses, we had to take that just a little bit step further. Of course we also leverage our lever in that as well. Our business services individual working with businesses out there and hooking up military members can also really work with those military spouses, so leveraging that, we started to do a better job of coordinating that effort too. But we also recognize that we had to have an actual WorkSource specialist out of Fairchild who was dedicated to working with military spouses.

So we sat down and talked about what that looked like about four years ago. And within that we really felt like we needed to find the right person to be able to do that role. And at the same time recognize that that had to be the primary role that they did. And so we've been working with that (dragnet ?) WorkSource specialist, which is Debbie, who will be speaking here in just a little bit and telling you about the role that's out there.

And of course we've also been working with the U.S. Commerce and in partnership with our Airman and Family Readiness Center out at Fairchild Air Force Base, as our CEO of our Workforce Development Council is with a member of the Airman and Family Readiness Center, the chair of the military spouse employment zone. So leveraging those resources we recognized in that partnership that we had to work on.

And then establishing that relationship and continuing to make it grow was very important. One of the key things we recognize, we talked about this, Debbie and I were just speaking about it just before the call started as well of how we came to it, was the fact that we had to recognize that we needed to embed an individual actually in the Airman and Family Readiness Center on Fairchild Air Force Base.

This person had to actually be seen as part of that team in order to gain the respect and trust from the military spouses out there. So just to have someone out there who was willy-nilly at certain hours and wasn't really seen as a member of the Fairchild community would not have worked. And so we've seen great dividends from that, by actually embedding Debbie in her roll out at the Airman and Family Readiness Center.

Of course I would tell anyone that one of the most important relationships you have to have – and they do change every two to three years typically is having a relationship – a good relationship with your installation commander and the spouse. So recognizing that there are multiple commanders on any base and recognizing that the primary one, the installation commander whether that's a joint base, or if it's just an Air Force Base as Fairchild Air Force is – Air Force Base is, is recognizing you have to build that relationship with those individuals, and then continue to grow them, so that as it's passed on from one commander and their spouse to the next, that the importance of an American Job Center being a part of what they do out at their base is significant.

And then of course recognizing also the cultural competency and force multiplier. Selling the fact that absolutely working with military spouses is a force multiplier issue that can really help with that; and noting that you have cultural competency of what it is to be a member of Fairchild Air Force Base.

Debbie has embedded herself and become part of that culture and gained that cultural competency, so that she is looked at as the expert when it comes to employment; and also looked at as a part of Team Fairchild which has been very significant with that and with their culture.

So with that I forgot to say in the very beginning, I'm so sorry for those who coordinated the call. You told me to do it and I messed it up. I didn't explain who I am. I'm Kevin Williams the OneStop operator at WorkSource Spokane, overseeing the operations here at our American Job Center in the connection site. I'm also a 25-year veteran and retired out of Fairchild Air Force Base just four years ago before I became the OneStop operator here.

So enough from me, I really want you to hear from the person who's actually making all of this happened. And the superstar that we have out there – I'm really trumping her up here, so she better be really good now, huh – out at Fairchild Air Force Base and that is Debbie Medlen.

Sorry, is there any questions for me I guess before we go on with that? I do see there must be someone from Joint Base Lewis-McChord over on our website here, watching on there saying that they have a WorkSource on the base and they expanded to other areas.

And I have to say that is an amazing – I've been out there to visit that a couple times, that's an amazing facility that also if anyone wanted to talk about how you embed yourself and become part of the culture on a base to help military spouses in transitioning military members Joint Base Lewis-McChord is another great example of that.

I see something here that says – (inaudible) – and the other military service counterparts already have someone employed at their centers to specialize in employment of military spouses.

The answer to that is yes, they absolutely do, and Debbie is going to get into that, because in the very beginning that was something we had to work out, was how does the person that we have out there, that that person does not have the connection back to the actual American Job Center and understand all of the services and programs that we have to offer. And so by having Debbie out there we've been able to connect that and help spouses out a lot more because of that connection. Now that she has directly with understanding programs and services from our center.

DEBBIE MEDLEN: OK. Well, thank you all for being here. This is definitely exciting to be able to bring to you our business model out of Fairchild. My name is Debbie Medlen and I am the Workforce professional out at Fairchild Air Force Base. My background is I have been in the employment industry. I was branch manager for a few staffing agencies locally here at Spokane. And I've also worked as a college recruiter. So both education and employment is my background.

And I'm also a lifelong resident of Spokane. So this community is near and dear to my heart and so are the individuals coming in. I would wish that they could all stay here with me because I need some amazing people. So to get started, I have a polling question out there. And so how many of you actually work on a military installation? Well, we've got some good numbers. OK. Oh, we've got small numbers out there for the actual onsite. OK. Great.

Well, not great. I'd like to see a larger number. Because I think that the benefit to being on base to the military spouse it's just priceless for them. They are in need of course of that first contact and networking. You're their networking person. So if you're on the installation, actually, you have a lot of opportunity not just out in the community, but also with those GS positions, NAS positions so you make those connect to while you're on base.

So let's get into base integration and outreach, kind of wanted to start with that. Of course, all of our leadership, base leadership and our American Job Center leadership they've done all the hard footwork. I get to do the fun part. And that fun part is working directly with those military spouses. But also the one thing I think that I did getting in there, I come from a sales background. So I am always looking at identifying my customers and my stakeholders.

And who are they and I need to get to know them because they're going to be key to my outreach and key to my business. So my customers of course are military spouses and my stakeholders are my active duty spouses. Leadership, the entire base community. The local community because businesses will definitely be a part of this – our local business and our local economy, and anyone who has access to spouses, or will be affected by a spouse's employment, or underemployment. Again, by identifying these stakeholders just opens up that outreach in getting out there and promoting what we do as an American Job Center.

So what does total integration look like? So really get to know the culture of that Readiness Center, or wherever they have you located. What is their mission statement? So the mission statement of the Airman and Family Readiness Center Fairchild is to provide targeted airman and family supports and services contributing to the mission readiness, resiliency and wellbeing of the Air Force community.

So where do I fit in that? Well, I definitely fit in resiliency for military spouses. Knowing that and having that vision really helps me in everything that I'm doing out there. How can I get a military spouse? How can I assist them in getting those employment opportunities faster and keeping them out of that underemployed category?

So the other thing I do, I also really got involved in knowing the services that the Readiness Center provides. I engage in activities to support the center. Anytime I can be a part of any workshop that they're doing, or any presentation that they're providing that's – I get involved. The other day I was – I took 15 minutes out of my time and I was just packing some little backpacks for the kiddos for going back to school. And in that I had an opportunity to do outreach to the spouses that were also in there helping in that little assembly line.

So it's super important to know the different aspects of the Readiness Center and what they provide to their military families. We had the question earlier about doesn't somebody out at that Readiness Center already do what I do? Yes. As a matter of fact, she does. But I work closely with her and I actually take – because at our Readiness Center, people – they carry multiple hats out there. So I actually take some of this burden off of that individual. We are actually partners in this.

She handles more of the legislative staff where she's really involved with our leadership here down at the American Job Center in Spokane, and then also the base leader – (inaudible) – so she's that coordinator on that legislative level, getting these reciprocity issues handled with our state. And then I'm the as Kevin said boots on the ground, I'm sitting with the military spouses. I'm collecting all that information for her. What are my obstacles or what are the spouses' obstacles in certifications, in underemployment?

And I'm feeding that back to her, so we can work together and she can just gain in those statistics through my – through the information that I'm gathering just sitting right next – sitting next to those individuals. So every contact is an opportunity to spread the word and get out there. Even when I'm over at Starbucks, or at that Burger King on base, if I'm over there I'm letting everybody know what I do. "Hey, are you a military spouse? Are you a dependent?" If I'm standing in line next to somebody. And just presenting our American Job Center.

And it really is about being part of that family and part of that community out there. Don't be afraid to do that. So if possible go to the staff meetings, the more you were considered part of the installation, the more they'll trust in you. I go to staff meetings every week. I learned what my co-workers out there at the Readiness Center are doing. So if there's another opportunity – if somebody – if I can tag along and present at one of the briefings 100 percent they are all onboard about that. So it's a great way to make sure that I'm hitting all of those meetings.

Some of them are hit and miss. Some of them I'll go out to I get a lot. So don't be afraid to just go, you'll find your rhythm and figure out where those meetings are and what meetings are going to give you a lot of business in the future. But it's also word of mouth. So everybody you talk to out there is going to be a part of that. And then know the needs of your customer. So here's really where we connect out at the Readiness Center. It's knowing the needs of the customer and knowing that employment is not necessarily the only need that they have.

So in that I'm able to do a warm hand off to individuals out at the Readiness Center. And so what that might look like is if a spouse is having – if they're having family issues, their children aren't getting back into school, we mention that in casual conversation.

We have the MFLCs, the marriage family life counselors out there. And when I'm done with them I take them to meet with a different individual out there. So they get to know all of the resources of the Airman and Family Readiness Center. And that really is part of what builds that unity between the American Job Center, because again, we become incorporated into what they're doing and we're promoting their services also. There is really no difference out at Fairchild between the American Job Center and the military installation.

As a matter of fact, I answer the telephone, "Hello, this is Debbie with WorkSource at the Airman and Family Readiness Center." If they just think that I'm planning WorkSource, but they think I'm just a department out of WorkSource. The other thing is, do not sit behind closed door offices. I sit in their resource room where I have people coming and going. It's just the same environment down here at our local AJC where we just have customers coming in and out. That way, individuals that are coming in to use the computer for various reasons, they also hear what I'm doing and then they become aware of the service that I provide.

And I can't tell you how many times somebody will stop me and say, "Hey, my wife is looking for this, can you help her?" And boom, I make another scheduling another opportunity right there. So leadership spouses connect with those leadership spouses. I have an amazing relationship with our current base commander's wife, with our squadron commander. I'm there to serve them. So how can I help them? Their key spouses, leadership spouses they will actually bring it.

They'll walk new spouses directly over to me and introduce them and then again another opportunity. So they're really key to getting you in and getting that information to their active duty spouse in those leadership departments. So that is definitely key. And so from there I do a lot of briefing events. Of course I'm at every major briefing the first – (inaudible) – Airman, RightStart, Smooth Move. But now we'll go into knowing more about the chair side and career exploration with military spouses that I do my actual job where I'm sitting next to the military spouses.

I work both with incoming and outgoing spouses and I had just learned you don't need to cover everything on the first meeting. You want to definitely develop that relationship which builds referrals. And the first step is that career job search. I sit down, we identify our local opportunities, we go for labor market information; and I educate the customers – or I educate the spouses on our local industries.

If the outlook isn't that great – because I do want it to be realistic and if it's not that great maybe for the industry that they're coming from where can we transition them to? I do the skills assessment with them and we go over a lot of different opportunities that we have out here in the local Spokane area. Again, military spouse employment their resumes are absolutely fabulous because they come from a variety of backgrounds.

So I do want to get also on that networking piece that we have. So I work closely with our leader here at the AJC – and a shout out to (Hannah Shep ?), I know you're on this conference call, thank you so much – or this workshop – but thank you so much for being there and being a part of our team out at Fairchild. But she does a warm handoff for me out into our community with those business leaders that she's made those connects with, and we've had tremendous success doing that. And then I sit down, do a chairside prep with my spouses.

We talk about functional chronological combination resumes and federal resumes. And we just developed a great base resume. I talked to them about targeted resumes. We pulled job descriptions and I really sit down and explain that the one size fits all resume is out the door, so we need to start targeting their resumes to the local jobs and the employers and what they're looking for.

And then we do that by a lot of utilizing assessment tools, again, like crossover industries, like career opportunities. Then we go back to the labor market information and we see where their assessments meet our labor market information, and that really kind of expands their world and open their eyes to the opportunities in our area.

So then if there are additional services, funding services, or if I want more detailed information – if they need more detailed information, I definitely refer them down here to our local American Job Center and they get taken care of down here. So I think it's great because they also get additional feedback on resumes. Because I think everybody should have their eyes on a resume and get that feedback all with professionals. I'm not the expert in resumes by any means.

So everybody has some great input. And so it's really great to get spouses involved in that too. So licensures and certifications. But now that the military is actually paying for those and so they're no longer coming down to work – they're no longer accessing WorkSource for that funding, I however am still the go to for that information. Now I do post that information on the Fairchild spouses web – Facebook page. So that one thing that I post monthly, I'll do a post on this new PCSA on how the military is paying for those opportunities.

But the other thing is, is that they'll come in and they'll talk to me because they know I'm the one posting it. So I always give my little blurb about WorkSource Spokane, so they will come in and talk to me, and again, another great opportunity. And I will tell you on the spouses' Facebook page, if somebody comes in and says something about a job on there – I've posted on there, I've got 50 comments from other spouses that just – it's Debbie, talk to Debbie, call Debbie.

So yet again a great opportunity for outreach there. And I would suggest developing a team there at your installation. We've got a great team. We have a military family like counselor, she assesses when spouses have interview anxiety. They need to talk about work-life balance. We have a financial counselor and she assists with those 401(k), how does the military spouse start with their retirement plan and the importance of that?

And so they get a whole team. And now we've brought, again, our LVER on board and Hannah's out there and she helps out with that employment networking side.

This concludes my presentation for the today. I want to thank all of you for what you do out there. Thank those of you who've served in our military. Thank you so much. And go get them and get those spouses employed. So thanks a lot.

MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. We had a few questions and I'll answer a couple and I'll leave a couple to Debbie to answer. One of them was – it says, "How do you identify your American Job Center or military spouse?" That's a good question. So obviously very easy when you're out at Fairchild Air Force Base. When we're actually here, it's one of the first questions that we use.

We have a triage process in the very beginning and one of the questions that we ask of course to ensure that we're meeting the priority of service obligations and requirements also is the fact that we ask individuals, are you currently serving in the military, or served in the military, or are you a military spouse?

And so quickly we'll be able to identify at that point in time at our actual comprehensive AJC, whether we're working with a military spouse or members with that. I'm going to try to scroll down and hit a couple more of these questions that we got for us, and I'll let Debbie do this one.

One of the questions was, "Most of the training programs that you recommended the spouses qualify for military benefit." And that's not necessarily true entirely. We do a co-enrollment process [n WIOA, and so Debbie is out there, and co – we co-enroll everyone who comes into our American Job Center and including anyone that Debbie or our DVOP out there at Fairchild would work with.

We co-enroll them into WIOA Title I basic. And so from there we're able to go ahead and work and then determine whether or not they need to be enrolled in WUIA Title I individualized. And if so, then they can take any of our training services whatsoever whether or not military benefits come with that. Thanks. I hope I answered that one, and if I didn't please jump back on there with it.

And then the last one for me is that, "I noticed that in the presentation slides, the LVER is involved in the process but my question is where does the DVOP fall into the picture here?" Great question. So the DVOP, obviously, the role that they have at Fairchild Air Force Base is more to serve individuals as I mentioned before. We have a large retiree population here in this area.

And so our DVOP out there works a lot with some of the retirees who are either changing jobs to qualify because they fit within the parameters for a DVOP to work with them. But at the same time they can just be a resource also – a referral source for American Job Center and talking to anyone on the base. Out there they're known as the individual who, once again, represents the American Job Center at the Airman and Family Readiness Center and the education center where they actually sit at.

And so our DVOP is able to be that connection back. We hold workshops obviously for veterans who have disabilities and so forth and so on like that, and so being able to attach themselves to that and to the right folks and go out and do outreach on the base that would benefit individuals who are disabled veterans and their spouses.

MS. MEDLEN: Yeah. And just really quick to also follow up with the DVOP. So my coworker and I, we do work closely together. And I ask him – talk to him about résumé crap and there are some things that I might want an extra eye on. So he just gives me some suggestions and we just work that way. But we are very involved together doing some of those outreach things. And so have I ever done a single employer meet and great; hiring a vet for military spouses at the AFRC? We have actually done two full-on job fairs at the Red Morgan Center out there, and yeah, we have a great time putting those on.

Again, we get our neighbor involved and she assists us with all those great connects out there in the local area, so we can get those HR professionals in there. We are looking at – we do mimic what we do down here at the American Job Center downtown, which is an employer – meet the employer, to where we'll have more of a mini-panel of maybe a few employers that are going to come out.

Now what we're trying to do is we are definitely trying to incorporate this into that TAPS week, so it's beneficial for the employers as well as the military spouses. So we definitely are putting this on as a military spouse event, but it is in coordination with that TAPS week, active duty transitioning – active duty can also access those employers and speak with those employers.

MR. WILLIAMS: Just one last question we'll hit on for time, I'm sorry, but certainly anyone can email Debbie or I any of the questions that you have and we'll get right back to you. Debbie touched on it just briefly. But Debbie, could you talk a little bit about how when you have someone who – spouse who is transitioning with their military member to another location, how you reach out to that location?

MS. MEDLEN: OK. So definitely I do breathe at our Smooth Move, and that's the individuals that are, of course, PCSing out. And I either sit with them, or we handle it via email if they've heard about me a little late and they're getting ready to leave. If they're terrified with me I sit down and I do that footwork for them. We look up that American Job Center in their location.

I will try and get a direct connect and I'll even try and pick up the phone right then and there and make a phone call, and again do that warm hand off and say, hey, this is Debbie with the American Job Center at Fairchild Air Force Base, who at your veteran services department is available for military spouses? And you just go on to the military OneStores to find out that information.

So yeah, we handle them all, everybody. So I'm there for all spouses coming in and out. And it is really great too because I also get to prep them for those unemployment benefits and make them – and that's another big thing. A lot of spouses have no idea they can actually file for unemployment. So that's another tool in my belt that I can use because that always perks up everybody's ears.

MR. WILLIAMS: I think that's it for us right now. We'll turn it back over to the facilitators.

MS. FRUGOLI: OK. Great. So I just wanted to summarize some action steps that you can do in your AJC. Specify or host military spouse services page on your website. Schedule a meeting with the nearest military installation for you to discuss your AJC services and explore establishing a formal partnership. Conduct staff training to enhance their capacity to assist military spouses.

You could even use this webinar as a training tool for that. And also the resources that we provided in the file sharing and on the web links. Plus, find a military point of contact in your AJC. Find out if anyone has a military affiliation, or might have the cultural competency to be that point of contact.

And then also access and use the resources that we've talked about on the military spouse license recognition and resources paid on WorkforceGPS. And you can also go to CareerOneStop and search for military staff; you can find resources for them there. And for then I wanted to take some of the questions it seems were directed at the national office, but let's talk about some of those.

I wanted to assure you that we have been working with the Department of Defense. Both the state liaison office there was the one that works with the state on their legislation for military staff license recognition. We're going to speak to them in the middle of September. And we've been sharing resources with them. Because we do also have resources for states about best practices, or making their lifeless information acceptable to spouses.

And someone mentioned the cap workshop. I wanted to change too. We also have done some webinar training for Department of Defense, mySECO, the Spousal Education and Career Opportunities. We have done a webinar training and provided the same resources to their career coaches that work for them. And also, too, they hosted a military spouse webinar for us. As far as TAP goes, because of the recent National Defense Authorization Act, the three-day employment workshop is changing to a one-day employment workshop run by the Department of Labor followed by a two-day mandatory track.

So that curriculum is going to be developed this year and we have been working very closely with our Veterans' Employment and Training Services that is responsible for that curriculum, but they know that these resources and we'll take that suggestion back that these need to be mentioned as part of TAP. Because of course the warm handoff to the agencies is something that is emphasized, but we also need to make sure that they know that those same services are available to their spouses.

Was there another one for me? We're not going to cover the eligibility requirements. It's sort of hard to do and especially if we don't have the slide already prepped for it. It's like they're in PPL and BPL and the TEGL.

Oh. So there's national legislation – or is their state legislation – on military staff licensing and then there's the legislation on reimbursement, but I don't know of legislation to require AJCs to partner with state resources. But I mean you certainly – you can do that.

MS. GALLAGHER: And then number 10?

MS. FRUGOLI: It's possible that in the new future we can expect advertising, incentives to employers about military staff hiring. So I want you to know that there are already – Hiring Our Heroes has a military spouse initiative with employers that's run by the Chamber of Commerce. So you might want to contact your local chamber of commerce or look on the web for the chamber of commerce Hiring Our Heroes initiative. But yes. There are incentives in advertising to employers about military self-employment.

MS. GALLAGHER: Number 8 was –

MS. FRUGOLI: Yeah. You know, we don't have good data on how many agencies are located on bases. And I'm not sure exactly how we would go about getting that. If DOD would have it, or if we have to find out. But I will look into seeing if we can determine that.

I just want to say we're very proud. Everyone always cites Joint Base Lewis-McChord which is also in Washington State. But we were so happy that we also found Fairchild and we could have one more example. So Washington State's doing a great job we'll have to find out about other states. That's a good step. Thank you.

MS. GALLAGHER: And you have another example – (inaudible) – Florida.

MS. FRUGOLI: Ah, Florida. We've been sharing that CareerSource Florida has information for transfers to Patrick Air Force Base, and we could provide that contact information.

So thank you everyone. Are there any last-minute questions? If not, I'm going to turn it back to Jon Vehlow to close out the session. Thank you. Thanks all for attending too.

MR. WILLIAMS: We've got one more question here. Need more answers. But – a second here.

MS. FRUGOLI: Oh. So Lori Adams at the National Association of State Workforce Agencies says she can find out how many AJCs are on base through the National Veterans Affairs Committee. So that's great. Thank you so much, Lori.

MR. VEHLOW: OK. Well, thank you Pam. Thank you everyone, actually.

(END)