2017 BLUE STAR FAMILIES
MILITARY FAMILY LIFESTYLE SURVEY

MILITARY SPOUSE RESPONDENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS 2016-2017

- Employed: 48% (2016), 47% (2017)
- Unemployed: 21% (2016), 28% (2017)

2016 EARNINGS AMONG MILITARY SPOUSE RESPONDENTS

- Under $20,000: 51%
- $20,000 - $49,999: 30%
- $50K - 99K: 19%
- Over $100K: 5%

51% of employed military spouse respondents earn less than $20K.

CURRENT AND PAST EARNINGS DIFFERENCE AMONG MILITARY SPOUSE RESPONDENTS

- Less than 20%: 21%
- Less than 50-99%: 41%
- Less than 20-49%: 38%

41% of military spouse respondents currently earn less than half of their previous highest salary.

55% of employed military spouse respondents are underemployed.
STRENGTHS & CHALLENGES

According to the Sorenson Impact Center, military spouses are:

UNDER-REPRESENTED IN LABOR FORCE:

MILITARY SPOUSES

57% vs

CIVILIAN SPOUSES

75%

UNDEREMPLOYED:

Spouses are six times more likely to earn salaries below their education and experience level

6X LESS

WELL EDUCATED:

Over 25% have at least a bachelor’s degree and military spouses outperform the general female population for graduate and professional degrees

Most importantly, military spouses want to work. Blue Star Families found that 60% of active duty, guard, and reserve spouses who were not working indicated they want to be employed.
● For at least the last ten years, Active-Duty military spouses have been unemployed at rates far exceeding the national average.
● This ongoing and persistent gap between spousal unemployment and civilian unemployment harms the well-being of our service-members and their families and will ultimately undermine the readiness of our military and the security of our country.
OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to hiring military spouses and military youth, some of the ways that the business sector can help support military family members becoming gainfully employed include:

- Offering career counseling
- Expanding career services
- Supporting programs that provide skill and employment trainings
- Offering scholarships for post-secondary education, including certification trainings
- Supporting quality, affordable and flexible childcare
- Offering flexible schedules and telecommuting options for employees who are military spouses
- Creating military family-friendly policies
- Advocating for reciprocity across states for professional certification or degree licensure