



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

May 20, 2024

## Memorandum

To: DOI Human Capital Officers

From: Jennifer A. Ackerman  
Director, Office of Human Capital  
Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer

Subject: Advancing Military Spouse Employment Outcomes through the 4+1 Commitment

Military spouse unemployment is a long-standing concern. The 21% military spouse unemployment rate is five times higher than the national average and has not significantly changed since 2015. High unemployment among military families creates financial instability, threatening our national security and the ability to recruit and retain an all-volunteer force.

Research shows a tight link between spouse unemployment and financial insecurity, but moving every two to three years makes it difficult for many military spouses to find and keep a job. According to Blue Star Families, [69% of Active-duty spouse respondents report](#) “*my service member’s daily work schedule is too unpredictable*” as a top barrier to employment. One in three Active-duty spouse respondents want to work remotely if offered the opportunity in their field, in a position commensurate with their education and experience.

President Biden’s [Executive Order 14100: Advancing Economic Opportunity for Military and Veteran Spouses, Caregivers, and Survivors](#) was a groundbreaking step towards addressing unemployment root causes for the 16,000+ military, Veteran, and surviving spouses in the Federal workforce. Yet even increasing Federal workforce participation and retention will not bring the ecosystem the change needed to sustainably reduce overall military spouse employment outcomes.

Consistent with EO 14100, Interior is committed to advancing military spouse employment outcomes and has partnered with U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (Hiring Our Heroes), Blue Star Families, and U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) to adopt the 4+1 Commitment to support military spouse employment success in the Federal workplace.

In addition to this commitment from the Department, the [4+1 Commitment](#) is a scalable, actionable, and effective way for Bureaus/Offices to make a voluntary commitment to improve

military spouse employment outcomes by adopting at least one of the following military-spouse-friendly employment policies:

- facilitate job transferability,
- offer remote or telework arrangements,
- offer flexible work hours,
- provide paid or permissive Permanent Change of Station (PCS) leave, and
- participate in the Department's [Military Spouse Employment Partnership \(MSEP\)](#) and/or [SkillBridge Program](#).

The 4+1 Commitment provides an accessible solution for Bureaus/Offices, directly addresses problems military spouses have identified, is easily understood by military spouses and companies alike, and simplifies tracking adoption.

Bringing employers together in this commitment provides the missing piece of the solution that the DoD, employment programs, and military spouses themselves cannot provide, allowing military spouses to build careers that support their families' wellbeing, with long-term financial benefits for military families and for the stability of the All-Volunteer Force.

This is the preventative, upstream solution to military families' financial insecurity, hunger, housing insecurity, and employment retention that military families need to thrive in the military lifestyle.

Bureaus/Offices with questions concerning the commitment's initiatives may contact Departmental Veterans Employment Program Manager, [Angela Mettling@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Angela_Mettling@ios.doi.gov).