



THE FORCE BEHIND THE FORCE

Defining and Enabling Job Portability Employment Solutions for Military Spouses

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PROBLEM

Most employment efforts focus on recruiting and hiring military spouse employees, but retaining them is often a more challenging goal for employers. For one, most employers adopt existing veteran hiring strategies and apply them to military spouse initiatives. Using these strategies has the advantage of providing an existing framework, and yet has minimized the impact of relocation on military spouse retention. For these and other reasons, unemployment and underemployment continues to remain high for military spouses which raises some key questions:

- ✔ Can improving or increasing the options for military spouse career portability positively impact the unemployment and underemployment situation for military spouses?
- ✔ What are the issues that impact career portability and how can employers retain their military spouse employees when they relocate?

CURRENT RESEARCH EFFORTS

The current research effort will explore how relocation impacts military spouses and begin to identify policies, procedures, and practices employers can adopt to enable job portability solutions. We will collect information from both military spouses and employers on career portability and related information. The goals of this project are to:



- ① provide a definition of career portability,
- ② identify the range of portability challenges encountered by both employers and military spouses, and
- ③ to develop resources, guidelines, and frameworks that inform and assist employers, policy makers, and military spouses in creating portable career pathways.

NEXT STEPS FOR DEFINING JOB PORTABILITY



INTERIM FINDINGS

The following variations of job portability were developed directly from the focus group interviews with military spouses and will serve as a working definition of job portability.



WHAT'S NEXT

This research effort will continue to convene additional focus groups with military spouse employees and company representatives (including human resource professionals and hiring managers) who can provide insight into the issues and barriers related to career portability. Employer surveys and follow-up interviews will be conducted as well. The results of these efforts will include a series of publications including a practical toolkit that offers suggestions, recommendations, and tools for employers who wish to explore portability options for their employees and particularly for military spouses. This career portability research and tool will:

- ✓ Review current and prior research to identify the job portability issues related to military spouses
- ✓ Examine how companies address job portability for non-military affiliated employees
- ✓ Identify career portability issues from the perspective of human resource professionals
- ✓ Identify human resource policies, practices, and priorities related to job portability for military spouses
- ✓ Identify issues associated with Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) such as key themes, barriers, and policy issues that either enable work while living overseas or present barriers to employment
- ✓ Provide recommendations and future directions for companies, collaborative working groups, legislators, and military spouses
- ✓ Provide tools for employers to identify whether offering portable career options within their organization aligns with their business case
- ✓ Provide a template or “cookbook” for companies to establish portable career programs

ABOUT “THE FORCE BEHIND THE FORCE” SERIES

Prudential Financial Inc. has committed to recruit, hire, and retain its military spouse employees. As part of this commitment they have invested in learning, developing, leading, and disseminating best practices related to military spouse employment. Toward this end, Prudential Financial Inc. along with the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University, has published and continues to publish a series entitled “The Force Behind the Force” which focuses on recruiting, hiring, retention, and best practices for military spouse employment initiatives.