



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

MAY - 4 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOW FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Military Spouse Employment Initiative

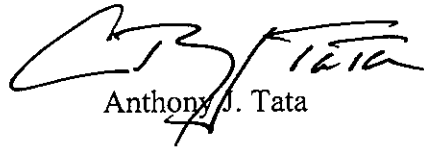
The economic well-being of military families and career fulfillment of military spouses are inextricably linked to the readiness and retention of our All-Volunteer Force. Yet, military spouse unemployment and underemployment remain persistent challenges that impact family stability and, in turn, force readiness. To better support our families and lower military spouse unemployment, the Department is shifting from a passive, resource-available model to a proactive, data-driven engagement model.

My intent is to rapidly reduce the military spouse unemployment rate from 20 to 15 percent or lower. To achieve this, I am directing the Assistant Secretary of War for Manpower and Reserve Affairs to establish a task force including the Deputy Assistant Secretary of War for Military Community and Family Policy and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of War for Civilian Personnel Policy. This task force will develop and execute programmatic and policy changes to aggressively reduce the military spouse unemployment rate across the following six lines of effort:

- **Promote Training and Hiring for Critical Skills:** Create innovative pilot programs to train military spouses and create talent pipelines for high demand, critical skills, (such as health care, teaching, defense industrial base, information technology, and others).
- **Reduce Impact of Permanent Change of Station (PCS):** Address the structural drivers of unemployment by reducing PCS-related career disruption and childcare barriers during PCS.
- **Department of War (DoW) as Model Employer and Catalyst:** Make DoW the exemplar for spouse hiring, retention, PCS career continuity, and contractor expectations.
- **High-Impact Pathways and Employer Partnerships:** Expand access to in-demand skills, structured pathways, and employer partnerships that translate directly into quality jobs.
- **Data, Insights and Design for Impact:** Sharpen metrics, leverage the Active Duty Spouse Survey and other data, and use human-centered design to target interventions where they have the greatest effect.

- **Brand Refresh and Improved Awareness:** Rebrand and market spouse employment support so that spouses, commanders, and employers clearly understand how to access and leverage these resources.

The readiness of our force depends on the stability of our families. This initiative is a critical step in fulfilling our commitment to them. It will require a whole-of-Department effort. The task force will coordinate efforts across the DoW Components to ensure program and policy changes are standardized across the Department. I expect all Components to work collaboratively with the task force on this initiative and take proactive, independent steps to rapidly reduce military spouse unemployment.



Anthony J. Tata