



# Military-Spouse Career Advancement Accounts

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**Military-spouse unemployment rate is triple the civilian rate**

**Pilot program helps military spouses build portable careers**

**Spouses at three Washington military bases are eligible**

**Focusing on high-demand fields builds career security**

**WorkSource helps administer the program.**

Nearly 80 percent of military spouses report that they want and need work, yet their unemployment rate is triple the rate of their civilian counterparts, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Over the next decade, two-thirds of American jobs will require some kind of post-high-school training. Yet, according to the Department of Labor, three-fourths of military spouses cannot afford higher-education costs.

## Career Advancement Accounts

The Military Spouse Career Advancement Account (CAA) was created through a partnership of the federal departments of Labor and Defense to enable military spouses to gain the skills they need to successfully start and advance their careers after a military move. This program will help military spouses overcome the barriers associated with trying to develop a career in the midst of frequent relocations. Eligible participants have access to an account to pay for training in high-demand, portable occupations in several fields (see below for details). Eligible expenses include tuition, fees, books and equipment necessary to complete their education or training.

This is a demonstration program through 2010. The federal government has allocated \$3.7 million for use by Washington state CAA participants. From 2008 through 2010, this program intends to help more than 5,000 participants nationwide.

## Eligibility and locations

Qualified spouses must have a high school diploma or general equivalency degree and must be married to active-duty military personnel who are assigned to one of the 18 sites in eight states with large military populations. In Washington state, participants' spouses must be stationed at Fort Lewis, McChord Air Force Base or Naval Station Kitsap to be eligible. Participants may receive up to \$3,000 per year for two years.

The intent of the program is to support training for careers that have been nationally identified as high-growth and portable. Portable training means that, not only are the students' credits transferable to any accredited institution, but also that the careers are available in most communities. The currently approved career categories are financial services, education, health care, information technology, construction, human resources (personnel), hospitality, homeland security, social work and business administration.

## WorkSource system plays a role

Each military base's Family Support Center and the local workforce development council (part of the WorkSource one-stop career-services system) work together to process applications and administer the program. Additional information is available at <http://caa.milspouse.org/>.

## Contacts

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