

Military Spouse Preference (MSP) Information Sheet

The Military Spouse Preference (MSP) program is derived from Title 10, United States Code, Section 1784, “Employment Opportunities for Military Spouses” and applies to spouses of active duty military members of the U.S. Armed Forces (including Coast Guard), who relocate to accompany their sponsor on a permanent change of station (PCS) move. The program is intended to lessen the career interruption of spouses who relocate with their military sponsors. MSP is a Department of Defense (DoD) program. Consequently, it applies only to DoD vacancies. Military spouses are eligible to request MSP hiring preference regardless of current employment status.

The MSP program applies only if:

- The spouse was married to the military sponsor prior to the reporting date to the new assignment;
- The relocation was based on PCS move and not for separation or retirement;
- The vacancy is within the commuting area of the sponsor’s permanent new duty station; and
- The spouse is among the “best qualified” group and is within reach for selection.

MSP hiring preference does not apply, however, when preference, if granted, would violate statutes or regulations governing veterans’ preference or nepotism.

Military spouses may receive MSP hiring preference as follows:

- Military spouses who are current or former Federal employees are referred for vacancies within the U.S., its territories, and possessions, through the DoD Priority Placement Program (PPP) - Program “S.” To meet the appointability requirement under PPP, the spouse must be in one of the following categories:
 - Current Federal career or career-conditional employee;
 - Veterans Readjustment Authority (VRA) employee or Schedule A appointee for persons with disabilities;
 - Reinstatement eligible;
 - E.O. 12721 eligible (returning overseas employee); or
 - Eligible for competitive service appointment based on employment under other merit systems.
- Under PPP, eligibility continues from 30 days prior to the sponsor’s reporting date throughout the tour until the spouse accepts or declines a continuing (lasting one year or longer) appropriated or non-appropriated fund position with any Federal agency in the local commuting area.

- Spouses who are not eligible for consideration through PPP, are eligible for MSP hiring preference when applying for DoD positions in the U.S. or in foreign areas through the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) or a DoD Delegated Examining Office (DEU) competitive examination. MSP hiring preference applies only to the specific announcement under which the spouse is applying and only if that list is used to fill the position.
- Spouses applying for positions in foreign areas (not through OPM or a DEU) receive MSP hiring preference consideration under procedures established by the local activity. These spouses may file applications for employment with the overseas civilian personnel office 30 days before their anticipated arrival; however, they may not receive preference until actually arriving at the overseas location.

To request MSP hiring preference, all spouses must submit the following documents:

- Application or resume;
- Statement requesting MSP; and
- Copy of military sponsor's PCS orders.

In addition, spouses who are current or former permanent Federal employees or who are eligible for appointment under E.O. 12721 (returning overseas employee), must also submit the following documents:

- Copy of Standard Form 50 (SF 50) documenting current or previous appointments; and
- Copy of last performance appraisal.