

TITLE: MILITARY SPOUSE PREFERENCE FACT SHEET

PURPOSE: This guide is to inform Employment of military spouses of active duty military members in foreign overseas areas.

APPLICATION: Military Spouse Preference (MSP) is a program that was developed by the Department of Defense (DoD) to help lessen the interruption of a spouse's career when they have to move due to the service members' receipt of permanent change of station (PCS) orders. MSP applies to spouses of active duty service members of the U. S. Armed Forces, including the Coast Guard and full time National Guard. MSP provides priority in the employment selection process for relocating military spouses. Spouse preference is not limited to the branch of military of which the sponsor is serving or to only those who have previously worked for the Federal government. Preference applies worldwide to most DoD appropriated fund (APF) positions at pay grades GS-15 and below (or equivalent wage grade positions).

It is important to note that the MSP Program does not give a military spouse competitive status as an applicant. According to the Office of Personnel Management, competitive status is "a person's basic eligibility for assignment (for example, by transfer, promotion, reassignment, demotion, or reinstatement) to a position in the competitive service without having to compete with members of the general public in an open competitive examination. Once acquired, status belongs to the individual, not to the position." Spouses of active duty service members may be eligible for preference if the following conditions are met.

- They were married to the active duty service member prior to the reporting date to the new assignment
- The relocation was based on a PCS transfer and not separation or retirement
- The vacant position is within commuting distance of the new PCS location
- They are among the best-qualified group of candidates for the position

Preference applies to the initial employment at the location. Once the spouse accepts or declines such a Federal position at the new duty station, eligibility terminates, whether or not the position was obtained through spouse preference. If a spouse indicates that they are interested in a temporary position and they decline an offer, the spouse loses their preference. Preference is also lost if a temporary position is accepted and the duration of the position is extended and the spouse declines the extension. If the position offered is for less than one year or ends early, the spouse continues to retain their preference.

REFERENCE: DOD Instruction 1400.23; DoD Instruction 1404.12; AFMAN 36-204 para 4.6; AFMAN 36-203 Chapter 4

EXCEPTION: Military Spouse Preference does not apply to positions in the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, or to other organizations in the DoD components that have a primary function of intelligence, counterintelligence, or national security.

Civilian employee spouses are not eligible for this preference. If a military sponsor is retiring or separating from service, this preference does not apply.

TIMELINE: Spouses may begin exercising their preference 30 days before their sponsors' reporting date and for the duration of the tour as long as they do not decline a position considered valid for MSP under DoD policy. Spouses relocating overseas must wait until they arrive at the new duty station to begin applying for positions using military spouse preference. Preference is lost when you are within six months of your scheduled departure.

MORE INFORMATION: More information from the Air Force Personnel Center can be found at: https://gum.afpc.randolph.af.mil/cgi-bin/askafpc.cfg/php/enduser/std_alp.php?p_search_text=military+Spouse+Preference&p_sid=jORzCfmk&p_lva=&p_li=&p_accessibility=0&p_redirect=&p_page=1&p_cv=&p_pv=&p_prods=&p_cats=&p_hidden_prods=&prod_lv11=0&cat_lv11=0&p_new_search=1