

ASEP helps relocating Army spouses find jobs

BARBARA PURVIS

Army News Service

FORT JACKSON, S.C. – The phrase “I’ve got orders,” is one uttered by servicemembers around the world. For Army spouses, those words can evoke a host of emotions associated with the uncertainties of moving. Besides packing and preparing to leave, working military spouses face financial and employment uncertainty at the new duty location.

Enter the Army Spouses Employment Partnership, a program designed to support military spouses by helping them establish and maintain careers wherever the Army sends them. The partnership is an agreement between the Army and 21 Fortune 500 companies which offer a spectrum of career opportunities for Army spouses.

Renee Bosco, an Army spouse whose husband transferred to Fort Jackson, S.C. from Fort Riley, Kan., included ASEP assistance in her job search.

“As a military spouse I had to be realistic,” Bosco said. “I can find a job anywhere. But, I wanted something I could keep long term and hopefully

make more money and get a little higher in the organization.”

Bosco investigated ASEP positions, which includes federal jobs.

“My husband is a [Fort Jackson] drill sergeant and I wanted to find a federal position so my job could move with him,” she said.

When she arrived in South Carolina, Bosco intended to complete certification for a degree in education, but plans changed when she realized her husband might be transferred before the end of the three-year program in which she hoped to enroll. Assignments for drill sergeants are relatively short – usually two years with an uncertain option to volunteer a third year.

Instead of school, Bosco opted for a job. After a three-month search, she found a position as a human resources assistant at the Fort Jackson Directorate of Human Resources, where she processes orders.

“Over 14,000 spouses have been hired through the ASEP program between October 2003, when the program began, and the most current figures available in 2005,” said Barbara Martin, Fort Jackson Army Community Service Employment

Readiness Program manager. “Not all of the companies provide jobs here in South Carolina, but most offer employment opportunities nationally, as well as internationally.”

Several local partners have provided employment opportunities to Army spouses in South Carolina, across the nation and overseas, Martin said.

“ASEP is a great program because it allows us to work closely with military spouses to provide opportunities for employment,” said Brett Wadford, a staffing specialist with Manpower Incorporated. “We’ve helped a lot of spouses of Soldiers from Fort Jackson.”

Corporate America is embracing military spouses because they add varied backgrounds and skill sets to the workforce.

“Adecco is a company that values diversity,” said Theresa Williams, a representative from Adecco Staffing Company. “We get a lot of good applicants through job fairs and the ASEP program. We feel that with the positions we have, we should be able to fill a lot of them with the resumes we collect.”

Wadford said military spouses tend to be more committed employees.

“A lot of what spouses bring with them to the job is their previous work experience, having worked around the world or in other parts of the United States,” Wadford said. “Add to the fact they have a higher level of commitment, especially when it comes to finding a position that fits their interests and staying with the assignment.”

Positions available through ASEP range from beginner to advanced levels, Martin said.

“Even if the military spouse has limited skills, ASEP is still a good starting point for them,” Martin said. “Some of them can come in at the entry level, while others can start as managers.”

ASEP was established in 2003, and was driven by an initiative begun by Gen. Eric Shinseki, then chief of staff of the Army, when a statement of support was signed between the Army and 13 corporations. Since then, the ASEP partnership has increased to 21 companies.

Military spouses can apply for jobs online through the Army Spouse Employment Partnership at www.myarmylifetoo.com or www.militaryspousejobsearch.org. For information call (803) 751-5432.

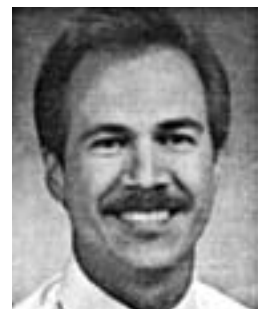


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