



NATIONAL
MILITARY FAMILY
ASSOCIATION

MILITARY SPOUSE SCHOLARSHIP & EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

2019 Year in Review

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Military Spouse Scholarship and Employment Program

When it comes to employment, military spouses face enormous challenges. Like many Americans, military families often rely on two incomes, yet military spouses experience a 24% unemployment rate—nearly six times the national average—and even higher rates of underemployment. The unique demands of military life make it difficult for military spouses to achieve their educational goals and career success. They end up paying more to obtain the same degrees, certifications, and licenses as their civilian peers because of frequent, military-mandated moves—sometimes to remote locations.

That's why the National Military Family Association (NMFA) created the Spouse Scholarship and Employment Program.

The program began in 2004, when 270 applicants sought financial support for their education and job expenses. NMFA awarded \$20,000 to 30 military spouse recipients.

Since then, the program has grown to meet increasing demand and now includes in-kind partnerships for tuition discounts and employment support. For military spouses, a little help can go a long way.

In 2019, NMFA served **923** military spouses through the Military Spouse Scholarship and Employment Program, granting a total of **\$1,162,012** in scholarships and in-kind funding. Also, this year, NMFA moved from a bi-annual to a rolling application model. The new structure better aligns with the military spouse lifestyle because military moves happen year-round.

Military Spouse Laura and her Army Family



2019 Awardee Demographics

97%

are female

83%

are spouses of active duty service members

8%

are spouses of wounded or fallen service members

5%

are currently serving or veterans

69%

are spouses of enlisted service members (26% E4 and below, 43% E5-E7)

60%

have one or more children

45%

are not currently employed

48%

are 30 or younger

40%

are new to the military (married three years or less)

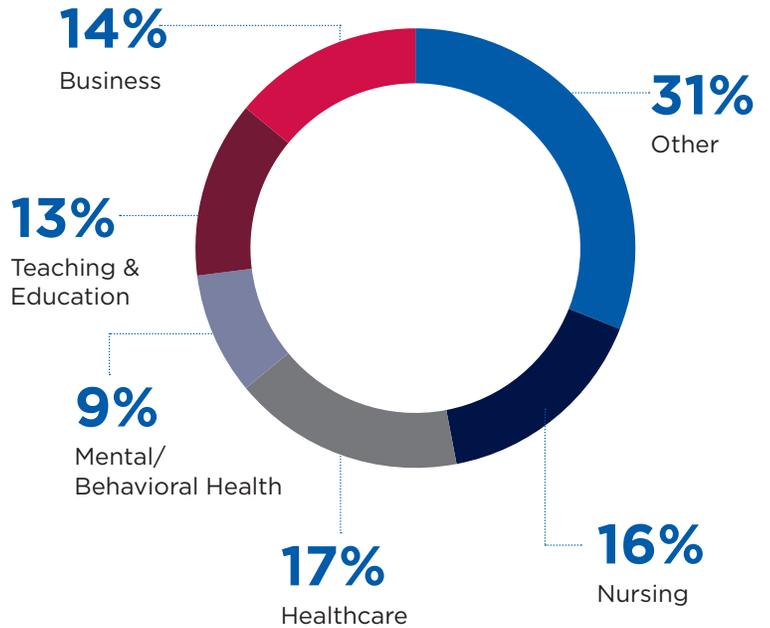
39%

identify as minorities

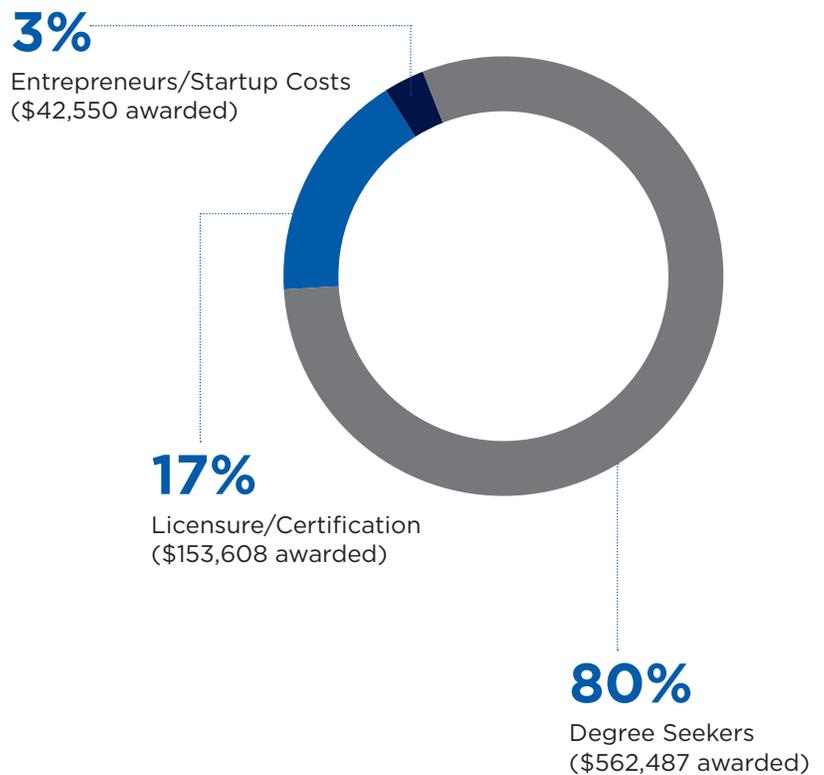
12%

speak English as a second language

Career Fields



Scholarship Type





"I work with special education students, and saying goodbye is an incredibly difficult thing to do. Working with these students is my passion, and I feel so lucky that with this scholarship I will be able to obtain my Speech Language Pathologist licensure in the United Kingdom and continue to pursue my career in our new home!"

Megan
Air Force Spouse

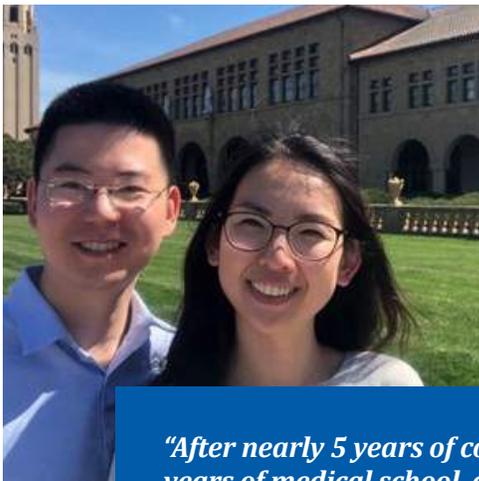
Licensure & Certification Need

An average of 200,000 military spouses move each year, according to Department of Defense (DoD) estimates. At the same time, more professions are requiring licensure than ever before, resulting in an increased need for support for licensing and certifications. NMFA scholarship applicants mirror this trend. In 2007, only five percent of NMFA scholarship applicants sought funding for licensure and certification compared to 25% in 2018.

Teaching, nursing, and mental health are among the top ten occupations pursued by military spouse scholarship applicants. Each time a military spouse in one of these fields moves, they have to meet and pay for new licensing and certification requirements.

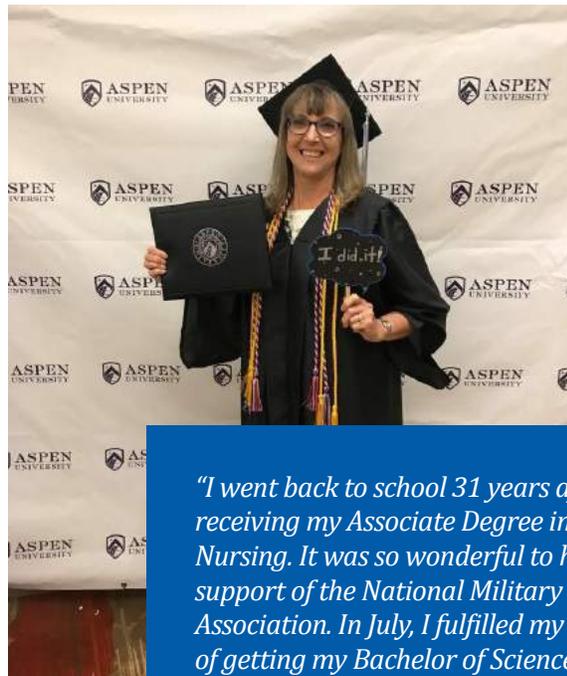
NMFA worked with Congress on the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to help buffer the costs through a pilot program that offers a \$500 licensure reimbursement with a military move to a new state, but implementation was delayed until 2019.

It is important to note; the program does not cover costs associated with initial licensing nor does it cover supervision hours.



"After nearly 5 years of college, 4 years of medical school, and 4 years of specialty training, I am finally getting ready for the Neurology Board Examination, which is required to start working as a fully trained neurologist. The NMFA scholarship funding will provide assistance in not only defraying the cost of the exam but will also lessen the burden of my student debt."

Sun Yang
Army National Guard Spouse



"I went back to school 31 years after receiving my Associate Degree in Nursing. It was so wonderful to have the support of the National Military Family Association. In July, I fulfilled my dream of getting my Bachelor of Science in Nursing. The degree gave me personal satisfaction, helped me stay current in my profession and opened up other career potentials within nursing."

Patricia
Army Spouse

In-Kind Partnership Impact

NMFA has partnered with universities, colleges, and corporations to provide additional support in the form of scholarships, tuition discounts, and employment support for military spouses. In 2019, these partnerships allowed NMFA to serve an additional 132 military spouses with a cost savings of \$375,282.

Through our partnership with University of Maryland Global Campus and the Pillars of Strength program, caregivers of wounded, ill, or injured service members receive full scholarships. In 2019, the Pillars of Strength partnership awarded seven caregiver scholarships, totaling more than \$126,000.

NMFA is grateful to our many 2019 in-kind partners, including:

The Chicago School of Professional Psychology
Flex Jobs

Georgetown School of Nursing

Kansas State Global

The Major Group

Purdue University Global

Social Work at USC

University of Maryland Global Campus

Webster University



Jessica, a registered nurse, made a career taking care of others.

But when her husband's Humvee hit an IED in Ramadi, Iraq, she had to leave her nursing job to be a full-time caregiver for her husband, who suffers from a traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress (PTS). Jessica assists Nathaniel around-the-clock and says what keeps her going is "lots of coffee!" and making sure her husband and children receive great care. She hopes to build a new career as a legal nurse so that she can advocate for families like hers.

"Having this scholarship will help me further my degree and help ensure financial security for my family, and it also gives me an identity outside of being a caregiver, which means a lot to me."

Jessica
Marine Corps Retired Spouse

Military Spouse Meredith and her Navy Family



Online Support & Networking Communities

Careers in nursing, teaching, and mental healthcare are among the top ten professions in the military spouse community. NMFA created unique Facebook groups for each career field so that spouses pursuing jobs in these professions can network, turn to each other for support, and share the latest in industry trends and professional development. Within the groups, spouses find mentors, gain career advice, and guide one another on upcoming moves. They also share what they've learned about states licensing/certification requirements and procedures, job opportunities, and various degree programs.

Peer Reviewed Applications

Scholarship applications are evaluated by military spouse volunteers, which not only saves \$35,000 in administrative costs but also brings a level of understanding critical to program success. No one knows the challenges facing military spouses like their military spouse peers. NMFA's Spouse Scholarship and Employment Program staff equip volunteers with a detailed rubric, providing them the tools necessary to evaluate essays, while also encouraging the volunteer evaluator to draw on their experience to understand an applicant's professional journey. In 2019, 101 volunteers spent 1,417 hours ensuring those most deserving spouses received the funding they needed to advance their careers.

In Their Own Words

"I want to relay my gratitude for allowing me to be a part of the NMFA volunteer community. As a scholarship judge, I'm connecting with hundreds of military spouses whose stories are too often overlooked or unheard; and am able to positively impact their lives by furthering their educations, their professions, and their contributions to their military households and communities. As a former military spouse and veteran, the NMFA platform affords me the privilege to reach fellow spouses to show, 'You are heard, you have a voice and you have our support.'"

Ebonnie
NMFA Volunteer

"The scholarship I was given helped to pay for the undergraduate prerequisite courses I needed to take before I could get into grad school. I then entered graduate school, earned my Master of Accounting, and went on to pass the CPA exam. Now I own my own accounting firm!! It's everything I ever dreamed of, and it started with the scholarship!!"

Nancy, Air Force Spouse
2019 Survey Response and 2013 Awardee

"My husband's military career has made my goals much harder to achieve. I know how common that is, but this scholarship felt like someone in the military community showing they care. My hopes and my dreams matter too. This funding directly impacted my ability to continue my degree. I just found out that my husband is going to be deployed for the fourth time, but I have not worried about school. More important than the money, I feel like I have received, 'you are doing great, keep going!' in receiving this scholarship and that has made all the difference."

Stephanie
Army National Guard Spouse and 2019 Awardee

"I always knew I wanted to go back to school but kept waiting because it wasn't the 'right time'. I completed the application on my phone, never dreaming I would be awarded the opportunity. When I got the notification that I was selected I said to myself, this is my sign, it's time. It's because of you that I am less than a year away from completing my Master of Social Work degree."

Jessica
Coast Guard Spouse



LaQueshia and her husband have been together for 17 years, through many military moves. As a teacher for students with disabilities, LaQueshia has focused on developing social-emotional learning (SEL) practices. She decided to create a yoga and mindfulness training program for other dedicated and like-minded educators, addressing SEL, mindfulness, community building, and social justice.

“These skills will help build school communities we can take pride in and that support the type of communities we want to build. I honestly didn’t believe I’d finish school or ever complete grad school after starting my family and moving all over the United States. But now, not only am I a Special Educator with a graduate degree. I am also a 200hr yoga and mindfulness teacher and am able to bring these added skills into my teaching practice in order to help other teachers. Thank you for all your support of myself and other military spouse. It makes a difference in our world.”

LaQueshia, Army Spouse

Program Impact: Recipient Progress

NFMA surveys the past five years of scholarship recipients each year to understand the long-term impact of our program on a military spouse’s education and employment success. Over the last five years:

96%

of scholarship recipients reported they are more satisfied with their career opportunities now that they have completed their degree, licensure, or certification

86%

of scholarship recipients reported that their degree, licensure, or certification has helped them obtain employment

75%

of scholarship recipients reported a higher salary upon completion of their degree, licensure, or certification

THANK YOU.

Generous donor support enables the National Military Family Association to turn dreams into realities for many military spouses, providing them with both the financial assistance they need and the vote of confidence they deserve. Special thanks to the Fisher House Foundation, which has served as the National Sponsor of the Spouse Scholarship and Employment Program since 2008.

Additional thanks to...

CLA Foundation

Corvias Foundation

Fisher House Foundation

General Dynamics

International SOS

Lockheed Martin Corporation

May & Stanley Smith Charitable Trust

Northrop Grumman Foundation

Pioneer Services

Prudential Financial

Shlomo Y. Rechnitz/Tamar Rechnitz Charity

The Berkowitz Foundation

The Greater Washington Community Foundation

The Oak Foundation

The Wasily Family Foundation

The National Military Family Association is the leading nonprofit dedicated to serving the families who stand behind the uniform. Since 1969, NMFA has worked to strengthen and protect millions of families through its advocacy and programs. We provide spouse scholarships, camps for military kids, and retreats for families reconnecting after deployment and for the families of the wounded, ill, or injured. NMFA serves the families of the currently serving, veteran, retired, wounded or fallen members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, and Commissioned Corps of the USPHS and NOAA.

Learn more and get involved at MilitaryFamily.org.



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