

Tips for a Successful Pre-Screening and Interview of a Military Spouse

Military spouses bring strong capability, adaptability, and resilience—but their résumés may look “non-linear” due to relocations, deployments, and family responsibilities. The goal for MSEN employer partners is to **interpret these experiences accurately**, remove traditional hiring barriers, and create space for talent to shine.

Below are tailored recommendations you can use during the **Work Seeker Appointment** process and when reviewing resumes.

1. Approach the Conversation with Context and Empathy

Many military spouses face frequent relocations, gaps in employment, and career interruptions that do *not* reflect their skills or commitment.

Use the interview to understand the *story* behind their timeline, rather than judging gaps at face value.

This aligns with the MSEN guidance that this portion of the event focuses on **job screening, interviews, job matching and offering advice** rather than redirecting candidates to a website.

2. Look for Transferable Skills Over Traditional Career Progression

Because many spouses have held diverse roles across sectors due to moves, focus on:

- adaptability
- learning quickly in new environments
- remote work competency
- cross-sector experience
- leadership in volunteer or community roles
- resilience and multitasking

The agenda encourages employers to help candidates “navigate the process” and identify placement ideas—this includes identifying skills that may not be obvious on paper.

3. Use the Screening Time to Build Confidence and Clarify Fit

Some spouses are hesitant to apply because they may feel unsure of where they fit or how their skills translate.

Employers are encouraged to spend time **walking through the resume and offering advice and placement ideas**, instead of simply directing them to job postings.

A supportive conversation can uncover:

- hidden strengths
- ideal roles within your organization
- possible training or upskilling pathways
- opportunities where their mobility can be an asset

4. Ask Skills-Based Questions Instead of Timeline-Based Questions

Traditional questions like “Why were you out of the workforce for two years?” can unintentionally penalize military life circumstances.

Try instead:

- ✓ “Tell me about a challenge you solved in a previous role or volunteer capacity.”
- ✓ “How do you approach adapting to new work environments?”
- ✓ “What types of roles energize you most?”

This approach aligns with MSEN’s focus on **helping candidates navigate** rather than evaluate them solely by linear career metrics.

5. Recognize Non-Traditional or Volunteer Experience

Many military spouses:

- lead community programs
- manage family logistics during deployments
- coordinate moves
- volunteer in base or local organizations
- build freelance or portable businesses

These experiences often mirror high-value competencies like operations, leadership, planning, event management, and crisis coordination.

6. Clarify Career Goals and Role Alignment Early

To make the short **15-minute** appointments effective, guide the candidate toward clarity:

- What type of work are they seeking?
- What is their ideal schedule or flexibility requirement?
- What role(s) in your organization fit their transferable skills?

Keeping the conversation focused is important because appointment times are fixed at **15 minutes**.

7. Ask About Work-From-Home or Mobility Needs Thoughtfully

Military families often relocate without much notice. Instead of framing questions around permanence, ask:

- “What work arrangements support your ability to contribute long-term?”
- “Are remote or hybrid options valuable to you?”
- “What helps you stay engaged and successful during transitions?”

This builds trust and demonstrates employer flexibility.

8. Offer Guidance on Next Steps Rather than Gatekeeping

MSEN explicitly encourages helping candidates find the right place within your organization, not sending them back to your website.

[\[Employer Toolkit & VCF | Word\]](#)

Consider:

- identifying departments they could connect with
- recommending roles they may not have considered
- providing clarity on the hiring timeline
- explaining team culture or expectations



9. Use the MSEN Tools to Personalize the Screening

During the event, employers have access to:

- the candidate's resume
- chat, audio, and video options
- the ability to add tags and notes

These tools allow you to tailor the conversation and create meaningful follow-up actions.