

MILITARYSPOUSE[®]

It's Time to Create Your Own Success

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Advancing your professional development while your spouse is active duty presents challenges, as a move every two to three years can affect job promotions, career growth, and stability. The Association of the United States Army reported that military spouses faced a staggering 25% unemployment rate in 2021, and 60% of military spouses were job-searching. While it may be difficult to obtain a traditional office job, military spouses can pursue an entrepreneurship-related role and channel their evident perseverance and diligence into starting their own business. Entrepreneurs are esteemed corporate professionals who establish and manage their own business. The ability to work from home and to set your own hours is especially compelling for military spouses, as this provides greater flexibility. It's a rewarding field to enter, as the Military Spouse Chamber of Commerce reports that 48% of all military spouses are self-employed business owners, or aspire to be.

Entrepreneurship presents an excellent opportunity to follow one's passion and bring an idea to fruition.

Rafsan Huseynov, a Navy military spouse who's in an ACP mentorship, is preparing to launch his business of a plus-sized woman's clothing line, and aims to bring value to his customers. Huseynov described how once while shopping, he saw a plus-sized woman that was struggling to find clothing. When she found something, it was for men, and she had no choice but to pick it up. This inspired him to start Crag and Tail, a company that sells clothes perfect for outdoor activities. Huseynov is an avid skier and hiker, and even nature inspired the company's name: Crag and Tail refers to a landform created from glacial erosion. Brittany Bailey, a Navy military spouse who is a registered dietician, also exemplifies how entrepreneurs can create their own success.

"I have a story to tell and there are women out there just like me who have everything on their plate but forget about themselves," she says.

Bailey founded The Blonde Dietician in July 2020, and implements nutritional programs for her clients, offers personalized coaching, and provides resources on how women can shed body fat.

Entrepreneurs have autonomy as they navigate their work life, and the chance to work remotely provides valuable lessons on how to boost productivity, maintain independence, and increase work-life satisfaction. Bailey explains that she has an office set up in one of her spare bedrooms, and her work day includes reviewing upcoming sessions for the week, creating new content, and blocking time dedicated to conduct research.

"Owning a business means having a work-life balance. If you don't have that, then that's a mistake," she says.

Entrepreneurship further presents a wonderful chance for military spouses to broaden their expertise. Bailey is not just an entrepreneur, she is a skilled marketer; She understands search

engine optimization (SEO), writes and uploads weekly blogs, and is involved in email marketing.

It's crucial to note that instituting a business builds self-sufficiency and confidence levels. Manda McVey, the founder and CEO of the wellness and resilience coaching business The Healtary Spouse, says to get comfortable with being uncomfortable and that tenacity is one of the characteristics that define a successful small business owner.

"My ACP mentor reminded me that a lot of the time, entrepreneurs started out as volunteers, so we are natural givers. But we have to be receivers. We started this business to make a living for ourselves, so we have to make sure the time is valuable," McVey emphasizes.

Not only is embarking on an entrepreneurship journey a fulfilling option for military spouses, there are vital resources offered to military spouses as they create their own company and turn into their own bosses. For example, The Small Business Administration provides free instruction on branding!

Entrepreneurs can also strengthen and develop their business plans by working with an American Corporate Partners (ACP) mentor. ACP is a national non-profit organization that offers a year-long, one-on-one customized mentorship to post 9/11 veterans and active duty spouses. Mentors from highly regarded Fortune 500 companies such as Morgan Stanley, Home Depot, and General Motors, have extensive careers that span a wide variety of industries. Small business and general business development are two of the industries that ACP mentors are well-versed in. Whether military spouses seek to improve their business plans or work on marketing, mentors are ready to see their protégé's business prosper. Interested military spouses can apply through this link: <https://www.acp-usa.org/spouseapp>.