



Soldier for Life

Department of the United States Army

Military Spouse Coworking Space

Meeting the Needs of Our Spouses

As of 01 November 2021

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Addressing a Quality of Life Priority

Military Spouse Coworking Space

Quality of Life Priorities

- ✓ Housing
- ✓ Healthcare
- ✓ Childcare
- ✓ **Spouse employment**
- ✓ PCS moves



39%

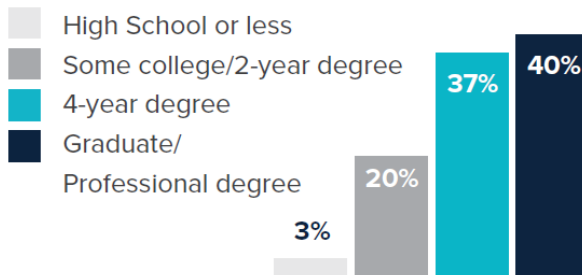
Of military families discussed the “possibility of leaving military service specifically to support [the spouse’s] work or career.*

48%

For spouses with a graduate or professional degree.*

Army Interest at All Levels

EDUCATION



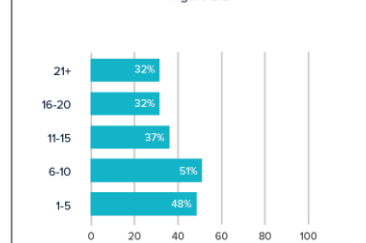
REMOTE & FLEXIBLE WORK

- Increase opportunities for remote and flexible work by using online platforms to target and prioritize occupations with remote work opportunities.
- Provide employers with tools to offer more remote work opportunities, and support local education and training programs that enable remote work and distance learning.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Provide resources and training to encourage entrepreneurship, and increase transparency in loan options to provide targeted support for military spouse business owners.
- Showcase a range of military spouse entrepreneurs to underscore different types of entrepreneurship.

Considered Leaving the Military (By Years of Service)
Figure 2.2



“I want a career too....I’ve been sacrificing too long.”

*- Military Spouse, Focus Group**

* [Military Spouse Career Journeys \(SEP 2020\) link](#)



A Vision and Concept

Military Spouse Coworking Space

Key Attributes

- ☐ *Adequate demand* (assess interest and requirements using local spouse network).
- ☐ Located *on- or off-installation*.
- ☐ Available at *no or minimal* cost.
- ☐ Ideally *available 24/7*; *not an initial requirement*.
- ☐ Provides *easy access* to WiFi and printing capability.
- ☐ Provides *adequate seating and work space* that may include table space, desk space, seating areas, individual cubicles / offices, and meeting rooms / conference rooms.
- ☐ A *training and networking venue* focused on military spouse employment opportunities.

Multi-functional Space

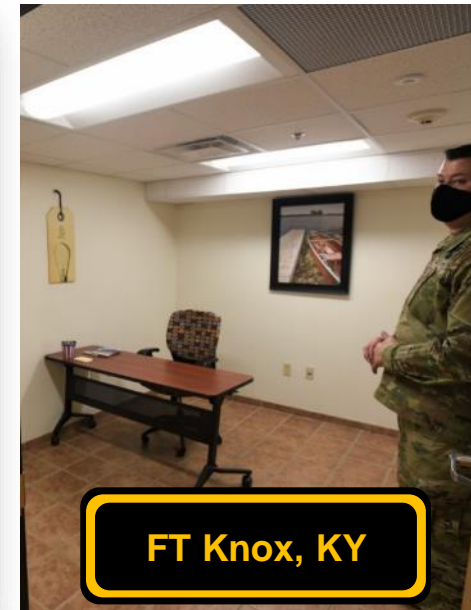
- ☐ Entrepreneurial
- ☐ Remote work
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Networking
- ☐ Career services

“What we’re trying to do is provide [spouses] a space that’s away from the home where they can actually go and pursue some of their career goals.”

~MG John Evans, Ft Knox



FT Belvoir USO



FT Knox, KY





Deloitte: MilSpouse Coworking Initiative

Military Spouse Coworking Space

December 2020



Six months of interviews, market research, cost analysis, and hypothesis testing.

There is strong support for military spouse coworking, and any future space should be developed through strong partnerships across DoD, military support organizations, and by continuing to place spouses' needs at the center.

Strategic Recommendations

- ☐ Tailor Models to Site Specific Needs
- ☐ Work In Tandem With The Services
- ☐ Utilize Existing Space When Available
- ☐ Conduct Location Specific User Research
- ☐ Partner With Military Support Organizations and Industry Organizations
- ☐ Measure Success of Military Spouse Coworking
- ☐ Locate Space Near Childcare Center
- ☐ Remain Cognizant of COVID-19 Impacts



Proof of Concept: Fort Belvoir & Austin

Military Spouse Coworking Space

Fort Belvoir, Virginia

- ❑ August 2020: Initial dialog with national partners on the challenges self-employed and remote-working military spouses face finding professional workspace.
- ❑ Metro DC USO repurposed existing space at Fort Belvoir USO for MilSpouse coworking space *(\$200,000+ funded solely by Metro DC USO).*
- ❑ Integration of installation programs; USO maintains existing relationship across installation, local and state resources.
- ❑ Conducted “soft opening” on 08 MAR 21; anticipate “grand opening” post-COVID.

Fort Belvoir USO space became **1st in the world** for the **entire Department of Defense.**



Austin ISO Army Futures Command and USAREC

- ❑ July 2021: Discussed initiative during SFL engagement with Austin Community College (ACC) Executive Vice Chancellor of Operations and Public Affairs and local partners; ACC agreed to establish a coworking space at their North Austin campus.
- ❑ ACC will provide a three-phased approach: PH 1: existing facilities; PH 2: expanded space at north campus; PH 3: expansion to additional campuses.
- ❑ September 2021: HQDA G9 Chief of Army Partnerships conducted follow up visit to assess program establishment.

Initiative Interest at All Levels

- ❑ **CSA's QOL Task Force**
- ❑ **XVIII and III Corps leadership focus**
- ❑ **CG, Fort Knox**
- ❑ **GCs: Campbell, Bragg, Drum, Riley, Hood, Carson, Irwin, and Huachuca and West Point**



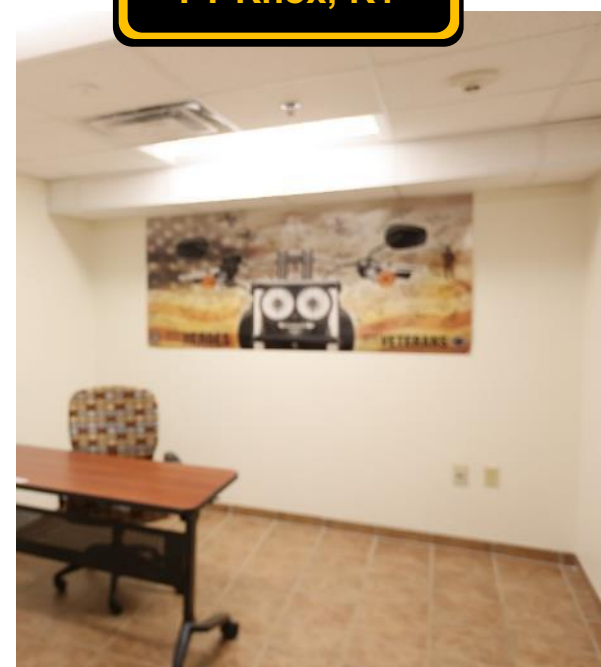
A Vision and Concept – Realized

Military Spouse Coworking Space



FT Belvoir USO

FT Knox, KY





Initial Feedback – Fort Belvoir @ 3wks

Military Spouse Coworking Space

How did you hear about the space?	How much time did you spend per visit?	Has using the space helped with your work and/or career??	Would you recommend this space to others?
66% social media	33% 4-6hrs		
22% word of mouth	33% 2-4hrs	78% Yes	100% Yes
	22% 2hrs	22% No	
	11% 6hrs		

What additional services or capabilities would you like to see?

- Individual space vs. common areas
- Printers (*note: these were on order, but not yet on hand)
- Multi-day, automated reservation system (currently manually managed)
- Monitors on hand to plug into
- Storage space / lockers to maintain items in

Why would you recommend this space to others?

- Convenient, quiet, stress-free
- Convenient space with terrific amenities; SAFE AND SECURE
- If you need to get out of the house and to work in a fresh, modern, beautiful space
- It's a perfect space for those who need just a bit of quiet time to get things done. Networking and meeting new friends is an added bonus!

"It's my first time but just getting out of the house to work was a huge win for me. I feel more productive not being at home and seeing the laundry/dishes/etc and would love to use this for lighter work meeting days, when I need to concentrate and get more done." ~ Military Spouse Respondent

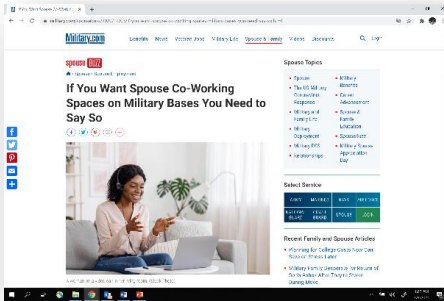
9x respondents of 10x queried
USO has limited capacity due to COVID restrictions



Expanding Awareness and Interest

Military Spouse Coworking Space

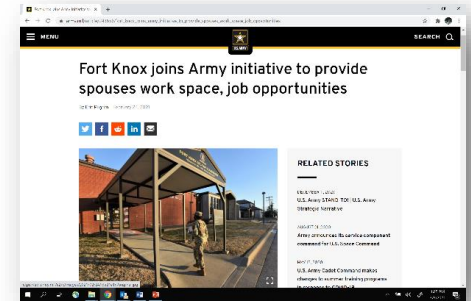
1 of 2



[Military.com](#)
03 DEC 20



[Army New Service](#)
16 DEC 20



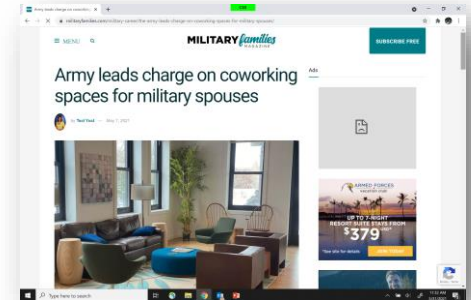
[Army New Service](#)
24 FEB 21



Joint GO Sr. Spouse Forum
20 APR 21



[Army New Service](#)
04 MAY 21



[Military Families Magazine](#)
07 MAY 21



Expanding Awareness and Interest

Military Spouse Coworking Space

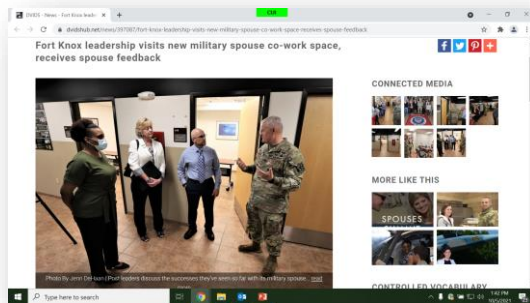
2 of 2



“Soldier for Life spearheaded the initiative to establish co-working space for self-employed and remote-working military spouses...”

[LTG Brito Prepared Remarks - SASC Subcommittee on Personnel](#)

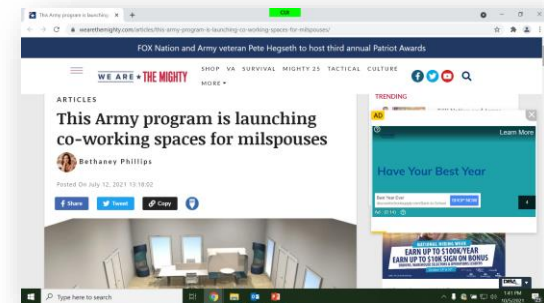
12 MAY 21



[Fort Knox News - DVIDS](#)

21 MAY 21

“We were afraid that we would make it and nobody would want to come use it, and I’m glad to see that’s not the case,” said [MG John] Evans.



[We Are The Mighty](#)

12 JUL 21

“...48% of soldiers whose spouses had an upper-level degree said they considered leaving the military to allow for better employment options for their spouses...”



Key Take Aways

Military Spouse Coworking Space



*12 APR 21: Senior military spouses from **US Space Force** visit the FT Belvoir MilSpouse Coworking Space hosted at the USO.*

Pictured are: Mary Thompson (Space Force), Lisa Marie Riggins (USO), Mollie Raymond (Space Force), Maura Gondak (USO), Sarah Johnson (USO) and Tammy Endicott (Space Force)

- ☐ **Fort Belvoir and Fort Knox serve as a “proof of concept” model for future implementation considerations on-installation.**
- ☐ **Expanding opportunities off-installation (Austin, Colorado Springs and Boston) to serve as models for future expansion considerations.**
- ☐ **HQDA G9-facilitated, RAND-produced “commander’s handbook / guide” for establishing and using MilSpouse coworking space (within input from national partners) is in development → due in November ‘21.**



Back Up Slides

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An Array of Programming Options

Military Spouse Coworking Space

Entrepreneurial

- ☐ The Rosie Network – Entrepreneurial
- ☐ Visiting “lecture series” (other entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, etc.)

Remote Work

- ☐ Connect to employers (Chambers of Commerce, state programs like Virginia Values Veterans, Instant Teams)

Training

- ☐ The Rosie Network – Entrepreneurial
- ☐ Bunker Labs DC – Entrepreneurial
- ☐ SBA VBOC – Entrepreneurial
- ☐ IVMF – Entrepreneurial
- ☐ Instant Teams – Remote Work

Networking

- ☐ Connect to peers and mentors
- ☐ A local network of support

Career Services

- ☐ US Chamber of Commerce
- ☐ Virginia Chamber of Commerce
- ☐ Instant Teams

An Evolving Consortium of Collaboration

- ☐ Army Installation Management Command (IMCOM) and local garrison commands
- ☐ The United Service Organizations (USO)
- ☐ The US Chamber of Commerce Hiring Our Heroes (HoH)
- ☐ The Virginia Department of Veterans Services
- ☐ The Virginia Chamber of Commerce
- ☐ The Rosie Network
- ☐ Instant Teams
- ☐ Google
- ☐ Squadra Ventures
- ☐ Rowan Tree

National and local partners are a key element to the success of this initiative.





Working Group Agenda – “A Way”

Military Spouse Coworking Space

Participants / Invitees

- ☐ Garrison command representatives
- ☐ ACS
- ☐ MWR
- ☐ Transition Services (as appropriate)
- ☐ Local and state workforce development reps
- ☐ SBA reps
- ☐ USO
- ☐ Local spouse organizations (Mil. Spouse Professional Network, The Rosie Network, Spouse Clubs, etc.)
- ☐ Local chambers of commerce (connection to employers; may already exist within garrison relationships)

Inputs

- ☐ Facility options
- ☐ Space utilization and training options
- ☐ Funding options
- ☐ Partnership opportunities

Agenda

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome and Introduction of Participants (LTC Keith Wilson) | 5 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Opening Comments (Lisa Marie Riggins, Metro DC USO) | 3 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General MilSpouse Coworking Space Concept Overview (LTC Keith Wilson) | 12 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities “walk through / talk through” (Michael Hartzell, Fort Belvoir USO) | 5 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coworking Space Open Discussion (focus on utilization and capabilities) | 20-30 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training Venue Open Discussion (focus on training programming opportunities) | 20-30 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open Discussion and Closing | 10-20 minutes |