

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DoD BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE

MEG O'GRADY

Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

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## PROCEEDINGS

MR. SELBY: I'd like to welcome you all to the Department of Defense Bloggers' Roundtable for Tuesday, January 28, 2014. My name is William Selby, with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs, and I'll be moderating our call today.

Today, we'll demo My Individual Career Plan, a virtual career roadmap, with Ms. Meg O'Grady, Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Program Manager, and also field questions about the site. We are pleased to have you as a guest today, ma'am.

A note to the bloggers on the line -- when you are asking a question, please remember to clearly state your name and blog organization in advance of your question, and please keep your phone on mute when you are not asking a question.

With that, Ms. O'Grady, if you have an opening statement, and to get us started, go ahead with that now.

MS. O'GRADY: Okay, great, William. I would like to go ahead and welcome everyone to the call today. And I will do a quick opening statement, and then launch into the overview, if that's okay with you, William.

MR. SELBY: Sounds good to me, ma'am.

MS. O'GRADY: Okay, great. So, welcome everyone. I want to thank you for the opportunity for us to show you some new technology that we're really excited about in the SECO Program. I know many of you from previous Bloggers' Roundtables that we've had.

And we wanted to take a little bit of time today to take you through our MySECO website, which, as you know, was launched in July as a technical resource, and one of the great resources that we have within the SECO Program -- the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities Program,

We have, since our launch, actually talked to spouses, listened to feedback, and had the opportunity to add functionality, as we will continue to do as we hear great stories from spouses and needs from spouses in the field.

And so when we launched in July, we had our basic MySECO site, which includes a whole lot of tools and resources that complement the services of our SECO Career Center. And in the meantime, in between the time that we launched and right now, we added a scholarship database, which we'll be able to have a chance to talk just a little bit about today.

And then just recently, we launched our MyICP -- or My Individual Career Plan -- which allows military spouses the opportunity as a self-service option to create an individual career plan, or to use that individual career plan in conjunction with career counseling with our certified career counselors through the military ones or SECO Career Center.

So, I'd like to take you just sort of quickly through a bit of an overview of the site. As you can see, military spouses are able to access the exclusive content of our site. We do use the DS logon functionality, which allows us, one, to authenticate that military spouses are the ones actually using our site. And the other thing that it does is allows for us to use the information that already may be in DEERS for that military spouse in their profile.

One of the feedback points that we've heard from military spouses is that they are using a

lot of the tools and resources across the career space for military spouses, and they're kind of forced to create profiles at every site. So, this allows us, one, to authenticate that they are a military spouse, and, two, to use the information that's already available for them to populate their profile.

The other piece, as you just saw on our banner, is that we have the opportunity for military spouses to actually populate their profile within the MySECO website with their LinkedIn information, which we know is one of the best tools for military spouses to actually network with other military spouses, other folks in career fields, and our employers. So, one of the great features that we have about the site.

So, as you can see in our SECO website, we have three large areas for military spouses, to start with. We have all of the tools and resources that are available throughout the site. And those tools and resources include assessments for military spouses to take if they're looking at a career exploration. There are articles available for them. There are links to other career resources, and many of those career resources are resources that are partners within the Military Spouse Employment Partnership have available for our military spouse population.

We have a place for military spouses to access our career counselors, through the SECO Career Counseling Center. As you know, we have certified career counselors who are standing by, ready to assist military spouses with whatever their career needs may be. And we also have a specific part of the website where military spouses can take assessments.

One of the assessments that military spouses are able to take in the site is the Myers-Briggs assessment. We also use the Kuder Journey Assessment, and there are many others. So, for those of you who might be military spouses and are blogging at the same time, we absolutely encourage you to go in and take a look at the site.

The site is really set up around our comprehensive SECO Program, which, as you may or may not know, covers all four career lifecycle stages for a military spouse -- career exploration, they're able to look for education and training -- whether they can find a licensing certification program, scholarship information, financial aid information, and school information.

In the employment readiness lifecycle stage, military spouses can find resources for preparing themselves for that career, whether it is interviewing tips, building their own résumé, connecting that résumé through LinkedIn, or accessing, again, a certified career counselor who may help them get ready for that job search.

And then through career connections, military spouses can access a variety of tools and resources that allow them to really look at the career fields that they may be looking for a particular job in a particular location. They can link through to our MSEP portal, as well.

And then, as you see on the sidebar, we have the opportunity for them to do five of the really popular tests that military spouses come to the site to do. They can build and manage their ICP. They can research occupations, search for scholarships, find schools, and, again, build that résumé. And that résumé can link through, again, to LinkedIn, where they can connect directly with our MSEP employers.

So, if we can go to the next page, we'll go ahead and show you what that Individual Career Plan looks like.

MR. SELBY: Ma'am, I'm just going to -- one sec -- I'm going to jump in. Somebody else has joined?

MS. COWELL: Yes, Glen; this is Michele, from *Military Matters*.

MR. SELBY: Thank you, Michele. Okay, sorry about that.

MS. O'GRADY: No problem. Thanks, William.

We are going to walk through, and Myrtle Matthews is actually going to create her Individual Career Plan for you today. And you can see Jane, our virtual career counselor, is going to take her through. So, let's go ahead and create a MyICP for Myrtle.

And there's Jane. And if you notice, Jane also is letting you know that, at any point, you can call a Military OneSource career counselor who can actually walk a spouse through the ICP process, or even assist them in making it even more individual. So, let's go ahead and get started.

So, one of the things that we have developed with the Individual Career Plan is the opportunity for military spouses to identify themselves with another military spouse persona. And in this case, we're going to say that Myrtle is an early career spouse with a student. And if you can see, if you check each of the spouse types, you get to see a picture of a spouse who may be in that persona, to kind of help you out, as to figure out, you know, where do I generally fall within the categories of spouses?

We can go ahead and go to the next. And we're going to say that Myrtle is actually -- she's a spouse who is working in the allied health field. She's a certified nurse's aide, and she's actually looking to go back to school to be a registered nurse. And so that's where we're going to create her career plan.

Military spouses have the option to actually pick an occupation. These occupations are taken directly from the Department of Labor's Career OneStop. So, we're actually directly connected with the Career OneStep site with Department of Labor. We don't have every single occupation that's available, but we're adding more all the time. And so we're going to go ahead and pick registered nurse for Myrtle.

So, this is really one of the efficiencies of the site itself that we've been able to really directly pull this information in from Department of Labor. Again, it just gives the opportunity for the military spouse not to have to leave one site and go to another in order to find information. And you can see that the information comes back for registered nurses, talks about what job titles might be available, different tasks that a registered nurse might be asked to do, the abilities that they're looking for in a registered nurse, the knowledge that's needed in order to obtain that career field, and then the different interests.

And so if Myrtle were to go in and assess her interests using one of our assessments or tools, she can actually come back and look at the registered nurse occupation and see, do my values and skills actually measure up with this occupation? Is this the right occupation for me?

Okay, we'll go ahead and go to the next page. One of the things that we know is very, very important for military spouses is the opportunity to overcome challenges -- not only with education and careers, but many barriers for careers for military spouses have nothing to do with just education or the occupation itself. We know that there are a lot of challenges that military spouses have.

So, Myrtle, at this point, has three children. So, one of her challenges is going to be

childcare. And, in fact, she's going to be changing station with her service member, and so she's going to be looking for some information in a new location for her occupation.

And then since Myrtle's been kind of working out in the field, she really wants to get her computer and technical skills up to speed, and so that's a real growth opportunity for her. And then, of course, with three children and a possibly deployed service member, going back to school, and holding a fulltime job, time management and prioritization is also an opportunity for us to work with her, and help her kind of balance it all, as we know military spouses do so well.

We'll go to the next. And so now that we've actually identified what type of spouse Myrtle might see herself as, the occupation that she's actually looking into for her career, and the challenges and growth opportunities, she has a chance to review those, and then we're going to go ahead and finish. And we're going to go ahead and see her Individual Career Plan.

So, you can see Jane is really excited that Myrtle has finished her career plan. She's doing the whole, "Yes," and we'll go ahead and view what that career plan looks like. I don't know how many of you have had that "yes" moment, but I have when I've been really excited about a career move.

What we'll look at now is Myrtle's home page for her Individual Career Plan. She can actually create as many Individual Career Plans as she would like to create. And so any of the additional career plans that she creates will be listed here, in her home page, and anytime she goes to "Manage My Individual Career Plan," she'll come back to this page. So, we can go ahead, and look, and see what this ICP looks like for Myrtle.

Okay, so here's the plan overview. And you can see, what the Individual Career Plan does is, it creates different paths based on the goals that Myrtle has identified for herself. And each of those paths has activities associated with them.

At this point, if Myrtle would like to start to pursue those paths and activities on her own, she can go ahead and get started. We also have the opportunity for any of our military spouses to contact a certified career counselor as many times as they would like to, in order to work through their Individual Career Plans. And, actually, we'll go into the activities, and I'll show you how a career counselor could really help a military spouse with their career plan.

So, let's go ahead and look at getting started as a student spouse. Great. So, in her path of getting started as a student spouse, you can see that there are 33 activities that she has the option to complete. And if you look, there are different assessments that are available for her. She can complete these in any order that she would like to, and she has the option to either complete them or actually skip that activity, if she finds that that may not be something that she wants to do.

And, again, I think this is really the opportunity for the military spouse to work with a career counselor, who can really help them prioritize, and find the activities that are most beneficial to their individual career goals. There are articles that are available for military spouses, and, also, in this case, Myrtle's looking for schools. So, let's go ahead and look at the career exploration section of MySECO.

So, I think we're looking at the activities that are associated with her career plan. And what we want to do is review the college exploration section of MySECO. And it's going to take us just a second.

And so you can see it takes you directly to the part of the website that talks about college exploration. We have a variety of resources that are available under college exploration that she

can start to take a look at and complete activities. So, we have community college finder, ways to choose a school. Many of these resources are directly connected with the Department of Education, and, also, with our scholarship database and the schools that participate in our MyCA Scholarship Program.

So, we're going to go back to Myrtle's Individual Career Plan. And I just want to take you through, really quickly, the occupation piece. And I think we'll finish up, and find some time for the questions that you'd like to ask about our great tool.

So, if we go back to her main ICP page, that'll take us to the home. And we'll be able to take a look at those goals again. And we're going to take a look at her "Getting Started as a Registered Nurse" goals.

In this case, what I really would like to show you is that if we hit "View All," you'll see that any of the occupations that our military spouses are able to choose within the site -- if they make that part of their goal for their Individual Career Plan, activities will show all the way at the bottom, I think. I think we'll have to do a -- if you can see those activities at the bottom, starting with "Learn More About (inaudible)," what we have done is directly connect those military spouses with Military Spouse Employment Partnership -- or MSEP -- employers who have opportunities available in that career field.

So, in this case, with a registered nurse, we have Express Scripts, and HealthNet, Humana, United Health Groups, FTTI -- and that's a really important piece for us. We definitely want to take that military spouse from the very beginning of their goal to the end goal, which is actually having that job in that career field, with an employer who understands that they're not only looking for a job, but an actual career path, in many cases.

So, as I said, military spouses can come in and complete these activities as they are able. They can skip or do as many of the activities as they'd like to do. We've offered an estimated time to complete the activities so that they have an idea -- if they have an hour, they can pick and choose those activities that might be helpful for them with the time that they have.

And once they're done for that period of time or that day, they can go straight back to their ICP home. And as they complete their ICP or they find other goals, they can actually complete or begin a new ICP.

So, at this point, I think, William, I'll go ahead and turn it back to you.

MR. SELBY: Thank you very much, ma'am.  
We'll go to Amy. You were first on the line.

MS. BUSHATZ: Hey, thank you. And I'm going to go ahead and do a disclaimer: I work from home, as many military spouses do, and I have a two-year-old, so my apologies in advance if that is (inaudible).

I'm with Military.com. Thanks so much for doing this roundtable today. I was able to spend a couple of hours just looking over the website, over yesterday and today, and I have a couple of questions, kind of based on that experience.

First of all, I was hoping that you could tell me a little bit about the budget for this -- how much was spent -- and where that money came from.

MS. O'GRADY: Actually, Amy, I can't really give you any specifics on budget. Those

are generally numbers that we vet through our budgeting offices. I can tell you that it's part of our Military Community and Family Policy programmatic budget, and we have taken the SECO Program, as you know, and consolidated that program so that we can offer all of these services under the SECO umbrella, and connect them, also, with the other family programs, to include the Military OneSource Program, which, as you know, is kind of our premiere resource for military families to go when they are looking for information and resources as they move through military life.

So, I can't answer any specific budgeting questions. I can go ahead and see if there are some of those numbers I'm able to release. From a programmatic standpoint, it's not something I could do right off the top of my head for you.

MS. BUSHATZ: All right. Thank you. I don't think we have very many people on here, so I will just wait until it's my turn again.

MR. SELBY: Okay, thanks.  
And Phyllis, you were next.

MS. MILLER: Yes. Sorry; I had to take it off mute. What I would like to know is, what's the most important thing that's missing from this site right now that you hope to have in the future?

MS. O'GRADY: Oh, that is a great question, Phyllis. Thank you for asking.

One of the things that we're actually going to be adding is the opportunity for service providers and other interested parties to actually access parts of the site so that they have an awareness of what the site offers, and when they are assisting military spouses in the education and career field, they can actually access the tool, and use the tool in conjunction with the military spouse, who's able to access some of the exclusive content.

So, that's something we're really looking forward to. We know that we have many service providers, both on installations and in communities, who are looking to help military spouses with career resources. Many of them are partnered with us at DoD, and so we want to offer them the opportunity to see all the great technology that's available to military spouses, as well.

MS. MILLER: And when do you hope to have that ability back?

MS. O'GRADY: We're working on it for this fiscal year. So, I don't have a specific timeline for you, but that's one of the functions that we're actually adding during this fiscal year.

MS. MILLER: And when does the fiscal year end?

MS. O'GRADY: October.

MS. MILLER: Okay, thank you (inaudible). Okay, thank you.

MR. SELBY: You're welcome. Michele?

MS. COWELL: Hi, Glen.

Yes, I would like for -- kind of partnering up on what she just mentioned in her question, about having the outside resources -- are you working within your database for the individuals to choose a college, and have you worked with the colleges and universities to have them give you the information to input their schools onto your system?

MS. O'GRADY: Yes, absolutely. So, we have over 3,000 schools that are associated with our MyCA Scholarship Program. As they join and become a partner in the MyCA Scholarship Program, we collect that information from those schools on any scholarships that may be available to military spouses, specifically through their school, as well as any scholarships for military families that they may know about within their community.

The other piece of the scholarship database is many of our MSEP partners are actually military service organizations, such as NMFA, MOA, Blue Star Families. And many of them also offer financial aid/scholarship resources.

And so we've worked with our MSEP partners to include all of that information into our scholarship database. The other thing is, many of our corporate partners have tuition assistance programs or scholarships available through their employment and HR departments, and, when they have those, we include that information, as well.

MS. COWELL: So, are the schools considered to be -- going through the next fiscal year, if you're going to get that put on there for them to input the information themselves, to have any one of their veterans or military-oriented individuals in the colleges access this database?

MS. O'GRADY: That's actually a great question. The scholarship database is actually live right now, and so that functionality is available to all military spouses right now. We do not yet have the ability for scholarships to be submitted directly to the database from an outside entity. And part of that is information assurance, and ensuring that the people who actually touch the database or have the opportunity to enter are folks who are fully vetted with us.

But we do have the opportunity for them to submit scholarships. And, actually, right now, we haven't put that into the technical function. They actually do that just on an individual basis to our program, but I think, actually, that's wonderful feedback. And if we have the opportunity for them to have maybe a link where they can submit database or scholarship information for us, we can make that an easy process.

So, I will definitely take that, and put it on our list.

MS. COWELL: Yeah, I would, because I would also consider that not all 50 states are currently active with the program that the President and then the individual governors of each state have put out to where their states can opt for any student, any veteran, but including the spouses -- male or female -- to get their licensing.

MS. O'GRADY: Right. And, actually, I'm glad you brought that up. You know, we are

working with our state liaisons, who work directly with the states to help educate the legislature about information and laws that they can pass to assist military spouses as they move around the country, to ease those challenges that they might have with certifications and licenses.

So, we do have that resource available for military spouses through MySECO. If they indicate that they are in a profession that is licensed or has a certification, one of the resources that we will direct them to is our official DoD site, which shows all 50 states and what legislation they might have that might ease that challenge for them.

MS. COWELL: So, they know if -- two of the most important ones I know I deal enormously with here are teachers.

MS. O'GRADY: Yes.

MS. COWELL: And the teachers are moving from one state to another. They know in advance they'll be moving. I'm coming to your state. Where's the closest school or what you have available? That information -- they could contact that state individual.

And I'm assuming that Military OneSource -- your career planners work with the Department of Veterans Affairs from the state?

MS. O'GRADY: Absolutely. Well, we actually have all of that information available through our Career Center. The career counselors aren't working directly with the Department of Veterans Affairs. They have all the information to refer military spouses to the relevant licensing and certification boards within that state, as well as the school that might have the opportunity for them to get the continuing education credits that they need.

So, we absolutely recommend that military spouses in those situations call the Career Center so they can work individually with a career counselor, and find those resources, and ease that path for them as they relocate.

MS. COWELL: Okay. Very good, very good.

MS. O'GRADY: Great. Thank you.

MR. SELBY: And did anybody -- was there anybody else on the line that has not asked a question yet?

Okay, back over to Amy.

MS. BUSHATZ: Thank you so much. Again, I'm with Military.com.

I know you said, Ms. O'Grady, that you are going to be adding careers to this list, and you said that these were pulled from the Department of Labor. But I was wondering how you -- the methodology used to come up with these careers specifically. I noticed there was some pretty big things missing from the list, and then some really kind of random things on the list. For example, Bureau of Land Management employee just seems kind of out of the blue.

MS. O'GRADY: Well, actually, Amy, I'm glad you brought that one up in particular.

It's really interesting. We're actually, right now, working with Department of Interior and USDA. They actually have some telework positions that are available through the federal government for military spouses. So, while some of them may seem kind of esoteric, we have pulled those occupations that we've identified -- mostly within our MyCA database -- that military spouses are interested in.

We also have identified 22 high-demand occupations that are available, and within the website, we actually have fact sheets on each one of those 22 in-demand careers. So, we're actually looking at the high-demand careers or the programs or careers that our MyCA scholarship recipients are interested in.

We also have the opportunity for a military spouse to create a custom ICP with a career counselor if their occupation has not been identified within the MySECO website.

And, again, if neither of those options are available for a military spouse, they can also use the Career OneStop website.

MS. BUSHATZ: (inaudible) one of the things I noticed that was missing was anything to do with communications. So, basically, this would be completely not helpful for me, right, if I was to use this site, because I work in communications.

You're saying that I could call the career counselor, and develop something to fit my needs. Would that then be available -- would that profile then upload to this site, or would I then need to only follow up via phone with this person?

MS. O'GRADY: Oh, no, absolutely. You'd be able to create your custom ICP within the site. And I wouldn't say it's absolutely not helpful. I think there's a lot of other opportunities for you to look at different resources that may not be directly related to your individual career field. We are growing the list, and it is a starting point. And it's interesting you used communications, because that's one of the ones that we identified that we want to enter, that we can add, based on feedback that we've received from military spouses.

So, you're part of a growing group who has asked for that particular occupation.

MS. BUSHATZ: I'm sorry; you're right. It is useful. In fact, I saw a couple of things on there where I was messing around that I will actually be using.

But I don't know that as a military spouse, I would ever even get to see those things if I just stopped. You know, like, oh, well, my career's not on here, so, you know, window closed. You know what I mean?

MS. O'GRADY: Well, that's actually really good feedback, Amy. And what we may actually look at is adding some language there that talks about if your career -- and I think we've actually already talked about adding that functionality. Oh, here we go: "If you do not see your desired occupation, please call a SECO career counselor. Also, please check back."

But I think the other thing that I'm hearing you say is, you know, you don't have to choose an occupation at all. We probably need to add just a little bit of language that says, "The occupation is optional. There are many other resources available for you. Please continue your ICP" so that we don't get folks who stop.

I will say that one of the things that we're doing within the next two months is, we're

doing some pretty intensive focus groups for military spouses to actually use the site, and provide us with their feedback. And that's exactly the type of feedback we're looking for, so that's really helpful for us.

MS. BUSHATZ: Great. And if it's okay, I have one more question -- if that's okay. I was just hoping that you could tell me how many spouses have registered for the SECO site since you launched it in July.

MS. O'GRADY: You know, that is a great question, and I'm going to get you the exact number, and get it back to you. I know we have had thousands of military spouses visit the site, but we can get you some absolute exact numbers. I'm always afraid to say a number, and then be totally wrong. But I will find that number out for you. We can get it back to you.

MS. BUSHATZ: Thank you.

MS. O'GRADY: Sure.

MR. SELBY: Thank you, Amy. And Phyllis?

MS. MILLER: This site is so great, but I wanted to know -- are active duty personnel actually about to be (inaudible) site often?

MS. O'GRADY: So, actually, the site is available just for military spouses. It is exclusive to military spouses -- although active duty service members are able to use the CAP Program and the Transition Assistance Program. And we do actually coordinate with those programs within DoD, to ensure that we have coordinating and complementary information for those two programs.

Military spouses are also able to use the Transition Assistance Program, as well. And one of the important things that you all should know is that military spouses who are transitioning are able to use our site for 180 days past their service member's departure date, so that they can ease that transition.

MS. MILLER: (inaudible) but how do you know who's -- I didn't quite understand the login. How does someone join in the first place, and prove he or she is a military spouse (inaudible)?

MS. O'GRADY: We actually use the DS logon functionality, which I think we can probably take you back, and show you what that looks like for a military spouse. We use the information that's available through DS logon, which is also the authenticating source for things such as TRICARE benefits and other benefits for military spouses --

MS. MILLER: (inaudible) I mean, there's an ID number on there. Is that --

MS. O'GRADY: Mm-hmm.

MS. MILLER: Okay, that's what I wanted to know. Thank you. That's what -- very much.

MR. SELBY: And Michele?

MS. COWELL: Well, she just -- on your DS logon -- so if I understood you correctly, you must be active duty in any of the services, and be in the DEERS system to log in. Is that correct?

MS. O'GRADY: Yes. Active duty and reserve and National Guard are also able to use all of the SECO services, except for the MyCA Scholarship. The MyCA Scholarship is the only benefit that we have available that is only available to active duty or activated service member spouses.

But reserve, National Guard, and active duty spouses can use the site. They can use the Career Center, and all of the services available, except for the MyCA Scholarship.

MS. COWELL: But they must have the DEERS login to get the DS login.

MS. O'GRADY: That's correct. And if they don't have a DS logon to begin with, we have information on the site that will allow them to go in and create their DS logon. And once they do that, then they're able to use it for all of the other benefits and entitlements that are available to them through the DS logon process.

MS. COWELL: Now will this be available -- you mentioned for 180 days, from when they go from active duty to leaving the services -- will this information still be available for them? They have to log in during that 180-day period?

MS. O'GRADY: That's correct. But we do have the option for them to print their ICP, so as they're getting close to that six-month period of time, and they want to go -- as they're transitioning into the civilian life, and they want to print an ICP to take with them, they have the ability to do that through the website, as well.

And then the other piece of it is, you know, one of the things that we think is great about our Military Spouse Employment Partnership is that we partner with many organizations who are able to provide services not only to veterans, but to their spouses and families, as well. Some of the organizations that I mentioned, such as NMFA, Blue Star Families, MOA, and also the Hiring Our Heroes Program that we partner very closely with -- all of those programs are available to veterans and veterans' spouses and families, as well.

So, we will ensure, as military spouses get ready to leave that eligibility period, that we have a warm handoff to a program that has great resources for them, as well as they transition into civilian life.

MS. COWELL: And that's the key point I was getting to, was, like, the Hiring for Heroes, which is part of nationwide. All are involved -- all of the Department of Veterans

Affairs in each state. It's also known in some states as Department of Military Affairs.

MS. O'GRADY: Yes, yep. And we partner very, very closely with Hiring Our Heroes. We actually send representatives to every career fair. And if you look into the MySECO site, there is an opportunity to see all of those partners. And on our MSEP portal, we post all of the events, including Hiring Our Heroes career fairs across the United States.

MS. COWELL: So, if we know of local fairs -- not necessarily the Hiring for Heroes fairs, but something that's going to be nearby an installation, can we log that in through MySECO?

MS. O'GRADY: You can't log that in through MySECO directly, but we're absolutely open to taking any events that are sponsored through any of our partners. And we do work directly with the installations of all of the services to collect that information, and ensure that that's posted, as well.

MS. COWELL: So, we can let them know -- the local installation -- check with the Family Readiness Office at the installation, and say, "You need to go to MySECO and put that information out there," or contact them to get that information included on MySECO site.

MS. O'GRADY: Yep, absolutely. And we meet with the services on a monthly basis, and we have direct contact with them all the time. Our MSEP team actually has the opportunity to work with every single installation all over the world, at least once quarterly. And so we support those installations with connections with our MSEP partners and other SECO resources. So, we're in direct connection with those installations. So, that's a great place to go to get the information to us.

MS. COWELL: Have they been amenable? Have the installations and the Career Readiness individuals on the installation for someone to come in, say, "Yes, we're willing to partner and work with Military OneSource directly"?

MS. O'GRADY: Absolutely. We've just created a whole entire library of materials around careers and education, and we just did a really large distribution to all of the installations across the globe. We also partner with them on their local job fairs. In fact, there is a Hiring Our Heroes career fair that's coming up. I believe it is the -- again, I'm going to say the wrong -- it's in the middle of February, at Fort Belvoir.

So, we work directly with the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines to support those local events in the communities where military spouses live and work.

MR. SELBY: Did you get all that, Michele?

MS. COWELL: I did. Thank you very much.

MS. O'GRADY: You're welcome.

MR. SELBY: And back around -- Amy, did you have a followup?

MS. BUSHATZ: I do, actually. Ms. Grady, I was hoping that you could expound a little bit on using these benefits for transition. I personally noticed in maybe the last six months or so that when we talk about military spouse career health, it was in the DoD. We're starting to talk about transition more than in the past, and I was wondering if you could tell me if that's a service goal ramp-up of that, or maybe I'm just noticing it more -- if you could expound on that, please.

MS. O'GRADY: Great. Amy, I welcome the opportunity to expound upon that, because it is a very specific point of concentration for us at this point. We know that transitioning spouses -- if we're able to get them successfully employed in a secure career, that they really do contribute to the success of that entire military family as they transition.

And so when you look into MySECO, one of the personas that we do have is the transitioning spouse. And we want to work closely with the Transition Assistance Program, in order to ensure that entire family is able to transition successfully.

So, it is one big point of concentration for us. And we know that there are many, many challenges that are very specific to that situation that we're working to help mitigate and alleviate.

MS. BUSHATZ: Thank you so much.

MS. O'GRADY: You're welcome.

MR. SELBY: And, Phyllis, did you have a followup?

MS. MILLER: No, I didn't. Thank you very much for this. It was very helpful.

MR. SELBY: Sure. Michele?

MS. COWELL: If I could -- Meg, I guess, if you could just explain -- what is it that you would like for us, on this end, to be able to resonate to the spouses, male or female, that this site is going to help them right now? What is it that you want us -- I know somebody had mentioned that you had the July -- since you launched this site in July -- are you reaching enough people, or what is it that you would like for us to tell them to consider that you offer, that the communities don't offer within the installations and/or areas where the spouses are living -- which may not be on or nearby an installation?

MS. O'GRADY: Michele, thank you for asking that question. And what I appreciate is that you all are here today to help us spread the word, and that's really what we would ask, is that you are able to spread the word to military spouses that these resources exist, and that this is a comprehensive -- not only a program, but a partnership with all of the other community organizations who do offer these resources.

So, this is really one place to go to find the resources and tools that you need, to access

and create a virtual career roadmap for yourself, and, through that career roadmap, we will connect you with all of those resources, and tools, and community organizations that are available to you. It offers you the opportunity to do that in a convenient way, and for those military spouses who are not able to access an installation, it's a virtual way for them to receive the services -- not only through the technology, but through the virtual career counseling center.

MS. COWELL: And that will be added onto your site down the road, for what you're going to put through, hopefully, by the end of the year, for those resources to be able to come to you, saying, "We offer this. We want to let all of our military spouses know that this is available to them, that we are available to them"?

MS. O'GRADY: What's interesting is, I think it's already there. And so when you go in and create that career plan, those connections already exist within those paths and activities. And so as the military spouse creates their own individual plan, by virtue of the path, and goals, and activities that they have within that plan, they will be connected with those installations, community activities.

And the other way that we are spreading the word about the resources that are available, not only within SECO but within our partnership, is through our Spouse Ambassador Network. And that network is a group of dedicated MSEP partners who have come together to spread the word through their networks, in communities where military spouses live and work. And so through our Spouse Ambassador Network, we're able to spread the word for the resources, as well.

But it's always a challenge for us. And so we always appreciate the opportunity to come and share information with you, as you share that with your readers.

But it is a comprehensive program that includes many, many connections. So, we encourage military spouses to come in and create a career plan.

MS. COWELL: Very good, very good. Okay.

MR. SELBY: Okay. Well, Amy, did you have any followups?

MS. BUSHATZ: Actually, I do just have one more. Have you considered using the DS login system for the MSEP portal? I know it'd been discussed a while back that the MSEP could be used by anybody who wanted to. And I think there had been perhaps some measures in to make a login. Is that in the works at all?

MS. O'GRADY: That's a great question, Amy. Actually, our goal is to have one single sign-on that allows a military spouse to have one record across all of our SECO systems. That is in development right now, and we're currently resourcing. I don't have a timeline for you, but I can definitely assure you that is a piece of our plan that's very important to us -- because we have heard military spouses say that, you know, as they go through and find resources for themselves, it becomes burdensome for them to create different profiles, to reintroduce the same types of information and data. And so that is absolutely part of our long-term plan.

I don't have a definite timeline for you, but I will say that it's a priority for us.

MS. BUSHATZ: Thank you.

MS. O'GRADY: Sure.

MR. SELBY: And anymore followups?

MS. COWELL: Glen, I do have one followup, if I may.

MR. SELBY: Sure. We have plenty of time, yep.

MS. COWELL: If an individual such as myself were out here, and I have other military spouses that I work and deal with, and they say, "You know, I've never signed on," or, John Q. Public has an opportunity that they want to open up to any and all veteran/military spouses to come and work in our area, I work with them directly.

By calling the 1-800 number to talk with one of your career counselors, can they work with that individual to get them listed onto your system?

MS. O'GRADY: Absolutely. Actually, through our MSEP partnership, we have a vetting process that we use for the organizations that are part of the MSEP partnership. But we are always looking for other resources that are available to military spouses, as well. And we do have a vetting process that we use, in order to ensure that the resources that we're offering to military spouses through the site and through the Career Center are quality resources that military spouses can use and feel good about.

So, they can actually call the Career Center. They can submit feedback, and if you're still on the screen, you can see that we have a feedback tab. Those types of requests or submissions of information can come through feedback -- not only through our MySECO site, but through our Military OneSource site, which is public-facing.

So, we absolutely encourage submission of resources. We're always looking for good resources to share with our stakeholders.

MS. COWELL: So, all of your partnerships that you have listed -- that if one goes through the activities, and that would come up -- all of those are vetted partnerships; they are vetted, credible individuals that Military OneSource has already taken that person through, taken that business, taken that resource through your system.

MS. O'GRADY: That's correct. And that's not just program-wide, Michele; that's DoD-wide. So, we vet those through the Department of Defense. And if we have stakeholders who find that those organizations may not be acting in good faith, then we absolutely encourage that feedback, as well, so that we can look into those issues.

MS. COWELL: So we know -- because that is really important when anybody goes out to any unknown database on any website, and a name comes up. That's a main concern for a lot of the individuals, that it's -- they put a business out there, or they put a name or a resource that

there's no credibility behind them.

MS. O'GRADY: Absolutely. So, I will say- - just because I have to, from an official standpoint -- say that neither our partners nor our resources receive official endorsement, because that is something that the Department of Defense cannot do, as far as endorsing resources. But they do go through a vetting process through Department of Defense. And we do ensure that all of the resources and partners that we offer to our military spouses are vetted, and are acting in the best interests of the military and our military families.

MS. COWELL: Okay.

MR. SELBY: Any more followups?

Roger that. I'd like to thank everybody on the call today for your questions; very informative today.

And, Ms. O'Grady, if you have any closing comments, you can go ahead with those now.

MS. O'GRADY: Thank you so much. I really appreciate you all taking the time today, and I really appreciate the feedback that you've given. And we are looking forward to meeting with military spouses and receiving more feedback about the site, so that we can continue to make this site the very best that it can be.

I'd like to thank and appreciate you for spreading the word about the SECO resources that are available program-wide, and particularly today about spreading the word to military spouses that they have the opportunity to create an Individual Career Plan, which will be a virtual career roadmap for them, as they move towards any of their career goals throughout the career lifecycle.

So, thank you very much; very much appreciated.

MR. SELBY: Thank you very much, ma'am. And, again, thank you to everybody on the line today for your participation. That concludes today's roundtable. If you'd like to see the transcript or see the audio file, we'll have that on DoDLive later today or, at the latest, tomorrow morning.

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