



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

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MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Taking Care of Our Service Members and Families

The Department of Defense has a sacred obligation to take care of our Service members and families. Doing so is a national security imperative. Our military families provide the strong foundation for our Force, and we owe them our full support.

This is also personal for me. I have seen firsthand how much our military families sacrifice to keep our Force strong, healthy, and ready to defend this exceptional Nation. In the face of challenges and frustrations, our families show incredible resilience.

Over the past year, we have focused on ways to take even better care of our Service members and their families. I am proud of the progress that we have made, and we will keep driving hard to do even more. I understand the extraordinary pressures that our military families face — and we are determined to do right by them, every step of the way. The Department's leadership, including myself, will continue to listen, learn, and lead on issues that we know are critical to stability for our outstanding military families. This includes:

Securing affordable basic needs: Our Service members and families must be able to secure affordable basic needs. It is a matter of bedrock financial security and a critical individual readiness issue. The President's budget includes a 4.6 percent pay increase for Service members starting January 1, 2023. To further address this issue, I direct the Department to:

- Review the prospective 2023 Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) tables to ensure that calculations reflect the unusually dynamic fluctuations in the housing market. I further direct automatic increases in BAH for active duty Service members in the 28 Military Housing Areas that have experienced an average of more than 20 percent spike in rental housing costs this year above this year's BAH rates. These automatic increases will go into effect in October 2022.
- Fully fund our commissaries to cut prices at the register, with the goal of achieving at least a 25 percent savings on grocery bills compared to the local marketplace.
- Pay eligible Service members a Basic Needs Allowance starting January 2023, which is a supplemental allowance for Service members who qualify based on their gross household income.



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Making moves easier: Service members and families are required to move frequently, and these moves often come with costs that can strain budgets and cause financial uncertainty. Last year, I directed the extension of Temporary Lodging Expense (TLE) beyond 10 days for Service members and families searching for housing in areas experiencing housing shortages. To further ease the process of permanent change of station (PCS) moves, I direct the Department to:

- Permanently increase standard TLE maximum coverage from 10 days to 14 days for CONUS moves and allow up to 60 days of TLE if a Service member is in a specified Military Housing Area with a housing shortage. This will give Service members and families significantly more flexibility to secure housing during a PCS move. This will take effect in October 2022.
- Increase the dislocation allowance (DLA) for E-1 to E-6 Service members to further help offset personal expenses for PCS moves. DLA payments for all Service members will now be paid automatically one month prior to their move date to preempt out-of-pocket expenses. This will take effect in October 2022.
- Continue improvements to Military OneSource, the Department's information portal for military families, through enhancements to the online moving and housing tools. These online resources must be clear, intuitive, and easy to navigate.

Further strengthening our support to families: We have made significant progress in this area, but I remain determined to do far more. We have expanded parental leave policies to cover non-chargeable leave following the birth or adoption of a child for both active duty and eligible Reserve Component Service members. The Department has broadened the New Parent Support Program to help parents through the joyous but often challenging transition to parenthood, and have updated policies to reimburse nursing Service members for shipment of breast milk when on mandated temporary duty travel for more than three days up to 24 months after giving birth.

We must continue to push hard to provide even more affordable child care options for military families. Military Child Development Centers have extended their hours to provide additional coverage for our Service members to account for the varied schedules of military service. The Department has reached out to additional high quality, community based child care providers who agree to provide care for military families using our fee-assistance program.

Yet with child care shortages affecting the entire country, we must do more to help our Service members and military children. To further support our military families with children, I direct the Department to:

- Make significant investments in Child Development Program (CDP) facilities and infrastructure to further expand our capacity to provide quality child care.
- Standardize a minimum 50 percent employee discount for the first child of our CDP direct-care workers to help attract more talented staff and to increase capacity. This will take effect in October 2022.

- Improve access to child care programs and resources such as Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood and expand the in-home child care fee assistance pilot program to additional states to provide more options to military families.

Expanding spousal employment: Military spouses provide the strong foundation upon which their loved ones in uniform stand — and our communities and our Nation rely on their resilience. We owe them our energetic, unwavering support. To further expand employment opportunities for military spouses, I direct the Department to:

- Accelerate the development of seven additional occupational licensure interstate compacts with organizations representing multiple professions. This will ease a burden for spouses who must go through the often challenging and frustrating process of transferring their professional licenses or credentials with each PCS move.
- Increase the use of noncompetitive, direct-hiring authorities for military spouses in the Department of Defense and further expand remote-work and telework options to help military spouses build portable careers.
- Launch a new career accelerator pilot initiative that will match military spouses with paid private-sector fellowships in a variety of career paths. This will take effect in January 2023.
- Increase the number of partners in the Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP) program by 10 percent before January 2023. MSEP is critical in connecting military spouses to organizations that have committed to hiring efforts.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness will oversee implementation of this memorandum, in coordination with the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) and the Secretaries of the Military Departments. The Department will continue to monitor progress of these initiatives through the Deputy's Workforce Council and through regular updates to me.

These actions reflect the Department's sacred obligation to honor and support our Service members and families. We remain profoundly committed to doing right by our military families, just as our military families remain profoundly committed to their loved ones and to the Nation that they all do so much to defend.

