HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ARIZONA’S MILITARY FAMILIES

SAVE THE DATE: Sept. 22, 2011, 8am.
Arizona Work-Life Network Follow-Up Meeting (see last page for more info)

Notes from:
- Plenary Session (p. 1-4)
- Breakout Sessions (p. 4-6)
- Closing Session (p. 6-7)
- Additional Resources (p. 7-8)

NOTE FROM THE SPONSORS
Thank you for participating in the dialogue about workplace flexibility for military families (and others) in our state. We are proud of the fact that this event was the only one in the National Dialogue on Workplace Flexibility to specifically address the flexibility challenges of those that serve our Country, and to highlight employers with best practices to support this population of workers. We are especially grateful to the outstanding speakers and session facilitators who volunteered time to share their expertise with us. We look forward to continuing the workplace flexibility conversation in Arizona, and hope to work with you again on these important issues.

SETTING THE STAGE: MILITARY FAMILIES IN THE STATE
After thanking those in the audience who have served, Army Brigadier General Richard “Gregg” Maxon (ret.) provided key insights about the scope of military families in the state and some thoughts about why flexibility matters. He focused his comments on members of the National Guard, but noted that many of the issues are the same regardless of the branch and type of service. This information provides an insight to employers who have military veterans and National Guard members as employees in their organizations. This information is also helpful in understanding some of the issues facing service members returning from the combat arena in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Arizona has:
- Seven military installations (five active duty bases and two National Guard facilities)
- Approximately 27-30,000 service members deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan; 10,000 from the Guard and Reserves
- Approximately 600,000 veterans in the state, which is 1 in 10 people in the state (300,000 of which live in Maricopa County; 100,000 in Pima County; rest living in rural Arizona).
  - It is one of the largest states in terms of population of veterans.

This summary was prepared by the Work-Life Policy Unit, Civil Justice Clinic, Arizona State University Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law. This event would not have been possible but for our amazing collaborators on this event, including Region 9 staff of the U.S. Department of Labor’s Women’s Bureau, WorldatWork’s Alliance for Work-Life Progress, the YWCA of Maricopa County, volunteer speakers, and other partners acknowledged here.
Unlike earlier eras, almost all recruits today get called up at least once every five years. Earlier policy was deployment lasted 14-24 months (includes training time). Now, deployments are a year total, with a usual experience of five deployments over the life of a career. General Maxon described the anatomy of a military deployment: many service members receive minimal notice when these wars began – some as short as four days. Typically, once a service member receives notice of deployment there are many issues that have to be addressed quickly, including:

- Dissolving a lease on a house or apartment (particularly stressful for single service members)
- Securing appropriate placements (or backup) and care for children, elder relatives, and pets
- Making arrangements for bill payment

He also described the impact deployment has on families, including:

- Previously shared chores that fall squarely on the partner that remains behind, such as:
  - Paying all the bills
  - Caring for kids, who may withdraw or act up in school when a parent is deployed
  - All home maintenance and repairs
- Trailing spouse/partner reluctance to share troubles with soldier because he/she does not want to be the cause of more stress
- Repeated separation anxiety when the service member spouse signs off Skype or comes home for break mid-way through a deployment
- Living with constant fear that an officer and chaplain will show up at the front door.

After deployment, life does not immediately return to “normal”:

- Takes time to get back into routine of life
- There is a “new normal”
  - Many service members are not the same – withdraw from family life
  - Potential unemployment issues
  - Impact of post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury

In Arizona, not all National Guard members returning from combat have access to services.

- Many Guard members live in rural Arizona
- Told not to whine or show emotional issues → Reluctance to get help → Higher divorce rate → More arrests → Higher rate of incarceration → Higher rate of people experiencing homelessness → High suicide rate
- 15% of veterans are women now (through almost all of the military structure/roles) → More reluctant than men to seek help. → See the VA as a “men’s organization.”

Finally, General Maxon observed that the public, including employers, is getting war-weary. There appears to be less overt overall support of the deserving men and women who need all the support they can from their communities.
**SETTING THE STAGE: WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY AND TOTAL REWARDS**

Diane Burrus, Senior Consultant at WFD Consulting, provided an overview of the meaning of workplace flexibility and a Flexibility Spectrum that describes the continuum of flexible work practices involved in building a culture of flexibility as a business/organizational strategy to ensure success in the 21st century. Burrus described how leading employers are using flexible ways of working as a talent management tool to attract, retain and motivate the workforce and drive organizational success. She also described the characteristics of a successful flexible work culture. Click here for her PowerPoint.

**PANEL OF KEY TRENDS AND BEST PRACTICES**

Moderated by Dr. Sarah Tracy, this panel included remarks by:

*Adam Reich, Veteran.* Reich shared his experiences with workplace flexibility while reintegrating to his civilian job at a hospital after a 2005-2006 tour of duty in Iraq with a disability, including the unfortunate fact that half of the suicides mentioned by General Maxon were from his unit. More about Reich and his flexibility experience after returning to work is available at [http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/blog/one-guard-member’s-flexibility-story-2](http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/blog/one-guard-member’s-flexibility-story-2).

*Alex Deshuk, Manager of Technology and Innovation – City of Mesa.* The City of Mesa is the third largest city in the state and the 33rd largest in the country. Deshuk discussed the innovative “4 for Mesa” program, which started as a pilot program three years ago to motivate employees and serve as a budget-saving measure. Under the program, the City tried a 4-10 schedule for non-emergency personnel. After implementation, the City experienced a 30% decrease in sick time requests and saw a 10% decrease in utility bills. Deshuk also shared that the City was prompted to create more online services for greater citizen access to services around the clock. More about “4 for Mesa” is available at: [http://mesaaz.gov/services/hours.aspx](http://mesaaz.gov/services/hours.aspx).

*Anne Palmer, Worklife and Wellness Manager of Raytheon Missile Systems.* Raytheon is a Defense contractor based in Tucson with over 12,000 employees, including over 2,500 veterans and 45 active Reservists. In 1998, Raytheon created a 9/80 schedule for salaried employees to recruit college age students. The company observed it has turned out to be a “huge” recruitment tool for all ages. Palmer shared the experiences of a Raytheon employee who uses the 9/80 schedule to help her meet her personal responsibilities as well as her professional responsibilities to Raytheon and the Reserves, where she serves as a Commander. Raytheon uses this schedule as a recruitment tool, and also provides other flexible work hours, telework opportunities for employees not working on classified programs, and part-time work. Palmer also noted that Raytheon actively recruits military personnel through its Operation Phoenix, which talks about flexibility, differential pay, and full benefits for up to five years for deployed employees. More information about Raytheon’s policies is at: [http://www.rayjobs.com/index.cfm?NavID=8](http://www.rayjobs.com/index.cfm?NavID=8).
Charles McLaurin, Military Leave Program – USAA. USAA is a Fortune 200 company that was started by a group of Army officers in 1922 to support people serving in the military who could not get insurance at the time because they were considered gypsies. It now has approximately 22,000 employees worldwide, including 143 Guard and Reserve personnel who are currently deployed from Arizona facilities. USAA has a Military Leave Program that offers a pay differential in recognition that some employees lose money when called up to active duty. The Program also allows employees to maintain USAA health, vision, and dental care during deployment. McLaurin observed that USAA would “be a company speaking with fork and tongue” if it did not support employees in the military since the company’s mission focuses exclusively on supporting military personnel and their families. (USAA’s tagline: “We know what it means to serve.”) He also noted that he has not seen any resistance to the program or its retraining programs to assist employees coming back from service with disabilities who are no longer able to do their pre-service jobs.

NOTES FROM THE BREAKOUT SESSIONS:

1. The Workers’ Perspective Breakout, facilitated by Dana Campbell Saylor, explored:
   - The role of managers in balancing the needs of employees and clients when determining work schedules.
   - The need for workers to have distinct “free-time” distinct from work time.
   - The impact of doing business in a “right to work” state.
   - The desire of employers to do the right thing, especially when dealing with military personnel. e.g., expressing gratitude for employees’ service.
   - A suggestion was made to train managers on military culture and the need to underscore the importance of flexibility. Another participant added that this awareness and communication about it is key.
   - Research about how empowering employees to work collectively to create schedules may increase worker happiness.
   - The positive environmental benefits of flexibility, including reduced gas consumption and decreased city-wide traffic.
   - Generational perspectives on flexibility. One person described an “evolution of flexibility,” to capture a belief that the next generation will have the burden of uncovering what works.

2. The Role of Workplace Culture Breakout, facilitated by Susan Schmaltz, explored:
   - The need to have management buy-in to sustain major change. Training and communication are key to managers understanding employee experiences. Some questioned whether one can understand the military culture if you haven’t served. In response, there was a suggestion to have non-military managers trained on it with guidance for having an open dialogue with service members themselves. Others commented that training cannot provide the same level
of understanding as management who are themselves veterans because the culture does not transfer effectively. It was pointed out that while there are some shared needs, each service member’s experiences are also unique, giving rise to the need for customization. e.g., if and how often they will need therapy, their needs for counseling, divorce consultation.

- The importance of culture is paramount when designing flexibility programs. Employers should be seen as supporting all workers, not just favoring military families. Plus, Arizona’s labor laws influence culture and workplace change. For example, being a right-to-work state limits the number of unions in the state and participants observed this gave employers more flexibility than in other states. Employers were encouraged to pay attention to flexibility from an EEO perspective.

- The importance of industry expectations. One public sector participant noted the need to use flexibility for recruitment, since matching private salaries is often not possible.

3. **The Business Case Breakout**, facilitated by Sharon Klun, explored:

- Specific flexibility examples from local businesses, including using corporate employee survey data to make the case, career “on and off ramp” opportunities, mini sabbaticals, creating military support groups, encouraging people to ask for what they need rather than allowing managers to make assumptions based on service.

- The creation of an information spot about workplace on the military’s radio and TV channel in Iraq and Afghanistan. The goal would be to help troops return to life and to work—to help empower people to ask for flexibility and learn how to make the case for themselves.

- The impact of businesses hearing what other businesses are doing in making the case for their worksites. As communication and education increase, it will help expand supports and programs like these for military families. Another person observed the differences in making the case in various industries. (Using accounting examples to get more flex options in another accounting firm. Same with law firms.)

- The perceived salary savings of offering flexibility.

- An increase in recent graduates using flexibility as a factor when thinking about potential employers. Another participant observed that Generations X and Y were teaching others about balance and flexibility.

- The creation of a government PowerPoint template that can be downloaded with generic slides that employers can use to fill in their own data thus customizing their own case.

- A need to recognize the “mental health war going on” as well as the physical impacts of military service.
CLOSING PLENARY

Butch Wise, Executive Director, Arizona Office for Employer Support of the Guard & Reserve (ESGR). Using this PowerPoint as a guide, Wise focused his remarks on three things:

1. **Overview of ESGR and its Programs**

   Created in 1972, ESGR is a Department of Defense agency that believes “We all serve.” Wise described a 3-legged stool of the employer, service member, and family member. If any one leg breaks, there is a problem with the stool as a whole. Wise described a number of ESGR’s free programs for the public:
   - **Education and Training Programs such as:**
     - Statement of Support. Contact Wise if you are interested in getting a statement, which essentially says that you support the Guard, Reserve and USERRA.
     - Briefing with the Boss Program. ESGR targets known Guard and Reserve employers and goes to them with a DOL representative (enforcement expert) and someone who can take about the anatomy of deployment to provide information.
     - Boss lifts. These events show employers what the Guard and Reserve do.
   - **Employer Awards:** ESGR held seven events a year to recognize best-practice employers.
   - **Ombuds Education and Consultation Program:** Trained ESGR professionals offer presentations on the ins-and-outs of USERRA. They also mediate and consult on cases. ESGRA has an impressive 90% track record resolving cases in accordance with the law!
   - **Employer Initiative Program.** This new program is trying to prevent unemployment of Guard and Reservists. [Unemployment rates can be as high as 30% for returning units.]

   Wise spoke of the seven components of Guard and Reserve, and explained how the Army and Air Guard are unique with both Federal and State missions. [This matters because state missions are not covered under USERRA.] Wise mentioned that there are 15,000 Guard and Reserve members in Arizona. He also shared that there are 3,700 known Guard and Reserve employers in Arizona; and only three percent of employers nationwide employ Guard and Reservists.

2. **Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).**

   Wise explained the nuts and bolts of USERRA, which prohibits discrimination against Guard and Reserve members among other things, and its interaction with the new Military Provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). More information about USERRA and the new FMLA provisions is available on his PowerPoint, and the Civil Justice Clinic’s handouts (see below).
3. **Best Practices for Employers: Supporting Military Families With Flexibility**

Wise provided helpful information about best practices he’s seen in the state, including:

- Paid military leave policies
- Pay differentials during deployment
- Continued salary and/or health care benefits while mobilized
- Flexible geographic employment assignment for spouses
- Military support groups
- Recognition programs
- Discounts on merchandise

- Care packages. e.g., Raytheon’s Operation Warm Heart, which provides gifts to military families and opportunity for employees to come together to wrap, delivery, and plan the project.
- Payment of defined pension contributions
- Resource pools to make home repairs, care repairs for families

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<th>A SAMPLING OF HANDOUTS AND RESOURCES RECOMMENDED BY PARTICIPANTS</th>
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The White House
- [White House Forum on Workplace Flexibility](#)
- [Continue the Conversation on Workplace Flexibility](#)
- [Work-Flex Event Starter Kit](#)
- [Work-Life Balance and the Economics of Workplace Flexibility](#)
- [White House Council on Women and Girls](#)
- [Middle Class Task Force](#)
- [Joining Forces](#)

U.S. Department of Labor
- [The National Conversation on Workplace Flexibility](#)
- [Women's Bureau Fact Sheet 2011](#)
- [Improving Working Conditions and Increasing Employment Opportunities for Women](#)
- [Secretary Hilda Solis: Giving Back to Our Military Families](#)
- [The Family and Medical Leave Act Military Family Leave Entitlements](#)
- [Flex-Options Guide](#)
- [Veterans’ Employment & Training Service (VETS)](#)

U.S. Department of Defense
- [ESGR](#)
- [Mullen: Military Workplace Needs More Flexibility](#)
- [Navy’s Task Force on Life/Work](#)

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- [Coming Home to Work Program](#)

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- [Employer Best Practices for Workers with Caregiving Responsibilities](#)
- [Veterans with Service-Connected Disabilities in the Workplace and the ADA](#)
A Cheat Sheet of Abbreviations and Terms for Civilians Interested in Working with Military Families

Overview of Key Laws (prepared by student attorneys in the Civil Justice Clinic):

- The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act
- The Family Medical Leave Act’s Military Provisions
- Disability Discrimination in the Workplace
- Hiring Preferences for Veterans and Spouses of Servicemembers
- Arizona’s Time Off Laws for Military Personnel
- Selected Proposed Arizona Legislation on Workplace Flexibility for Military Families
- The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act
- Select Federal Credit Protection Laws For Servicemembers

World at Work’s Alliance for Work Life Progress (AWLP). AWLP’s website has a wealth of information and templates for employees who want to ask for flexibility and assess whether she or he is a good candidate for flexibility, tips on implementing it in your organization, and information for businesses that want to be manage their work-life effectiveness.

When Work Works

Alfred P. Sloan Foundation’s National Workplace Flexibility Initiative

Military Families: Extreme Work & Extreme ‘Work-Family’ (Executive Summary) (Full Article)

Workplace Flexibility 2010’s Military Families Stakeholder Information

Arizona Coalition for Military Families


The Arizona Work-Life Network provides a learning and networking forum to facilitate the sharing of information, best practices, resources, and strategies for creating healthier, more productive work environments through the implementation of an integrated work-life portfolio of programs and practices. This meeting will provide time for additional reflection and dialogue on workplace flexibility for military families and others.

Meeting Location: Lower-Level Auditorium of Clifton Gunderson LLP
3003 North Central Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85012

RSVP to Jessica.Burrus@worldatwork.org Whether you are a pioneer with years of experience or are new to the work-life field, there’s always something more to learn as work-life strategy continues to evolve. We hope you can join us to continue the conversation!