# 2025 PUBLIC EDUCATION METHODOLOGY

The 2025 public education methodology assesses Department of the Air Force (DAF) installations based on the available public education capabilities and offerings from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade schools[1]. Specifically, it focuses on schools that share zip codes with the Military Housing Areas (MHAs) where service members and their families are likely to reside, encompassing both on-base and off-base housing options. MHAs are groupings of zip codes surrounding military bases, set by the Department of Defense for the purpose of calculating and assigning Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates.

The methodology requires that schools also be within a 60-minute drive of a DAF installation. This 60-minute drive time is calculated using the Open-Source Routing Machine (OSRM). OSRM is a routing engine run by the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGIA) and calculates the average driving time to a location considering road conditions and speed limits.

## WHAT'S NEW FOR 2025

The 2025 education scorecard includes the addition of several new criteria, across three categories of measurement, to capture a more holistic view of the educational environment surrounding DAF installations in the United States.

### Academic Performance

New criteria in the Academic Performance category include SAT/ACT Participation, Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB) Course Offerings, and Post-Secondary Outcomes[2]. Previous scorecard iterations calculated the core component of a school's rating – the academic score – using two criteria, making them highly influential for overall rankings. The 2025 scorecard has been expanded to include additional measures related to college and career readiness. SAT/ACT Participation serves as an indicator of the proportion of students intending to pursue post-secondary education after graduation. AP/IB course offerings provide evidence that local schools support students' successful transition to higher education through rigorous, college-level coursework. Post-Secondary Outcomes measure, pending data purchase from GreatSchools, will further augment the assessment of academic outcomes by offering a more holistic picture of a school's effectiveness. These measures not only track the successful graduation rates but also offer insights into their readiness for the challenges of higher education and the workforce.

### School Climate

The 2025 methodology adds School Crime Rates, Relative Teacher Pay, and the Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) to the School Climate category. Safety and socio-economic conditions in a school can have a substantial impact on a student's learning environment; School Crime Rates and FRPL Eligibility provide a measure of these key aspects of school climate. Relative teacher pay is used by prominent education economics researchers as a correlation with school climate, as higher relative wages are more likely to attract and retain more experienced and well-trained staff, contributing to a more positive learning environment.

### School Service Offerings

Interscholastic Sports was added to the 2025 methodology in the School Service Offerings category. Although academics are the most important aspect of a school, parents care about opportunities available for their children outside of the classroom as well. The number of interscholastic sports available at area high schools is the best measure available and is used in this methodology as a proxy measure of the overall availability of extracurricular opportunities for students.

## DATA NOTES

The 2025 analysis is designed to incorporate the most up-to-date data available, subject to data release schedules, and processing capabilities. As noted, due to data release schedules and a change to the level of the data reported, the current scorecard utilizes previous data for two criteria – Graduation Rates and Students' Average Annual Learning Rate. Graduation data is based on the historical average from 2018 to 2021, as the 4-year cohort graduation rates reported by EDFacts have a significant lag in release. The latest available data is for the graduating class of 2023, which is not used due to the impact of COVID-19.

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[1] Magnet, charter, and juvenile justice schools are not taken into consideration
[2] Pending data purchase from GreatSchools

The Students' Average Annual Learning Rate data was previously reported at the individual school level by the Stanford Educational Data Archive (SEDA); however, the data for 2025 is rolled up at the Administrative District level. The SoMF methodology analyzes offerings at the individual school level, therefore the 2024 data was used vice the 2025 data. All other data sources are the most recent available. It is important to note these considerations when interpreting the scorecard results. Data integrity is continually monitored to ensure there are no data quality issues and the weighting for each criterion may be altered if deemed necessary.

**Table 1: 2025 Public Education Framework**

| 2025 Public Education Framework | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **Criteria** | **Weight** |
| **Academic Performance** | Graduation Rates | **60%** |
| | Students' Average Annual Learning Rate (Annual Grade Proficiency Level) | |
| | SAT/ACT Participation | |
| | AP/IB Course Offerings | |
| | Post-Secondary Outcomes (College Enrollment)[3] | |
| **School Climate** | Chronic Absenteeism Rate (Absences per student) | **20%** |
| | Suspension Rate (Suspension per students) | |
| | School Crime Rate (Incident per students) | |
| | Relative Teacher Pay | |
| | FRPL Eligibility (Students Receiving Lunch Subsidies) | |
| **School Service Offerings** | Student to Teacher Ratio | **20%** |
| | Student to Counselor Ratio | |
| | Student to Mental Health Professional Ratio | |
| | Availability of Free and/or Universal Pre-Kindergarten Score | |
| | Extracurriculars (Interscholastic Sports Teams per school) | |

**CALCULATING SCHOOL SCORES**

The process of calculating the score for an installation begins at the school level. As the scores are intended to give a measure of the quality of education available for service member families, the schools included in an analysis for a base only include those schools that are within a reasonable commuting distance. As described earlier, the selection of schools to include in calculations for a particular installation is limited to those within its MHA and a 60-minute drivetime from base, as reported by the OSRM. After filtering down to the set of schools that satisfy the two requirements, a score is first calculated for each of those schools individually.

Each eligible school is individually scored using 15 criteria across three categories: Academic Performance, School Climate, and School Service Offerings (defined in Table 2). This involves percentile ranking each school against all schools serving DAF installations for every criterion. A school's score is then determined by a weighted average obtained by finding the mean percentile ranks of its criteria within each category, multiplying by the category's weight (as indicated above in Table 1), and summing the results.

**CRITERIA DEFINITIONS**

The definition for each criterion can be found in Table 2 below. The criteria listed in Table 2 are reported as averages per installation with the following exceptions:

- Extracurriculars (Interscholastic Sports) and AP/IB Course Offerings are the count of offerings at each school, with extracurriculars being measured in the count of sports offered at each school and AP/IB course offerings being measured in the count of courses offered at each school.

- Student to Teacher Ratio, Student to Counselor Ratio, and Student to Mental Health Support ratio are measured as a per-student metric. Expressed as the number of students per one teacher, counselor, or mental health professional. These ratios focus on the availability of educational or support staff relative to the student population, indicating how many students are assigned to each staff member.

[3] Pending data purchase from GreatSchools

- Chronic Absenteeism Rate, Suspension Rate, and School Crime Rate are also measured as a per-student metric. However, these ratios are expressed as the number of events (such as absences, suspensions, or incidents of school crime) per student. They measure the frequency of specific occurrences or events within the student population, providing insight into behavioral or attendance patterns rather than staffing levels.

- Student's Average Annual Learning Rate (Annual Grade Proficiency Level), Relative Teacher Pay, and Availability of Free and/or Universal Pre-Kindergarten Score, utilize different methodologies and will be discussed in the next section.

**Table 2: 2025 Public Education Criteria Definitions**

| 2025 Public Education Criteria Definitions | | |
|---|---|---|
| Category | Criteria | Definition[4] |
| Academic Performance | Graduation Rate | The average graduation rate across all schools near an installation. |
| | Students' Average Annual Learning Rate (Annual Grade Proficiency Level) | The average student learning rate measures how students are progressing compared to the expected average grade level, across all schools near an installation. |
| | SAT/ACT Participation | The average percentage of all enrolled high school students who participate in either the SAT or ACT exam across all schools near an installation. |
| | AP/IB Course Offerings | The average number of Advanced Placement (AP) courses offered at high schools out of the five tracked by the CRDC across all schools near an installation. International Baccalaureate (IB) programs are equivalent to offering all five AP courses. |
| | *(Pending) Post-Secondary Outcomes (College Enrollment)* | *(Contingent on receiving technical definition provided by GreatSchools data.)* |
| School Climate | Chronic Absenteeism Rate (Absences per student) | The average percentage of students with significant unexcused absences across all schools near an installation. A chronically absent student is defined as a student who is absent for 10% or more of the school year. |
| | Suspension Rate (Suspension per students) | The average percentage of students suspended across all schools near an installation. Suspension is defined as the total number of suspended students, not total suspension days. |
| | School Crime Rate (Incident per students) | The average number of criminal offenses (e.g., assault, battery, robbery, drug possession) reported to the CRDC across all schools near an installation. |
| | Relative Teacher Pay | The ratio of median teacher pay to the median overall wage across all schools near an installation. |
| | FRPL Eligibility (Students Receiving Lunch Subsidies) | The average percentage of total students enrolled who are eligible for either free or reduced-price lunches across all schools near an installation. |
| School Service Offerings | Student to Teacher Ratio | The average number of students per teacher across all schools near an installation. For example: a value of 15.43 means for every 15 students, there is one teacher. |
| | Student to Counselor Ratio | The average number of students per counselor across all schools near an installation. For example: a value of 404.21 means that for every 404 students, there is one counselor. |
| | Student to Mental Health Professional Ratio | The average number of students per mental health professional across all schools near an installation. For example: a value of 954.64 means for every 955 students, there is one mental health professional. |
| | Availability of Free and/or Universal Pre-Kindergarten Score | An average score from zero to 100, given the Pre-Kindergarten availability across all schools near an installation. |
| | Extracurriculars (Interscholastic Sports Teams per school) | The average number of interscholastic sports and number of teams offered across all schools within a 60-minute drive of an installation. |

[4] All metrics apply to all schools within a 60-minute drive of an installation. Metrics are also weighted by school enrollment

To provide further context, the score for each DAF installation is compared to the average across all 157 DAF installations. This is done by percentile ranking the set of individual scores and calculating the difference of each for the installation from the average education score across all installations. The difference in percentile ranks helps to clearly indicate how an installation's educational environment compares to the Air Force wide norm, with a positive difference signifying performance above the average and a negative difference highlighting areas that may warrant attention or resource allocation. By identifying installations with significantly positive differences, DAF can explore and potentially share successful strategies and best practices implemented in those locations DAF-wide. This can also inform decisions regarding resource allocation and targeted interventions for installations lagging behind the average, and understanding an installation's relative standing can strengthen advocacy efforts for educational improvements and inform policy decisions at the military and local levels.

The final results also classify each installation's Academic Performance, School Climate, and School Service Offering scores into top 25%, mid 50%, or bottom 25% categories based on the distribution of scores for each DAF installation. This provides a nuanced understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the educational ecosystem of each installation, allowing stakeholders to pinpoint specific areas for improvement at the individual school level.

**PUBLIC EDUCATION SCORECARD**

For each DAF installation, a public education scorecard is developed outlining the results of DAF's analysis. Each scorecard includes the following information for each installation:

- Installation Name and Location
- Percentile Difference of Installation's Public Education Score to the Average Percentile Rank Across the 157 Total DAF Installations[6]
- Criteria Categories and Corresponding Weights:
  - Academic Performance (60%)
  - School Climate (20%)
  - Service Offering (20%)
- Average of the Metrics in the Criteria Categories
- DAF Ranking Group for Each Criteria Category Relative to DAF Averages:
  - Categorized into either "Top 25%", "Mid 50%", or "Bottom 25%"
- Map of DAF Installation and Surrounding Area, including:
  - School(s) within a 60-minute drive of the installation
  - School(s) over a 60-minute drive to the installation
  - One-hour drive border
  - Relative population density
- Table with criteria and corresponding data sources and references

The scorecards also include clarifying language about the results on the scorecard and any notes about the methodology and rationale that are needed.

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[6] Data excludes magnet, charter, and juvenile justice schools; Historical comparisons may include temporarily virtual schools during COVID.
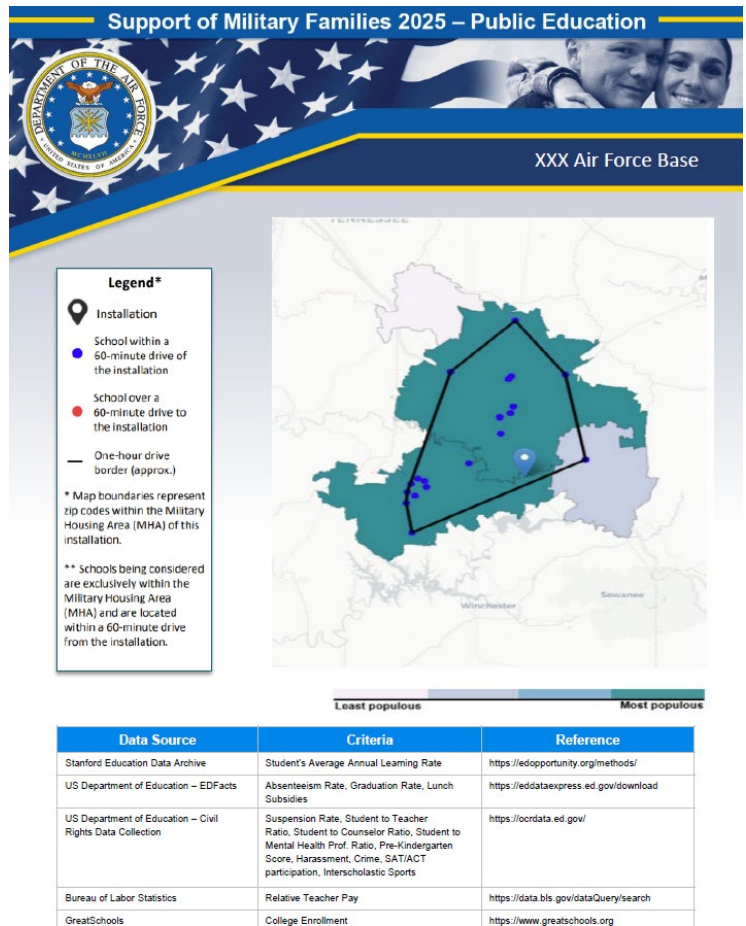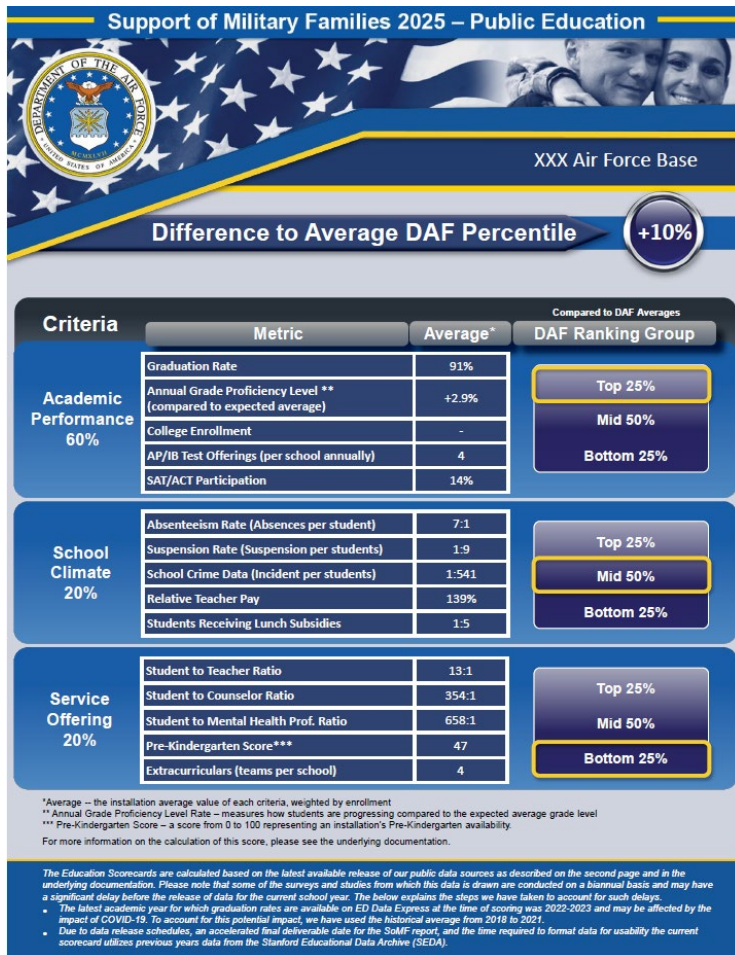
## DATA SOURCES

The 2025 Public Education Methodology utilizes the Data Sources and references in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: 2025 Public Education Data Sources**

| 2025 Public Education Data Sources | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Data Source | Criteria | Reference |
| Stanford Education Data Archive (SEDA) | Students' Average Annual Learning Rate (Annual Grade Proficiency Level) | Methods \| The Educational Opportunity Project at Stanford University |
| US Department of Education - EDFacts | Chronic Absenteeism Rate, Graduation Rate, FRPL Eligibility (Students Receiving Lunch Subsidies) | The EDFacts Initiative \| U.S. Department of Education |
| US Department of Education - Civil Rights Data Collection | Suspension Rate, Student to Teacher Ratio, Student to Counselor Ratio, Student to Mental Health Professional Ratio, Pre-Kindergarten Score, School Crime Ratio, SAT/ACT Participation, AP/IB Course Offerings, Extracurriculars (Interscholastic Sports) | Civil Rights Data \| U.S. Department of Education |
| Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) | Relative Teacher Pay | BLS Data Finder |
| GreatSchools | Post-Secondary Outcomes (College Enrollment) | School Ratings & Reviews for Public & Private Schools: GreatSchools |

The 2025 State Spouse Employment Scorecard aims to create a relative assessment of employability across States and to offer military spouses and strategic basing decisions with information about compact participation and area labor market conditions in a State.

The SCRA of 2023[7] and NDAA of 2025[8] require States to temporarily honor professional licenses of servicemembers and their spouses, while the servicemember is stationed in the destination state. As a result of this legal change, licensure portability as previously measured in the State Licensure Portability methodology is no longer a significant differentiator for military family basing decisions. To address this change, the methodology was broadened to capture a better sense of general employment conditions in each State by including metrics such as relative wage levels and unemployment rates. By introducing these wider measures while keeping relevant metrics used previously, such as compact participation, the updated methodology provides a measure of local labor market conditions to analyze spouse employment opportunities. The 2025 assessment is broken into two main categories: Occupational Compact Participation to include Military Spouse Juris Doctorate Network (MSJDN) and Area Labor Market Conditions. Table 5 shows a breakdown of the categories and respective criteria for assessing a State's spouse employment opportunities.

**Table 5: 2025 State Spouse Employment Framework**

| 2025 Spouse Employment Framework | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **Criteria** | **Weight** |
| **Occupational Compact Network Participation and Military Spouse Juris Doctorate (MSJDN) (50%)** | Occupational Compact Participation and Attorney Licensing Accommodation | **50%** |
| **Area Labor Market Conditions (50%)** | Local Area Unemployment Rate | **20%** |
| | Mean Relative Wages for Key Occupations | **20%** |
| | Employment per 1,000 Jobs in Key Occupations | **10%** |
| **Total** | | **100%** |

Recognizing the significant professional hurdles military spouses encounter due to relocations, particularly with occupational licensing, the Defense State Liaison Office (DSLO)[9] tracks and promotes occupational licensure compacts, which are inter-state agreements designed to ease licensure portability.

The 2025 methodology assesses a State's participation in these compacts using DSLO's comprehensive list, which also informs the selection of key occupations for wage and employment measures. Through this expanded tracking, DSLO has successfully aligned 17 key occupations, critical to State workforce needs, and frequently held by military spouses, with existing licensure compacts. This strategic alignment significantly streamlines professional transitions, enabling military spouses to maintain their careers across State lines, contributing to both their financial stability and the filling of critical occupational shortages. Table 6, below, shows the DSLO Occupational Compacts and the Occupations that these compacts encompass.

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[7] Spouse Licensure Portability." Military OneSource, U.S. Department of Defense, https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Factsheets/tcop/TCOP-Factsheet-SpouseLicensure.pdf.

[8] FY 2025 NDAA Spouse Licensure Portability." Bing, https://www.bing.com/search?q=fy+2025+ndaa+spouse+licensure+portability&cvid=16015136e4974cb4acb4f64ebcbc177a&gs_lcrp=EgRlZGdlKgYIARBFGDsyBggAEEUYOTIGCAEQRRg7MgYIAhAAGEAyBggDEAAYQDIGCAQQQABhAMgYIBRAAGEAyBggGEAAYQDIGCAcQRRg8MgYICBBFGDwyCAgJEOkHGPxV0gEIMzg2M2owajSoAgCwAgA&FORM=ANAB01&PC=U531.

[9] "2025 DSLO List of Occupational Licensure Compacts." Military OneSource, U.S. Department of Defense, 2025 DSLO List of Occupational Licensure Compacts.

**Table 6: Occupations Covered by 2025 Occupational Licensure Compacts**

| 2025 DSLO Occupational Compacts | 2025 Occupations |
|---|---|
| Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) | Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) |
| Audiology & Speech-Language-Hearing Interstate (ASLP-IC) | Audiology & Speech-Language Pathologist |
| Cosmetology | Cosmetology |
| Counseling | Clinical and Counseling Psychology |
| Dentistry/Dental Hygiene (DDH) | Dental Hygienist |
| Dietitian Licensure Compact | Dietician |
| Emergency Medical Services (EMS REPLICA) | Emergency Medical Services (EMS) |
| Massage Therapy (IMpact) | Massage Therapist |
| Nurse Licensure (NLC) | Registered Nurse and Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse |
| Occupational Therapy (OT) | Occupational Therapist |
| Physical Therapist (PT) | Physical Therapist |
| Physician Associates (PA) | Physician's Assistant (PA) |
| Psychology Interjurisdictional (PSYPACT), School Psychology | Psychologist |
| Respiratory Care Interstate Compact | Respiratory Therapist |
| School Psychology | School Psychologist |
| Social Work Compact (SW) | Social Worker |
| Teaching, Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact (ITMC) | Teacher (Elementary, Middle, Secondary) |

**COMPACT APPROVAL**

As part of the 2025 methodology, DAF evaluated a State's Compact Approval: specifically, examining the occupational licensure portability compacts enacted by each State. For this year's release, DAF measured compact participation across a set of 17 key occupations, reflecting the most current and comprehensive understanding of compact coverage. These 17 compacts and their corresponding occupations are detailed above in Table 6. A State's compact participation score is calculated as the percentage of all DSLO-tracked compacts that have been enacted by that State, providing a clear metric of each State's commitment to facilitating occupational licensure portability for military spouses. This expanded scope, now incorporating 17 occupations ensures a more accurate and relevant evaluation of State compact participation.

**AREA LABOR MARKET CONDITIONS**

The Area Labor Market Conditions metrics will source the local area unemployment rate[10], average relative wages, and the Location Quotient for key occupations[11].

The Unemployment Rate is the number of people looking for work divided by the total number of people looking for work and actively working. The unemployment rate data come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Local Area Employment survey and is collected at the State level. The addition of unemployment rate to the scorecard provides a sense of overall economic conditions in the area.

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[10] Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, BLS, https://www.bls.gov/lau/.
[11] Occupational Earnings Survey of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, BLS, https://www.bls.gov/oes/.

The Mean Relative Wages metric compares wages in key occupations to the overall median wage in the area. Higher relative wages for a particular occupation means that it pays well compared with typical earnings for that area. Comparing the median wage for the area gives a rough comparison against the local cost of living.

The Location Quotient (Employment per 1,000 jobs) measures how common a particular occupation is in a State compared to the national average. It is the number of people employed in each occupation per 1,000 total jobs in a State divided by the national average. A higher Location Quotient means that an area has relatively high demand for a particular occupation. This metric serves as a stand in for occupation specific unemployment as the BLS does not collect granular, occupation-specific unemployment information.

## CALCULATION STATE SCORES AND FINAL RESULTS

A State-level spouse employment score is derived by equally weighting two key components: Interstate Compact Participation and MSJDN inclusion and Area Labor Market Conditions, with further breakdown in Table 5 above. The first component assesses a State's support for professional license portability. It is calculated by summing participation in the 17 compacts (1 point per compact) and evaluating attorney licensing accommodations based on MSJDN participation: Yes (1 point), 'Yes, with Supervision' (0.5 points), or 'No' (0 points). This yields a maximum of 18 points, contributing 50% to the final score for that State. The remaining 50% is determined by area labor market conditions, incorporating the local area unemployment rate, mean relative wages for 17 occupations, and the location quotient for those same occupations. The resulting State score provides a holistic measure of the spouse employment landscape across the nation.

To provide a comparative framework, percentiles are calculated across all 50 States for the overall spouse employment score and each of its underlying components. For finding the mean relative wages for each of the 17 key occupations within a State, each occupation's percentage value as compared to the average relative wage across all 17 occupations in that State is calculated. These 17 percentage values for relative wages are then averaged, and this average is percentile ranked across all States to yield the State's Mean Relative Wages Percentile. Similarly, for the location quotient, a percentage value for each of the 17 key occupations is calculated out of the average location quotient across all 17 occupations in that state. The same process is applied to the 17 percentage values for location quotients to obtain the Location Quotient Percentile. Subsequently, the difference between a specific State's percentile score and the national average percentile is calculated for each metric, including the overall spouse employment score, the Interstate Compact & MSJDN participation score, and the Area Labor market Conditions score (this also includes calculated percentile differences for the Relative Wage and Location Quotient). This percentile difference offers valuable insights into a State's relative standing. For the overall spouse employment score, this difference clearly indicates how a State's support for military spouse employment compares to the national average. Similarly, the difference in the Interstate Compact & MSJDN participation percentile highlights the relative strength of a State's professional license portability policies. Examining the percentile differences for relative wages and location quotient, derived from percentage values of the 17 key occupations, and consequently the overall labor market percentile, reveals specific strengths or weaknesses in a State's economic environment for military spouses. This comparative approach, focusing on percentile differences, allows for a more nuanced understanding beyond absolute scores, clearly illustrating where a State excels, lags, or aligns with the national average in facilitating military spouse employment

## SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT SCORECARD

For each State, a Spouse Employment scorecard was developed outlining the results of DAF's analysis. Each scorecard includes:

- The State's Name

- State Spouse Employment Percentile Difference from the National Average

- Indication of Occupational Compact Participation Across 17 Compacts

    - Indication of Existing Attorney Licensing Accommodation for MSJDN Participation

- Options show as follows: "Yes, with Supervision", "Yes", or "No"

- State Occupational Compact & MSJDN Participation Percentile Difference from the National Average

- State Area Labor Market Conditions Percentile Difference from the National Average

- State Mean Relative Wages Percentile Difference from the National Average

- Percentage of Mean Relative Wages for 17 Occupations Across the State

- State Local Key Positions Percentile Difference from the National Average

- Percentage of Local Key Positions (Employment per 1,000 Jobs) for 17 Occupations Across the State

- State Local Area Unemployment Rate Percentile Difference from the National Average

- Local Area Unemployment Rate

The scorecards also include clarifying language about the results and any notes about the methodology and rationale that are needed.
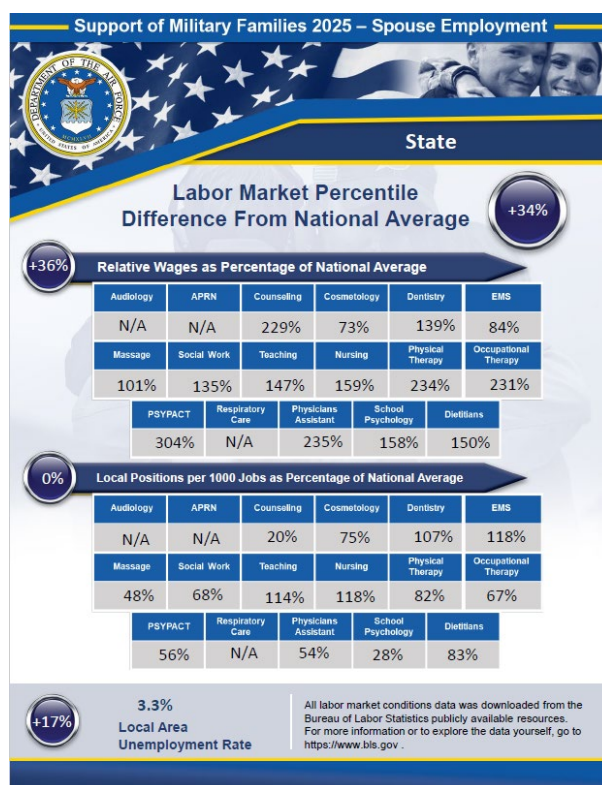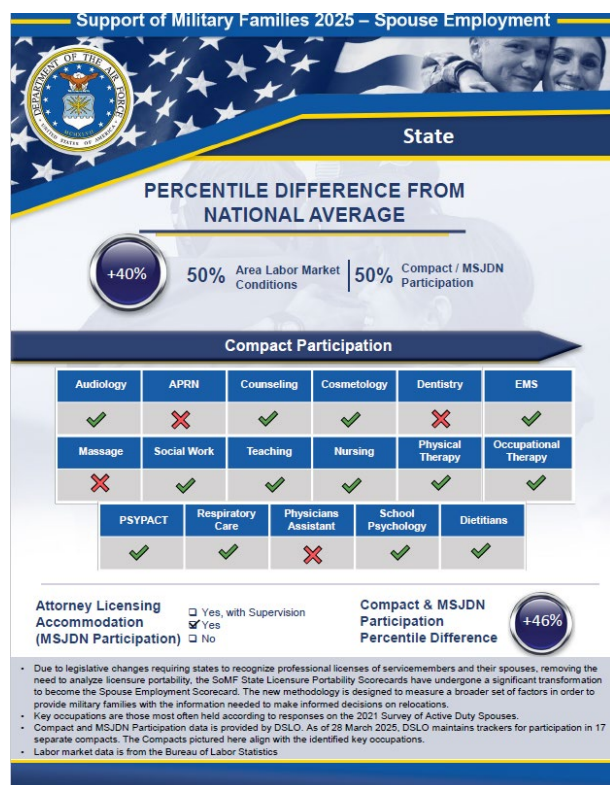
# 2025 SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT METHODOLOGY

**DATA SOURCES**

The 2025 Spouse Employment Methodology utilizes the Data Sources and references in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: 2025 State Spouse Employment Compacts**

| 2025 State Spouse Employment Compacts[12] | |
| --- | --- |
| **Compact** | **Reference** |
| Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) | https://www.aprncompact.com/ |
| Audiology & Speech-Language-Hearing Interstate (ASLP-IC) | https://aslpcompact.com/ |
| Cosmetology | https://cosmetologycompact.org/ |
| Counseling | https://counselingcompact.org/ |
| Dentistry/Dental Hygiene (DDH) | https://ddhcompact.org/ |
| Dietitian Licensure Compact | https://dietitianscompact.org/ |
| Emergency Medical Services (EMS REPLICA) | http://www.emscompact.gov/ |
| Massage Therapy (IMpact) | https://massagecompact.org/ |
| Nurse Licensure (NLC) | https://www.nursecompact.com/ |
| Occupational Therapy (OT) | https://otcompact.gov/ |
| Physical Therapist (PT) | https://ptcompact.org/ |
| Physician Associates (PA) | https://www.pacompact.org/ |
| Psychology Interjurisdictional (PSYPACT), School Psychology | https://psypact.org/ https://schoolpsychcompact.org/ |
| Respiratory Care Interstate Compact | https://respiratorycarecompact.org/ |
| School Psychology | https://schoolpsychcompact.org/ |
| Social Work Compact (SW) | https://schoolpsychcompact.org/ |
| Teaching, Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact (ITMC) | https://teachercompact.org/ |

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[12] "List of Occupational Licensure Compacts." Military OneSource, Department of Defense, https://download.militaryonesource.mil/StatePolicy/pdfs/DSLO-FactSheet-ListOfOccupationalLicensureCompacts.pdf.