



***Joining Forces for Women Veterans and Military Spouses Mentoring Plus™***  
[www.JoiningForcesMentoringPlus.org](http://www.JoiningForcesMentoringPlus.org)

In February, 2012, Business and Professional Women's (BPW) Foundation launched ***Joining Forces for Women Veterans and Military Spouses Mentoring Plus™*** to connect women veterans and military spouses with volunteer working women mentors to help them navigate the challenging path to success in the civilian workplace. With grass roots capacity to position and guide women veterans and military spouses in their job searches and career development, we will initially pair 1,000 mentees with mentors toward a broader goal of 10,000 during 2012. Ultimately, we will engage partners to support 100,000 mentorships, recognizing that over 150,000 women are projected to leave the military during the next five years to join the more than 1.8 million existing women veterans.

***Joining Forces Mentoring Plus™*** is the analytical and evidence-based response to extensive quantitative and qualitative studies among women veterans of all ages and eras. BPW Foundation's groundbreaking 2007 research among 1600 women veterans highlighted translation and portability of skills as major obstacles and underscored an overwhelming gap in career and employment support upon their return from service. Armed with this learning, in October, 2010, BPW Foundation engaged more than 75 leaders from private sector businesses, local and national government agencies, and non profit organizations to identify barriers to women veterans' reentry and outline employment access strategies at our inaugural ***Joining Forces for Women Veterans National Summit***.

During 2011, BPW Foundation developed the methodology to assemble ***Joining Forces Mentoring Plus™***, an outcome-focused framework to address the critical ongoing need for informed, committed working women mentors to position and educate women veterans as they search for new employment, hone their career goals, and package their military skills and experience to gain access to civilian jobs. First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden recognized this "mentorship gap" in their selection of BPW Foundation to implement this large-scale mentoring initiative within the White House's national Joining Forces effort.

***Building the Joining Forces Mentoring Plus™ Program:  
Developing the Architecture***

Workforce research reinforces the fundamental value of mentor relationships and the measurable impact of one-on-one coaching. ***Joining Forces Mentoring Plus™*** is engaging and training volunteer working women mentors from our supporter base (50,000), legacy network (10,000), program partner employee bases, and network of women's coalitions. These volunteers tap their own experiences in the workplace to guide and empower veterans and military spouses through a high tech-high touch combination of online resources and personal interaction.

***Joining Forces Mentoring Plus™*** is a career development mentoring model, engaging a cross section of veteran and civilian mentors who provide insights, advice, and encouragement to steer women veterans and military spouses on individualized courses of action in the civilian workplace. The user-friendly platform enables mentors and mentees to design and develop individual employment goals and benchmarks. A cadre of online resources and subject matter experts assists in specific and specialized areas such as workplace attainment, adjustment, retention, and supplier chain participation.

### ***The Business Case for Joining Forces Mentoring Plus™***

BPW Foundation will continue to enlist employer stakeholders to support, engage, and train volunteer employees as mentors and subject matter experts: working women helping women work. Corporate stakeholders provide access to job and supplier chain opportunities for qualified unemployed and/or underemployed mentees, using the mentoring program as a pipeline to motivated and dedicated employees and suppliers.

Along with workforce development, the program augments talent development and acquisition for employer partners, diversity and inclusion, corporate employee voluntarism and social responsibility, and related customer loyalty benefits. Individual company mentor/mentee program participation models will guide development of expanded ***Joining Forces Mentoring Plus™*** efforts, as initial goals are reached and the framework is broadened.

### ***Building Tools and Resources***

BPW Foundation is engaging program and resource partners from private and nonprofit, civilian and military sectors to support deployment of ***Joining Forces Mentoring Plus™*** and increase our numbers of mentors and subject matter experts. Content is continuously updated to augment mentoring resources and expertise, connect mentors with mentees, and provide training and job opportunities for mentees. Online and direct contact resources offer tailored, individualized services for women veterans and military spouse mentees, including:

- A 10-point matching system for mentors and mentees, including such areas as specific industry interests, veteran benefits, job readiness, and career transition needs
- An individual development plan “contract” between each mentee and her mentor outlining employment and career goals, with benchmarks and action steps
- In depth, user-friendly training and content for mentors, mentees, and employers
- Subject matter experts who can be tapped for individual consultation and guidance on issues, ranging from work-life balance and negotiation skills to industry career insights and entrepreneurship
- Access to extensive job boards, as well as industry training and credentialing systems
- Portal access to entrepreneurship resources including assessments, training, and support
- Analytic information about mentors, mentees, employers, and their experiences—as well as outcomes and goal attainment—for use in evaluation and program development

### ***Building Joining Forces Mentoring Plus™ Capacity through Partnerships:***

The Joining Forces Mentoring Plus™ website structure reinforces this program as part of the continuum of workforce development, preparing and encouraging current and potential employees to take on increasingly active and substantial roles in the workplace. To augment efficiency, BPW Foundation will continue to identify organizations with expertise in mentorship, education and training, veterans’ benefits, social networking, and other identified career tools and skills to make their materials available through the website.

In addition, BPW Foundation will seek out partnerships with communities providing holistic reintegration strategies for women veterans and military spouses. These include connections to benefits, services, and mentors utilizing local employers, community colleges, adult education programs, and housing systems, as well as community-based and women-focused organizations.

### ***Evaluating Joining Forces Mentoring Plus™:***

Ongoing success is measured by tracking the transition and reintegration of women veterans and military spouses through a woman-helping-woman model as we generate 100,000 mentor relationships nationally. Mentor/mentee success is gauged by factors including number, quality, and relationship outcomes, with key barometers such as progress in attaining and advancing employment and reaching personal and family goals.

If you have questions or would like further information, please contact:

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**We welcome corporate, foundation, and agency support and partnerships.**