

**Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services
December 2023 Request for Information**

**Military Personnel Policy Response
November 2023**

BACKGROUND

The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) is seeking information regarding recruitment barriers for women. The Committee has requested the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness provide information on Department of Defense policies on recruitment. The office of Military Personnel Policy (MPP) within the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs will provide a response to applicable sub-questions.

In accordance with DACOWITS' Terms of Reference, the Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Subcommittee will assess potential recruitment barriers which inhibit the accession of women into the Military Services. In addition, the R&R Subcommittee will examine existing policies and procedures to determine whether current practices inhibit the recruitment of women, specifically assessing medical accession standards and the application of these standards.¹

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION NO. 1

The Committee is concerned medical accession standards may have a disproportionate impact on the pool of women qualified to join the Military Services as compared to men. In June 2023², via RFI 2, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)), via the Office of Military Personnel Policy (MPP), reported that 62.5% of all applicants with a diagnosis from the Military Accession Record Pilot (MARP) list of 63 conditions were able to enlist, with a reduced timeframe for disqualification. However, only 50% of female applicants were able to do so. In addition, MPP also stated less than 5% of women applicants were disqualified for women-specific health issues.

The Committee requests a **written response** from the **USD(P&R), Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, and National Guard** on the following:

- a. The most current data on accession rates, broken down by gender, for applicants using MARP standards.

¹ DACOWITS December 2023 Requests for Information. Available at: <https://dacowits.defense.gov/Home/Documents/2023-Documents/>.

² DACOWITS 2023 Quarterly Business Meeting Report. Available at: <https://dacowits.defense.gov/Portals/48/Documents/Reports/2023/DACOWITS%202023%20Focus%20Group%20Report.pdf>

- b. Identify any trends and causes for any disparity in the percentage of men and women assessed using MARP standards.
- c. The number of applicants with an applicable MARP code by gender.
- d. The number of applicants accessed using the MARP by gender.
- e. The number of applicants who have shipped with MARP condition by gender.
- f. The number of applicants accessed using the MARP who have separated from Service by gender.
- g. The reasons for separation by gender (i.e., was it MARP related or was the applicant separated for a different reason).
- h. Length of service for separated applicants by gender.

MPP RESPONSE

MPP can provide a response to the following requests for information:

a. The most current data on accession rates, broken down by gender, for applicants using MARP standards.

In Fiscal Year 2023, the latest data following MARP standards indicates a specific gender distribution among military service applicants. Of the 1,704 individuals who applied, 247 (15%) were female and 1,457 (85%) were male. For FY23, 935 applicants were successfully enlisted, including 122 females (13%) and 813 males (87%). The remaining applicants are waiting to ship to training, still in a delayed entry status, or have discontinued their enlistment for individual reasons.

b. Identify any trends and causes for any disparity in the percentage of men and women assessed using MARP standards.

While the Department continues to analyze trends related to individuals accessed under the MARP standards, initial findings indicate a slightly lower percentage of females assessed via MARP than accessed in general. Understanding that further analysis is required, we believe that this variance is due to, as current medical research has indicated, a higher prevalence of ADHD in young men versus young women in the general population. To date, ADHD is the medical condition that the MARP timeline standards have been applied against the most.

c. The number of applicants with an applicable MARP code by gender.

In Fiscal Year 2023, under the MARP standards, 1,704 individuals applied for military service, comprising 247 females (15%) and 1,457 males (85%). This gender distribution at the initial application stage reflects the number of applicants with a MARP code, categorized by gender. These figures exclude those who later successfully enlisted or proceeded to basic training, a

distinction that is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the accession process under MARP standards.

d. The number of applicants accessed using the MARP by gender.

In Fiscal Year 2023, following MARP standards, a total of 935 individuals were successfully enlisted into military service, including 122 female applicants (13%) and 813 male applicants (87%). This data specifically relates to enlistments under MARP standards, distinctly separating it from the broader pool of initial applicants and those who advanced to basic training after enlistment. Understanding this distinction is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of the accession process under MARP standards.

e. The number of applicants who have shipped with MARP condition by gender.

In Fiscal Year 2023, a total of 730 applicants, comprising 73 females (10%) and 657 males (90%), were shipped to basic training under MARP standards. This specific gender distribution pertains solely to the group that advanced to basic training with a MARP condition. Of note, these figures represent a subset of the total pool of individuals who applied for military service or enlisted. They do not reflect the entire applicant or enlistee population, focusing instead exclusively on those who reached the basic training phase under the conditions set by MARP, with a breakdown by gender.

f. The number of applicants accessed using the MARP who have separated from Service by gender.

The Department is actively analyzing data on service members who shipped to basic training under MARP standards. Upon compilation of this data, the Services will provide additional analysis, categorized by gender. While the current dataset is limited in size, it remains vital for evaluating the preliminary impact of MARP standards, especially in terms of gender-related separations. Despite the constraints of a small sample size, which may affect the breadth of conclusions, a comprehensive breakdown will be conducted. This will include detailed gender-specific data on applicants who separated after joining the military under MARP standards, ensuring a thorough understanding of these trends.

g. The reasons for separation by gender (i.e., was it MARP related or was the applicant separated for a different reason).

The Department is gathering data from the Services to analyze gender-specific reasons for separations among those enrolled under the MARP. This analysis focuses on understanding why service members, categorized by gender, who commenced basic training under MARP, subsequently left the service. The goal is to determine whether these separations are attributable to MARP conditions or to other factors. This is a complex and ongoing process, as individuals accessed through MARP did not all start their basic training simultaneously. These recruits are at different training stages or have already progressed to their first unit, leading to a staggered approach in data collection. The current limited sample size may restrict the depth of our conclusions. Nevertheless, once all relevant data is compiled a thorough analysis will be performed.

This will include a detailed gender-specific analysis of separations under MARP, considering the sample size's limitations and the staggered nature of the data collection.

h. Length of service for separated applicants by gender.

OSD is currently awaiting data from the military Services to analyze the service duration of applicants who separated by gender after being accessed under the MARP. This forthcoming data is vital to ascertain the duration of service before separation for both male and female applicants. Upon receiving this information, a detailed examination of service length by gender for those separated under MARP standards will be undertaken.

Simultaneously, the Department is collecting data on individuals who began basic training under MARP standards. This data, once available, will enable the Services to provide comprehensive information, including gender-categorized reasons for separation. The analysis will seek to distinguish between separations directly related to MARP conditions and those arising from other factors. Although the current sample size presents limitations, this data is crucial for assessing the preliminary impact of MARP standards on separations, particularly gender-specific ones. Recognizing the limitations in sample size, a detailed gender-specific report on post-MARP accession separations will be compiled, providing valuable insights into the effects of MARP standards, and aiding in the assessment of the data's validity