

Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) June 2023 – Requests for Information

RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES TO INCREASE WOMEN’S PROPENSITY TO SERVE

In accordance with DACOWITS’ Terms of Reference, the Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Subcommittee will assess the scale and effectiveness of the Military Services’ recruitment programs with the goal of providing actionable recommendations on how to best increase adolescent women’s propensity to serve. In addition, the R&R Subcommittee will examine existing policies and procedures to determine whether current practices inhibit the recruitment of women, specifically assessing the inclusivity of existing marketing strategies; current recruitment goals for women; improvements in the representation of female recruiters; virtual recruiting capabilities; and potential innovative best practices gleaned from the establishment of the Space Force.

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| 1 | <p>In September 2016, via RFI 14, the Joint Advertising Market Research & Studies (JAMRS) Office provided a briefing to DACOWITS titled: “<i>The Target Population for Military Recruitment: Youth Eligible to Enlist Without a Waiver.</i>” The briefer and presentation slides indicated the single parent female recruitable population was only 3%, which equated to 500,000 women. The Committee remains concerned that some of the Military Services’ policies exclude the accession of women who are single custodial parents.</p> <p>The Committee requests a written response from the Office of People Analytics (OPA), via the Joint Advertising Market Research & Studies (JAMRS) Division, on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Provide an update on the target population for military recruitment presented in September 2016.b. Provide the latest estimate of how many members of the recruitable population (17 to 24 years old) are disqualified for being single parents by gender (provide both percentage and raw numbers). |
| 2 | <p>In March 2022, the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command (USMEPCOM) launched the Military Health System (MHS) GENESIS across the nation. MHS GENESIS highlights potential medical factors for disqualification. MHS GENESIS was developed to increase efficiencies; however, the Committee was informed by recruiters in March 2023, that the adoption of the new platform has impacted the Services contracting production due lengthy processes. The Committee wants to determine whether there are ways to eliminate unnecessary barriers to military service, as well as remove or reduce extended timelines that cause the military to lose out on talent. In addition, the Committee understands the Defense Department is using medical data collected from MHS GENESIS to review whether 38 medical conditions that now disqualify individuals from military service should remain disqualifiers.</p> <p>The Committee requests a briefing from the Office of Military Personnel Policy (MPP) and the Military Services (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard) on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. MPP: Please describe the process and purpose of the review of disqualifying medical conditions and how MHS GENESIS is used in that process.b. MPP: How was the review developed? Were subject matter experts included (internal or external)? Who participated in the design of the review?c. MPP: What objectives, outcomes, and metrics are being examined as part of the review?d. MPP: Describe the demographic makeup of the sample being reviewed (include breakout by gender).e. Military Services: Identify unique and the most frequent medical conditions leading to disqualification and waivers (specify both) being reviewed for females.f. MPP: When were the standards for these medical conditions originally established, and when were they last reviewed for validity to current population and treatment protocols?g. MPP: Who has authority (e.g., statutory, policy, or regulatory) to determine disqualifying conditions?h. Military Services: Who has authority (e.g., statutory, policy, or regulatory) to authorize medical waivers? |

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3	<p>In March 2023, via RFI 5, the Committee received responses from the Military Services regarding their single custodial parent accessions policies. The Committee remains concerned about the significant recruiting challenges facing the military.</p> <p>The Committee requests a written response from the Air Force on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Since implementing the change to the Active Component’s single custodial accession policy in 2014, has the Air Force done a longitudinal study or any review to assess the impact of this policy change?b. Have there been any challenges or adverse impacts to the Air Force since permitting single custodial parent accessions?c. Are there any lessons learned?
4	<p>In March 2023, via RFI 1, the Committee received a briefing on Recruitment Initiatives to Increase Women’s Propensity to Serve. The Air Force briefer mentioned a cross functional team (CFT) sprint, focused on eliminating barriers to recruiting with key personnel.</p> <p>The Committee requests a written response from the Air Force detailing the composition and focus of the Barriers to Service CFT Sprint (Tiger Team):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. What barriers were identified and what methodology was used to identify the barriers?b. How did they choose the barriers to address?c. Were there any barriers unique to women?d. What recommended policy changes were made?e. Which recommended policy changes were approved?f. When will these policy changes be implemented?g. How long will the CFT Sprint Tiger Team be in place?h. Were there any lessons learned?

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GENDER INTEGRATION

In accordance with DACOWITS' Terms of Reference, the Employment and Integration (E&I) Subcommittee will examine current efforts to fully integrate women into previously closed combat positions, determine whether barriers are inhibiting full integration, and identify actionable solutions. In addition, the E&I Subcommittee examined recent modifications to women's uniforms, as well as combat gear and equipment, to identify solutions, as required.

- 5** In December 2022, the Marine Corps provided a briefing on the status of Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) integration, following the release of the University of Pittsburgh (UPITT) study. In this brief, the Marine Corps presented an update on the 18 secondary recommendations outlined in the study. As of December 2022, there were 12 recommendations that had been or were in the process of being implemented, of which 6 were pending further analysis and follow-on recommendations. The Committee requests a **written response** from **Marine Corps** on the following:
- a. For the following alternate models from the study provide an update on planning and implementation:
 - i. Alternate model #1 (mixed-gender drill instructors teams in integrated companies): In the December 2022 briefing the Marine Corps indicated it did not plan to implement this recommended model from the study. Please provide any updated information on implementation plans (including timelines) or justification if there are no plans for implementation.
 - ii. Alternate model #2 (Integrated Company Plus): Please provide the list of training events and activities where male and female recruits are currently integrated at or below the platoon level. Please include training events that are planned for further integration at or below the platoon level in the future, including timelines for implementation of integration.
 - iii. Alternate model #3 (integrated platoon model): In the December 2022 briefing the Marine Corps indicated it did not plan to implement this recommended model from the study. Please provide any updated information on implementation plans (including timelines) or justification if there are no plans for implementation.
 - b. For the following recommendations that have been accomplished provide the specific actions taken to implement each one:
 - i. Establish and use drill instructor working groups at each stage (before, during, and after) of gender integration to more readily anticipate and identify challenges, innovation solutions, and demonstrated successes.
 - ii. Incorporate explicit training and socialization on respect into all education materials and training opportunities.
 - iii. Incorporate primary prevention education on sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic abuse, and equal opportunity courses and Core Value Guided Discussions. Provide recruits education, training, and discussion about “what right looks like” in addition to course curriculum already delivered.
 - iv. Enforce a zero-tolerance policy for training cadre, drill instructors, and recruits using sexually explicit, gender-based, or derogatory language in the training environment.
 - v. Develop or task recruit leadership positions to aid drill instructors with recruit accountability checks when forming gender-integrated units.
 - c. For the following recommendations that are currently underway provide an update and timeline for implementation for each recommendation:
 - i. Provide explicit and consistent leadership statements about how current or future changes to gender integration approaches at MCRDs connect with the broader mission of producing basically trained Marines.
 - ii. Conduct regular evaluations of the recruit training “product”: a basically trained Marine. These evaluations should connect data from a basic Marine’s performance and outcomes in the ELT pipeline and their first fleet assignment and should be used as an opportunity to collect information relevant to the impact of the Service’s gender integration efforts.
 - iii. Review and update educational curriculum and imagery in training environments to represent women and be more inclusive of their contributions to the Marine Corps institutional legacy.
 - iv. Increase number of female personnel at MCRD San Diego (training cadre and leadership) while growing female drill instructor and recruit population to fulfill NDAA mandate.
 - v. Increase efforts to recruit women into the Marine Corps.
 - vi. High initial workloads coupled with injury rates and decrements in strength and power performance - warrants incorporation of a periodized approach to physical training that emphasizes progression and proper technique development.
 - vii. High relative percentage of hip injuries in female Marine Corps recruits during gender-integrated training – investigation of causes and customized injury mitigation programs recommended.
 - d. For the following recommendations that were still pending decision in December 2022, provide an update on the decision. For those recommendations that will not be implemented, provide a justification for why not. For those that will be implemented, provide implementation action steps, timeline, and plan.
 - i. Establish a Marine Corps definition and/or strategic mission/vision for gender integration in recruit training.
 - ii. Restrict those who teach key/milestone sexual harassment and sexual assault courses to full-time SAPR personnel who are subject matter experts.
 - iii. Replace gendered identifiers (e.g., “sir,” “ma’am”) in the primary salutation or response to drill instructors with gender-neutral language such as “drill instructor,” “senior drill instructor,” “senior,” “DI,” or “SDI.”
 - iv. Build an additional competitive element for series or companies to work toward to facilitate drill instructor and recruit investment in a shared identity beyond the platoon.
 - v. Potential relationship between attrition among female Marine Corps recruits and psychological resilience measured on the Connor-Davidson scale – further investigation recommended.
 - vi. Association between previous quantity of strength training in female Marine Corps recruits, and attrition and preservation of neuromuscular function – further investigation recommended.

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PHYSICAL FITNESS STANDARDS

In accordance with DACOWITS' Terms of Reference, the E&I Subcommittee will examine the components of the Military Services' physical fitness tests, to include body fat specifications, height/weight measurements and scales, and physical ability requirements deemed necessary for adequate occupational performance. In addition, the E&I Subcommittee will assess whether the Military Services' physical fitness standards disproportionately affect women's career progression and identify solutions, as required.

- 6 In [December 2022](#), via RFI 7, the Committee asked the Military Services to provide updates to their physical fitness training programs. There have been numerous changes to the Military Services' Body Composition (Body Fat) Assessments. In order to better understand these new policies across the military, the Committee requests a **briefing** from the **Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard** on the following:
- a. Provide an overview of your Service's Body Composition (Body Fat) Assessment process for the past 5 years. If the process has changed within this time period, provide the impetus for the change(s), as well as describe what exactly was modified.
 - b. Cite the anthropometric research utilized to support your Services' Body Composition (Body Fat) Assessment policy.
 - c. Provide photos that demonstrate how Service members' body fat is assessed (by gender).
 - d. What is the margin of error associated with your Services' Body Composition (Body Fat) Assessment process (e.g., percentage range)?
 - e. Explain whether the method of Body Composition (Body Fat) Assessment has either increased or decreased separations (broken down by gender). Provide data/metrics for the last 5 years.

PREGNANCY IN THE MILITARY

In accordance with DACOWITS' Terms of Reference, the Well-Being and Treatment (WB&T) Subcommittee will determine if there are gaps in institutional policies and procedures that obstruct pregnant servicewomen from progressing in their military career and recommend policy changes.

- 7 In October 2022, Secretary Austin published a memorandum entitled, "[Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care](#)," which directed that policy be developed to allow for administrative absences for non-covered reproductive health care, to establish travel and transportation allowances to facilitate official travel to access non-covered reproductive health care, and to extend command notifications of pregnancy to 20-weeks unless specific circumstances require earlier reporting. The Committee would like to understand how these policies are being implemented.
- The Committee requests a **written response** from the **Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Department of the Air Force, and Coast Guard**, regarding implementation of the SecDef memorandum. Please provide the following:
- a. What guidance and directives have been published to implement the SecDef's directives? Are those policies now in effect? If not, when?
 - b. Provide copies or links to all relevant publications.
 - c. Who/what position is the approval authority for granting non-covered administrative leave requests?
 - d. What is the process or appeal mechanism for non-covered administrative leave requests which are disapproved? May the servicewoman appeal the disapproval? Is it a mandatory or discretionary appeal? Who/what position is the appeal authority and is there a minimum grade requirement?
 - e. What are the published criteria and guidance defining whether and when a commander may disapprove a non-covered administrative leave request, and how does a commander document those reasons? Is a narrative reason required or just a "check the box" tick mark?
 - f. How have servicewomen been made aware of the new policies regarding non-covered administrative leave requests, travel and transportation allowances, and delayed pregnancy notification policy provisions?

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PREGNANCY IN THE MILITARY

- 8** Performance evaluations are the key documents in promotion packets. Language, report coding, and/or information about a lengthy absence from primary duties in promotion record files could result in intentional or unintentional bias toward servicewomen who are pregnant, have been exempted from weight standard testing, have taken their full convalescent leave (CONLV) and parental leave entitlement, and/or were afforded year-long operational deferments from deployments, Temporary Duty (TDY) by reason of giving birth. The Committee is interested in learning how the Services will address these challenges to ensure servicewomen compete on a level playing field with other candidates being considered for promotion, that they are not disadvantaged in their careers by their choice to have a family, and to ensure their promotion record files do not contain language, codes, or other irrelevant family, pregnancy and weight information.
- The Committee requests a written response from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard addressing the following questions:
- a. How will the Services prevent and ensure there will be no negative impacts on servicewomen’s career progression and promotions arising from just the fact of: (i) noncompliance with/exemption from weight standards due to a birth event, (ii) lengthy leave absences resulting from CONLV and parental leave, and (iii) lengthy operational deferment periods?
 - b. Provide the specific guidance and copies/links to each applicable directive.
 - c. How will promotion record files be managed to ensure inappropriate information related to birth events, weight, and associated duty absences is not included or visible to promotion board members? Alternatively, if such information can be discerned, how will that concern be mitigated so as not to adversely affect servicewomen?
 - d. Describe any other pending changes to current regulations that have been developed, or are being considered to account for:
 - i. servicewomen’s noncompliance with weight standards;
 - ii. lengthy CONLV and parental leave; and
 - iii. operational deferment absences during the one-year postpartum period.

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GENDER DISCRIMINATION

In accordance with DACOWITS' Terms of Reference, the WB&T Subcommittee will examine existing Defense Department and Military Services' institutional policies and procedures to identify gaps that enable gender discrimination to occur unconstrained and recommended necessary policy changes.

- 9** In 2019, the Committee recommended the Secretary of Defense “establish a DoD policy that defines and provides guidance to eliminate conscious and unconscious gender bias” with a view to tackling the bias that has impeded servicewomen’s promotion and advancement opportunities. The Committee continues to be interested in the gender barriers servicewomen confront during their service. Women in the military and across all industries have historically lagged behind men in career progression opportunities and promotion rates, and women in male-dominated industries (such as the military) typically encounter even greater barriers and resistance to career progression. Gender bias is among the barriers that servicewomen have and continue to experience in their career progression.
- To better examine whether potential remedial measures should be undertaken, such as eliminating gender indicators, the Committee requests a **written response** from the **Defense Department, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard** on the following:
- a. **Military Services:** Promotion results in 2010, 2015, 2020 and 2022:
 - i. by gender, grade, occupational specialty/MOS/community, number and percentage of males/females considered;
 - ii. by gender, grade, occupational specialty/MOS/community, number and percentage of males/females selected for enlisted (E-7 thru E-9) and officer (O-4 thru O-6) competitive promotion selection boards; and
 - iii. the top 5 gender promotion variances by MOS/rating, for enlisted (E-7 thru E-9) and officer (O-4 thru O-6).
 - b. **Military Services:** Identify the trends and compare promotion rates of females and males by occupational specialty/MOS/community to the degree possible. In other words, in what occupational areas do servicewomen’s promotion rates lag behind servicemen?
 - c. **Navy:** Identify what gender information was removed from officer selection board records, when removed, and from which documents within the file, i.e. on some or all documents in the selection folder. Are gendered pronouns visible in any of the documents found in the promotion record file (e.g. on award citations); if so, on which documents.
 - d. **Defense Department:** Provide the report and findings of the Institute of Defense Analysis study commissioned regarding bias removals including gender-specific biases.