

RFI Category and Number: RETENTION INITIATIVES FOR SERVICEWOMEN, RFI 5

In accordance with DACOWITS' Terms of Reference, the R&R Subcommittee will identify barriers to female retention and present findings and actionable recommendations to improve the overall retention of women. In addition, the R&R Subcommittee will utilize the Military Services' retention and exit survey data to identify barriers and/or lessons learned to identify ways to improve servicewomen's retention.

RFI Question:

Military personnel trends continue to reflect that the Military Services face ongoing challenges with the retention of servicewomen, particularly at the midgrade levels. DACOWITS is assessing the extent to which the Services are identifying and taking action to eliminate the barriers to the retention of servicewomen. In June 2022, the Committee received a briefing from the Department of the Air Force (DAF) Women's Initiatives Team (WIT). DAF WIT is an all-volunteer team with 54 lines of effort and 600 volunteers. DAF WIT's mission is to "identify barriers to women's service in the Department of the Air Force and Department of Defense that influence and impact women's propensity to serve and advocate to eliminate those arrears through policy change." This all-volunteer team has accomplished significant progress toward effecting positive change for the female Airmen and Guardians in the areas of convalescent leave for pregnancy loss, Commander accountability for climate, flying while pregnant, postpartum travel allowances for nursing mothers, and temporary duty travel for fertility treatments. DAF WITs current initiatives include child care, Tricare doula shortfalls, reproductive health, and infertility.

The Committee requests a written response from the Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, and National Guard on whether your Service has a working group like the DAF WIT, focused on identifying and resolving barriers that impact the retention of servicewomen?

- a. If so, please describe the composition of your organization's working group and outline what issues they have addressed since inception, as well as what policy or regulation changes have been implemented as a result of their efforts? In addition, what impact have these changes had on women's retention?
- b. If your Service does not currently have a working group equivalent to the DAF WIT, with an express task and purpose to identify barriers to retaining women, how is your Service identifying those issues? Additionally, what is the process Service members can utilize to elevate such issues to senior leadership for resolution?

RFI Response 5a:

Navy does not have a formalized WIT, but is in the process of developing one.

RFI Response 5b:

Office of Women's Policy (OWP) advises on policy, programs, recruitment, and retention of Navy Servicewomen throughout the Enterprise. This is done via four lines of effort:

1. Policy Development & Alignment – Ensure current policies are aligned with higher authorities (DoD, SECNAV, and OPNAV), revising and collaborating on the development of new policies based on input from servicemembers, key stakeholders, and cultural indicators as evidenced by data.
2. Program Management & Development – Develop programs and mechanisms within the Navy Enterprise to obtain policy feedback and data, to include identifying barriers to recruitment and retention.
3. Policy & Program Analysis & Assessments – Analyze feedback to determine if policies concerning Navy servicewomen are implemented and effective. Feedback is obtained through conferences, summits, symposiums, surveys, listening sessions, and social media. Servicemembers can reach out directly to the Office of Women’s Policy email: ALTN_USN_Office_of_Women_policy@navy.mil
4. Strategic Communications & Engagements – Provide strategic communications about policies, programs, and initiatives to internal and external audiences via social media, print media, and direct communications. Engaging with the fleet, other services, civilian counterparts, and other internal and external key stakeholders.