

**SUBJ:** DACOWITS RFI 5 - September 2022 QBM

**FROM:** Office of Diversity and Inclusion (CG-127)

**TO:** DACOWITS Committee

## **RETENTION INITIATIVES FOR SERVICEWOMEN**

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.

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**DACOWITS:** 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 of retention of servicewomen. In June 2022, the Committee received a briefing from the department of the Air Force (DAF) Women's Initiative's 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 an 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 childcare, 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?

- **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.**
- **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?**

**CG Response:**

The Coast Guard does not have a working group like the DAF WIT. The Gender Policy branch within the Coast Guard's Office of Diversity and Inclusion works with the workforce, affinity groups/employee resource groups, and other entities such as the DAF WIT, to identify issues that may impact women within the Coast Guard.

Service members have several avenues to elevate such issues to senior leadership for resolution:

1. Service members can raise issues of concern and/or provide suggestions via White Paper, directly to the program office that promulgates the policy the member feels needs to be changed.
2. Service members can provide a recommendation for a policy change and/or raise issues of concern through their Unit's Leadership; their local Leadership & Diversity Advisory Council (LDAC); and the Inclusive Leadership, Excellence and Diversity (ILEAD) Council which has direct, unimpeded access to the Commandant.
3. Service members can raise issues of concern and/or provide a suggested policy change to the Gender Policy Branch within the services office of Diversity and Inclusion Program for elevation through the relevant program office and Assistant Commandant for Human Resources (CG-1).
4. Service members have access to their Senior Enlisted Command Advisors, (E8 and E9 personnel), also known as the Badge Network, who serve as advocates for the workforce and elevate concerns to Senior Leadership throughout the Service.