



## **Initial Deployment of *Joining Forces for Women Veterans and Military Spouses Mentoring Plus: A Leadership Challenge***

On Veterans Day, Business and Professional Women's (BPW) Foundation committed \$50,000 to lead the January 2012 deployment of *Joining Forces for Women Veterans and Military Spouses Mentoring Plus (JFWVMSMP)*. We challenge your organization to match our investment and join us as a *Joining Forces for Women Veterans and Military Spouses Mentoring Plus Leadership Partner*.

This landmark initiative will help thousands of women veterans and military wives who are or will be navigating the challenging civilian economy-- and its ever changing landscape—to receive the guidance of working women mentors who are committed to seeing them succeed. We invite you to join us and make a difference in the lives of women veterans and military wives.

### **The WHO?**

Over the past year, BPW Foundation has developed and evaluated the tools, outreach, and capacity to connect thousands of women veterans and military wives with employment and career mentors to help navigate the challenging path to success in the civilian workplace. During 2012, we will pair 10,000 women veterans and military wives with mentors, toward a long-term goal of 100,000 mentorships.

Veterans, particularly women veterans, face extraordinary obstacles during this grim economic period. The 2011 overall jobless rate hovers around 9%, and the rate for veterans is nearly 2% higher. The October 2011 unemployment rate for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans was 12.1% for men and 14.7% for women. These rates are projected to rise as increasing numbers of veterans are discharged.

### **The WHAT?**

Beginning in 2005, BPW Foundation made a commitment to better understand the employment transition of women veterans, fielding research among 1600 women veterans of all eras. The results underscored an overwhelming gap in career and employment support among the growing population of working military wives and women veterans upon their return to civilian life, with an emphasis on translation and portability of skills.

In October 2010, BPW Foundation hosted the Inaugural *Joining Forces for Women Veterans (JFWV) National Summit* and identified an ongoing need for women veterans and military wives to enlist informed, trusted guides to assess their goals and help them navigate their way to careers that provide economic stability for themselves and their families. The Office of the First Lady and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce have recognized this "mentorship gap" in their selection of BPW Foundation as point organization for a large-scale mentoring initiative to benefit women veterans and military wives.

*JFWVMSMP* will enable women mentors to tap their civilian workplace experience and help women veterans position their military expertise and skills for long-term career stability and success. The program will make connections for military wives who often cannot find (and keep) jobs that match their skills and education because of the single-parenting demands and geographic flexibility their military lives require. The effort builds on a pilot project with the USO and Hire Heroes USA to serve wounded, ill, and injured women warriors.

### **The WHY?**

Your contribution will elevate your organization's stature to the forefront of this deployment initiative and offer the following benefits as a member of the ***Joining Forces for Women Veterans and Military Spouses Mentoring Plus*** Leadership Council:

- Attract a pipeline of women veterans and military wives who participate in the mentoring initiative through direct links to your employment site or human resource contact.
- Actively engage your employees as mentors, as part of your volunteer and community involvement strategies, while demonstrating social responsibility for those who have served.
- Build, train, and retain a dedicated workforce through workplace practices that are woman- and veteran-friendly, to increase productivity and retention.
- Gain visibility on the national platform of First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden's White House Joining Forces effort. Communicate and promote your leadership and commitment to high level government agency and administration representatives.
- Access recently-legislated tax incentives for hiring veterans.
- Receive BPW Foundation support and assistance in working with the mentoring initiative, and employee outreach for women veterans and military wives who are well-suited for your workforce and supplier needs.
- Utilize ***JFWVMSMP*** training and support for your organization's participants in the mentoring initiative.
- Access opportunities to support BPW Foundation's broad base of subject matter experts to highlight your commitment to women veterans and military spouses on national, local, and/or organizational levels.

### **The HOW?**

Please join Business and Professional Women's Foundation and an elite group of companies, foundations, and organizations to develop skilled women veteran employees, military wives, and businesses through sustained, targeted career and employment/business mentoring.

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