Know Your Worth: How to Negotiate Your Perfect Fit

Session Transcript

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- [Mininia] Welcome to the second day of the 2019 Virtual Military Spouse Symposium. My name is Mininia Hawkins and I am a program analyst in Military Community Support Programs, the host for this week’s symposium. Our next speaker is Julie Wheeler, SECO career coach. Miss Wheeler will discuss what to do once you have a job offer, and how to negotiate to start off on the right path. Learn what you can negotiate and how to do so effectively. Salary, benefits, location and telework will all be discussed. Welcome Julie.

- [Julie] Thank you. Hello and welcome to Negotiating Your Professional Future. My name is Julie Wheeler and I’m a career coach with the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program and I’ll be presenting today’s webinar. So welcome. Today’s webinar is going to focus on the tricky subject of negotiations, and developing your professional portfolio, applying for jobs and going through the interview process is extremely stress provoking. But, when it comes to negotiating your compensation, stress can escalate to a whole new level. Today I’m going to take some time to help you strategize ways to make the most out of negotiating your professional compensation packages. So thank you and enjoy today’s presentation. To give you an idea of what to expect during today’s webinar, let’s take a moment to look at some of the topics we’ll be discussing. We’re going to pick some times to discuss why you should negotiate and some of the common fears with the negotiation process. Next, we’ll discuss how to prepare, in advance, for negotiating. This includes determining your market value. And, we’re going to talk about the right time to begin the negotiation process. Then we’re going to discuss resources to consider throughout the entire negotiation process that builds confidence, which equates to success. This includes accepting an offer in style. We will also discuss how the SECO program can assist with the negotiation process. Lastly, at the end of today’s presentation, we will have a question and answer session. Before we go any further, I want to pull up the polling question that was available when you were logging into today’s webinar. Some of us have had different experiences when it
comes to negotiations, and our feelings about this process may vary. However, I just want to thank all of you that have already answered this question, but if you missed the opportunity to answer it earlier, please take a moment to provide your responses at this time. Oh, and I see more coming in. So thank you for those. Okay. They’re still coming in. I’ll just go over those questions. The question was, what is your level of comfort with negotiating compensation packages? We have four responses there. The first was, I love negotiating. I make it a game that I am determined to win! Or, I do well for myself, but do not really enjoy the process. The third is, I can’t stand negotiating and I’m stressed beyond belief during this process. And lastly, I don’t negotiate. I take whatever the employer offers and I call it good. We have a pretty broad range here, and it looks like the highest, at about 47%, is I can’t stand negotiating and I’m stressed beyond belief during this process. Following that was, I don’t negotiate. Okay. It is no surprise that most of us are uncomfortable with the negotiation process. So I’m hopeful that after today’s session, although we may not be able to remove all the stress associated with negotiations, we can make that process a little more comfortable for you. Let’s start out by tackling this difficult question right from the start. Why should I negotiate? Negotiating your salary demonstrates your professional value to an employer. During the negotiation process, you have the opportunity to remind an employer of the value that you bring to his or her organization. With each benefit that you request, taking time to explain why you feel the benefit should be provided and how it will assist you to be a better employee builds a connection between you and the employer. It also builds a mutual respect as the employer gains a better understanding of your skills and abilities, as well as a clear assessment of your value to the organization as a whole. Also, negotiating your compensation benefits will follow you on to your next job. Skipping out on the opportunity to negotiate compensation not only impacts your current position, but it also impacts your ability to negotiate at your next position. Now, you might be thinking, why put myself through an uncomfortable conversation? You’re not alone. Many of us have asked that same question. However, if you’re not willing to advocate for a better compensation, no one else will do it for you. Unfortunately, statistics show that there is a 25% wage gap between military spouses and their civilian counterparts. So your success now translates into greater successes down the road as you have the opportunity to grow from your negotiation experiences. Lastly, negotiating your salary helps you get pay equivalent to your peers. Employers have an expectation that they are going to negotiate your compensation. Typically, employers do not start out by offering the highest salary for which they’re willing to pay. Instead, they focus on a range that they’re hoping to fall within. So it’s up to you to prove to the employer where you fall in that range. When it comes to negotiations, there are several things that can hold us back including common fears. When I ask individuals about the negotiation process and how it makes them feel, the number one response is that it’s an awkward conversation. The second most common response that I get is that individuals don’t want to ask too much and offend this potential new employer, and they don’t want to ask too little and not get paid what they’re worth. Other common responses that I get include, I’m just happy to have a job and I’m willing to take whatever’s offered, or, I don’t know what to ask, so I just took what
the employer offered. And some have even shared that, as long as they’re making the same or more than their last job, they’re happy. When you’re speaking with someone you barely know and discussing a delicate topic like money, it creates an uncomfortable environment. But there are many unknowns in this process, and it can generate fear. And we often tend to avoid that instead of tackling it head on. So, now that we’ve identified some of the common fears, let’s talk about the steps to get beyond them. The first step is to begin with crunching numbers. Having a budget in place that clearly identifies your cost of living is going to be one of the first steps. Understanding where you spend your money opens up areas that you can potentially use to negotiate different compensation benefits. It is also important to understand the standard organizational benefits. Most are familiar with the common benefits such as medical, dental and vision insurance, maybe retirement matching, and even vacation and leave time. However, there are other examples of benefits that could be included in the negotiation process. These might include bonuses and commission incentives. Once you negotiate a base pay, you could possibly negotiate a scheduled bonus or commission program as a performance incentive. How about their commuting and parking incentives? You might be able to benefit from a transit pass or a parking permit. And what if the eight-to-five shift doesn’t fit your needs? During negotiations, you can explore the possibility of flex scheduling that may be more conducive to your scheduling needs. Some major cities that struggle with traffic congestion have city and state-sponsored commuter programs that actually promote flex scheduling during off-peak hours. Programs like these might be part of your negotiation tactics. And commuter costs. What is the distance of your commute? Should you drive, bus, train or maybe plan to walk to work? If you drive, this would impact your vehicle. Would you lease your vehicle and have mileage limitations? Will the new job impact your gas budget for better or for worse? Are there tolls and parking fees? All of these might be hidden costs that are easily forgotten in the excitement of a job offer. Most importantly, make sure that you research all your company benefits in this process. The last think you want to do is attempt to negotiate for a benefit that the company already offers. These are just a few examples of factors to be considered, and it is vitally important to crunch numbers and know what your needs are, and understand all factors that can play into the compensation negotiation process. Here we have a quick exercise. When you start negotiating and are thinking about salary alone, sometimes we can miss the big picture. So let’s look at two job offers. Offers always start with the gross take-home pay. But we know there’s more. So make sure that you factor in potential withholding. These examples include federal withholding, social security deductions, Medicare, and for our sample today, we’re using the Virginia state income tax. So just a note. Not all states have income tax, so you may wanna check your state when you’re doing this. Now, let’s go ahead and bring up our polling question here for you to answer. I assure you this is not a trick question. This question asks, looking only at the salary information in front of you today, which job offer would you prefer? You have two choices, job offer A or job offer B, and you can see that job offer A is coming in over 34,000 and job offer B is coming in over 37,000. And we’re looking at straight numbers here. Responses are still coming in. They’ve slowed down now, perfect. And not surprising, looking at these polling
questions, most everyone selected job offer B as the preference with over 37,000. This does make perfect sense. There’s a few of you that selected job offer A, so we might wanna talk. There’s always a reason behind every decision. But with job offer B here, we see that the income is much higher, and, looking only at the numbers, there’s about a $3,000 difference. But let’s go ahead and explore these sample offers in greater detail. We’re going to close this polling question and move on to the next page here. We’re going to look at this again, but instead of accepting just the salary offers, we’re going to negotiate now. Here are those withholdings again. So we can see the actual annual net pay for both offers. And after everything we’ve learned so far, we can certainly explore the possibility of getting more, especially if you compromise on your initial asking salary. Now let’s take a second look at these two job offers that display the additional benefit opportunities. This is where we can certainly say, one size does not fit all. This means, what is important to you might not be so important to someone else. So let’s compare. For both jobs, transportation benefits were negotiated. One offers a monthly transit benefit, and the other offers a monthly parking permit, so you’d have to determine which is most important. One offer provides the possibility of a commission or a bonus, while the other offers a flexible work schedule that might include virtual employment or a shift outside regular commuter challenges. One offers a gym membership, while the other has discounted entertainment rates. Again, this is where your needs and lifestyle are going to determine which is more important to you. You might use the free gym on base or this gym membership might be exactly what you’d hoped for, or you might find that some of these entertainment benefits are for activities that you do on a regular basis. There are some large companies out there that will purchase tickets to sporting events, concerts, or theater shows, and provide that as a benefit to employees to purchase at a significantly discounted rate. Others may offer a percentage off of admission fees, sometimes rivaling a military discount. So understanding your needs and how you spend your money, going back to crunching numbers, might help you better determine which of these benefits may be more beneficial. Lastly, vacation and personal time off. This is important to most of us. You can see that job offer A has three weeks vacation, while job offer B has two weeks vacation. Looking at vacation alone, this might be straightforward. But what if the flexible work schedule makes it possible for you to work, whereas job offer A would not even be a possible option? Individual needs are going to dictate this decision. I’ve added up the compensation packages and given you an estimate. Remember, these numbers are not exact because job offer A has a $5,000 benefit factored in that is performance-based and not guaranteed. And, job offer B has a discounted entertainment package that does not have a value assigned, but depending upon use, could be very valuable. So although job offer A has three weeks vacation versus two weeks with job offer B, remember those flexible hours can be huge. So, we’re going to pause again and go ahead and bring up our next polling question. Looking at the two different job offers now with all of the additional negotiation information in place, which job offer would you prefer to accept? Remember, these results are not as clear as the first polling question. Everyone has different needs, and although the financial aspects have changed, there are individual needs that can impact which is more appealing. I can see that those
responses are still coming in and going back and forth. Perfect. It looks like we’re pretty consistent there and it’s real close to a split. This is just as I thought. If you’re looking at the polling results, we are now officially divided. It’s not just as easy as looking at the salary to determine what is best. Remember, negotiations are personalized and there is no one right answer here. So when it comes to negotiating your next compensation package, think about the big picture and explore possibilities that suit your needs. You never know how much your negotiations can benefit you if you don’t ask. Let’s go ahead and take a moment to review. We’ve talked about crunching numbers in order to prepare to negotiate. This included determining your cost of living, exploring benefits and considering hidden costs. Then we moved on to the big picture, which is the negotiation exercises, and quickly determined that each person has different needs and interests that can impact the compensation package. Now, let’s talk about how to determine your market value.

How do you know where to start when specifically discussing your salary? I have three different tools to share with you today that can help you answer that question. We’re going to explore the Occupational Outlook Handbook from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. We will also use My Next Move from the Department of Labor. And lastly, we will be using LinkedIn to look at possible salary information for specific employers. Let’s start with the Occupational Outlook Handbook. We’re starting with this tool because it is a trusted and valid source and the numbers here can be specifically referenced during negotiation. The Occupational Outlook Handbook provides you with a great deal of information that is useful when negotiating your compensation package. The example that I pulled up here today is for a dental hygienist. At a quick glance, you can see the national 2017 median pay for a dental hygienist is $74,070 a year, or $35.61 per hour. It also offers the typical entry level education and experience so you can determine how you qualify for this position. Do you have more education or less? Is your experience leaning towards just getting started in the career field or are you very experienced? This information is important to look over and can be factored in during the negotiation. Also, notice that this information is only the first tab on the horizontal menu provided at the top of the page. There’s a great deal of other useful information that I would encourage you to explore. Because we’re focusing on salary information and pay, you’ll want to click on the Pay option from the menu bar. This provides pay statistics specifically for dental hygienists. This information can be found when you select that Pay tab from the menu bar. Notice how this information discusses the national median pay once again. But, then it breaks down the wage information according to the lowest and highest 10th percentage of wages earned. You will see a chart that breaks down the median pay for different industries as well. So this was great if you want to work in a dentist’s office as a dental hygienist. However, you may want to expect a decrease in pay if you plan to work in a government organization which typically pays less. And, don’t forget to keep reading. If you look at the last two paragraphs, it discusses typical benefits for this career field as well as information regarding part-time and full-time employment. This information can help you prepare for negotiations and understand what employers typically offer. In addition to the Pay tab from that horizontal menu that we just saw at the top, you can see where there’s an option that says State and Area Data. Once you select this, it allows you to detail
into your career field and access regionalized salary information in the form of a map, and you can see an example of that here to the right of this page. Because not all areas are economically equal, you can use wage maps and just hover your mouse over the different areas and it will provide the number of jobs in the region as well as the annual mean wage. This also gives you access to more localized wage statistics which will be much more relevant when you’re negotiating your compensation. So we explored the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Occupational Outlook Handbook. Now it’s time to explore another resource that gives you some great information as well. This resource is called My Next Move and it is hosted by the Department of Labor. The My Next Move program contains numerous resources that are designed to help you research career fields including finding information relevant for compensation negotiations. First you will want to enter in your career field using the Search careers with key words feature. We’re still going to use dental hygienist as an example. Once you enter that, you’ll want to press Enter and it’s going to take you to a report-style document that gives you career-specific information. Here’s an example of what that page might look like for a dental hygienist. There is a lot of general information useful in researching careers here on this page. However, at the bottom of the page you will find a section titled Job Outlook. Amongst other resources, you will find the average national salary for this career field. This might look a little familiar to you because we just looked this up on the Occupational Outlook Handbook. However, you can see there is a button titled Local Salary Info to help you determine the salary for this career field in your local area. When you press this button and enter in your zip code, you will get a chat that displays local pay information. Actually this is going to be a chart. So, let’s use the example of a military spouse stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington State. This chart has two different sets of numbers. The blue numbers are reflective of the U.S. dental hygienist wages with the average coming in at that $74,040 a year. The red numbers are reflective of your local area wages for dental hygienists, with the average coming in much higher, at $91,230 a year. Here you also have the low, median and high wages for this field. This individual seeking employment as a dental hygienist is in luck because the average pay in Tacoma, Washington is significantly higher than the national pay. So remember, some may get paid more and some may get paid less than this average, and it’s important that you consider your education, experience and knowledge in the career field when you’re negotiating. Using tools like this will help you to determine your market value as a candidate in regards to where you fall on this potential scale. You might wonder, how does this help with the negotiation process? Let me give you some ideas. I would encourage you to pick a resource such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics or the Department of Labor. Have the pay statistics written down and be ready for the famous negotiation question of, can you please tell me what pay you’re hoping to receive? That’s everyone’s favorite, right? So here it is. Tensions are high and nerves are on edge. Instead of making a very personal statement, where you’re saying things like, I was hoping for, or, I would like, you can keep this very professional and now respond with something more specific, such as, according to the Department of Labor, the median pay in Tacoma metropolitan area is $91,230 a year. Based on my skills, abilities and experience, I am requesting, and then, at that point, you can
begin your negotiation. Now the employer knows why you’re asking and you can ask with confidence because you know there’s statistical evidence to support your request for this salary comparable to your experience and with colleagues in that same area. This should hopefully help reduce that 25% wage gap that we’re seeing between military spouses and their civilian counterparts, as I mentioned earlier. When it comes to negotiating, this is a small piece of the overall negotiation process. Let’s continue to look at more resources. LinkedIn Premium is a social media platform designed to facilitate professional networking connections. This resource tool collects employer insights, including salary data, to help you determine potential wage information for negotiations. I’m just going to throw this in there as a quick reminder, following our session today, the next webinar is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Eastern Time, and this is going to be Leveraging Your Network from the experts at LinkedIn. I would strongly encourage everyone to join the session and see how LinkedIn can support you and your career goals. And also, LinkedIn has a very special announcement that they plan to reveal during the session. So, make sure that you tune in following this presentation. So, when you access LinkedIn Premium’s Salary Finder, using filters, you can enter in your career field and location. LinkedIn will then begin using filters to access salaries reported by other users in that region for the same career field. This example here revisits Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Tacoma, Washington. Entering in dental hygienist as a career field and then the greater Seattle area as well, which encompasses Tacoma, this provides local salary statistics. Looking at this example, you will see the base salary is, on average, around $47 per hour. The total annual compensation is around $97,800 per year. Information in this block tells you that 45 LinkedIn users provided this salary information, so that’s where these statistics are coming from. If you look at the top right of this block, you can also see that you can sort by industry and also by years of experience. More importantly, this information is displayed on this site just like what you see here. So make sure that you explore all this information, including some of the other buttons, because it is going to be relevant and certainly help with exploring all the salary information. We just finished discussing three major resources that can help you look up salary and wage information to negotiate with confidence. But in order to establish your true market value, there are more questions that you will need to ask yourself, starting with, what is your contribution? In order to determine your contribution, start by asking, what is the company requiring for the position? What is the knowledge that you bring to this company? Is your knowledge expensive or unique, or is it more common amongst other applicants? This is going to be important. Think about the skills. An employer is hiring you because you have skills needed. What do your skills look like? I would actually encourage you to make a list of skills the employer requires, and then write a list of skills that you bring to the position. This is going to be important during the negotiation process to ensure that your skills match the position requirements. And don’t forget your qualifications. Your qualifications impact your ability to work within your career field and also to offer a validation to the employer regarding the level of skill that you have to offer. It’s one thing to have knowledge, skills and qualifications to work in your favor when you’re negotiating your salary, but you must ask yourself, what did I share during the hiring process? If
you did not disclose all these wonderful qualities that you offer the employer, why would the employer give you a top dollar? So, although we think the negotiation process is an event that generally occurs after interviews, negotiations basically begin with the application process. You must be forthcoming with the employer and clearly share your skills, so when you're negotiating a compensation package the employer agrees with you and the value-added requests that you're making. Also, don't forget to determine the level of strength and experience that you have. If you start asking for expert levels of pay when your expert skills may not have been demonstrated, there may be a disconnect and a breakdown in the negotiation process. Be honest with yourself and the employer during this process but make sure you don’t shortchange your skills. Give your skills a simple rating. Exceeds expectations, meets expectations and does not meet expectations. This sample rating system will help you determine where on the pay scale, you might want to start negotiating. Also, be realistic with your expectations during negotiations and make sure that you justify the salary for which you’re asking. If you are asking more than the employer is offering, make sure that you demonstrate skills and give examples of your work that warrants the higher pay request. Also know when to stop. Negotiations, they’re a bit of a dance. The offers can go back and forth, but at some point, there needs to be an agreement. If the employer feels that you’re focused too heavily on a compensation package that is far beyond anything they can offer, the employer could rescind the offer. This means they no longer want to hire you. It’s fine to be a tough negotiator, but do it with finesse. The employer should feel like he or she has won with acquiring an outstanding employee, and you should feel like you won when you know that your compensation package is on point with your colleagues and your skills. So we’ve talked about crunching numbers and preparing to negotiate, and we’ve discussed how to establish your market value. Now let’s just again because timing is everything. When is the best time to negotiate? It is beneficial to begin the negotiation process after you’ve clearly demonstrated your value. This is generally not during the first interview. During the initial interview, you’re still establishing a professional rapport with the employer and discussing skills. So do your best to avoid discussing compensation during the early conversations of the interview. If you have the ability to obtain a written offer, this is helpful, so you’re clearly aware of the full compensation package as well. This gives you time to assess the offer and develop a clear counteroffer, including specific details. And, as we’ve discussed before, the best time to negotiate, is after you’ve done your wage and labor market research. If you’ve not taken time to research your career field in detail, you will not be able to negotiate with confidence. So make sure that you do your research before you even submit your application materials. And, be aware, some employers have a prescreening process that includes discussing salary before the first official interview. This has come about because many employers, they’ve decided not to publicly list their pay scales. So this complicates things a bit because it throws some of the strategies we’ve discussed out of order. Remember, during the prescreening session, the employer is not looking to begin the negotiation process at this time. They’re just wanting to confirm that your compensation ideas are in alignment with theirs. So, if the employer asks what pay you were hoping to receive for this position, your research will give you a
general idea. Also, know that you can put the question back on the employer. For example, you can respond with a question such as, while reviewing the job listing, I noticed that you did not have a published pay scale for this position. Can you please tell me what the typical salary range is for this position? Usually the employer will discuss a general range, and instead of talking specific numbers, you can state that you’re comfortable with moving forward with that discussed range. Or, during the prescreening session, if the salary is too far off from your goal, then you can politely state that there is a significant enough difference between their range and your expectations, and at this point, you can respectfully withdraw your application. What if you’ve accepted an offer and you’re just now finding out that you are underpaid? Is it ever too late to negotiate? Know that you are in control of your career and there are certain times that open up conversations for you to negotiate your market value. A good time to negotiate can be during a performance review. Make sure that if a company says they offer performance reviews on a regular basis, you hold them to it. During this performance review, you can reestablish your market value, provide examples of your skills, show your expertise and demonstrate how you are making a positive difference and working above expectations. At this point, you can ask to have your compensation package reviewed. Most importantly, be organized, concise and clearly communicate your goals with the employer, so they can make an assessment of your contributions and consider adjusting your compensation. What if you don’t want to wait for an annual performance review? That might be a long ways away. Or, maybe your role has significantly changed since you started working. From time to time, employees take on additional work assignments, acquire new skills and/or certifications, or the overall contributions significantly increase. You can request an internal equity review. This gives you an opportunity to, once again, clearly outline your market value, demonstrating the growth in your responsibilities, skills and overall contribution. Just like a performance review, be organized and concise with both your feedback and requests, with examples to why you feel your compensation should be adjusted. Remember, you are the best advocate for your benefits, and the more you are informed, the better you can communicate your market value and enter into a respectful and productive negotiation, both during and after the hiring process. So confidence is a tremendous strength when negotiating your compensation package. Confidence comes from preparation and leads to success. Practicing your next negotiation might sound a little strange, but it works. Just like practicing for an interview, stand in front of a mirror and watch yourself speak and listen to your request. Then, when you do this for real, you will be able to visually see yourself doing this as well as recall hearing your request, making for a much more focused negotiation process. And, if you want to take it one step further, the SECO team has career coaches that are available to assist with virtual mock interviews. Practice your interviewing and negotiation skills with a SECO career coach that can provide you with professional feedback. When should you prepare? We’ve already discussed the importance of researching ahead of time to be ready for any difficult conversation, whether it’s during the prescreening process or engaging in the negotiation. However, it isn’t just knowing numbers that makes the negotiation process a success. It is the confidence that builds from knowing and understanding
the career field, the labor market information and your benefit needs, that enable you to engage in a confident negotiation conversation. When it comes to difficult thought conversations, the most important step is to know that you want to be clear about it. Be concise, provide clarification and confirm that your audience is accurately hearing your request. Also, keep it professional. When you’re making requests for your compensation package, an employer does not need to know the personal details. For example, it is not helpful to tell the employer that you need more income because of something specific to you. Instead, focus on your skill levels that warrant an increase in the pay. And lastly, justify your request. If you’re asking the employer to meet you halfway on various benefits, be prepared to justify your market value, your expertise and experience. Each example or justification grows the employer’s confidence in your skills and abilities and increases your negotiation opportunities. Now for the exciting part. After all your hard work applying for the job and negotiating your compensation, at some point, you will be presented with an offer. Make sure that you take time to review the offer and fully understand the benefits. And, once the offer is received, establish a time frame of when you’ll be getting back to the employer with your decision. This provides clarity. If possible, you may want ask for the offer in writing. When you have an offer in writing, everything should be clear and concise. If anything is unclear, don’t hesitate to ask those clarifying questions. Clarification is key to making sure all parties, let me stress that, all parties, are happy when it comes to the negotiation process. Always give a reason why you deserve what you’re asking. Remember, throughout the entire negotiation process, to the very last moment when you officially sign and accept an offer, provide examples of your skills. The employer needs to feel that this is a win-win situation. And lastly, if you were close to an agreement, but not quite there, then make sure that, if the employer states this is their best and final offer, you can decide if the compensation, as it stands, would suffice. You may be able to accept, on a contingent, that instead of an annual performance review, maybe it’s bumped up to six months with the possibility of a salary increase based on performance. This is just one example. Remember, the negotiation process is flexible and can often become a creative agreement between you and the employer. Well we’ve covered a great deal of resources for negotiating your professional future during today’s presentation. I want to begin wrapping up our presentation by just reminding you that the SECO program has career coaches that are available to discuss your next steps toward your education and professional goals. SECO offers online employment resources, among others, that can help you develop your professional portfolio, prepare for interviews and the negotiation process. In addition to online resources, you can always speak directly with a career coach by reaching out to our SECO team, by calling 1-800-342-9647, or participating in a live chat. It’s been great and my pleasure sharing how to negotiate your professional future. I trust that you’ve enjoyed our session and that you’ve learned some valuable information that will give you a competitive edge during your next compensation negotiation. Don’t forget to access the presentation slides, the handouts and links that we discussed during today’s session, and these should be listed here on our screen for convenience. I do want to thank you for your service as a military spouse, and remember the SECO team is here to assist. At this time, I’d like to go ahead and
open up our session for any questions you may have regarding negotiating your professional future. Okay, and I am back. What I’m going to do is just start looking for any questions. Please feel free to put those in the chat pod. I know that we had a team here helping answer those questions as they were coming through. I’m just going too look at some of these questions here. So Corrine, I can see a question and you said, When was a good time to negotiate? Just remember that negotiation process actually begins with the application. Make sure you disclose all the information that’s going to truly show that you’re a best candidate. One of the things I found with military spouses is we, and everyone in general, most people don’t like talking about themselves. So it’s really hard to say how wonderful I am in all these different areas. But if you’re not doing it, the employer doesn’t know. So, negotiate from the beginning to the very end, and usually if the negotiation process happens after that first interview, and maybe, depending upon how many interviews you have, towards the end. That’s one of the best times to negotiate because that’s when the employer knows you best and knows the skills that you have to offer. You're more comfortable and have a greater knowledge of the employer and the organization as a whole. So Laura, you said, when or how can one determine the take-home pay after you take on that annual salary offer? One of the things that can be really helpful is trying to determine the percentage. Depending upon what you claim as withholding, your state income tax and all of that, it’s going to impact that. There’s actually some websites out there that you can enter in your information and your state and it will calculate for you. So, that might be something to do is to check to see if you can find those. But if you have any previous pay stubs that reflected your withholding, you might want to just determine what percentage of your gross pay was held out in deductions and you can almost apply that to that salary offer and that will also help determine about how much you’d be taking home on a regular basis. So Karla, you said, if my last paid work experience is over 10 years old, does that automatically mean I’ll be lucky to get the bottom end of the advertised range for your position? No, that does not. Remember, skills, as long as you can show and demonstrate to an employer, that you have solid skills, even if you haven’t worked during a period of time, usually we don’t stop using our skills. So, you demonstrate how you’ve used those during that employment gap. It could have been volunteer experience. It could have been additional education, reading up, staying current on what’s going on in your field. Then what might happen in your case, is that you can demonstrate to an employer that you have experience even though it was 10-plus years ago, how much experience and how that is relevant to the job that you're applying for, and that builds the employer's confidence. So that does not mean you have to start over at the bottom. It means your job just might be a little bit more challenging, but possible to present your skills in a way that the employer feels confident. So, don’t necessarily think that you have to be at the very bottom of that. If an employer offers you the job within the first interview, and seems to expect an immediate answer, is it okay to still take time to consider the offer, or could that lead them to pull the offer? This is Erica. Great question Erica, and that would be exciting. Congratulations if that happened to you with getting an offer on the first interview. That’s wonderful. The employer should not be offended if you ask to take time. This is a big decision. If you think about how much of your day you spend
working, how much of your life you spend committed to your employer, that’s a big deal. So, be very gracious. Thank the employer for the offer and tell them you’re very excited, you’d like to take some time to think about it, and this is where I mentioned, set that deadline. Tell them, I need one to two days, whatever it is that you determine, and tell them that you’ll be getting back to them with that response. They should understand that you need just a brief moment. You can ask them if this is okay. If it’s not, there’s other things you might want to factor in there. But, usually an employer will understand that you need to take time to think about it, especially if you think about interviews. If you think about the negotiation process, our senses are really heightened. We’re very emotional. It’s a very stressful event, and the last thing you want to do is make a hasty decision because you just wanted to please the employer, you wanted to get out of that stressful environment. Take time to step back from that, look the offer over, and then be able to respond once you’ve had time to calm the emotions and thoroughly consider the offer. Most employers should accept that. If not there might be some things that you want to consider, talk to the employer on why they’re wanting such a quick response. But usually they’ll give you time to think about it. So Yolanda, what do you do when you receive less hours every week? It seems like you may have taken a position that is, maybe, reducing hours, reducing hours and that impacts your income. That’s a big deal. I’m all about transparency and I try to advocate for that, both from the employer’s perspective and the employee’s perspective. So, if you find that your hours are being reduced, I would encourage you to reach out to your management, and let them know that you’ve noticed that there’s a decrease and ask if they can explain what that is all about, and be prepared with all the things, the wonderful things that you have to offer, to explain, this is what I offer and it kind of starts that negotiation over again to negotiate for more hours. Unfortunately, if they’re not willing to give that to you, it might be a signal, okay, this might not be the best fit that I’d initially thought it was. At that point, you’d have to decide, can I take these less hours, can I negotiate for more or does this mean I have to move on? Hopefully, that communication will increase those hours for you. So I’m looking here. I’m seeing some numbers filling in, about 23% of gross. That’s typically, the 20, 23% of deductions is what a lot of people will see. So that might be a number to factor in. What search words would you use to find the websites that can help you determine what your gross pay would be, especially if you don’t have an old paycheck? So if you type in calculating a net pay, because you’re going to take the gross and subtract the deductions and that equals your net pay. Or calculating net income. Usually you’ll find those calculators. Hopefully those words will help you there. That was for Laurie. I’m way behind So we still have some time here. It looks like, from Tammy, there’s a question. I’m finding, in my job search, that more and more companies are listed under admin assistant, but, as you’re reading the job description, the role could be or should be listed under a different title. Do you have any ideas of how to search for salary specifics when the job title isn’t quite accurate? Something you need to do when you see that a job title isn’t maybe exactly representing what the position is recruiting for. They’re looking for certain skills. For example, they might say admin assistant, but when you start reading, maybe they have like payroll and accounting. If that’s the case, look up accounting skills, account payable accounts receivable, maybe even
payroll assistant match, then you might want to factor that in to the negotiation process, and you could even use that during negotiations, explaining that I’ve reviewed this position, it looks like a lot of the responsibilities for this position lean towards giving some of my accounting services. And based on that, and the skills that I have to offer you. And that way, your compensating those skills and not necessarily just the title. And the employer should be receptive of that because remember this is a two-way conversation. Great question. How do we handle negotiations when the remote position is a high market value area and the remote employer is a rural area, a rural employee asking for the higher-market and the employer offering a lower value? That is an excellent question. What we do find is that, when you’re negotiating pay, you can look at that two ways. Understand where they’re coming from as an employer in a rural area, but don’t hesitate to mention where you’re at. So if you are in a larger area that has more expenses, and the pay might be higher, you can state, well I’ve researched the salaries for where I’m at for this position and it is reflective of this. Be prepared to potentially meet the employer somewhere in the middle, because the employer can pull candidates from multiple locations. So it’s going to be important that you understand that they can offer less, but may be able to come up and help meet you halfway. So, those remote positions can be a little bit more challenging. That’s an excellent question.

- [Mininia] All right, thank you, Julie, for the wonderful information and thank you to all of the military spouses that have joined us here today. The classroom will remain open for a few more minutes. So, feel free to type your questions in the general chat. In the top left and right corner, you can download the available handouts from the session today, including the presentation slides, our SECO program flyer, as well as the SECO career coaching fact sheet. Please highlight the document and click the Download Files button. The items will download to your computer in a compressed file. If you are connecting from a mobile device and are unable to download the files successfully, you may enter your email address into the Trouble with Downloads chat pod to receive the materials after the event. If you have trouble, please let us know in the Need Technical Assistance chat pod. Also, in the Web Link pod, you will find two links. The first link is the session survey. Please provide feedback on your experience today. This concludes our presentation. Please join us at 10:00 a.m. for Leverage Your Network from the experts at LinkedIn. Have a wonderful day!