

Findings and Recommendations Pertaining to Malmstrom Air Force Base

Background

The Air Force reported in 2019 that the state of Montana received approximately \$659 million in Defense spending, which provides direct funding for DoD personnel salaries, defense contracts, and construction of military facilities in the state. This spending by DoD personnel, contractors, and their families creates significant economic activity, attracts related industries and investment, and generates important state and local government tax revenues.

Most recently the Department of Defense Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation reported that Cascade County receives the largest amount of defense personnel spending in the State of Montana of \$395 million. It is a major employer in Montana and created 1,328 indirect jobs in fiscal year 2021.

Malmstrom AFB is home to the 341st Missile Wing that maintains and operates the Minuteman III nuclear Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM). The 341st Missile Wing is one of three operational intercontinental ballistic missile units. The 341st Missile Wing is responsible for 150 Minuteman III ICBMs, 15 missile alert facilities, and 150 remote launch facilities. These missiles and facilities are dispersed across an 13,800 square mile area in central Montana. The 341st Missile Wing also operates 8 UH-1N "Huey" helicopters needed to support missile operations across a widely dispersed complex.

Malmstrom AFB is also home to the 819th RED HORSE Squadron. The 819th RED HORSE Squadron is an "associate unit" with approximately two-thirds of its 300 personnel being active-duty military and the other third Montana Air National Guard members. The 819th RED HORSE Squadron is a self-sufficient, mobile squadron able to deploy rapidly worldwide to remote, austere environments. The base also supports the Montana Air National Guard's 219th RED HORSE Squadron; the 22nd Space Operations Squadron Detachment 1; and AFOSI Det. 806.

The 1995 Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission led to the inactivation of the 43rd Air Refueling Group with the 91st Air Refueling Squadron transferring to MacDill AFB, Florida, along with the remainder of the refuelers at Malmstrom. On Jan. 1, 1997, Malmstrom's runway was declared inactive for the first time in the base's history.

Malmstrom is the youngest community in Montana and the youngest workforce in the Air Force. According to Malmstrom AFB, 4,000 active-duty military and civilian members are assigned to the base. Approximately 2,500 family members live and work on and around the base, and an estimated 6,500 veterans live in the local area. The military personnel, their civilian family members, and the civilian spouses of active military personnel are valuable contributors to the area's workforce and offer a diverse set of skills to the local economy. Fifty-one percent of officers are Lieutenants and 77% of enlisted are Airmen-Staff Sergeants. Out of more than 4,000 employees, 88% are military members and 12% are civilian employees. Additionally, there are approximately 1,450 spouses of active military

personnel. It is estimated that over 30% of the total workforce has advanced degrees and over 70% maintains a DoD security clearance. Approximately 2,500 family members live and work on and around the base, and an estimated 6,500 veterans live in the local area.

Malmstrom's physical appearance has undergone many changes since 1995. Construction of new and renovation of old family housing, dormitories, work facilities, a new commissary and Base Exchange, and general base infrastructure have transformed the base's image and upgraded utilities.

Situational Analysis on Malmstrom AFB

Malmstrom plays a major role in national defense and maintains a mission of priority in the Air Force. The Air Force installation has an estimated \$395 million economic impact on the region and its presence supports a variety of services that directly and indirectly serve the base and its personnel. The presence of Malmstrom AFB can also influence targeting new industries. Technology companies, call centers and other back-office operations are especially attracted to military communities due to their large labor pools of "trailing spouses" with at least some college education. Of the approximately 1,450 spouses of active military personnel at Malmstrom, more than 30% hold advanced degrees. However, Malmstrom's mission as a Missile Wing also means it has less potential to generate certain types of spinoff activity relative to many other Air Force bases. Because the primary mission of Malmstrom is to host a Missile Wing, it does not draw the local support that a training installation that a major air command would. Also, a private defense footprint is not required as it would be at other military bases with a training mission, Air Wing or depot/maintenance.

It is our opinion that the installation plays a major role in our national defense and has the capabilities with existing assets to expand the installation's role, reflective of the Air Force priorities in modernization and supporting the existing and new technology priorities. The programs listed below have some level of synergy to the existing and past missions of Malmstrom AFB. A group focused on supporting Malmstrom should further explore the following programs with an eye toward capturing and expanding support missions at the base. The following programs are examples of growing programs that align strategically with the current mission at Malmstrom AFB.

- Ground Based Strategic Deterrent programs
- Next-Generation Overhead Persistent Infrared programs
- Space Command
- Cyber Operations and Training (supporting The Sixteenth Air Force)
- Supporting Air Force Depot operations

Expansion of Missions at Malmstrom AFB

Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD)

The Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent, or GBSD, program aims to replace the aging Minuteman III nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles that first became operational in 1970. The Pentagon awarded Northrop Grumman a \$13.3 billion contract for the weapon system in September. Air Force

officials say the new ICBMs will have increased accuracy, extended range and improved reliability compared to the Minuteman III.

The three current MMIII bases in the Air Force (Minot AFB, Malmstrom AFB, and FE Warren AFB) require greater numbers of security forces personnel compared with other units in the Air Force. The GSBD's modularity that enables most maintenance to be done with the launcher closure door closed might also allow for a reduction in the number of Security Forces personnel required at Malmstrom AFB.

In addition to fewer required Security Forces, the Air Force expects the maintenance needs of a new weapon system to be greatly reduced. Finally, although the final layout of how the system will be set up has not been publicized, there are indications to suggest that fewer Launch Control Centers (LCCs) will be required. Current requirements have 15 LCCs at each of the three missile bases for a total of 45 LCCs. Each LCC is manned continuously by two missile combat crew members. If fewer LCCs are needed in GBSD, it could lead to the need for fewer missile operators. It is premature to estimate the potential total manpower savings to the Air Force, but it may be reasonable to assume there will be some.

While the reduction of personnel over the long term could have a minor impact, we recommended that the Great Falls community monitor the impacts by working closely with the prime contractor Northrop Grumman and its subcontractors.

Next Generation Overhead Persistent Infrared program

The Next Generation Overhead Persistent Infrared program is the successor to the Space Based Infrared System, which currently operates as the military's premier missile warning satellite constellation. Next Gen OPIR will be made up of five satellites: three in geostationary orbit (Next Gen OPIR GEO) and another two in highly elliptical orbits for polar coverage. The first satellite is set to launch in 2025.

The Next Gen OPIR GEO program is a space-based missile warning constellation designed to detect and track current and emerging threats from hostile entities around the globe. It is the latest evolution of the U.S. Space Force's missile warning satellite constellation and is a high priority program with the Space Command and Air Force.

Because of the past and existing missions of Malmstrom AFB in global threat detection, it is worthy of additional research to explore the feasibility of Malmstrom providing support to this Air Force technology priority.

U.S. Space Command

The 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, which was signed into law in 2018, directed the re-establishment of U.S. Space Command as a sub-unified combatant command under U.S. Strategic Command. In December 2018, the Trump administration established the U.S. Space Command as a newly established, fully unified combatant command with full responsibilities for space warfighting, which at the time, was under the authority of the U.S. Strategic Command (USSPACECOM).

Space Command has two functional components, Combined Force Space Component Command at Vandenberg Space Force Base, Calif., and Joint Task Force-Space Defense at Schriever Space Force Base, Colo.

With Malmstrom AFB proven history in global missile defense and global threat detection, we believe that Montana can provide a strategic advantage in supporting the new emerging missions of USSPACECOM. Local and state leadership should explore the opportunities in supporting the US Space Command.

Cyber Operations and Training (supporting The Sixteenth Air Force)

Headquartered at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, the Sixteenth Air Force (Air Forces Cyber) is the Air Force's Information Warfare Numbered Air Force. Through Program Guidance Letter 19-05, the Secretary of the Air Force directed the stand-up of 16th Air Force to optimize and synchronize the readiness, generation, employment and presentation of cyberspace; electromagnetic spectrum; information; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; weather; and other related capabilities to generate information warfare outcomes for combatant commanders and air components. 16th Air Force operates globally across nine wings and two centers presenting capabilities to generate insights on our adversaries while simultaneously ensuring and having the capabilities and the capacity to persistently engage and respond appropriately to threats today, in the future, and across the competition continuum.

The DoD commitment to grow the cyber security functions is escalating at an extraordinary rate and is a top priority within the Cyber Command and the Sixteenth Air Force in San Antonio plays a major role in supporting the new priorities.

In May 2021, the Biden administration proposed a \$10.4 billion cybersecurity budget for the Department of Defense for 2022 that significantly adds to the cyber mission force responsible for cyberspace national security.

Malmstrom has the existing infrastructure and security to facilitate a government-to-government contract to support the Sixteenth Air Force mission. Montana has the political support to facilitate an expanded role in cyber security. By leveraging Malmstrom existing capabilities to support the increasing priorities in cyber security, the community could gain new military and government civilians that would further diversify the missions of Malmstrom and the local economy.

Department of Defense Maintenance Depots

The Air Force supports three main depots. Ogden Air Logistics Complex in Utah works on the F-35, F-22, C-130, and Minuteman III ICBM. The Oklahoma City Air Logistics Complex in Oklahoma works on B-1B and B-52 bombers, as well as military engines. The Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex in Georgia maintains F-15 fighters, C-5 transports, and special operations aircrafts.

Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.) states that it is “essential for the national defense that the Department of Defense maintain a core logistics capability that is government-owned and government-operated [GOGO] ... to ensure a ready and controlled source of technical competence and resources

necessary to ensure effective and timely response to a mobilization, national defense contingency situations, and other emergency requirements.” DOD’s maintenance depots are GOGO facilities that are capable of performing complete overhauls of military weapon systems, as well as repairs to many individual components within each weapon systems.

Because of Ogden Air Logistics Centers' work with supporting the Minuteman III weapon systems and because of Malmstrom’s existing infrastructure capabilities, an exploratory conversation should be conducted with Ogden Air Logistics Complex in Salt Lake to discuss how Malmstrom can support Ogden’s increase in workload in a Government to Government contracting scenario.

Expanding Malmstrom’s support role into these types of missions would not only generate hundreds of military jobs but would also create civilian contractor jobs and would make a significant economic impact in the state of Montana and the Great Falls community.

Military Installations Attract Related Target Sectors

Many military communities leverage the presence of a military installation and its accompanying workforce to attract complementary private sector sectors. The Great Falls MSA has a competitive advantage when it comes to the percentage of veterans in its labor shed and their labor force participation rate. 5,584 veterans live in the Great Falls MSA and make up 12.1% of the labor force as compared to 6.8% for Montana and 4.6% in the U.S. Veterans in the Great Falls MSA also have a high labor force participation rate of 77.3% as compared to 77.1% for the State and 76.6% for the U.S. The high labor force participation rate could be attributed to the younger soldiers stationed at Malmstrom AFB who decide to stay in Great Falls after military service.

	Great Falls MSA		Montana	U.S.
	Value	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage
Armed Forces Labor Force	2,321	3.6%	0.4%	0.4%
Veterans, Age 18-64	5,584	12.1%	6.8%	4.6%
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64	4,317	77.3%	77.1%	76.6%

Source: JobsEQ

Barksdale AFB in Shreveport-Bossier, Louisiana helped the region attract a major new cyber security and technology company to the area. General Dynamics IT (GDIT) is a subsidiary of General Dynamics that provides IT products and services primarily to the Department of Defense (DoD) and Intelligence Agencies. Headquartered in Falls Church, Virginia, GDIT acquired a cyber security and IT operations that is strategically located in the National Cyber Research Park in Shreveport-Bossier, near Barksdales Air Force Base in 2018. GDIT created more than 1,000 jobs, recruiting exiting veterans from nearby Barksdale AFB, which provides access to military veterans with security clearances. Veterans make up 30 percent of its workforce.

Jacksonville, Florida is home to multiple other military facilities, including Naval Station Mayport and Marine Corps Blount Island Command. Mayport is one of only two East Coast Navy homeport areas, and there are more than 50 companies in the area that support Navy ship repair — BAE Systems is one of those companies.

Lawton OK is home to Fort Sill Army Installation. Fort Sill current population is 53,000, composed of 20,000 military and civilian personnel, and 33,000 military family members.

In October 2013, the Lawton-Fort Sill Economic Development Corporation, in conjunction with the City of Lawton, leveraged Fort Sill's workforce to recruit Serco creating over 500 new jobs. Serco Inc. is a leading provider of professional, technology, and management services primarily to the federal government. Serco Inc. occupied a 55,000 square foot facility in Lawton Oklahoma.

Serco Inc. was awarded a new contract by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to support the newly created health benefit exchanges. The starting hourly wage in supporting this contract was \$17.50 hr. and the average salary was \$53,000 a year. Serco later expanded to 1000 new jobs because of the accessibility of military spouses and local veteran workforce.

Typically, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, defense-related and IT and cyber security companies are attracted to military communities. A military installation serves as a key customer to defense contractors and civilian personnel. Additionally, a base generates a high-skilled, disciplined and educated workforce of exiting veterans and trailing spouses that can be funneled into a workforce pipeline for a civilian employer.

However, this is not to say the Great Falls region can attract the above-named industries — not without “competitive product improvements” to enhance its workforce, logistics and transportation infrastructure and economic development and military recruitment strategies. There are many methods used to identify economic development target markets for a community. Some approaches are based on incomplete business sector-focused methodologies that ignore a variety of important issues from workforce attributes to educational assets to geographic advantages. BBA approach to target market identification is rooted in a more comprehensive examination of the region's strengths and opportunities, including the defense installation missions, economic impacts, military and veteran workforce and skill sets in attracting primary employers.

Advance Manufacturing

The Advanced Manufacturing industry includes a range of businesses involved in transforming raw materials into component pieces and finished products using innovative technologies. Advanced manufacturing can include production activities that depend on information, automation, computation, software, sensing, and networking. Modern Advanced Manufacturing is distinguished from the days of smokestacks and smelting by its reliance on advanced technology and a skilled labor force. For many years, national media focused on the decline of US manufacturing employment, but the US remains the world's second largest producer of manufactured goods. Manufacturing employment has increased every year since 2010 and currently employs more than 8.5 million Americans.

Advanced Manufacturing operations require a high-skill workforce. Firms typically utilize costly machinery that requires specialized training. As a result, advanced Manufacturing businesses usually benefit from locations with a military presence, strong community college and other training systems in place. High demand for skilled workers often leads to relatively high wages in this cluster.

Locations with plentiful, affordable energy supplies are usually also important. Specific Advanced Manufacturing subsectors may require sizable natural gas, water, and wastewater capacity. Operations often prefer sites with immediate proximity to an interstate to help facilitate delivery of finished goods. They may also require sites with direct rail access. Because of the high cost of facilities and equipment, large-scale Advanced Manufacturing operations often pursue incentives to facilitate their expansion and relocation.

The technical skill sets of the veteran workforce that supports Malmstrom missions are transferable into advanced manufacturing. Veterans possess invaluable hard-earned skills that make them some of the most sought after prospective employees by top manufacturing companies. For example, Rockwell Automation, in Milwaukee, has even escalated its commitment in hiring this technical expertise by creating the Academy of Advanced Manufacturing to train veterans for careers in advanced manufacturing.

Aerospace

Aerospace encompasses a diverse range of activities, including the development and manufacture of aircraft, their engines, component parts, missiles, and space vehicles. Aerospace has been one of the more resilient sectors of the US manufacturing industry over the past decade. In 2020 the industry did experience a downturn because of the Boeing 737 Max situation and the COVID outbreak but the market is expected to fully recover by 2024. The continued growth of international air travel demand is expected to fuel sustained growth in new aircraft production. Private space exploration is also a rapidly emerging area within the Aerospace sector.

Great Falls can leverage the technical workforce that the State and Malmstrom AFB generates to support a tier two Aerospace supplier. The existing available land at the Great Falls airport could facilitate a small to medium size producer of subcomponents. Additionally, Malmstrom's military

support assets (healthcare, base exchange and other services) will be a valuable asset in recruiting aviation experienced veterans to support this industry.

Defense Contractors

The Defense sector covers businesses that manufacture and support a range of military hardware and equipment – including weapons, munitions, trucks, tanks, and other technological equipment. American defense businesses sell their products to the US military and allied foreign governments. Recent years have seen continued government spending on efforts to overhaul and modernize military equipment and technology, and these are not expected to slow. The defense industry is very reliant on hiring military veterans and technical talent that possess DoD Security Clearances.

Presently there are dozens of professional level positions, requiring a DoD security clearance, being posted and advertised by national defense firms to be in the Great Falls region.

The following list is an example of companies that target employees with security clearances:

- Safran SA
- CACI International Inc.
- Amazon Inc.
- SAP SE
- Fujitsu Limited
- Atos SE
- Unisys Corporation
- Atkins
- AT&T Intellectual Property
- Microsoft Corporation
- Oracle Corporation
- Capgemini SE
- Unisys Corporation
- Northrop Grumman Corporation
- IBM Corporation
- Leidos Holding Inc.
- General Dynamics Corporation
- Accenture
- BAE Systems PLC

Professional & Information Services

Professional & Information Services includes a range of skilled services that support the overall functions of the economy from accounting and engineering to data security and graphic development. Alongside supporting other sectors of the economy, Professional & Information Services are often the source of

innovation with a heavy focus on research and developing new products, systems, and software. Employing nearly 20 million individuals, Professional & Information Services has become one of the largest and highest paying industries in the nation.

Professional & Information Services require minimal site requirements — office space, high-speed internet, and affordable utilities— are usually the basic requirements for a firm to operate. More importantly, talent availability and the ability to attract and retain talent are two of the most critical factors for this industry. Within this sector, government contractors, not military contractors, are attracted to defense communities with a university because of the regional talent pool profiles and they generate a continuous supply of new workers.

These government contractors provided services to the US government in healthcare, insurance, human resources, passport and other services. Because many of these operations are not strictly location dependent, quality of life becomes an important factor in determining where they can locate and attract the best talent.

Since Great Falls MSA has a higher than average veteran workforce participation rate, the Great Falls Development Authority could capture a portion of these professional jobs by creating a strategic outreach and marketing program that targets these related industries.

Support Contracts Impact

Spin-off work

Multiple Award Task Order Contract, MATOC, is a special type of Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity contract with multiple awardees. A MATOC contract is a design-build, bid-build construction acquisition based on a general statement of work, which is further defined with each individual task order. Work to be performed under the MATOC will be the general construction category to include maintenance, repair, alteration, mechanical, electrical, heating/air conditioning, demolition, painting and earthwork.

In February 2020, the Air Force awarded eight firm-fixed price, indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity, multiple award task order contracts (MATOC) to support Malmstrom Air Force base. Each award will not exceed \$90,000,000. Work will be performed at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana, and is to be completed as specified in each individual task order by Feb. 2, 2027. This award is the result of a competitive solicitation to total small businesses, 8(a) small businesses, and HUBZone small businesses.

The following are the contract award companies:

- Doyon Management Services, Federal Way, Washington
- Geranios Enterprises Inc., Great Falls, Montana
- Guy Tobacco Construction Co., Black Eagle, Montana
- James Talcott Construction, Great Falls, Montana
- JE Hurley Inc., Colorado Springs, Colorado
- NorthCon Inc., Hayden, Idaho

- Sealaska Construction Solutions LLC., Seattle, Washington
- Wadsworth Builders Co. Inc., Great Falls, Montana

GFDA's Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) offers consulting to local companies looking to win government contracts. GFDA's PTAC services are invaluable in helping local companies gain important certifications and to build capacity to win large contracts. GFDA should continue marketing its PTAC services to target companies that would likely win MATOC contracts, such as construction, electrical, plumbing, painting, HVAC companies.

Strategic Considerations

STRATEGIC LOBBYING EFFORTS ARE PARAMOUNT! Specific military spending decisions and the broader policies that impact them are made at the federal level. The Montana Defense Alliance and its partners need to escalate its efforts to work with Malmstrom AFB, local public officials, a variety of state-level personnel, and private third-party consultants to lobby on behalf of the base through multiple channels in Washington, D.C. This allows the region to make its case to the key decision-makers who ultimately determine the staffing levels and government contracts at Malmstrom. Reaching these individuals through a coordinated effort involving all relevant state and local partners is especially important in pursuit of expanding the defense industry and DoD missions in Great Falls.

Following SWOT interviews with the Montana Defense Alliance, it is our informed opinion that current support efforts have decreased over time, and current efforts and momentum have been ineffective. Majority of the volunteer members of the Defense Alliance are not Air Force Subject Matter Experts (SME) and do not have the prerequisite knowledge, relationships and experience to effectively support and attract new missions to Malmstrom.

We recommend that the Montana Defense Alliance, State congressional representatives, GFDA and the Great Falls Chamber of Commerce jointly re-energize the Alliance to develop a new action plan that includes an updated meaningful mission and goals. The new strategic plan will also include a goal to establish funding for an experienced congressional support firm to address any potential threats or opportunities for Malmstrom, Great Falls MSA and the State of Montana. It is common practice for military support organizations to engage an experienced lobbying firm with Air Force SMEs to advocate for the missions and goals of the organization.

Great Falls should engage a full-service, bipartisan consulting firm specializing in federal and state government relations, public affairs and strategic communications, and advisory services. Such a firm should have a long and successful track record of supporting military communities, military support organizations and military installations. The firm should also have existing relationships with key members on the House Committee on Armed Services, Senate Armed Services Committee, House and Senate Appropriations Committees and their Defense Subcommittees.

It is also important to leverage existing relationships with Montana's federal delegation members and align local, regional and state efforts with your congressional delegation. Montana Senator Jon Tester would be a key champion for protecting and expanding Malmstrom AFB. Senator Tester serves as

Chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee as well as on the powerful Appropriations Committee. As a Democrat serving his third term in office under a Democratic administration, Tester is well positioned to protect and expand Malmstrom's interests. His seniority gives Montana a strong voice in the U.S. Senate. It would be also critical that congressional communications run in parallel with U.S. Senator Steve Daines and U.S. Representative Matt Rosendale.

Communications

The BBA Team interviewed multiple local and state focus groups, elected officials, military entities and past Air Force leadership. The Great Falls community maintains various groups and government officials that have the desire to support the mission of Malmstrom and its families. Unfortunately, there has not been a coordinated process of sharing information and collaborating on common goals. Many local groups have voiced their values, concerns and desires off-base in the general community but their thoughts and opinions often are not translated by Air Force SMEs and effectively delivered to installation resources and leadership.

Because of this communication gap, there is a disconnect between the base resources and the community leading to a community value void and in some situations community discontent. Malmstrom's Command Group clearly illustrates the highest levels of professional Air Force standards and is dedicated to Malmstrom missions and its families. Therefore it is critical for the Great Falls community to communicate its values and its operational and political support to the leadership.

Issues that affect the military's ability to conduct training and operations also impact the relationship between installations and their surrounding communities. Many of the decisions made by installation management and local government leadership have serious and real consequences for their respective installations and local jurisdictions. Because local government and installation relationships are interconnected, leadership is responsible for making management decisions that minimize conflict and promote mutual understanding. It is the responsibility of both parties to ensure that decisions being made are advantageous for both the installation and the community.

The BBA Team recommends that a community-wide communications plan be designed and accepted by Great Falls leadership and related support organizations. The communication plan includes a communications strategy that defines roles and responsibilities of supporting organizations and local government. It will also be important that numerous ex-military personnel be directly involved in the design and implementation of the plan.

Leveraging Veterans for Workforce and Entrepreneurism

The BBA team interviewed multiple large and small employers where they had a desire to fill open positions with military spouses but did not know of any resources or processes. In some cases, employers had negative misconceptions or did not have any knowledge of the available talent pool that a military installation provides.

Veteran Workforce

360 military personnel retire from Malmstrom AFB annually with civilian skill sets ranging from installation, maintenance, repair to radio, cellular and tower equipment installers and repairs to carpentry, communications operators, first-line supervisors of construction trades and managers. (JobsEQ, 2021) Additionally, veterans have a strong work ethic and are considered highly disciplined. Military personnel are often cross trained in multiple skills, work well on teams and have experience in varied tasks and responsibilities. They exit from military service with multiple paid educational opportunities and other services and benefits to support their transition to civilian life.

Veterans possess invaluable hard-earned skills that make them some of the most sought-after prospective employees by top manufacturing companies such as Boeing, Raytheon, and SpaceX. For this reason, many manufacturing companies have workforces that consist of up to 20% veterans or more.

There are additional incentives in recruiting companies to a community that hire Veterans. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a program developed by the Internal Revenue Service that allows companies to pay a reduced amount of taxes in exchange for hiring members of groups, including eligible military veterans, that have traditionally had difficulty finding a job, such as individuals who had been unemployed for an extended period.

Veterans are equipped with specific skills that can transfer to the civilian workforce, but it's not always clear how their military experience could fit a specific role. Great Falls employers need to keep an open mind when screening veteran candidates and not overlook someone just because their technical skills don't perfectly fit the job description.

In July 2018, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported 506,000 job openings in manufacturing compared to 391,000 openings the year before (July 2017). And by 2025, two million skilled jobs could go unfilled, according to a 2015.

How can we retain and recruit veterans into the civilian workforce? The Great Falls community has a higher veteran workforce participation than the rest of the State and nation — 77.3% for Great Falls as compared to 77.1% for Montana, and 76.6% for the rest of the nation. Workforce attraction efforts should target exiting veterans to raise awareness of local educational opportunities, job opportunities, community and quality of life assets and the low cost of living values.

Veteranpreneurs

One in 10 U.S. business owners are military veterans, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. From our SWOT interviews and focus groups meetings, BBA spoke with several veteran-owned businesses. Their presence in the community and region have added to and enriched the entrepreneur ecosystem. There are many resources locally that serve the veteran entrepreneur from GFDA's SBDC Boots to Business program, SBA's small business lending for veterans and other military support services.

Malmstrom Military and its Family Support Center provides information, support and services to help military personnel balance the demands of military life. The Military and Family Support Center is one part of the overall Family Readiness System, which is the network of agencies, programs, services, partnerships and individuals that supports your personal and family life readiness, mobilization and

deployment readiness, and mobility and economic readiness. The Support Center hosts transition assistance as a part of the support services. The transition assistance program prepares separating, retiring, and demobilizing service members and their families with the information, skills and knowledge necessary for a successful transition from military to civilian life.

We recommend an enhanced partnership with Malmstrom's Family Support Center to market the region and technical assistance programs that would help veteran's start businesses in the area. Veteran families prefer to live near military bases to continue to use base services. Those who stayed in Great Falls and at Malmstrom AFB for most of their services would be low hanging fruit to recruit into the private sector. There is a misconception that only security forces and MPs are stationed at the base, when in fact there are also technically skilled positions at the base. Information on the skill sets available at Malmstrom is not publicly available, but we believe there is considerable talent that could become veteranpreneurs.

Trailing Military Spouses

Military spouses are more likely to hold a bachelor's or advanced degree than the general population. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation study, 34 percent have a college degree and 15 percent have a postgraduate degree. Whereas in the general population, those numbers are 32.5 percent and 12 percent, respectively. (U.S. Census)

According to Military.com, military spouses are quick learners, committed to service, adaptable and they bring a diverse set of skills. These traits often make them strong employees. Organizations looking to hire military spouses should post to job boards that target military families and partner with military advocacy organizations. A variety of national and local veteran organizations have job boards specifically targeted to military spouses. Employers should research to determine which are most often used in areas they are targeting. While job posts targeting veterans should use language that reflects their military experiences, military spouses have a wide range of experience and expertise. Because of this, employers don't need to use military-specific language, but highlighting job benefits that are appealing to military spouses and stating a commitment to hiring military spouses can be beneficial.

The BBA team interviewed military spouses who shared that they and other military spouses had a desire to find quality employment but had difficulty in finding employment that was reflective of their profession or with a suitable salary level. The availability of affordable childcare is also a barrier for them to engage into the workforce.

In a recent 2020 Military Family Lifestyle Survey released by Blue Star Families, 35% of military spouses report that they are not employed but need or want employment. The BBA team would highly encourage Great Falls community groups to promote veteran and military spousal employment resources to assist in off-setting workforce shortage challenges of the region.

Below are examples of military spouse employment resources

National Labor Exchange: <https://virtualjobs.usnlx.com/about/>

Hiring Our Heroes: <https://www.hiringourheroes.org/>

Blue Star Families: <https://bluestarfam.org/careers/>

USAJOBS:

<https://www.usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/military-spouses>

Department of Defense Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program:

<https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/>

USO Pathfinder Transition Program: <https://www.uso.org/programs/uso-pathfinder-transition-program>

The Child Care Challenge

The BBA team interviewed military spouses and numerous Human Resource managers, and the availability of child care services is clearly a barrier for employment for a large percentage of skilled workforce — both military and non-military families.

As of January 2022, the childcare facilities on Malmstrom are at full capacity and off base options are extremely limited and priced above financial feasibility to available known employment opportunities.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation study finds that 41 percent of military spouses have dependent children, and more than 70 percent of those children are 7 years old or younger. This statistic is reflective of the childcare demand at Malmstrom.

Having young children in the home can increase the pressure on military and civilian spouses to find flexible work, but military spouses without children can also benefit from flexible work arrangements.

Currently, the average family with at least one child under age 5 would need to devote about 13 percent of family income to pay for child care, a number that is unaffordable for most young military families.

For parents, typically mothers, access to high-quality child care can be an important determinant of whether they enter or remain in the labor force. Many national studies find evidence that access to child care is an important factor in explaining female labor force.

The DOD offers a variety of resources to help families find the child care they need, including families with special needs. GFDA can help make prospective, new or existing childcare providers aware of resources that military families have at their disposal.

- MilitaryChildCare.com is a DOD website that helps families in any service branch find and request military-operated child care anywhere in the world. Search for full- and part-time care at child development or family childcare programs, including before- and after-school care, as well as summer and holiday camps.
- Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood is a DOD fee-assistance program available to qualifying families. This program offsets the cost of childcare off the installation in community childcare programs on behalf of families who are unable to access installation childcare. MCCYN has expanded to MCCYN-PLUS — in some locations where national accredited community-based providers are unavailable, childcare providers with a state quality improvement level/tier of three or higher will be made available to these families as an alternative. Child Care Aware® of America is contracted to administer the fee assistance program on behalf of the DOD. Learn more at Child Care Aware® of America. This program could potentially provide an income stream for new off-base child care centers.
- Through Military OneSource, service members and families now have free access to a national database of more than a million caregivers so they can find hourly, flexible and on-demand

childcare. Learn more about eligibility and how to register for the expanded hourly childcare options.

- Furthering its commitment to support service members and military families in securing childcare that fits their family's needs, the DOD is initiating the In-Home Child Care Fee Assistance program to provide fee assistance for families who have determined that full-time, in-home childcare is the best solution to meet their needs. This program is only available in select locations.
- On September 17, 2020, the Department of Defense announced the award of sixteen (16) grants totaling approximately \$50 million under the Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot Program by the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation. Fort Leonard Wood MO received a grant of \$677,238 to the Waynesville R-VI School District, Waynesville, MO, to undertake a \$1,354,475 project to enhance the Early Childhood Center to support military families at Fort Leonard Wood.

In October 2021, Great Falls Development Authority released a Childcare Demand Assessment Study to assess childcare needs in the Great Falls community and determine if new childcare facilities could be supported given current and projected demand and existing availability of childcare in the City. The study determined there was a childcare demand for approximately 580 children in the City of Great Falls with the highest demand in Newborns (up to 12 months) and Preschool (3-5 years) age groups. The BBA Team recommends that the Great Falls leadership explore and leverage DoD resources to potentially increase child care capacity. This would include potential Public to Public partnerships with funding available with the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation. (Listed below)

The STEM Opportunity

STEM education is expanding beyond traditional engineering and scientific communities, and it is increasingly critical for industrial skills proficiency. A community's education system that is dedicated to STEM programs is vital to the education and innovation of our nation and would be critical in recruiting the recommended targeted industries. Over the past 30 years, employment in science, technology, engineering, and math jobs has grown by almost 80%, according to a recent figure from Pew Research Center.

The Great Falls community has made multiple investments in STEM programs and as a defense community there are additional funding resources available to ensure that Great Falls is acknowledged nationally and by the Air Force as a leader in STEM education.

As a defense community Great Falls qualifies for some unique funding opportunities in supporting STEM education. One agency is the Department of Defense STEM (DoDSTEM). DoD STEM's mission is to inspire, cultivate, and develop exceptional STEM talent through a continuum of opportunities to enrich our current and future Department of Defense workforce poised to tackle evolving defense technological challenges. In October 2021, the Department of Defense, through the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, announced more than \$47 million to 15 awardees, consisting of local education agencies, higher education, and non-profits under the National Defense Education Program. <https://dodstem.us/>

As home to Malmstrom AFB, the defense community has a special interest in Great Falls and supporting Air Force families in STEM with grant opportunities. Below is an example of some of the private sector resources available.

Private Sector STEM Grant examples:

<https://www.northropgrumman.com/corporate-responsibility/corporate-citizenship/>
<https://www.lockheedmartin.com/en-us/who-we-are/communities/applying-for-contributions.html>
https://www.raytheon.com/responsibility/stem/grants_scholarships
<https://www.boeing.com/principles/community-engagement.page>
[K-12 Education - Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#)

Capturing New Federal Dollars to Support Economic Development

The Great Falls community is aware of the Department of Defense's Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation but has not fully embraced the funding opportunities the office provides. The Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation leverages capabilities of state and local partners through grants and technical assistance to enhance readiness of our installations and ranges, and to deliver safe places for our members and their families where capabilities in the Department of Defense do not otherwise exist. OLDCC's program portfolio comprises over 200 separate grants, exceeding \$1.3 billion, and represents partnerships between the Department and most states and communities that host Department of Defense installations.

OLDCC works with states and communities to help them respond to changes driven by the Department of Defense. By leveraging the full capabilities of the federal government, the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation helps towns, cities, and states plan and carry out a future that is both sustainable and in alignment with the military mission. <https://oldcc.gov/introduction>

The BBA Team highly encourages the Great Falls community to escalate its participation with OLDCC to access millions of dollars of grants that directly impacts community challenges and supports funding in community infrastructure, defense manufacturing and education.

There are valued programs with OLDCC that the BBA Team recommends exploring. The following programs could be leveraged to strengthen community competitiveness.

Construction Assistance Program

The Construction program enables states and communities to undertake necessary investments in public services and infrastructure to support the readiness and lethality of installations, as well as to provide safe places for service members and their families to live, work, and play. Current efforts support the management of civilian activities to absorb announced mission growth and investments in infrastructure such as the renovation of public schools on military installations, improvement of roads to medical facilities, and outside-the-fence investments in infrastructure.

Industry Resilience Program

The Industry Resilience program assists communities as they respond to defense changes, specifically a canceled contract or the failure to proceed with a previously approved weapons system. With Industry Resilience assistance, state and local partners can help defense manufacturers develop and manufacture new product offerings, capture new investments, and develop new technologies. These efforts help modernize our military and maintain a technological edge against its adversaries.

In addition to assistance with economic adjustment and recovery, the Industry Resilience program helps communities strengthen the economic and cyber resiliency of local defense industry supply chains.

Defense Community Infrastructure Program

The Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP) is designed to address deficiencies in community infrastructure, supportive of a military installation, in order to enhance military value, installation resilience, and military family quality of life.

DCIP is authorized under Public Law 115-232 Section 2861. The program authorizes the Secretary of Defense to make grants, conclude cooperative agreements, and supplement funds available under other Federal programs in support of the program.

The City of Great Falls has successfully applied and received funding in 2020 of \$10,000,000 to undertake a \$20,000,266 project to construct the Aim High – Big Sky Recreation Center.

Defense Manufacturing Communities Support Program

Section 846 of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019 authorized a new Defense Manufacturing Communities Support Program to “make long-term investments in critical skills, facilities, research and development, and small business support in order to strengthen the national security innovation base by designing and supporting consortiums as defense manufacturing communities.”

Under the DMCSPP, regional areas will work with the Department of Defense (DOD) to develop a public-private coalition and a comprehensive strategic economic development plan for manufacturing sectors important to the defense industrial base. If selected as a DOD-designated community, these coalitions would get technical and possibly financial assistance in implementing their plan, including help accessing multiple forms of federal support critical to manufacturing’s future, like workforce development, small business support, infrastructure, and technological innovation.

Military Installation Sustainability Program

The Military Installation Sustainability Program of assistance is designed to provide technical and financial assistance to states and local governments to analyze and implement actions necessary to foster, protect, and enhance military installation sustainability. This program encompasses the previous Compatible Use/Joint Land Use Study program as well as the recently authorized Installation Resiliency Authority.



In 2010, Cascade County received funding from the Military Installation Sustainability Program for a Malmstrom AFB Joint Use Study (JLUS). A JLUS is a planning process accomplished through the collaborative efforts of key stakeholders working together to identify compatible land uses and growth management guidelines within and adjacent to active military installations.

Cascade County qualifies for funding under this program to update the 2012 JLUS.

This escalation in participation and in capturing these dollars will further illustrate the Great Falls value and commitment to Malmstrom's command and to the Air Force.

Utilizing the previously mentioned government relation firm and working with Montana congressional staff will dynamically increase Great Falls capture rate of these grant dollars.

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