



Serving the spouses of those who serve

The hardships of military life often extend to the families of service members. The education and careers of military spouses, for example, might suffer setbacks due to periodic transfers. Relocating spouses may have trouble finding a job, or they may discover that their professional licensure or certification is no longer valid in their new location.

But a newly expanded program helps spouses train for or maintain careers that will travel with them. The Military Spouse Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) began as a pilot program in eight States and was recently expanded for military spouses worldwide. MyCAA is designed to equip spouses for “portable” careers: jobs for which there are broad opportunities.

MyCAA provides up to \$6,000 in financial assistance for education, licensing, and credentialing. Assistance is available for any occupation within several high-growth industries or for select in-demand occupations within other industries.

All spouses of active duty service members and activated reservists are eligible for the program, provided that the spouses are not members of the military themselves. To set up an account, eligible spouses should visit the MyCAA Web site at <https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>. If you have questions, call toll free, 1 (800) 342-9647 and ask for a Military OneSource career and education consultant.

Engineering a railroad career

If you’re an engineering major, consider a railroad track—as a career track, that is. The American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association Educational Foundation might even provide money for you to train.

The foundation, a charitable organization promoting railway engineering education, offers a range of scholarships for engineering students who are interested in working in the railroad industry. Individual awards range from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

All applicants must be enrolled in an accredited 4- or 5-year program that leads to a degree in engineering or engineering technology and must maintain a minimum 2.0 grade point average. Applicants must also submit a resume and a brief cover letter describing an interest in railroading and explaining why they deserve a scholarship.

Information and application materials are available on the foundation’s Web site, www.aremefoundation.org, or by calling Stacy Spaulding at (301) 459-3200.



Your future career: Blowin' in the wind?

Strong winds are blowing change into the energy industry, creating new careers. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, wind power is the fastest growing energy source in the country. As the industry expands, so does the need for technicians to install, operate, and maintain wind turbines.



Wind turbine technicians build or service individual turbines, help with the construction of entire wind farms, or work indoors at factories that manufacture wind turbines. These technicians use a range of mechanical, hydraulic, and electrical skills. Except for those working in factories, wind turbine technicians spend a good deal of their time outdoors and working atop wind towers. Therefore, these technicians should be comfortable with heights.

An increasing number of educational institutions offer wind turbine technician degree or certificate programs. The U.S. Department of Energy maintains a list of schools that offer training in wind turbine technology and other wind energy occupations. That list is available online at www.windpoweringamerica.gov/schools_training.asp.

For more information about the wind power industry, contact the American Wind Energy Association, 1501 M St. NW., Suite 1000, Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 283–2500. Or visit online at www.awea.org.

To learn about some other energy careers, see “You’re a *what?* Solar photovoltaic installer,” elsewhere in this issue of the *Quarterly*, and “On the grid: Careers in energy,” in the fall 2008 *Quarterly* and online at www.bls.gov/ooq/2008/fall/art02.pdf.

Learning from a distance

Busy schedules, difficulty in traveling, and lack of accessibility to courses used to hamper educational efforts. Not anymore.

Distance education, defined as a formal education process in which the student and the instructor are not in the same place, makes learning available to a range of students.

According to National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data, two-thirds of degree-granting 2- and 4-year postsecondary schools offered online or other distance education courses in 2006–07, the most recent year for which data are available. During that year, distance education courses accounted for about 12.2 million enrollments. This figure represents more than 16 times the number of enrollments in 1994–95, the first academic year in which the NCES collected data on distance education.

Distance education may involve communication through video, audio, or computer technology or by correspondence. Online courses were by far the most commonly offered in 2006–07, according to the data.

To learn more about distance education, visit nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009044. For general information about NCES data, write to the center at 1990 K Street NW., Washington, D.C. 20006, or call (202) 502–7300. You can also e-mail associate research scientist Peter Tice at Peter.Tice@ed.gov.

