RESPONDENTS INCLUDING SERVICE MEMBERS AND MILITARY SPOUSES

Blue Star Families’ annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey provides a comprehensive understanding of what it means to serve as a military family. For that reason, it is a blueprint for strengthening America, identifying how we can continue to enhance military family life.

This infographic represents a geographic cross-section of the results that only includes active-duty families. When referencing this data, please consider that the majority of respondents reported here are White/Non-Hispanic, military spouses (85%), and half are field or general grade officers. There is no one service branch that represents the majority of respondents; thirty-five percent of respondents are Army, 25% are Navy, 23% are Air Force, 7% are Marine Corps, and 7% are Coast Guard. The average age of respondents here is 38, 91% are female, and 24% report they are unpaid caregivers.

**TOTAL ISSUES RANKED (n=424)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent children’s education</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military family stability</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military spouse employment</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of control over military career</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time away from family</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL LIFESTYLE STRESSORS (n=459)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stressor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relocation issues</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation from family/friends</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial issues/stress</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to reliably earn two incomes</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of childcare</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

- Feel current OPTEMPO is stressful or very stressful for healthy work/family life (n=445)
  - 58%

**RELOCATION**

- Received hard orders 2 months or less before relocating (n=463)
  - 53%

**FINANCIAL READINESS**

- Experience stress due to current financial situation (n=360)
  - 58%

**TOP CONTRIBUTORS TO CURRENT FINANCIAL STRESS (n=205)**

- Un/under-employment
- Out-of-pocket housing costs
- Out-of-pocket relocation costs

**BOLSTERING BELONGING**

**LOCAL CULTURAL COMPETENCE**

- Feel local civilians support military families (n=439)
  - 60%
  - 22% have no opinion

- Feel local civilians understand sacrifices local military families make (n=439)
  - 13%
  - 16% have no opinion

**SENSE OF BELONGING**

- Feel welcome in their local civilian community (n=419)
  - 55%
  - 26% have no opinion

- Do not feel a sense of belonging to their local community (n=420)
  - 36%
  - 26% have no opinion

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

- Feel local civilian support agencies aren’t effectively addressing their needs
  - 33%
  - 29% have no opinion and 23% don’t know (n=383)

**MILITARY COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIRING THE MOST IMPROVEMENT (n=416)**

- Base housing
  - 54%
SNAPSHOT OF MILITARY FAMILIES IN BALTIMORE AND THE CHESAPEAKE REGION

SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT*

- 26% are not working, but want or need to work (n=301)
- 23% feel local employers are eager to hire military-connected employees (n=365)
- 20% are "not at all likely" to identify military affiliation in interview (n=282)

MILITARY CHILDREN’S EDUCATION

- 62% feel their oldest child’s school did an excellent job of welcoming (n=189)
- 38% say oldest child was unable to participate in extracurricular activities regardless of application deadline (n=120)
- 75% want teachers and staff to understand impact of frequent moves on child (n=195)

CHILD CARE

- 60% cannot always find childcare for current situation (n=201)
- 52% experienced childcare waitlist of 6+ months (n=89)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions about the annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey or ways to support? survey@bluestarfam.org

Questions about Blue Star Families’ Baltimore Chapter? maryland@bluestarfam.org

OVERALL TAKEAWAYS

Although the majority of respondents in the Baltimore / Chesapeake region are field or general grade officers themselves, or are married to one, over half of respondents also report they are financially stressed. Spouse unemployment, out-of-pocket housing costs, and out-of-pocket relocation costs exacerbate financial stress.

There is an opportunity for the Department of Defense to increase notice for hard orders to the Baltimore / Chesapeake region.

Schools in the Baltimore/Chesapeake region can better welcome military children, especially into extracurricular activities.