Military families, while resilient, encountered unique challenges during the COVID-19 crisis. The Resilience Under Stress Study (RUSS) describes the impact of the crisis on military families and the factors that support military families’ resilience during this unprecedented time, focusing on health, mental well-being, financial and household stability, and institutional and community belonging.

Military family resilience is when service members, veterans, and their families have the skills and resources they need to withstand, recover, and grow from stressors, including those compounded by military and veteran life.

Active-duty family respondents perceive COVID-19 to be:

- **A greater threat to**
  - 88% The U.S. economy (vs 70% in US)¹
  - 61% The health of U.S. population (vs 47% in US)¹
  - 46% Daily life in their local civilian community (vs 36% in US)¹
  - 15% Their personal financial situation (vs 34% in US)¹

- **But a lesser threat to**
  - 26% Their personal health (vs 27% in US)¹

### Active-duty family respondents reported COVID-19 having major or severe impacts on:

- **23%** Overall happiness
- **22%** Personal employment situation
- **21%** Personal mental health
- **20%** Children’s mental health
- **11%** Personal financial situation

### Active-duty family respondents perceived very good or excellent COVID-19 responses from:

- **37%** Installation
- **35%** Local K-12 schools
- **34%** Faith-based institutions
- **25%** Local government officials
- **22%** Local civilian community

### The impacts of COVID-19 on active-duty family families

**Financial stress improved, food insecurity steady**

- **Financial stress**³
  - 52% report No stress/Not very much stress (vs. 37% in 2019)

- **Food insecurity**³
  - 48% report Some stress/Great deal of stress (vs. 63% in 2019)

- Steady at 7% Reported food insecurity

- 7% → 6% Sought emergency food assistance

¹Pew Research Center, March 2020. U.S. Public Sees Multiple Threats From the Coronavirus – and Concerns Are Growing. Pew refers to ‘local community,’ this question refers to ‘local civilian community’

²Of a matched group of active-duty, veteran, National Guard, and Reserve family respondents from the 2019 MFLS and 2020 RUSS

³Active-duty family respondents in the RUSS, asked about food insecurity before March 1, 2020, and within the past 4 weeks
COMMUNITY SUPPORTS AND RESILIENCE

EXTENDING COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

**Military Family Lifestyle Cultural Competence**

Active-duty, National Guard, Reserve, and veteran family respondents perceived greater awareness, appreciation, understanding, support, and respect of military families and their service than before COVID-19²

**Community Leadership**

Active-duty family respondents reported greater awareness of their leadership and community resources³ (vs 17% in 2019)

**Social Networks**

More active-duty families had at least one friend they can talk to⁴

Compared to the U.S. Population¹

**Resilience and Belonging to the Local Community Connected with Less Intense COVID-19 Impacts⁵**

Active-duty family respondents who had greater resilience perceived COVID-19 impacts on their family, their mental health, their children's mental health and their happiness to be less intense

Active-duty family respondents who had a greater sense of belonging perceived COVID-19 impacts on their family, their mental health, their children's mental health and their happiness to be less intense

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¹Comparison of active-duty family respondents from the 2019 MFLS and 2020 RUSS
²Active-duty family respondents in the 2020 RUSS