Military families are assets to national defense and their local communities. They are central to the health and capability of the All-Volunteer Force and are good neighbors actively engaged in making their civilian communities great places to live.

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.

Service Members Experience Military-Connected Discrimination

**EXPERIENCES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**
Service members of color\(^1\) reported experiencing racial discrimination:

- 26% in their unit/command
- 21% in promotion/career advancement opportunities

**IMPACTS OF DISCRIMINATION**

- 8% of veterans of color left military service due to racial discrimination\(^2\)
- 10% of female veterans left military service due to gender discrimination\(^2\)

Active-Duty Family Respondents Feel Support and Appreciation, but Not Belonging

Active-duty family respondents feel civilians in their local community:

- **Truly appreciate** the sacrifices made by local military and veteran families (37%)
- **Truly understand** the sacrifices made by local military and veteran families (21%)
- **Are supportive** of local military and veteran families (55%)

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\(^1\)Includes Hispanic/Latino/a, Black/African American, Bi-racial/multi-racial, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or American Indian/Alaska Native active-duty respondents

\(^2\)Excluding those who left due to retirement
Limited Child Care And Education Options During Covid-19 Exacerbate Existing Active-Duty Family Concerns

**SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT**
- **80%** Employed (in labor force)
- **20%** Unemployed (in labor force and actively seeking work)
- **41%** Not in labor force

Underemployment\(^3\)
- **67%** of employed military spouses are underemployed

**MILITARY CHILDREN**
- **23%** of active-duty family respondents can find child care that works for their situation
- **39%** can find care "sometimes"
- **51%** Permission to work remotely

Top solution to alleviate schooling/child care concerns for active-duty service member respondents

Excessive Out-Of-Pocket Housing Costs and Food Insecurity are Financial Concerns

- **Pay more than $200 in out-of-pocket housing costs per month**\(^5\)

Enlisted active-duty families who reported food insecurity\(^6\)
- **77%**

Food insecurity is higher for spouses who are not employed but need/want to work

Enlisted spouses who need/want to work: 20% food insecure
Enlisted spouses employed full or part time: 10% food insecure

Active-Duty Families Struggle with Sleep and Anxiety

- **38%** of active-duty family respondents get enough good quality sleep to function effectively

**1 in 5** Active-duty service member respondents reported “concerns about spouse employment” as a reason they would leave military service

**Top Reasons for Not Working**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active-duty Spouse Respondents Who Need or Want to Work</th>
<th>Active-duty Respondents who homeschool/supervise virtual education for my child(ren)</th>
<th>Active-duty Respondents who child care is too expensive</th>
<th>Active-duty Respondents who My service member’s daily work schedule is too unpredictable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{1}\)Indicated one or more circumstances of underemployment

\(^{2}\)Includes Hispanic/Latino/a, Black/African American, Bi-racial/multi-racial, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or American Indian/Alaska Native active-duty spouses

\(^{3}\)Includes active-duty family respondents who live off the installation who reported out-of-pocket costs

\(^{4}\)Defined as low or very low food security