Top 5 issues affecting military-connected families¹ (n=246)

- Amount of time away from family: 33%
- Military spouse employment: 28%
- Military pay: 27%
- Impact of deployment on family: 26%
- Dependent child(ren)’s education: 22%

Gender of Respondents (n=271)
- Male: 26%
- Female: 74%
- 0.4% Gender non-conforming

Age of Respondents (n=271)
- 18-29 years old: 14%
- 30-39 years old: 40%
- 40-49 years old: 19%
- 50-59 years old: 13%
- 60+ years old: 14%

Gender non-conforming

Caregiving

- 24% of respondents consider themselves to be an unpaid caregiver (n =219)
- 20% of all respondents report that caregiver respite/support programs in their community are inadequate (n=192)

Military-connected families and their civilian communities

- 38% of military-connected family respondents feel a sense of belonging to their local civilian community (n=238)

Military-connected family respondents agree that civilians in their local community:
- Are supportive of local military and Veteran families (n=237) 51%
- Truly appreciate the sacrifices made by local military and Veteran families (n=238) 37%
- Truly understand the sacrifices made by local military and Veteran families (n=239) 23%

Length of time in community where respondents currently reside (n=202)

- Less than 2 years: 39%
- 2-4 years: 41%
- 5+ years: 21%

Quality of community resources available to military-connected respondents

Not fulfilled by installation

- Medical Care (n=201)
  - Inadequate: 13%
  - Sufficient: 51%
  - Outstanding: 23%
- Behavioral Health Care (n=200)
  - Inadequate: 23%
  - Sufficient: 36%
  - Outstanding: 10%
  - Unsure/Don’t Know: 32%
- K-12 Education (n=198)
  - Inadequate: 15%
  - Sufficient: 36%
  - Outstanding: 22%
  - Unsure/Don’t Know: 27%
- Financial Support Systems (n=193)
  - Inadequate: 19%
  - Sufficient: 32%
  - Outstanding: 4%
  - Unsure/Don’t Know: 46%
- Opportunities for Volunteerism (n=194)
  - Inadequate: 16%
  - Sufficient: 36%
  - Outstanding: 14%
  - Unsure/Don’t Know: 34%

In collaboration with

Syracuse University
D’Aniello Institute for Veterans & Military Families

1MFLS question and answer choice wording changed slightly from previous years.
Snapshot of the military lifestyle

TAKEAWAYS

- Just a third of Illinois respondents feel a sense of belonging to their local community.
- 1 in 3 Illinois respondents feel that community support for military-connected families is inadequate.
- A quarter of Illinois respondents identify as unpaid caregivers.
- Most Illinois respondents perceive discrimination in the military to occur at levels similar to that in the overall U.S. society.

Financial Readiness

Top Contributors to Financial Stress (n=97)

- Spouse un/under-employment
- Student loans
- Excessive credit card debt
- Major home repairs

53% report their family’s current personal financial condition causes them some or a great deal of stress. (n=194)

Active-Duty Families (n=129)

Military Children’s Education

- 73% of active-duty family respondents with children have one or more children currently enrolled in K-12 education (n=97)

Type of school of oldest child in K-12 (n=70)

- 74% Public school
- 14% Homeschool
- 10% Private school
- 1% Other

OPTEMPO

- 60% of active-duty family respondents characterize OPTEMPO as stressful or very stressful for healthy work/family life (n=114)

Child Care

- 23% of families with a need for child care can find child care that meets their needs (n=65)

Spouse Employment (n=77)

- 48% Employed
- 21% Want/need to work
- 30% Do not want/need to work

Perceptions of Discrimination in the Military*

- Compared to the general U.S. society, there is...
  - about the same amount of racial discrimination (48%, n=172)
  - about the same amount of gender discrimination (50%, n=170)
  - about the same amount of sexual orientation discrimination (49%, n=166)
  - about the same amount of religious discrimination (49%, n=166)

*Respondent sample includes Veteran respondents, some of whom are over the age of 60.

Questions about the annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey and how you can offer support? survey@bluestarfam.org

Questions about Blue Star Families’ Chicago Chapter? chicago@bluestarfam.org

2021 MILITARY FAMILY LIFESTYLE SURVEY

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