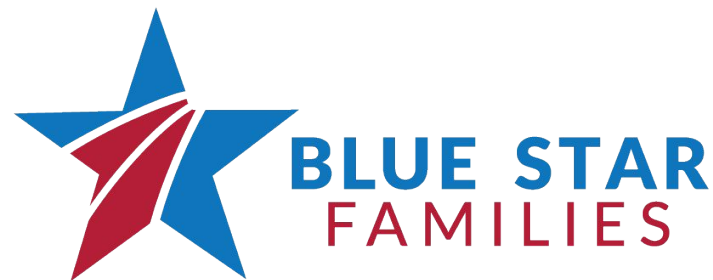




**Strengthening America's Military Families  
Through Communities**



For more information, visit [bluestarfam.org](https://bluestarfam.org).

# 2021 Annual Report





# A Letter From the CEO

## Dear Blue Star Neighbors,

I am very excited to share with you, once again, the work of Blue Star Families over the past year. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have continued our extraordinary streak of 20% growth year over year, driven by the demand from our population for the role we play in their lives. In fact, in many ways, it is because of the unpredictable challenges that military families face — like the pandemic and withdrawal from Afghanistan — that we are so needed. Blue Star Families serves as a key component of a larger community of support for military-connected families, with the ability to gather resources to aid our members. We always have their needs at the forefront of everything we do.

**I want to point out a couple of highlights from 2021, which you can read more about in the pages that follow.**

- We hosted our first DEPLOY Fellows cohort. This group of talented, devoted individuals from diverse backgrounds came to us as part of our Racial Equity and Inclusion (REI) Initiative. Fellows made significant contributions to our work while preparing for budding careers.
- As part of the REI Initiative, we fielded a groundbreaking survey specifically focused on military and Veteran families of color and the challenges they face. Just as diverse families are integral and necessary to our force, inclusion is something we are weaving into our culture and identity as an organization.
- We continued to make strides in our research efforts through fielding our annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey (aMFLS) and frequent Pulse Checks. The data gathered from these efforts is extremely valuable to lawmakers and defense leaders and helps us focus our efforts to meet our members where they are with the proper services and resources.

continued on slide 3



# A Letter From the CEO

## Additional 2021 highlights include the following:

- Our membership grew to over 210,000 military and Veteran families.
- Our town halls and outreach videos with the First Lady, Dr. Fauci, Secretary of Defense, actress Kerry Washington, and more reached tens of thousands.
- Over 400,000 people visited a museum for free as part of the Blue Star Museums Program; over 6,000 participated in outdoor activities and adventures through the Blue Star Outdoors Program; 15,000 books were donated to military kids through the Blue Star Books Program.
- We launched Blue Star Welcome Week, chaired by Joe and Ellyn Dunford, engaging over 250M individuals through outreach efforts, local events, virtual opportunities, and more.
- Nearly 10,000 volunteer hours were donated (at a value of approximately \$270K).

- The 2021 White Oak Collaborative included over 260 individuals representing over 80 MSO/VSOs, military, and government offices with bi-monthly meetings.

In 2009, with a firsthand understanding of military- and Veteran-connected families' challenges, I created Blue Star Families with a small group of volunteers to meet their needs. Since then, we have grown and evolved as an organization—adding programs and services, creating new partnerships to expand offerings, and consistently having a two-way conversation with our members and community. **We are on an ever-upward trajectory, and I am very excited about what we have planned for 2022 and beyond.**

With appreciation,

**Kathy Roth-Douquet**, CEO, Blue Star Families

# Why Blue Star Families?

## We know military families!

Blue Star Families is a national nonprofit network by and for military families from all ranks and services, including active-duty, National Guard, and reserves.

Our mission is to support military-connected families to improve military readiness.

If military families are not thriving, their service members are not mission ready, therefore jeopardizing the entire force.



1,500,000

Military family members served annually



344,400

Members & Supporters

70M

National Media Audience

\$5M

Earned Media

*We are expert storytellers!*

As the largest grassroots organization serving military-connected families, we have extensive experience partnering with top national brands on cause marketing campaigns.



### MilFam Support

\$157M+ worth in support



### aMFLS

82,185 respondents since inception (from 2009 to 2021)



### Blue Star Welcome Week

285M media impressions



# Our Theory of Change



## Listen

Identify, quantify, and understand emerging issues impacting military-connected families through survey research, focus groups, listening sessions, and other data-collection techniques



## Share

Translate data into understanding and understanding into effective action by sharing with military and civilian communities



## Partner

Partner at the national and local level to better support military-connected families



## Act

Deliver data-backed programming and advocate for policy change





# 2021 Impact Areas

## Racial Equity and Inclusion (REI) Initiative

Ensure our country meets its obligation to deliver positive, fulfilling experiences to all families who serve through this multi-dimensional, cross-sector, collective-action effort

## Welcome

Cultivate a deep sense of belonging and support in military and Veteran communities for all who interact with Blue Star Families

## Chapters

Facilitate engagement opportunities that create a cross-sectoral dialogue between military and civilian communities while fostering awareness and understanding of military lifestyle challenges

## Programs

Create and facilitate vibrant communities of support by providing opportunities for all members to connect with each other and their civilian neighbors

## Research, Policy & Social Impact

Empower influencers with comprehensive data through customized military and Veteran research to improve the quality of life for currently-serving military and Veteran families



# Racial Equity & Inclusion (REI) Initiative

- Fielded first-of-its-kind survey: *Understanding the Diverse Experiences of Military Families of Color*, with 2,700+ respondents
- Assembled a world-class REI Committee with Co-Chair Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Gwen Bingham, who was featured on CNN's "Champions for Change"
- Convened a 22-member White Oak Subcommittee on REI to develop a set of recommendations and best practices for military- and Veteran-serving organizations
- Hired 11 DEPLOY Fellows from military families of color to work in local and national roles, further improving experiences and representation in country-wide community settings



"In order to go to an organization for support, you have to first trust that you are welcome there. An easy way to determine [this] is to simply look at who is at the table providing the support and see if there's someone there who looks like you. Representation among the staff and leadership of an organization shows that they welcome and include everyone [...] and they have a variety of voices and experiences included in creating their programming." – Tonya, DEPLOY Fellow

To foster greater representation, the DEPLOY Fellows Program was born. "DEPLOY Fellows is a Blue Star Program within our REI [Initiative] designed to diversify and expand the pipeline of leaders in the military community. The effort will embed and train individuals from historically underrepresented populations into Blue Star Families' organization [...] Through our training, we'll seed a new generation of leaders throughout the Veteran and military family support space." – Kathy Roth-Douquet, CEO and Founder of Blue Star Families





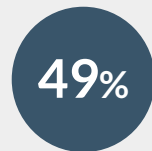


# Did you know?

Approximately **600,000** active-duty and transitioning military members move into new communities every year. But many will arrive feeling they **do not belong**.



of military families live off base,  
in their local communities  
(Department of Defense)



of active-duty family respondents feel  
welcome in their local civilian community  
(2020 Military Family Lifestyle Survey)

When military families feel a sense of belonging, everything else improves — financial security, mental health and wellness, resilience, and even military readiness.

What if we could **bridge the civilian-military divide** by creating **moments of welcome** and a **sense of belonging** for those who have sacrificed so much for our country?







# The Solution: Blue Star Welcome Week

September 25th – October 2nd, 2021

An annual event that rallies America to **recognize the service and sacrifices of our military** and their families **and welcome them into our communities** – no matter where the mission takes them.

National media coverage



**130**

national and local nonprofit partners engaged

**24**

proclamations issued by federal, state, and local government officials – including a bipartisan Senate resolution

Celebrity Endorsements  
(incl. Blake Shelton, Mark Hamill)



**80**

special events nationwide

Garnered more than

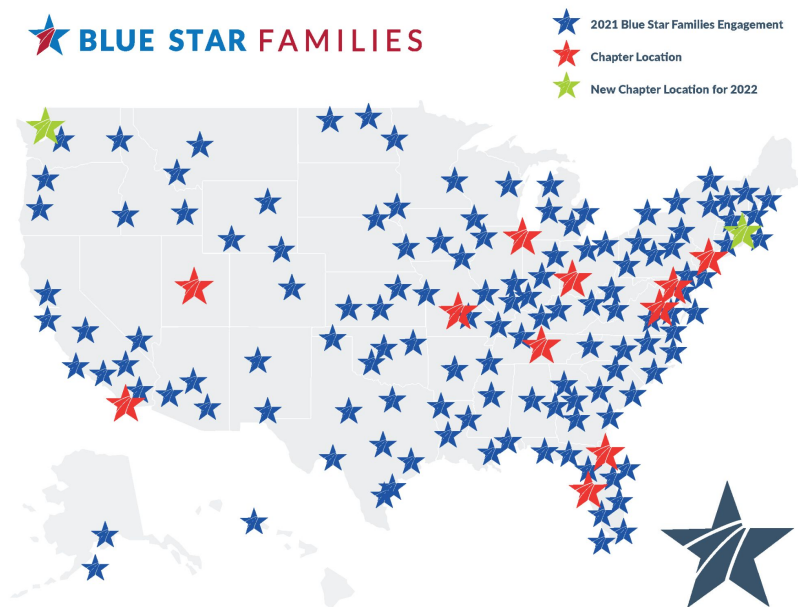
**285 million**  
media impressions

Inaugural Blue Star Welcome Week Highlights





# Blue Star Chapters 2021



**866** events held in Chapter locations

**50K+** attendees reached through impactful events

**58,356** members in Chapters

**17%** membership growth in 2021

**\$1.8M** Chapter support from funders

## Highlights

- 22,177 military children were impacted by educational opportunities provided through partnerships
- Added 234 new local partnerships
- Hosted and collaborated on nationwide food distribution events, reaching 3,362 military families





# Why Military Families Need Blue Star Chapters and Programs

Military families move **every 2 to 3 years**, leaving them isolated from support networks.



of active-duty family respondents feel a sense of belonging to their local civilian community (2020 Military Family Lifestyle Survey)

Blue Star Families' Chapter programming **provides the building blocks for belonging** (Connected Communities Impact Survey)

**“Being a spouse in the military, it gets extremely lonely when you PCS and don’t have your ‘tribe’ yet. This gives you a push to go to events to meet people while your spouse is gone and those people can become your tribe!”** — Active-Duty Military Spouse





# Blue Star Programs 2021

Blue Star Welcome Programs encourage military families to get connected to the communities in which they live.



## Engagements

**1,232**

Opportunities in communities nationwide



## Blue Star Museums

**400,700**

Free military family visits



## Impacted

**125K+**

Service members, spouses, children, and neighbors through events



## Blue Star Volunteers

**9.3K+**

Hours of service given (a value of \$267,914)



## Blue Star Outdoors

**6,106**

Members participated in outdoor programs



## New Caregivers

**1,205**

Benefited from high touch resources



## Blue Star Books

**14,953**

Given to military kids



## Yellow Ribbon Trees

**162**

in Starbucks stores spanning 39 states



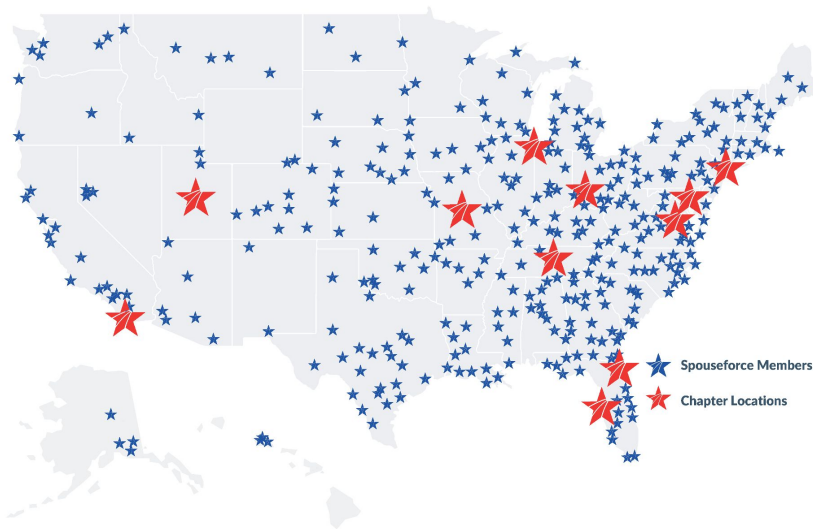


# Blue Star Programs 2021



TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT DELIVERED BY SPOUSEFORCE: **\$72,634,000**

MAP DOES NOT DEPICT OCONUS MEMBERS



**Highlight: Verano Bilingue  
for Latinx Military Spouses**

Results of the 2021 Military Family Lifestyle Survey (MFLS) revealed the top issue facing military families continues to be **military spouse employment**.

Blue Star Careers continues to broker solutions for *all* military spouses.

- 35% of military spouse respondents are not employed but **need or want employment**
- 43% of military spouses of color respondents are not working but need or want paid employment, **compared to 32% of white, non-Hispanic spouses**

**349%**

Growth of bilingual spouses in Spouseforce

**7.6K+**

Members joined Spouseforce

**50+**

New employers and resources within Blue Star Careers

**8K+**

No-cost certifications and training offerings for upskilling





# Applied Research and Policy 2021

## Year in Review

20,828

Research  
participants

369

Research  
presentations

20

Legislative efforts  
endorsed

4



Congressional  
testimonies

**“Thank you for offering these surveys and publishing the results. I am hopeful that the more data is gathered and available to the public, the more changes will be made to improve military life experiences.”** — 2021 MFLS Respondent





# Applied Research Publications 2021

 	<b>Q1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>★ 2021 Military Family Lifestyle Survey</li><li>★ Pulse Check: Military &amp; Veteran Families' Financial Needs</li></ul>	<b>Resulted in:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enactment of Sec. 567 of FY2022 NDAA: Study on Employment of Military Spouses</li><li>• Military spouses added as a protected class in the Commonwealth of Virginia</li></ul>
 	<b>Q2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>★ Pulse Check: Military Families' Perceptions of the COVID-19 Vaccine</li><li>★ Caregiving in Military Families</li></ul>	<b>Resulted in:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blue Star Families' COVID-19 vaccine awareness campaign, increasing the likelihood of military and Veteran families receiving the vaccine</li></ul>
 	<b>Q3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>★ Pulse Check: Supporting Our Afghan Allies</li><li>★ Survey Fielding: Understanding the Diverse Experiences of Military Families of Color</li></ul>	<b>Resulted in:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blue Star Families' collaboration with Welcome.US to connect key stakeholders and improve resettlement efforts</li></ul>
	<b>Q4</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>★ Illinois Community Assessment</li></ul>	<b>Resulted in:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased awareness of local military and Veteran families' needs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic</li></ul>







# Blue Star Families' Impact Survey Results 2021

## Greater Connection

**81%**

of respondents in Chapters

say activities **MADE THEM FEEL CONNECTED** to their community

1 in 3 respondents attended a Blue Star Families event

## Stronger Support

**71%**

of respondents in Chapters

say programs **BROADENED THEIR LOCAL SUPPORT NETWORK**

"BSF fills a huge gap in the needs of military families for support and connection."

## More Belonging

**52%**

of respondents

**FEEL A SENSE OF BELONGING** to their local civilian community

Compared to 30% of active-duty family respondents to the 2021 MFLS

"[Blue Star Families is] a lifeline between the military and community. [...] programs help support families, help the kids feel special during difficult changes, and create a bridge to help military families and their new community."

- Active-Duty Military Spouse





# Top Donors – CEO Circle \$1M+

In 2021, CSX funded six Blue Star Chapters, with more on the horizon. Together, we partnered with community organizations on 360+ events, engaging 24K+ service members, families, Veterans, and civilian neighbors. With CSX's Blue Star Welcome Week sponsorship, military families new to their communities experienced a week-long program filled with events designed to connect them with their new neighborhood. Additional growth came through support of Blue Star Careers, Blue Star Outdoors, and impactful surveys – the *annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey (aMFLS)* and *Understanding the Diverse Experiences of Military Families of Color Survey*.



Blue Star Families appreciates all that Craig Newmark Philanthropies has done to support the New York Tri-State Chapter and other programs, including digital transformation, DEPLOY Fellows, and Team Up Against COVID-19. Additionally, as the lead sponsor of Blue Star Welcome Week, the foundation helped turn a moment into a movement for the many military families who move to new communities each year. We appreciate this long-standing relationship.



USAA, another top donor, has sponsored many of our initiatives to strengthen military and Veteran families, including the White Oak Collaborative and White Oak Retreat, Corporate Playbook, Military Spouse Employment Initiative, aMFLS, and Blue Star Welcome Week. The significant support of Blue Star Welcome Week further cemented its commitment to ensuring our military-connected families feel welcomed and connected – no matter where their life in service takes them.





# Top Donors – \$500k and Below

**HOMEFRONT HEROES - \$500,000 - \$999,999**  
Macy's Inc.

**LEADERS OF LIBERTY - \$250,000 - \$499,999**  
Department of Interior - National Park Trust  
JPMorgan Chase & Co.  
Patrick J. McGovern Foundation

**COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS - \$100,000 - \$249,999**  
AARP  
BAE Systems  
Boeing  
Comcast  
COVID Collaborative  
CVS Health  
Jefferies LLC  
Johnson & Johnson  
Lockheed Martin Corporation  
May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust  
MetLife Foundation  
Navy Federal Credit Union  
Salesforce  
Sleep Number Corporation  
Starbucks Corporation  
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

**FRIENDS OF THE FLAG - \$50,000 - \$99,999**  
Amazon  
Blue Cross Blue Shield Association  
CJM Foundation  
Disney Worldwide Services, Inc.  
Microsoft Software & Systems Academy  
Northrop Grumman Corporation  
Paul and Joanne Prager  
PennyMac Giving Fund  
Pentagon Federal Credit Union  
Schmidt Futures  
Veterans United Foundation

**GOLD SUPPORTERS - \$25,000 - \$49,999**  
Albertsons Companies Inc.  
Aura  
Blue Shield of California  
Booz Allen Hamilton  
Cerner Corporation  
History Channel  
Leonardo DRS  
Philips North America  
REI Co-Op  
Viasat  
Walton Family Foundation  
Wounded Warrior Project

**SILVER SUPPORTERS - \$24,999 - \$10,000**  
American Armed Forces Mutual Aid Association  
American Red Cross  
Armed Services YMCA  
Bank of America  
The Barry Robinson Center  
Bob Woodruff Foundation  
CareLinx  
Centene Corporation  
Cohen Veterans Network  
Consolidated Edison Company of New York Inc.  
Crescent Cities Charities  
Delta Dental  
Department of Interior - National Park Service  
DEPCOM Power  
Elizabeth Dole Foundation  
Express Scripts  
Fisher House Foundation  
Galileo  
Guardian Centers LLC  
The Independence Fund  
Leidos Inc.  
Microsoft  
Perry and Donna Golkin Family Foundation  
The Preferred Client Group  
Pro Football Hall of Fame

Psychological Health Center of Excellence (PHCoE)  
Rancho Santa Fe Foundation  
Rosie Riveters  
The Safeway Foundation  
Safeway Inc.  
Sandboxx  
Shaw's Supermarkets  
Spiritune  
Tee It Up For The Troops, Inc.  
Textron  
Tramiel Charitable Trust  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce - Hiring Our Heroes  
Verizon  
Vista Outdoor  
Walmart Foundation  
Walter Reed Society  
Wargaming Group Limited  
The Wawa Foundation





## **Kathy Roth-Douquet**

CEO, Blue Star Families

## **Noeleen Tillman**

COO, Blue Star Families

### **Board of Directors**

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### **Emeritus Members**

Emeritus Members

Les Brownlee

Steve Hilton

Constance J. Milstein

Laura Schmiegel

Doug Wilson



# 2021 Unaudited Financials

## Assets

### Current Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$7,781,592
Accounts Receivable	\$1,353,609
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	\$186,059

**Total Current Assets** **\$9,321,260**

Property and Equipment, Net	\$100,576
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**Total Assets** **\$9,421,835**

## Liabilities and Net Assets

### Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable, Accrued Expenses & Other	\$794,866
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**Total Liabilities (All Current)** **\$794,866**

### Net Assets

Without Donor Restrictions	\$7,401,053
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With Donor Restrictions	\$1,225,916
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**Total Net Assets** **\$8,626,969**

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets** **\$9,421,835**

## Revenues

**\$12,333,358**

## Expenses

### Program Expenses

Communities	\$5,835,383
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Research and Policy	\$1,066,740
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REI-DEPLOY	\$751,785
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Technology Engagement	\$1,647,859
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**Total Program Expenses** **\$9,301,767**

Fundraising	\$835,290
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Administrative Expenses	\$837,938
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**Total Expenses** **\$10,974,995**



# Credentials

Blue Star Families is the nation's largest grassroots military family support organization, with a mission to support military families to improve military readiness. Its distinctive approach builds stronger communities around military families through knowledge and programs that address the unique needs of those who serve. Blue Star Families' nationally recognized surveys and analysis give military families an important voice that informs policymakers and its military family programs. It uses the power of its collective resources and cross-sector collaborations to make a difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of military family members to strengthen the troops, their families, and our nation as a whole. For more information, visit **[bluestarfam.org](https://bluestarfam.org)**.

