Military Family Lifestyle Survey

2022 Comprehensive Report
Spanish-Language Respondents

In collaboration with

Syracuse University
D'Aniello Institute for Veterans & Military Families
JPMorgan Chase & Co., Founding Partner

Spanish-Language Respondents

Spanish-Language Respondents Spotlight

In 2021, nearly 1 in 5 (18%) active-duty service members self-identified their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino,[1] making up one of the largest racial/ethnic groups in the military.[2] Additionally, data compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services show that 71% of Hispanic individuals speak a language other than English at home, and 28% report they are not fluent in English.[3] Given these demographics in the U.S. population as well as in the military, Blue Star Families set out to determine if military-connected individuals who are interested in the annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey may prefer to answer in Spanish. Indeed, 15% of military-connected respondents to the 2021 MFLS[4] used a language other than English in their home, with the most common being Spanish. However, most research on military families is conducted in English, which may not fully address the experiences of military family members who primarily use Spanish. Building on 2021 MFLS efforts, this year's survey was fully translated to Spanish. This spotlight highlights the results from those who answered the survey in Spanish. Disparate overall sample sizes between English- and Spanish-language respondents and the small size of the Spanish-language sample mean that caution should be taken when comparing these groups.

"As a Spanish-speaking wife who is always looking for resources for professional and/or personal growth, **I have noticed the scarcity of resources for learning the English language** and thus having a better adaptation to the community."

"Como esposa hispano hablante y que siempre está en busca de recursos para el crecimiento profesional y/o personal he notado la escasez de recursos para el aprendizaje del idioma inglés y así tener una mayor adaptación a la comunidad."

Active-duty Army Service Member

This year, Spanish-language respondents were asked all the reasons they chose to take the survey in Spanish and the majority selected "Español es mi lengua materna" ("Spanish is my first language") (68%), nearly half (44%) selected "Me siento más cómodo tomando la encuesta en Español" ("I feel more comfortable taking the survey in Spanish"), and more than a third of respondents (38%) selected "Queria mostrar mi apoyo a la inclusión de Blue Star Families de familias militares de habla hispana" ("I wanted to show support for the inclusion of Spanish-language military families in the survey research").

A total of 79 respondents started the survey in Spanish. Over half (51%) of these respondents reported their primary military affiliation was the spouse of an active-duty service member, 23% active-duty service members, 13% spouses of Veterans or retired service members, 5% Veterans, and the remaining respondents selected other options (e.g., parent of an active-duty service member, spouse of a Reserve service member, etc.).

Recommending Service

When asked how likely respondents were to recommend military service to a young family member on a scale of 0 to 10 (see Recommending Service Finding for additional information), Spanish-language respondents were relatively evenly divided: 28% selected a rating of 0 to 3 (unlikely to recommend), 39% selected a rating of 4 to 6 (neutral), and 32% selected a rating of 7 to 10 (likely to recommend).[a] In addition to the likelihood to recommend service ratings, respondents who answered the question about the likelihood to recommend service were then asked, "¿Puede decirnos por qué recomendaría, o no recomendaría, el servicio militar a un miembro de su familia joven?" (Can you tell us why you would recommend or not recommend service to a young family member?). The most common themes that emerged were "challenges/difficulties for families," "good benefits," and "it depends on the individual." Similar to their English-language peers, respondents cited both challenges and benefits of military service in their responses and also recognized the decision to serve in the military is a personal one.

"Can you tell us why you would recommend or not recommend service to a young family member?"

All Spanish-Language Respondents

Likely to Recommend

"It increases job stability and the possibility of retiring with a pension after the time in service. Today there are almost no companies that offer these benefits."

"Ofrece estabilidad laboral y la posibilidad de retirarse con una pensión después del tiempo de servicio. Hoy en día casi no hay empresas que ofrecen estos beneficios."

Active-duty Marine Corps Service Member

Neutral

"Being part of the military service has many benefits, but at the same time it has its own risks."

"Ser parte del servicio militar tiene muchos beneficios, pero a la ves tiene algunas cosas que sus propios riesgos."

Active-duty Air Force Service Member

Unlikely to Recommend

"PCS is fatal for families, not having stability. What a military man does can be earned in the civilian [world], there are really not many benefits being within the military, it is better to go to a university and look for work."

"PCS es fatal para las familias, no tener estabilidad. Lo que haga un militar lo puede ganar en lo civil, realmente no hay muchos beneficios estando adentro de lo militar, es mejor estudiar la universidad y buscar trabajo."

Active-duty Navy Service Member

[a] These results are for all Spanish-language respondents and are not limited to active-duty family respondents only. The results in Recommend Service finding are presented by various respondent subgroups, including active-duty family, National Guard family, Reserve family respondents, among other subgroups.

Profile of Spanish-Language Active-Duty Family Respondents

Military Characteristics

Primary Military Affiliation (n=58)

- 69% Spouses of Active-Duty Service Members
- 31% Active-Duty Service Members

Branch (n= 53)

- 45% Army
- 17% Coast Guard
- 15% Air Force
- 11% Navy
- 8% Marine Corps

Rank (n=53)

- 13% Junior Enlisted (E1-E4)
- 49% Mid-Grade Enlisted (E5-E7)
- 11% Senior Enlisted (E8-E9)
- 9% Company Grade Officers (O1-O3)
- 11% Field Grade Officers (O4-O6)
- 0% General Grade Officers (O7-O10)
- 2% Warrant Officers (W1-W5)
- 4% Unsure

Individual Characteristics

Gender[b] (n=57)

- 86% female
- 14% male

Race/Ethnicity[c] (n=57)

- 96% Hispanic or Latino/a/x or of Spanish origin
- 2% White
- 2% Selected the write-in option
- 2% Asian
- 0% Black/African American
- 0% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- 0% American Indian/Alaska Native

Citizenship Status (n=54)

- 54% of Spanish-language respondents are U.S. citizens born in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Northern Marianas, or abroad to U.S. citizen parents
- 37% are citizens by naturalization
- 6% are not U.S. citizens but are permanent residents
- 2% are not U.S. citizens

Family Characteristics

Multiracial/multiethnic family (n=57)

- 25% identify as a member of a multiracial/multiethnic family

Children (n=33)

- 79% have children ages 20 or younger

K-12 Enrollment (n=25)

- Of those with children, 76% have at least one child enrolled in K-12 education

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[b] For the purpose of reporting, "female" respondents include those respondents who selected "woman" or "trans woman" and "male" respondents include those who selected "man" or "trans man" in response to the question "What is your gender?" No Spanish-language respondents selected "Hombre trans" (trans man) or "Mujer trans" (trans woman).

[c] The survey utilized a select-all, combination race/ethnicity question as recommended by the U.S. Census Bureau. Respondents could select multiple options from the following: American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic or Latino/a/x or of Spanish origin, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, white, and/or a write-in option. In the English-language survey there was also an option for Middle Eastern or North African, however that was not included in the Spanish-language survey in error.

Spanish-Language Respondents

Top Issues

Spanish-language active-duty family respondents report some of the same key challenges as the English-language respondents, including spouse employment, time away from family, and military pay. However, these respondents also reported concerns about the transition from military to civilian life and access to health care systems, as well as concerns about the impact of deployment on the family and children's education.

Table 1: Top Issues Spanish-language active-duty family respondents (n=48)	
Military spouse employment / Empleo de pareja del/la miembro del servicio militar	**54%**
Amount of time away from family as a result of military service / Cantidad de tiempo separado de la familia a resultado del servicio militar	**42%**
Concerns about the transition from military to civilian life / Preocupaciones sobre la transición de la vida militar a la civil	**40%**
Military pay / Pago militar	**35%**
Impact of deployment on family / Impacto del despliegue en la familia	**33%**
Dependent child(ren)'s education / Educación de los hijos	**33%**
Access to military/VA health care system(s) / Acceso a sistema de salud militar / VA	**33%**

Question Text: Please select up to 5 military life issues that most concern you. / Seleccione hasta 5 asuntos de la vida militar que más le preocupan.

Financial Security

When asked "¿Cómo le está yendo a su familia financieramente?" (How is your family doing financially?); 62% of Spanish-language active-duty family respondents report their family is "estamos bien" (doing OK) or "vivimos cómodamente" (living comfortably). Of those who reported financial stress, the top financial stressors are: "Subempleo o desempleo" (underemployment or unemployment) (48%), "Costos de vivienda" (housing costs) (43%), and "Deuda excesiva de tarjetas de crédito" (excessive credit card debt) (33%). Perhaps due to the greater proportion of Spanish-language respondents in enlisted ranks in this sample, a greater proportion (46%), of Spanish-language active-duty family respondents reported living in military housing, on or off the installation. However, similar to English-speaking respondents, the most common military resources used were "Health care" (Atencion medica) (42%), "Recursos para la preparación para el trabajo" (Resources for job preparedness) (16%), and "Recursos de salud mental" (Mental health resources) (16%).

Spanish-Language Respondents

Endnotes

1   Department of Defense, & Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy. (2022). 2021 *Demographics Profile of the Military Community*. Military OneSource. https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2021-demographics-report.pdf

2   Rodriguez, A. (2020, May 23). *Latinos are fastest growing population in US military, but higher ranks remain out of reach*. USA Today. https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/nation/2020/05/23/latino-hispanic-military-high-ranking-commissioned-officer-positions/4668013002/

3   U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health. (2018). *Hispanic/Latino — The Office of Minority Health*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvlid=64

4   Blue Star Families. (2022). *2021 Military Family Lifestyle Survey Comprehensive Report Spotlight: Global Citizens Neighborhood and Built Environment*. Blue Star Families. https://bluestarfam.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/BSF_MFLS_Results2021_Global-Citizens_03_10.pdf