



# Unity in Diversity:

## Fostering Inclusive Communities for Military Families

**3**

Communities

**500+**

Respondents

**14**

Interviews

**1,800+**

Qualitative Responses

### Community Success Stories

Communities across the country are already doing incredible work to support military families:



**San Antonio, "Military City USA,"** embraces its military population with open arms, from

airport welcomes to large-scale community events.



**Hill Air Force Base and surrounding communities** are addressing belonging through "Project One,"

by building connections between Airmen, Schools, Governments, Community Partners, and Religious & Spiritual Support.



**Hampton Roads** earned the "All American City" honor by reaching

out to all community members, ensuring everyone feels included and valued.

### Getting to Belonging By Building a Culture of Welcome

Belonging is essential for the resilience and well-being of military families — but we still have work to do. Belonging — just like identity — is multifaceted and requires a holistic, community approach. When families feel valued and understood and have things in common with others, they do better, no matter where they live.

**Feeling Welcome** | Active-duty family respondents to the 2023 Military Family Lifestyle Survey

	White respondents (n=1010)	Respondents of color (n=373)	LGBTQ+ respondents (n=95)
I do not feel welcome in my community	22%	23%	26%
Living in civilian communities/general kindness	22%	21%	16%
Military presence/shared experiences	12%	16%	14%
Willingness to understand military lifestyle	9%	11%	13%
Community events for military families	10%	13%	8%
My child's school/extracurriculars	12%	7%	6%
Non-military affiliated orgs	9%	6%	12%
Religious community	11%	5%	4%

# All of Us Have a Role to Play — Here's What You Can Do



At Blue Star Families, we believe everyone can help create welcoming communities for military families. Whether you are part of a military installation, a community group, a business owner, a school, or a neighborhood, you can Do Your Part to include and support our diverse military families. Please visit [doyourpart.com](https://doyourpart.com) to learn more.

Every year 600,000 active-duty and transitioning military families move each year. **Blue Star Welcome Week is a nationwide campaign to build a better sense of belonging and community for all of us.** Join us for Welcome Week 2024, September 21st — 29th. Visit [welcomeweek.bluestar.org](https://welcomeweek.bluestar.org) to learn how to welcome military families in YOUR community.



## Be A Good Neighbor:



### Say 'Hello'

One of the most powerful things you can do is to be welcoming. Introduce yourself to neighbors or host events that bring together military and civilian families. A friendly wave, a welcome gift, or offering help can make military families feel at home.

### Host Inclusive Events

Create and promote activities that connect military and civilian families. Plan inclusive events highlighting shared interests and identities, like family-friendly festivals or neighborhood get-togethers.

### Highlight Diversity

Communities that celebrate diversity help military families feel welcome. Plan events that show your community's mix of cultures, identities, and experiences, like Pride Parades or Hispanic Heritage Month. This helps close gaps and build a stronger, more welcoming community.

### Amplify Diverse Voices

Welcome and uplift the voices of diverse military families in community activities and local decision-making. Representation on city councils, school boards, and other civic groups is important. Invite military families to join community meetings, encourage them to share their experiences, and support their involvement in local leadership roles.

### Be Kind

Small acts of kindness have a big impact. Greet new families, share information about local resources, or be a friendly face. These personal connections can make a big difference. Personal connection is one of the most powerful ways to transform outcomes for diverse military families. It builds trust, fosters belonging, and can change lives in meaningful ways.

**About the Research** The Blue Star Families Campaign for Inclusion Research Series is the first of its kind, focusing on the experiences of diverse military families, particularly those of color and LGBTQ+ families. The 2024 Campaign for Inclusion Research utilized case studies of three distinct military communities — Hill Air Force Base and surrounding communities, Utah; San Antonio, Texas; and Hampton Roads, Virginia, to explore the impact of community characteristics such as region, military presence, and community demographics on feeling welcome and belonging, particularly for diverse military families. To learn more about the findings, please review the full report using the QR code below.



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