

7,431 respondents

including active-duty, National Guard and Reserve service members, Veterans, and their family members.

Over 100,000 cumulative responses to date!

Blue Star Families' annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey has been providing a comprehensive understanding of what it means to serve as a military family since 2009.

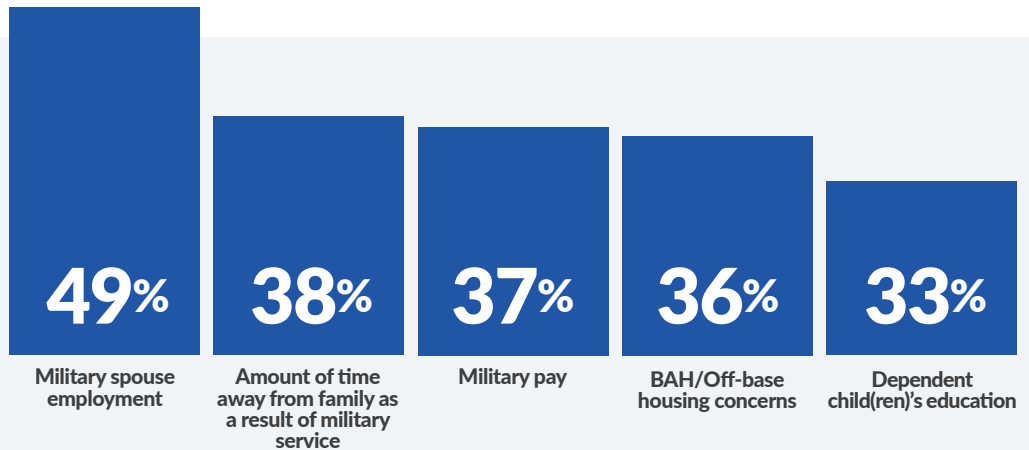


Blue Star Families

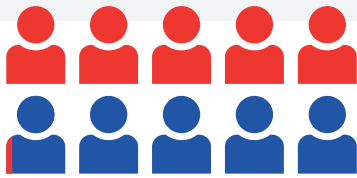
Military Family Lifestyle Survey

Top Issues

for active-duty family respondents



55%



2016

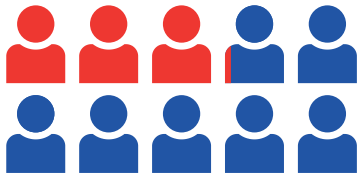
of active-duty family respondents were likely to recommend military service.¹

Military Families are Key to

Recruitment & Retention

Likelihood to recommend military service is dropping

32%



2023

of active-duty family respondents were likely to recommend military service.²

38%

of active-duty family respondents had encouraged an acquaintance to join the military in the past five years.

46%

Almost half of those who encouraged someone who joined reported that the person was not previously connected to the military.

Quality-of-Life Issues

Impact Likelihood to Recommend Military Service



Belonging

Active-duty family respondents who feel a **sense of belonging** to their local civilian community:

- report greater well-being³
- are **more likely to recommend military service**⁴



Spouse Employment

A greater proportion of employed active-duty spouses recommend military service

than their unemployed peers.⁵



Housing Costs

As out-of-pocket housing costs increase, the likelihood of active-duty family respondents to recommend military service dips.⁶

¹ Provided a response of 7-10 on a scale of 0-10.

² Question wording differed. In 2016, the question was worded "12. How likely are you to recommend a young person close to you to join the military?" In 2023, the question was worded "How likely are you to recommend that a young family member (child, niece, nephew, etc.) join the military? On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 = "very unlikely" and 10 = "very likely"?"

³ Active-duty family respondents who agree that they feel a sense of belonging to their local civilian community compared to those who disagree (48 versus 39, on a scale of 0-70).

⁴ Active-duty family respondents who agree that they feel a sense of belonging to their local civilian community compared to those who disagree (4.36 versus 5.34, on a scale of 0-10).

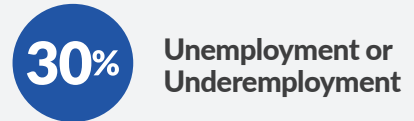
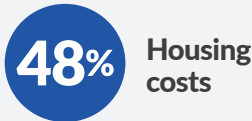
⁵ Active-duty spouse respondents employed full or part time compared to unemployed (4.8 versus 4.2 on a scale of 0-10).

⁶ Active-duty family respondents with all housing costs covered compared to paying \$200 or more out of pocket (5.03 versus 4.75, on a scale of 0-10).



Active-Duty Family Financial Well-Being

Top Contributors to Financial Stress⁷



Housing and Relocation



36% of active-duty family respondents who completed a recent PCS used temporary housing for 15+ days.

Child Care Remains Top Barrier to Spouse Employment¹⁰

68% report needing child care in order to work.

35% cannot find child care that works for their employment needs.

- >> **20%** utilize the CDC for care.
- >> **11%** use fee assistance.

\$758.26
 The average monthly child care cost in order for active-duty spouse respondents to work.



Health Care Access

40% of active-duty family respondents reported their family member waited more than two months to see a specialist, more than the average specialist care appointment wait time for civilians.



Spouse Employment



Labor force participation rate

70%

Comparable national labor force participation rate during survey fielding timeframe: 73%⁸

Employed (in labor force)

78%

Unemployed (in labor force)

22%

Comparable national unemployment rate during survey fielding timeframe: 4%⁹

31%

of employed active-duty spouse respondents reported they were able to maintain their employment through their most recent PCS move.

Food Insecurity

Basic Needs Allowance (BNA)

- >> **54%** of active-duty family respondents did not know what the BNA is.
- >> **3%** applied for the BNA.

Food banks/charities are a major food source for **14%** of active-duty family respondents experiencing food insecurity.



Have filed a PACT Act claim:

8% Active-duty service member respondents

18% Veteran respondents

⁷ For active-duty families who indicated they have financial stress.
^{8,9} Civilian comparison group data come from statistics reported for women, age 18-44, in the Current Population Survey (CPS) 2021 Annual Average Employment Status (not seasonally adjusted).
¹⁰ Active-duty spouse respondents.

