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Institute for Veterans and Military Families

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2021

### 2015 Military Family Lifestyle Survey: Data Brief

Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University

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6,291

RESPONDENTS  
INCLUDING  
MILITARY SPOUSES  
SERVICE MEMBERS  
& VETERANS

MILITARY FAMILIES ARE ASSETS TO NATIONAL DEFENSE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES. THEY ARE CENTRAL TO THE HEALTH AND CAPABILITY OF THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE AND ARE GOOD NEIGHBORS ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN MAKING THEIR CIVILIAN COMMUNITIES GREAT PLACES TO LIVE.

BLUE STAR FAMILIES ANNUAL MILITARY FAMILY LIFESTYLE SURVEY PROVIDES A COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IT MEANS TO SERVE AS A MILITARY FAMILY AND IS A BLUEPRINT FOR STRENGTHENING AMERICA BY SUPPORTING MILITARY FAMILIES.



IN COLLABORATION WITH:



Funding for the Annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey provided through the generosity of our presenting sponsor USAA and from the Lockheed Martin Corporation, United Healthcare Military & Veterans, Rent-A-Center, Health Net Federal Services, Facebook, and the USO.



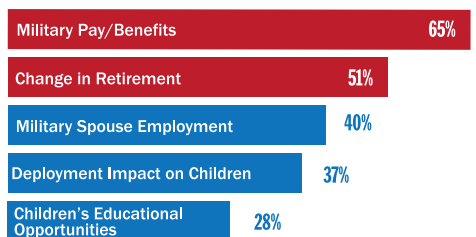
2015 MILITARY FAMILY LIFESTYLE SURVEY

TOP 5 ISSUES

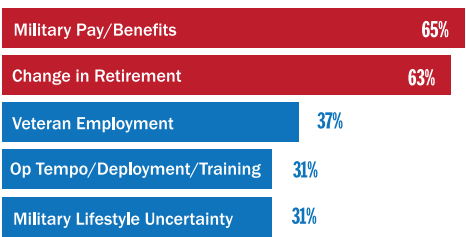
RANKED AS MOST CONCERNING

- > MILITARY PAY AND RETIREMENT BENEFIT CHANGES ARE THE TOP TWO CONCERNS FOR ALL RESPONDENTS
- > SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT, MILITARY SUICIDE & VETERAN EMPLOYMENT ROUND OUT THE TOP 5 ISSUES OVERALL FROM ALL SURVEY RESPONDENTS

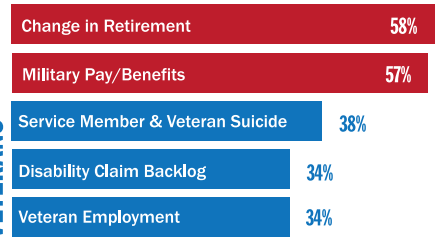
MILITARY SPOUSES



SERVICE MEMBERS



VETERANS



SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT



TOP CHALLENGES TO EMPLOYMENT

- 52% Poor Job Market Alignment
- 36% Service Member's Job/Work Obligations

45% have a full- or part-time job

58% are not working would like to be employed outside the home

75% reported being a military spouse had a negative impact on their ability to pursue a career

FINANCIAL READINESS



TOP 3 OBSTACLES TO FINANCIAL SECURITY

- 42% Uncertainty in Military Life
- 40% Spouse Employment
- 39% Benefits Uncertainty/Changes

14% of active duty do not regularly contribute to a retirement account

60% of post-9/11 Service members feel financially secure

78% are paying more than BAH for housing; 22% of those are paying \$400 or more

TRANSITION



described their overall transition from active duty to veteran as "difficult" or "very difficult"

28%

of veterans had some form of TAP & 57% agreed that it prepared them to successfully transition from active duty to civilian life

43%

feel the military has prepared me to be a leader in the civilian workplace and community

87%

feel pride from accomplishments during military service

97%



# SNAPSHOT OF THE MILITARY LIFESTYLE

45% WOULD RECOMMEND MILITARY SERVICE TO THEIR OWN CHILD

## VIEWS OF SERVICE

**90%** FEEL THE GENERAL PUBLIC **DOESN'T TRULY UNDERSTAND THE SACRIFICES** MADE BY SERVICE MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

**85%** JOINED MILITARY FOR **FINANCIAL SECURITY**

**57%** WOULD RECOMMEND MILITARY SERVICE TO A YOUNG PERSON WHO IS CLOSE TO US

## DEPLOYMENTS

**60%** DEPLOYED **MORE THAN 12 MONTHS** SINCE 9/11

**52%** AWAY FROM HOME **MORE THAN 12 MONTHS** DUE TO TRAINING, TEMPORARY DUTY AND REASONS OTHER THAN DEPLOYMENT

**50%** WITH CHILDREN REPORTED HAVING **A CHILD WHO EXPERIENCED MODERATE OR GREATER WORRY** AS A RESULT OF A PARENT'S DEPLOYMENT

**21%** EXPERIENCED **RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES** IN THE PAST YEAR RELATED TO WORRY OVER FUTURE DEPLOYMENTS

## MOVING

**73%** INCURRED UNEXPECTED EXPENSES AS A RESULT OF THE MILITARY LIFESTYLE; OF THOSE, **86% RESULTED FROM MOVING/PCS**

**60%** HAVE **MOVED 3 OR MORE TIMES** IN THE CONTINENTAL US

**52%** HAVE MOVED/LIVED **OUTSIDE OF THE U.S.**

## BENEFITS

**15%** removing the **BAH support for dependents** from the GI Bill benefit would impact the amount of time they or their service member planned to stay in service

**40%** would be less **likely to serve** a full, 20-year career if the **retirement plan was changed** to a defined contribution retirement plan

**45%** not at all or not very confident in receiving their **healthcare benefits post-retirement**

**76%** have transferred or plan to **transfer their Post-9/11 GI Bill** to spouse or child

## CHILDCARE

Finding childcare that meets needs increases both active duty and spouse satisfaction with the military lifestyle.

**27%** spent **\$500 or more per month** on childcare

**35%** are **not able to find childcare** that fits their current situation

## CAREGIVER

**32%** of respondents identified as caregivers

**11%** are providing care to active duty spouse or child over 18

**37%** are providing care to a parent or grandparent

## CIV-MIL DIVIDE

**46%** do not always have enough information to **vote in local elections**

**59%** had "no" or "hardly any" **confidence in the federal government**

**65%** **volunteered last year**; of those 70% volunteered in their civilian communities

**94%** Indicated **desire to serve country** was a reason to join the military

## SUICIDE

Admit suicidal thoughts during time in military

**7%** **Active Duty Spouses** (2% in past year)

**7%** **Veterans** (4% in past year)

**10%** **Active Duty Service Members** (3% in past year)

**14%** **Post-9/11 Veterans** (7% in past year)



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