



Military Family
Advisory Network

2020

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

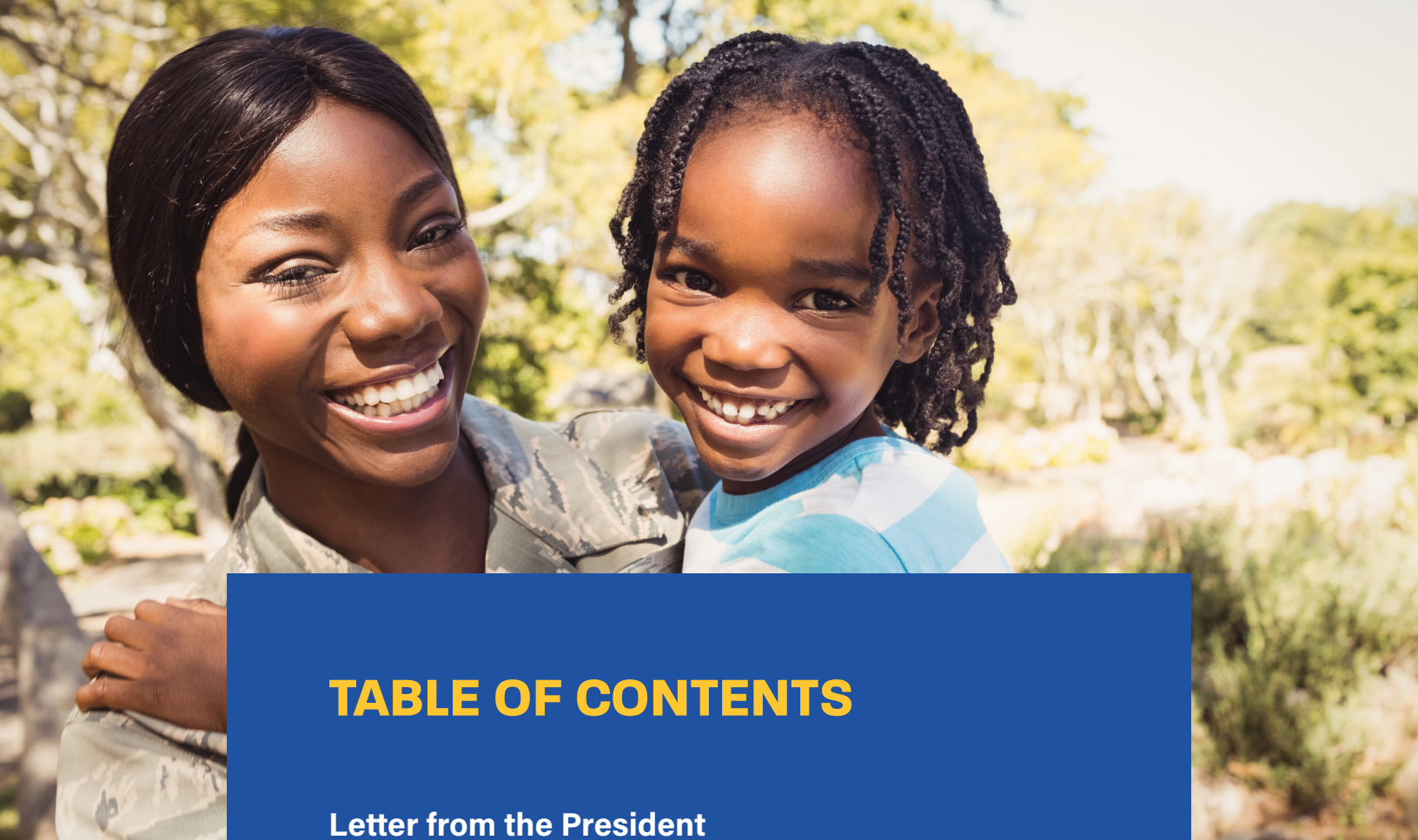


TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Letter from the President
& Executive Director01**

About MFAN02

 MFAN Board of Directors.....02

 MFAN Advisory Board.....03

FY 2020 Key Accomplishments04

FY 2020 In Review.....05

A Look Ahead.....07

Thank You08

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Partners:

The Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN) is pleased to share with you its 2020 Annual Report, which serves as a roadmap for where we have been, and where we are headed.

MFAN had a busy and productive year – bringing together military family community influencers, strengthening its programs, developing innovative new resources, and growing as an organization.

At the beginning of the year, MFAN responded to the impacts of COVID-19 on military families by hosting MFAN Connects – a series of engaging and fun virtual events for families. This summer, MFAN released the data from the third Military Family Support Programming Survey, which allowed military families to tell MFAN what they value and need. One of the key findings was that 1 in 6 survey respondents in Texas are experiencing food insecurity. As a result, MFAN responded and launched the Texas Regional Response Initiative in the fall, which included a specialized “State of the State: Texas” Report and Data Release Event to take a deeper dive into the root causes of food insecurity in the military. MFAN continued to respond to the need in Texas and concluded the year hosting the first Drive-Through Food Distribution Event in Killeen, Texas, which supplied over 500 military families with nutritious meals for the holiday season.

This year, MFAN continued important work with its three coalitions – the Military Family Food Insecurity Coalition (MFFIC), the Military Family Financial Readiness Coalition (MFFRC), and the Military Housing Roundtable (MHR). The coalitions showcase MFAN’s unique ability to convene key policy makers, public and private organizations, and other stakeholders dedicated to meeting the needs of military families. The coalitions also enable MFAN to help meet those needs and create plans of action to solve challenges that military families may face in the future.

As we continue into 2021, I can’t help but reflect on the incredible growth of MFAN and the impact that our organization has made. Thank you to our partners, sponsors, and advisors for their generous involvement, as well as the military and veteran community for giving us the opportunity to serve them.

Sincerely,



Shannon Razsadin
President & Executive Director
Military Family Advisory Network



ABOUT MFAN

The **Military Family Advisory Network** is the authentic voice of the modern military family and the bridge that connects military families to the resources, people, and information they depend on to successfully navigate all phases of military life.



OUR ROLE & APPROACH

1

CONVENE

Bring together leaders in the military community: nonprofit, military, government services

2

RESEARCH

Tell the stories of military families through qualitative research

3

RESPOND

Create data-informed solutions in the areas of greatest need

4

REPORT

Share research data to inform policy makers and service providers

MFAN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The board of directors is a diverse group of military spouses, former advisors, and civilian supporters that provides official advisement and direction to MFAN, as well as assumes official fiduciary responsibility. This year, MFAN expanded its board of directors by two positions.



Rosemary Williams
Chair



Charlene Austin



Denny Darnell



Kevin Miller



Erin Ward
Treasurer



Jack Benson



Joseph Kopser



Tammy Moore

MFAN ADVISORY BOARD

All of our advisors bring different backgrounds to the table, giving MFAN a fuller understanding of what military families need and value. The advisory board represents the active duty, guard, and reserve communities and all branches of service. The advisory board members are located across the country and each person brings a unique network and set of experiences.

Through the diverse networks of each advisory board member, MFAN is able to implement a peer influencer model, which allows for real, authentic connection and information sharing across the military and veteran community. And this past year, organizations, government agencies, and leaders requested calls and meetings with the MFAN advisory board members to access their extensive professional and personal networks and hear directly from military families about their experiences.

Advisors meet on a monthly basis through video conferences. We talk about what we are seeing, hearing, and experiencing in our military communities, and when a challenge is raised, we work together to find the best solution. During these meetings, advisors also regularly review programs and resources presented by other organizations, providing candid feedback informed by their experiences as members of a military family. This work really is a group effort — and that approach underscores everything we do. Advisors apply for and are selected to serve two-year terms. The current advisors were selected in July 2019 and will serve through June 2021.



Amanosi Adeniya



Emily Gerson



Annette Maldonado



Brian Alvarado



Joanna Guldin



Hana Romer



Kellie Artis



Libby Jamison



E.J. Smith



Hannah Becker



Kris Johnson



Brianna George



Lacey Langford



FY 2020 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ✓ **Fostering meaningful collaboration.** MFAN continued to grow and cultivate its coalitions surrounding military family financial readiness, food insecurity, and housing. In 2020, MFAN hosted a total of 9 coalition meetings. MFAN also launched an initiative to “Combat Military Hunger.” The work began in Texas, where 1 in 6 survey respondents are struggling with food insecurity. MFAN teamed up with the Food Cares Center in Killeen, Texas to provide 500 military families with food just in time for the holiday season. We were honored that Dr. Jill Biden took time to surprise our volunteers with a video call prior to the event.
- ✓ **Supporting families during COVID-19.** MFAN Connects – a series of virtual events launched in response to COVID-19 – garnered nearly 1,000 attendees, 131,762 total views, and 12,431 online engagements (likes, shares, and comments). These events balanced fun and the information families needed during the early days of the pandemic. A crowd favorite was the haircut tutorial when Shannon Razsadin learned how to cut her active duty husband’s hair live on Facebook.
- ✓ **Uncovering the lived experiences of military families through scientific research.** MFAN’s doctoral-level research team released the results of the Military Family Support Programming Survey. With nearly 8,000 military family respondents, this was MFAN’s most comprehensive research effort to-date. MFAN’s research team also released a special report surrounding the State of the State: Texas, which took a granular look at research respondents from Texas.
- ✓ **Demonstrating nonprofit best practices.** Based on the year of rapid growth, MFAN expanded the staff by six team members, earned Better Business Bureau’s (BBB) Accredited Charity Designation as well as the platinum standard through GuideStar.
- ✓ **Influence, visibility, and reach.** MFAN garnered over 500 million media impressions and saw a 250% increase in social media followers in 2020. MFAN’s president and executive director, Shannon Razsadin, was selected through a competitive process to serve as one of three civilian advisors to the Secretary of Defense on the Military Family Readiness Council. She was also named a We Are The Mighty “Mighty 25,” in recognition for her impact on the military and veteran community.



FY 2020 IN REVIEW

In the beginning of 2020, MFAN's research team coded the 2019 Military Family Support Programming Survey responses and began analyzing the data and developing key findings. The number of participants in the 2019 survey increased by more than 35% from the 2017 survey, from 5,650 military and veteran family respondents to 7,785 participants. Another highlight of the first quarter was that the senior director presented at the National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference in March 2020.

In addition to writing the full 2019 survey report and the executive summary, MFAN's research team provided data and specific content to produce six topical infographics and the senior director presented the key findings during the virtual survey release in June 2020. Several legislative offices asked for embargoed survey data to ensure their military and veteran family priorities for the FY 2021 NDAA were appropriately placed. The senior director also presented at the Military Family Financial Readiness Coalition and Military Housing Roundtable quarterly meetings, the Hiring Our Heroes Spouse Chat, and participated in the Spouse Angle podcast. The deputy director presented at the Military Families and Affordable Housing webinar.

Following the survey release, MFAN's research team produced customized reports for funders and key stakeholders, including Humana, PenFed Foundation, Prudential, Wounded Warrior Project (WWP), and USAA Educational Foundation. Additionally, data analysis and a draft of the State of Texas Report were completed. The research team received invitations to discuss MFAN's research from USTRANSCOM officials and Transition Assistance Program (TAP) officials. LTG Gamble's staff (Army deputy chief of staff for logistics) also requested a copy of the full survey report and associated materials for review.

A survey was created for MFAN advisors to assist with the identification of top themes and issues to be discussed in monthly advisory board meetings. The senior director also presented at the Military Family Food Insecurity Coalition quarterly meeting, the Military Social Work conference, a SAMHSA research panel, twice for the Building Healthy Military Communities pilot team, and at the 2020 Association of Military Banks of America (AMBA) workshop.

In the latter part of the year, MFAN's research team completed the final versions of The State of the State: Texas Report and the joint report with WWP on post-9/11 veterans, retirees, and their families. Additionally, the research team began building the privatized housing feedback loop and associated dashboard for the Hunt partnership, writing a journal article on the topic of alcohol use and/or concern about use among military spouses, and creating coalition program evaluation metrics. The senior director and deputy director also presented together at the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology Conference.



The team completed and executed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Texas and Austin, and it submitted a pending MOU with the Department of Defense's Total Force Fitness program. In November of 2020, MFAN released *The State of the State: Texas*, a report that took a granular look at research respondents from Texas. The report focused on the specific needs of military and veteran families in four key categories: food insecurity, finances, health and wellbeing, and loneliness and community. The findings will be used to guide MFAN's regional efforts in Texas in 2021.

Based upon the findings in the Texas report, the team wrapped up the year with the successful execution of its first food distribution event. With support from partnerships the team established on the ground, MFAN served 500 military families in Fort Hood, Texas and provided 40,000 pounds of healthy protein and 5,000 pounds of non-perishable goods to families in need. Dr. Jill Biden met virtually with event volunteers in advance of the distribution to provide a message of support and encouragement.

The team looks forward to continued regional efforts in Texas and in the other locations MFAN's research has identified as experiencing higher frequencies of food insecurity in 2021.



A LOOK AHEAD

MFAN launched a strategic plan to carry the organization into the future.

THE KEY AREAS OF FOCUS WILL BE:

Advisory Board and Alumni Ambassador Network	Research	Response	Communications	Development	Operations
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MFAN will focus on these areas through the lenses of engaging more constituents, adding rigor, improving diversity, strengthening cross-department collaboration, and increasing visibility.



THANK YOU

MFAN is proud to partner with organizations that are committed to supporting military and veteran families. Thanks to the generous support of the following organizations, we are able to assist and connect military families worldwide.

SPONSORS







STRATEGIC PARTNERS





If your organization is interested in discussing partnership opportunities with MFAN, please contact info@militaryfamilyadvisorynetwork.org. We look forward to working with you!



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militaryfamilyadvisorynetwork.org