

Military Family Food Insecurity

No military family should struggle getting enough healthy food for themselves and their families.

The MFAN Advisory Board sounded an alert in 2016 that they were beginning to hear more about food insecurity in families. We used that information to include food insecurity questions in our 2017 Survey. The results were overwhelming and alarming.

Baseline

I have trouble getting enough food for me and my family.

15%
2017



15.3%
2019

In 2019, MFAN expanded its research effort with a focus on understanding where respondents fall on the spectrum of food insecurity.

The People

One in eight military family respondents is food insecure.



A Closer Look

USDA Six Item Food Security Short Form

The USDA scale uses six statements and questions to evaluate food security. When respondents answer affirmatively, they are considered part of the food security scale. Food insecurity is indicated when respondents answer affirmatively to two or more. Hunger is indicated when respondents answer affirmatively to five or more.

Affirmative Responses	Designation	Respondents
2-4 Affirmative Responses	Low Food Security	5%
5-6 Affirmative Responses	Hungry	7.7%

12.7%

of survey respondents are food insecure.



23.8%

of currently serving military family respondents who had children attending school reported that their children receive free or reduced meals at school.*

(including active duty families and National Guard and Reserve families)

Here Are Their Stories

“ I always make sure my husband and daughter have food, period. I haven’t eaten anything but a few crackers and a microwave breakfast sandwich in two days, ”

said a **National Guard and Reserve member** in Oregon.

“ I won’t eat if it means my kids can eat. My husband is the soldier, and he needs the food more than myself as well, ”

said an **active duty spouse** in New York.

“ I ate as little as possible and gave most of my food to the babies, and went into credit card debt to buy groceries, along with accepting donations from strangers online and selling things to get money, ”

said an **active duty spouse** in Virginia.

Advisory recommendations

A Call to Action

Food insecurity among military and veteran families is a solvable condition. Public – private partnerships can together determine the root causes and find measurable solutions.

Join MFAN as we responsibly address this issue through research, collaborative efforts, and outcomes-focused response.



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Thank you to our research partners

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