

Research Overview

MFAN Stakeholder Engagement

Vision: The Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN) envisions a world where all military-connected families are empowered to thrive.

Mission: To understand and amplify the needs of military-connected families and inspire data-informed change.

As an organization, **MFAN creates programs that deliver impact, fill gaps, and address needs** by introducing military families to information and resources. MFAN's programmatic efforts are grounded in scientific data and leverage best practices in program evaluation to ensure maximum impact. This approach, coupled with MFAN's authentic understanding of the military community, has allowed us to build the trust and confidence of those we serve, and the government leaders charged with supporting them.

METHODOLOGY & APPROACH

MFAN's research is designed to complement research conducted by the Department of Defense and nongovernmental organizations that leverage scientific approaches to understanding the military community. MFAN's overarching goal is to offer deeper context through a mixed-methods, highly qualitative research design. While quantitative data can explain the "what," qualitative data can explain the "why" and "how." MFAN has established a systematic method for analysis. Because MFAN organizes and analyzes its data in-house, we can conduct timely surveys when needs arise and evaluate key intersection points and demographic-specific findings. This unique approach makes our data actionable.

MILITARY FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMMING SURVEY

First fielded in 2013, the Military Family Support Programming Survey is the cornerstone of MFAN's research portfolio. This biennial, mixed-methods survey provides insight into a wide range of the support needs of military and veteran families serving around the world. Expanding from a rigorous foundation in qualitative methodology, recent iterations of the survey leverage validated scales such as the Family Health Scale, UCLA Loneliness Scale, USDA Short-Form Food Security Scale, and the HUD Housing Burden Scale which enable comparisons with other population groups. MFAN shares this research with others so that it is actionable. These survey results lead to data-informed programming from MFAN and others, and edify public policy, yielding positive outcomes for military-connected communities.



Review the 2021 Military Family Support Programming Survey [here](#).

KEY TOPICS

The survey provides a comprehensive review of military and veteran family life, including focus areas like:

- ▶ Well-being
- ▶ Health care, Telehealth, Mental Health
- ▶ Family Relationships
- ▶ Financial Readiness
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Food Insecurity
- ▶ Military Community
- ▶ Transition
- ▶ Recommending Military Life



Military Family
Advisory Network



Actionable Key Findings



FAMILY WELL-BEING

In 2021, 44.7% of military and veteran family respondents reported moderate family health and an additional 41.3% of respondents indicated excellent family health. 14.0% of military and veteran family respondents reported poor family health.

Stars & Stripes: "Troops, veterans becoming less likely to recommend military service, survey finds"



HEALTH CARE & TELEHEALTH

In 2021, respondents were asked to expand on their health care experiences and obstacles in the past two years. The top five themes that surfaced from respondents were the lack of appointments and providers available, poor quality of care, administrative obstacles, inability to secure necessary specialization, and COVID-19 pandemic-related obstacles.

In the 2019 survey, only 11.3% of the total respondent population reported having used telehealth services. In the 2021 survey, 62.6% indicated that they or a member of their immediate family had used telehealth services for general health care services, therapeutic services, and mental health services.

Military Families Magazine: "Survey shows lack of appointments, poor quality of care top concerns"



FOOD INSECURITY

In 2021, one in six (16.6%) military and veteran families were experiencing food insecurity or hunger. Amongst the enlisted ranks, 23.3% of military and veteran families were experiencing food insecurity or hunger. This is striking in comparison to the 4.4% of food insecure or hungry families at the officer ranks.

Bloomberg Government: "US Troops Hungry at Higher-Than-Average Rates, Survey Shows"



HOUSING

Respondents noted their highest satisfaction ratings around privatized housing companies' responsiveness to repair issues. This data marks a drastic change in satisfaction levels since 2019. In the last iteration of the support programming survey, respondents were most dissatisfied with housing company responsiveness to repair requests. In 2021, respondents were least satisfied with military command responsiveness to privatized military housing issues.

Rep. Marilyn Strickland: "Introduces legislation to tackle military housing access and affordability"



Military families face unique challenges from employment to healthcare to housing.

That's why **MFAN is so critical**. We need an accurate, comprehensive picture of military families so that we in Congress can make policies that **best serve this community**.



—**Congressman Seth Moulton**
U.S. Representative (MA-06)
Marine Corps Veteran

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

MFAN data has informed local, state, and federal policy efforts, including:

- ▶ National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)
- ▶ Farm Bill (appropriations for SNAP program)
- ▶ Military Family Nutrition Access Act
- ▶ Military Spouse Hiring Act

MEDIA RELATIONS

MFAN research has been cited and referenced in military trade and mainstream publications across the world. In 2022:

- ▶ Mentioned in **1,560 articles**
- ▶ Reached a total of **3.23 billion viewers**