



Military Family
Advisory Network



ANNUAL REPORT

2023

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TO THOSE WE SERVE

Friends,

I am honored to once again share how the Military Family Advisory Network served military and veteran families over the past year.



This report is not just about highlighting MFAN's progress with you, but celebrating the community we know and love and illustrating the steadfast support of our partners. As MFAN has grown and evolved, one thing that has not changed is our enduring commitment to understanding the diverse experiences of military families and creating a safe landing for their voices.

In a year marked by the 50th Anniversary of the All-Volunteer Force and MFAN's 10th Anniversary, our mission to understand and amplify the needs of military-connected families and inspire data-informed change was on full display.

I want to note a few highlights, which you can read about more in-depth in the following pages:

- ★ Thousands shared their lived experiences in the fifth iteration of our Military Family Support Programming Survey
- ★ The MFANetwork, our innovative new program designed to support military family well-being, was piloted in Central Texas
- ★ We welcomed our sixth advisory board cohort and introduced a new slate of leadership to our Board of Directors, ensuring we continue to meet the needs of our population

MFAN was founded in 2013 to meet a persisting need: the ability to quickly and effectively connect to military families. Over the last decade, MFAN has become a difference maker for service members, veterans, and their loved ones and a trusted resource among decision-makers, advocates, peers, and partners.

We are no doubt a pivotal piece of a larger network of support for the military community — and our work is not possible without you!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shannon Razzadin".

Shannon Razzadin
Chief Executive Officer

TEAM MFAN

From conducting critical research that elevates lived experiences and sparks solutions, to creating impactful programs that connect families to the support they need, our team shows up for military families every day.



Shannon Razzadin
Chief Executive Officer



Delia C.L. Johnson
Chief Operating Officer



Ericha Hernandez
Director of Finance



Maura Angel
Operations Manager



Janice Walton
Director of Programs



Erin Kahn
Senior Manager of Programs



Tracy Thede
Programs Coordinator



Anna Clark
Outreach Coordinator



Gabby L'Esperance, Ph.D.
Director of Insights



Shanna Smith, Ph.D.
Associate Director of Research



Kate Clavijo, Ed.D.
Assoc. Director of Program Evaluation



Jessica Luckhardt, Ph.D.
Data Analyst



Kimberley Nicholson, Ph.D.
Data Analyst



Kristen Beattie
Director of Advancement



Lori Noonan
Major Gifts Consultant



Derek Doyle
Director of Public Affairs



Alexandra Meyers
Associate Director of Communications



Valentia McVey
Graphic Designer



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MFAN's Board of Directors spearheads the organization's vision and assumes fiduciary responsibility. Through strategic planning, they bring together their unique experiences and professional acumen to propel MFAN forward.



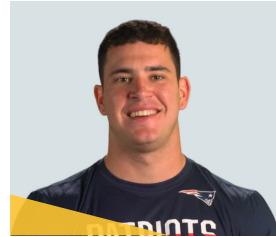
Delores Johnson Davis
Board Chair



Kim Joiner
Vice Chair



Jimmy Anderson



Joe Cardona



Stephanie Crosse



Gregory Frey



Sarah Holley



James Passeur



Daniel Thode

Loading Up with New Talent

MFAN welcomed four new members to the Board of Directors in 2023: Jimmy Anderson, Joe Cardona, Stephanie Crosse, and Sarah Holley. Their experiences will strengthen the support of our organization and we are grateful to have them on board.

Changing of the Guard

The Board of Directors unanimously elected Ms. Delores Johnson Davis, a retired federal executive with decades of military personnel and quality of life experience, as Chair. She follows the Honorable Rosemary Williams who served as Chair for six years, playing a critical role in MFAN's founding and growth.

ADVISORY BOARD

To meet the evolving needs of all military-connected families, the first step is to listen. Through MFAN's advisory board, we can ensure that our work is grounded in the lived experiences of those living military life daily.

In May, MFAN said farewell to the fifth cohort who had served since 2021. In July, we welcomed the sixth cohort who will serve a two-year term until 2025. The advisory board, graciously presented by CVS Health, is a peer-influencer model that harnesses the diverse experiences, expertise, and networks of the group to provide MFAN and others with valuable insight into the needs and trends of military communities across the country.

The sixth cohort comprises 14 volunteers who are spouses of active duty service members and veterans — some veterans themselves. Strategically spread throughout the United States, advisors represent a range of ranks, ages, and phases of military life and include each branch of service.



Keita Brock



Megan Brown



Ginger Gerrish



Lizann Lightfoot



Katie Lopez



Isa Marie McIntyre



Cindy Meili



Jessie Nash



Joanna Nicoletti



Roteshia Sanders



Melissa Shaw



Amy Shick



**Carla Vasquez-Angeles,
Ed.D.**



Mychael Willon



A DECADE OF SERVICE

Since 2013, MFAN has worked tirelessly to understand and amplify the needs of military-connected families and inspire data-informed change. 2023 marked a decade of service to the military community and provided us with the opportunity to reflect on how far we've come — and identify the path forward.

Over the years, MFAN has emerged as a leader in studying the entire military-connected community through scientific research to better understand how military life impacts them. And, just as importantly, MFAN has used our findings to inform programs and policies and collaborate with leaders in this space to develop holistic solutions.

RESEARCHERS:

Thousands of military-connected individuals have shared their family life experiences with MFAN to impact millions over the span of a decade. Marquee research efforts include five iterations of the Military Family Support Programming Survey, Causal Factors of Military and Veteran Family Food Insecurity, and pulse surveys on food insecurity, housing crisis, and military moves.

CHANGEMAKERS:

The heart and soul of our work, the advisory board gives MFAN a fuller understanding of what families truly need and value and provides a direct pathway for decision-makers to connect with military households.

CONVENERS:

Thanks to our advisors and alumni, coalitions, corporate sponsors, and strategic partners, MFAN has created a network that military families can rely on. Our community brings a unique perspective to both the challenges and opportunities that military families face.

1

RESEARCH

Use networks and qualitative research to identify the needs of military families.

2

EDUCATE

Understand, elevate, and advise on the data-informed needs of military families.

3

ACT

Catalyze outcome-driven solutions.

4

CONNECT

Bridge the gap between resources and the military community.

MILITARY FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMMING SURVEY



The findings from this research allow MFAN to bring together and inform nonprofit organizations, policymakers, armed forces leadership, and other stakeholders on key interests. The results of this survey will be released in summer 2024 and will be followed by a Solutions Summit – a convening that allows us to make data actionable immediately.

MFAN's research is the cornerstone of our work. We rely on data to drive our efforts and programming. In 2023, MFAN fielded the fifth Military Family Support Programming Survey, a highly qualitative research effort that learns directly from the lived experiences of service members, veterans, and their family members.

This survey is a comprehensive review of military families' experiences and well-being covering questions that will help us to better understand and ultimately address issues. This survey allows us to stay informed on current needs, amplify those to stakeholders that can make a positive difference, and simultaneously provide the best opportunity to create impactful programs that directly support the needs of the military community.





HIDDEN HELPERS COALITION

Thanks to the support of Wounded Warrior Project, MFAN has taken a leading role in supporting the Hidden Helpers Coalition by heading its Impact Subcommittee. Led by the Elizabeth Dole Foundation and Wounded Warrior Project, this group focuses on building awareness of and strengthening support for the children of wounded, ill, or injured service members or veterans who step into caregiving roles at home.

The coalition includes representatives from nearly 100 organizations spanning diverse sectors like health, education, and social services. Recognizing the varied stakeholders involved, MFAN assesses the collective impact of the coalition. These efforts focus on understanding how specific strategies and activities contribute to achieving shared goals within the coalition.

In 2023, MFAN conducted a comprehensive analysis of the coalition's programming and early-stage outcomes. This was created through interviews across the coalition, identified validated data collection tools, and established guiding principles for assessing youth well-being. A noteworthy achievement was the launch of the Hidden Helpers Coalition Outcome Survey, which serves as a crucial tool for measuring the coalition's progress.

This commitment to rigorous program evaluation demonstrates MFAN's dedication to ensuring success for both the coalition and the programs it supports, ultimately benefiting the Hidden Helpers community. This approach allows for informed decision-making and the continuous improvement of initiatives within the coalition.

TOPICAL STUDIES

MFAN specializes in qualitative research which is imperative when addressing the pressing needs within the military community. We are grateful to be selected by partners time and time again to conduct this type of research. Throughout the year, MFAN published multiple reports, including:

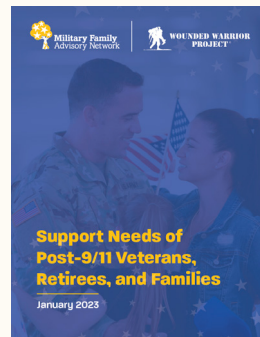
[Research Review: Military & Veteran Family Financial Readiness](#)



MFAN's Military Family Financial Readiness Coalition (MFFRC) participant, First Command Financial Services, Inc., generously funded a research review that compiled financial research conducted by MFFRC participants to better understand the landscape of military and veteran family financial readiness. Leveraging qualitative thematic analysis, MFAN's Insights team identified three key themes emerging from the literature:

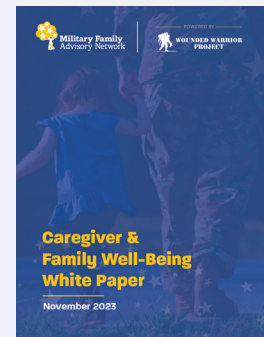
- Promoting military financial readiness
- Credit usage and overcoming money management challenges
- Increased vulnerability of military families to malicious financial practices

[Support Needs of Post-9/11 Veterans, Retirees, and Families](#)



Military life is a rich, nuanced experience that leads to broad differences in the military and veteran community, and it is crucial to leverage research to better understand the unique experience of subpopulations. Therefore, MFAN and the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) partnered together to closely examine the experiences of post-9/11 veterans, retirees, and their families by analyzing and comparing the results of MFAN's 2021 Military Family Support Programming Survey and WWP's 2021 Annual Warrior Survey. The report bore newfound findings in areas such as whole health wellness, food insecurity, access to medical care, and family well-being.

[Caregiver & Family Well-Being White Paper](#)



MFAN and WWP also have a shared commitment to understanding caregiving journeys and creating data-informed solutions. This report took a deep dive into the data collected in the 2021 Military Family Support Programming Survey, the 2022 Annual Warrior Survey, and Caregiver Discussion Groups. Through further investigation of these complementary research studies, the understanding of military-connected caregiving families was extended and the following tactics to expand and enhance caregiver support were recommended:

- Individualize caregiver support and increase access to caregiver resources
- Increase the accessibility of mental health services and promote wellness
- Build and strengthen caregiver communities
- Provide additional support to caregivers who are also parents
- Continue and expand caregiver research

AMPLIFYING INSIGHTS

In 2023, MFAN maximized the opportunity to showcase and share research findings and expertise in areas such as health care, mental health, food insecurity, childcare, caregiving, financial readiness, and more at many national conferences, symposiums, and convenings. MFAN demonstrated our expertise by presenting program evaluation, theory of change, and logic models. These conferences attracted standing-room-only audiences and further strengthened MFAN's reputation for unique insights into the lives of military and veteran families.

KEY EVENTS INCLUDE:

- American Evaluation Association
- American Public Policy Analysis and Management
- Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action Military Child Health Research Symposium
- National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference
- Military Social Work and Behavioral Health Conference
- Elizabeth Dole Foundation Convening
- Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) Summit
- America's Warrior Partnership Symposium
- Association of Military Banks of America (AMBA) Workshop 2023
- Texas Lyceum: The Divide
- ARNOVA Annual Conference





INTRODUCING THE MFANETWORK

[The MFANetwork](#) is MFAN's latest innovation, a collaborative program designed to support military family well-being through four key pillars: healthy bodies, healthy families, healthy homes, and healthy futures.

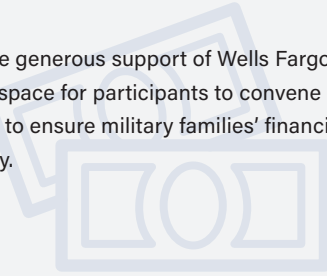
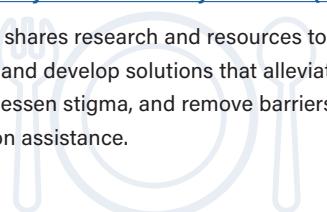
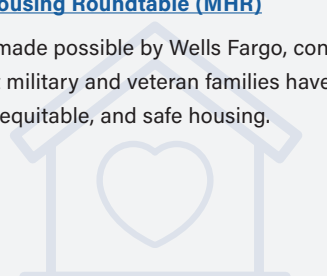
Phase one of the MFANetwork was announced in December 2023 with a pilot program launching in Fort Cavazos, Texas. [The PCS Pantry Restock Box](#) works strategically with national and local partners to help make Permanent Changes of Station, or PCS moves, easier for active duty families. MFAN's research shows that military families move every 2-3 years on average. Frequent moves can also lead to challenges in military families' financial stability and emotional well-being as they settle into their new community.

The PCS Pantry Restock Box is a low-barrier, stigma-free access point that links families to the support they need when they are vulnerable. Each box is an entry point to understanding families and connecting them to what they need in a way that offsets the expenses of a military move, builds a connection to local resources, combats loneliness, and gathers insight into where families need support.



COALITIONS

MFAN continues to convene public and private sector leaders through our coalitions on financial readiness, housing, and food insecurity. Our three coalitions provide an opportunity for participants to share resources, dig into emerging issues, and develop recommendations that support military family well-being.

COALITION	HIGHLIGHTS
<p><u>Military Family Financial Readiness Coalition (MFFRC)</u></p> <p>Through the generous support of Wells Fargo, MFFRC provides a space for participants to convene and collaborate to ensure military families' financial wellness and stability.</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted subject matters experts to brief the community on resources and programs that impact military-connected families, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Student loan repayment TRICARE premium updates Blended Retirement System Support from military aid societies Held briefings with the Office of Financial Readiness within the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to understand DoD financial programs such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts Basic Needs Allowance New childcare fee structure Launch of Sen\$e, the Department's financial literacy app
<p><u>Military Family Food Insecurity Coalition (MFFIC)</u></p> <p>The MFFIC shares research and resources to raise awareness and develop solutions that alleviate food insecurity, lessen stigma, and remove barriers to food and nutrition assistance.</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Held an information session with the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) to unpack 2023 Farm Bill priorities and Community Eligibility Provision Spotlighted Feeding America's Hunger Action Month and provided tangible ways for the community to get involved Introduced the Military WIC Office Council, which has been formed to share best practices across military installations to reduce food insecurity and increase access to WIC services
<p><u>Military Housing Roundtable (MHR)</u></p> <p>The MHR, made possible by Wells Fargo, continues to ensure that military and veteran families have access to affordable, equitable, and safe housing.</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged elected officials: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren's (D-MA) office provided an overview of congressional efforts to improve oversight and accountability of military housing U.S. Representative Don Bacon (R-NE) shared an update on the work of the House Armed Services Committee's Quality of Life Panel U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff's (D-GA) office highlighted the Senator's legislative efforts to address military housing conditions and accountability Held two briefings with the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) on reports outlining the conditions of military housing, including privatized housing and the barracks Over 35 organizations authored a letter to the Secretary of Defense encouraging the Department of Defense to fully restore the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to 100 percent Engaged offices within the Pentagon: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A senior housing analyst from the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Housing) within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense provided a status update on the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, Tenant Bill of Rights, and other reforms The Defense Personal Property Management Office within the U.S. Transportation Command provided an update on the Global Household Goods Contract (GHC) awarded to HomeSafe Alliance

RESOURCE CONNECTION

It is vital to ensure that military families can easily access the support and resources they need to thrive. Through our resource connections, MFAN offers multiple avenues to bridge the gap between military families and the services designed to support them.

Our webinars provide in-depth content on programs, timely news, and more. Our blogs keep military families up to speed on current events and the latest updates to resources.

Through our Connections on the Clock Series, we're able to deliver convenient micro-learning videos that help them more easily and quickly navigate common challenges.

MFAN partners with organizations, individuals, and stakeholders to curate our online content and allow military families to access information on-demand.

BLOG

Pharmacy Benefits For Busy Military Families

COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLBEING TRICARE

AUGUST 08, 2023

WEBINAR

Fast-Tracking Military Spouse Careers

Military Family Advisory Network

CONNECTIONS ON THE CLOCK

DR. JENNIFER BITTNER Exceptional Families of the Mil

TRANSITION TALES

Maggie

Personal stories and practical advice for military families transitioning out of active duty.
FROM THE MFAN ADVISORY BOARD

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

MFAN's work has been covered in national and local print, broadcast, and digital news. Whether we're discussing our latest research, introducing the broader public to the modern military family, or weighing in on our lifestyle, we're committed to responsibly representing military families based on what we see in our research and what we experience firsthand.

In 2023, MFAN was mentioned in 1,290 articles and reached a total of 5.91 billion potential viewers.

You may have seen us on:

Civil Eats



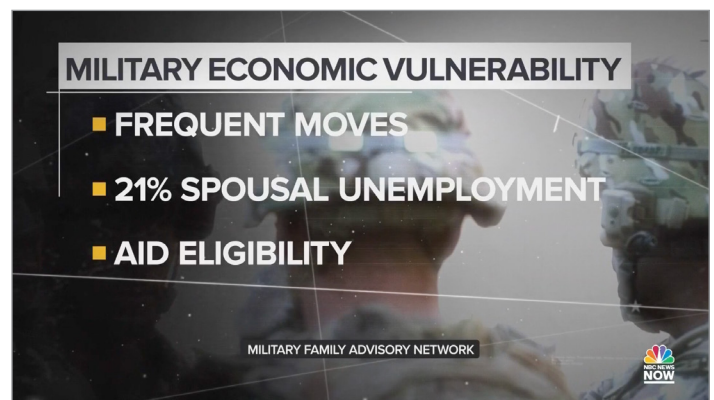
CNN



Military Times



NBC News



★ To view these stories and more, visit mfan.org/media.



A LOOK AHEAD

MFAN knows that there's more work to be done when it comes to supporting our community. We remain increasingly motivated year after year to address the greatest needs facing our all-volunteer force and their families. We are looking forward to the great impact we will make together in the year ahead.

IN 2024, MFAN WILL:

- ★ Release the findings from the 2023 Military Family Support Programming Survey
- ★ Convene our Solutions Summit, where military family members, business and government leaders, and partners will turn data into action
- ★ Release additional phases of the MFANetwork, further strengthening our commitment to military family well-being
- ★ Expand on internal and external program evaluation
- ★ Continue to collaborate with partners to ensure military families can access resources when they need it most



PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

If you are interested in discussing partnership opportunities with MFAN, contact us at info@mfan.org.

As a nonprofit organization, we rely on the generosity of donors and sponsors and collaboration from our amazing partners to fulfill our mission. We're grateful that so many answered the call to join us in 2023 in support of our nation's service members, veterans, and their families.

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Military Family Advisory Network



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The Military Family Advisory Network is a leading 501(3) military family support organization, with a mission to understand and amplify the needs of military-connected families and inspire data-informed change. We envision a world where all military-connected families are empowered to thrive. Our unique approach uses a peer-leader network, scientific research, and collaboration to stay ahead of and respond to the emerging needs of military-connected families. We conduct research, amplify voices, act alongside cross-sector partners, and connect the full spectrum of the military community to make a tangible difference in the lives of those who serve and the families who serve alongside them. To learn more, visit mfan.org.