

# Methods and Demographics

## 2019 Military Family Support Programming Survey

**T**he Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN) was founded in 2013 to fill a persisting gap in the military community: the inability to quickly and effectively understand the modern military family and connect military families to the resources they need to thrive.

Since its inception, MFAN has taken a data-driven approach to decision-making. Its Military Family Support Programming Survey<sup>SM</sup> has been the cornerstone of its research portfolio, providing deep insight into the support needs of families living military lives. MFAN shares this research with others so that it is actionable—it leads to data-informed programming from MFAN and others, ultimately yielding positive outcomes for military and veteran families.

MFAN's research is primarily qualitative or open-ended, which generates data that are rich with perspective and experiences and provide a greater diversity of topics to understand and evaluate. Quantitative questions, such as multiple choice, are used as a navigation system to ensure that participants receive only the questions relevant to them. While these quantitative questions supply valuable data, the qualitative data are the heart of the research.

MFAN's research goals are to offer deeper context. While quantitative data can explain the “what,” qualitative can explain the “why” and “how.” Some researchers may avoid relying heavily on open-ended responses because of the time and effort required to analyze them, but MFAN has established a systematic method for analysis. Because MFAN conducts and analyzes its data in-house, it has the agility to conduct intermittent surveys when needs present.

The data are analyzed with Qualtrics survey software, cutting-edge software that allows not only methodologically sound qualitative coding, but also comparisons with other data within the sets. MFAN's coding team reads every written response submitted to every question and tags each one with themes and subthemes. Then, the team evaluates all of those themes to explain



what military families are experiencing. The software also allows those themes to be sorted by demographics and geographics, among many other potential measures.

After the analysis is complete, the research team uses the results to tell the stories of military families. The data are arranged in percentages and charts to explain the most common themes and ideas families communicated in their responses. Military families are more than numbers and statistics, so the data are highlighted with the real comments and experiences participants shared.

All of MFAN's research ensures that participants are connected to military family life – it's a condition they must meet to take the surveys. When MFAN invites participants to share their thoughts in its research, it often uses a sampling technique in which participants invite others who are also connected to military life to join in. Invitations to participate are also sent out through social media and through many partners in the military family space who are also hoping to learn from the data. This ensures the participants come from every service branch, every rank, and from a variety of geographic locations.

The results are not meant to predict behaviors or perceptions of all military families. Instead, this form of research helps shed light on what military families are currently experiencing. MFAN's research explores new, emergent, and perennial needs of those who participate. Some questions have been asked each year, providing valuable longitudinal information. Other questions are new. New questions are designed to explore topics discussed in our network, primarily through the MFAN advisory board.



These data provide a holistic look at support programming that families most appreciate and where they have found it. The data also explain where there may be gaps in coverage and how families prefer to receive support.

**In full, the information shared in these results guide and inform a path toward developing solutions in the areas of greatest need.**

## Branches of Service:



Army:

**45.4%**



Air Force:

**20.1%**



Navy:

**19.8%**



Marine Corps:

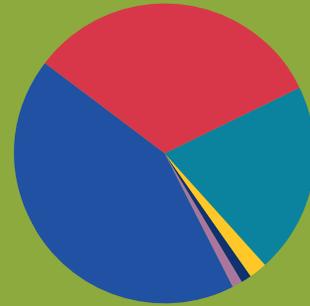
**11.1%**



Coast Guard:

**3.5%**

## Connection to Military Life:



Active duty members and spouses	<b>42%</b>
Veterans and spouses	<b>32%</b>
Retirees and spouses	<b>20%</b>
National Guard and Reserve and spouses	<b>2%</b>
Surviving spouses	<b>2%</b>
Divorced spouses	<b>1%</b>

## Ages:

Most **active duty** service members, **57.5%**, were younger than 34 years old.

Active duty members	Ages
18 to 21 years old	5.5%
22 to 24 years old	8.8%
25 to 29 years old	19.8%
30 to 34 years old	23.4%
35 to 39 years old	20.4%
40 to 44 years old	13.9%
45 to 49 years old	4.8%
50 to 54 years old	1.5%
55 to 59 years old	.73%
60 years or older	1.5%

Most of the **spouses of active duty** service members, **57.6%**, were also younger than 34 years old.

Spouse of active duty members	Ages
18 to 21 years old	3.9%
22 to 24 years old	8.3%
25 to 29 years old	19.4%
30 to 34 years old	26%
35 to 39 years old	20.4%
40 to 44 years old	11.9%
45 to 49 years old	6.2%
50 to 54 years old	2.7%
55 to 59 years old	.62%
60 years or older	.57%



## Ranks of Service:

Most respondents came from enlisted ranks, **specifically E4 to E6**, as is also true of the currently serving force.

E1 to E3	9.5%
E4 to E6	49.2%
E7 to E9	19.0%
O1 to O3	6.5%
O4 to O6	12.9%
O7 to O10	0.87%
W1 to W3	1.5%
W4 to W5	0.63%



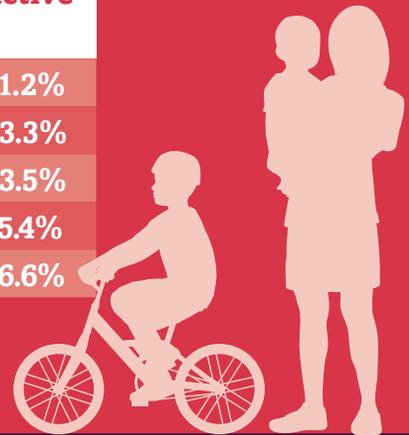
## Families with Children:

Active duty families with **children younger than 18:**

- ▶ **79.9%** with kids younger than 18
- ▶ **21%** without kids younger than 18

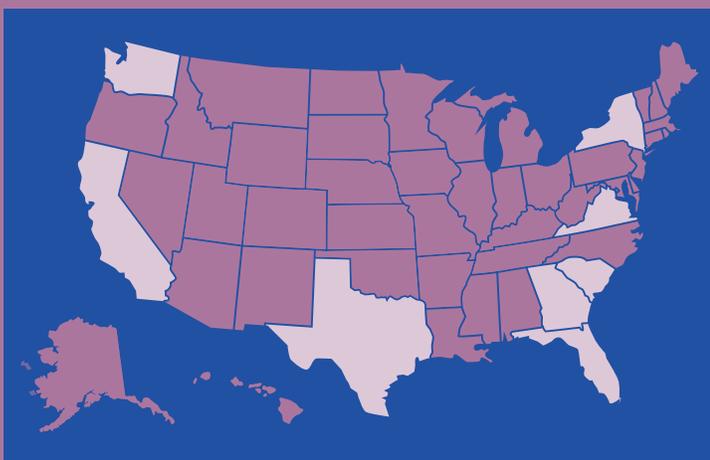
### Ages of children of active duty families

0 to 2 years old:	21.2%
3 to 5 years old:	23.3%
6 to 9 years old:	23.5%
10 to 12 years old:	15.4%
13 to 18 years old:	16.6%



## Locations:

Respondents came from **all 50 states in the country**. The top states in which most respondents live are also the states most populated by service members:



1. Texas	5. Florida
2. Virginia	6. New York
3. California	7. Washington State
4. North Carolina	8. Georgia

Respondents also came from **two US territories** and **22 countries**.

### Countries:

- Bahrain
- Belgium
- Brazil
- China
- Colombia
- Cuba
- England
- Germany
- Greece
- France
- Italy
- Japan
- Kuwait
- Netherlands
- Philippines
- Poland
- Portugal
- Qatar
- Scotland
- South Korea
- Spain
- Thailand

### Territories:

- Guam
- Puerto Rico

