

Understanding the Effect of Military Moves



Leading up to the MFAN Solutions Summit, we decided to take a closer look at what military families were experiencing this PCS season and during previous ones. To do that, **we distilled experiences from 5,546 military moves.** Whether they have been in military service for 2 years or 44 years, **they helped us understand everything from their finances and job prospects to their mental health and family dynamics.**



Methods and Demographics

We gathered the information in an online survey that was fielded for one week beginning July 19, 2018. All of the **1,080 participants** were connected to military family life. Most, **84 percent**, were spouses to active duty members.



The participants came from all branches of the Armed Forces, **47 states, 11 other countries** and **2 territories.**

Most of them, **74 percent**, have moved during the **past two years.** (All of them have moved within the past six years).

Together, they have moved a total of **5,546 times** with an average of **2.23 years** between moves.



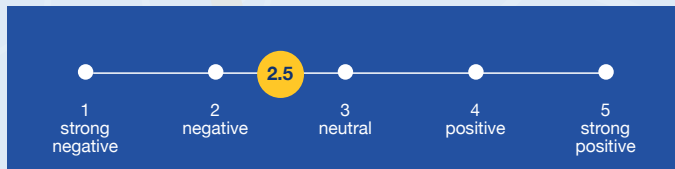
Military Family
Advisory Network



Findings

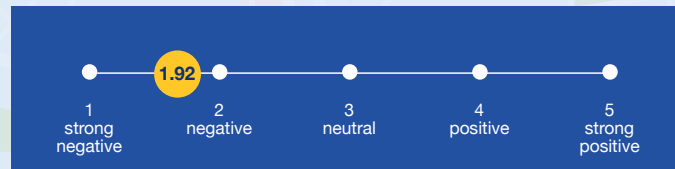
Moving is not easy on our families. Each average rating on a Likert Scale was generally negative, especially when it comes to finances and employment.

Moving effects on family life



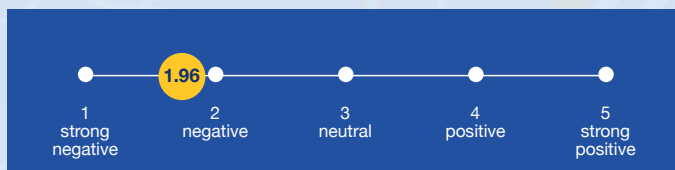
While families try to look at a PCS as a new adventure, it is a challenge to keep a positive attitude. The upheaval is stressful on both parents and kids as all of them tear out their roots with a community and try to set new ones at the next duty station. Added to that burden is the chaos and uncertainty in finding a job, a home, medical care, a new support system. During the move, their family relationships suffer. In the end, after weathering it together, some families reported having a stronger family bond.

Moving effects on employment



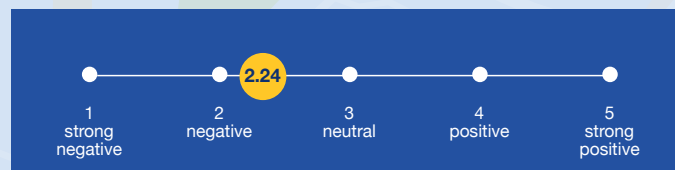
Participants repeatedly described stalled careers and unemployment. The delays in finding work are causing increased financial strain. They are struggling against moving to locations without jobs in their fields, hiring biases, licensing delays, and inability to work OCONUS. Some found solutions in using technology and self-employment to maintain portable work. Others have given up entirely and plan to wait until they leave military life to try to become gainfully employed.

Moving effects on finances



Participants said that the amount of money they pay out of pocket is more than what can be reimbursed. Some said they go into debt every time they move. Others said they try to mitigate the costs of a PCS by saving for months ahead. Added to the financial strain is the worry about loss and breakage during the move.

Moving effects on mental health



Most participants described the PCS process as highly stressful, anxiety-inducing, and mentally exhausting. Moving is especially difficult for those with existing mental health issues. Some reported diagnoses of depression and anxiety after moving.

A full report of findings will be available online following the MFAN Solutions Summit.

Visit militaryfamilyadvisorynetwork.org to learn more.