CORPORATE PLAYBOOK
for Supporting Military Families
Military families live in our neighborhoods. Their children go to our schools. Much can be learned from them. Building and sustaining healthy, resilient, and thriving military children and families will bring benefits not just to them but ultimately to all Americans. The military family is the American family.”

Supporting military families is vital to sustaining the All-Volunteer Force and a strong national defense. Service members and their families will continue to be asked to do more with less. Military families are central to service member recruitment and retention decisions, and to overall military readiness.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
American Psychologist, Military children and families: Strengths and challenges during peace and war.
Blue Star Families, 2015 annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey
INTRODUCTION

America’s veterans have received a great deal of attention and support from corporations, the government, and grant makers over the past several years. Though this is commendable, support for our currently serving military families (defined as an Active Duty, National Guard, or Reserve service member, their spouse, and/or their children as one unit), is critically needed.

Our country’s military men and women do more than protect against an enemy abroad. For example, they protect trade routes, underwater data cables, and satellites in space so that global markets, natural resources, and advanced global communication systems remain available to U.S. business and industry. The families who support them do so proudly, but at a cost their civilian peers do not have to bear. For this reason, they are central to a service members’ decision to join or to stay in the military. Thus, the military family unit, as a whole, is vital to the overall strength of our All-Volunteer Force.

As sources decline and demand increases, military families will continue to be asked to do more with less. New or additional resources and funding are needed in order for military families to sustain a healthy lifestyle. When a company invests in military families it invests in the security and strength of our nation!
WHY SUPPORT MILITARY FAMILIES?

Business success is dependent on a company’s reputation and its relationships with its employees, customers, vendors, partners, and community. According to Cone Communications, support of military issues is one of the Top 3 “Most Compelling Causes.” Their research found that 66% of corporate executives thought their social responsibility strategies resulted in improving their companies’ reputations.

Supporting military families is not just the right thing to do – it is also the smart thing to do. Hiring and supporting military families will result in better relations with the military community as well as the broader community.

“Our nation’s military service members, veterans, and their families sacrifice so much to protect us and ensure our freedom. We must provide our time, talent, and treasure to honor and support them.”
- USAA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TALENT ACQUISITION</th>
<th>COMMUNITY RELATIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td>80% of people want to work for a company that cares about society</td>
<td>92% of Americans have a more positive image of a company aligned with a cause</td>
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<td>The core skills that service members learn: camaraderie, teamwork, leadership, reliance on each other, and loyalty.” - Microsoft</td>
<td>“There is a lot of goodwill in this country for military... Military families are an important part of our community and integral to our national security.” - Booz Allen Hamilton</td>
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<th>CUSTOMER LOYALTY</th>
<th>STRENGTHEN LOCAL ECONOMY</th>
<th>EMPLOYEE RETENTION</th>
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<td>Military affinity audience alone is 100 million Americans with nearly $1 trillion spending power</td>
<td>$1 billion per year is the social cost of under/unemployed military spouses in the US</td>
<td>60% of employees who are proud of their company’s social responsibility are more engaged in their jobs</td>
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<td>91% of consumers would switch brands if the other brand were associated with a good cause</td>
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FOR MORE INFORMATION
Military OneSource, Various Reports and Surveys
Department of Defense, Demographics Reports
Cone Communications, Research
### SNAPSHOT OF THE MILITARY COMMUNITY

#### ACTIVE DUTY

- **1,301,443** active duty members (about 1% of total US population)
- **1,100,030** men (85%)
- **201,413** women (15%)
  - **35 years** Officers
  - **27 years** Enlisted

#### SELECTED RESERVE FORCE

- **826,106** selected reserve force members
- **669,146** men (81%)
- **156,960** women (19%)
  - **39 years** Officers
  - **30 years** Enlisted

#### OFFICERS:
- **84%** have a bachelor’s degree or higher

#### ENLISTED:
- **8%** have a bachelor’s degree or higher
- **92%** have a high school diploma and/or some college experience

#### MARRIAGE

- **54%** are married
- **641,639** active duty military spouses*
- **45%** are married
- **374,621** selected reserve spouses*
- **3%** dual-military marriages*

#### CHILDREN

- **689,604** selected reserve children
  - **31%** 0 to 5 years
  - **31%** 6 to 11 years
  - **28%** 12 to 18 years
  - **11%** 19+ years
- **42%** of DoD military personnel have children
- **41%** of selected reserve personnel have children

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Blue Star Families, *2016 annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey*
- Department of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress on Plans for the Support of Military Family Readiness*
- Military OneSource, *Various Reports and Surveys*
72% feel current operations tempo exerts unacceptable level of stress for a health work-life balance.

42% reported experiencing 6+ months of separation in the last 18 months.

MILITARY FAMILIES ARE UNDER/UNEMPLOYED

21% military unemployment vs 5% civilian unemployment.

60% ACTIVELY SEEKING WORK

63% of currently serving military service members and their spouse/partner experience anxiety or depression.

88% of active duty family respondents felt the general public does not truly understand the challenges or sacrifices made by service members and their families.

73% of military families and 65% of veterans volunteered in the past year.

66% of military families indicated they are not always able to find the childcare they need, largely due to accessibility and affordability challenges.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Blue Star Families, 2016 annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey
THE LIFE CYCLE OF MILITARY FAMILIES:

1. Early integration into military culture and life
The military lifestyle has its own culture, norms, and expectations. Adapting to this culture can be difficult and confusing at first.

2. Permanent Change of Station (PCS)
A PCS occurs when a military member receives new orders which result in a geographic move for the family.

On average, military families move every two to three years.

3. Deployment of the military member
Deployment is when the service member is sent on temporary orders to engage in military operations in another location that causes separation from their family.

Never ending war and conflict across the globe means that families are facing continuous and frequent separations.

4. Transition from active duty to civilian life
As the reduction in force size continues, more military families will be transitioning from active duty to civilian life. This transition may include relocating the family, new careers for service members and spouses, as well as finding supportive services that the military is no longer providing.

“Government and public funding is not enough to take care of our military families. We all, especially businesses, need to do our part.”
- USAA

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Council on Foundations, Supporting Veterans & Military Families
Booz Allen Hamilton & Blue Star Families, Corporate Employee Engagement Summit (2015)
Families who serve have unique challenges because of the life cycle experienced by military families. However, they do reflect the needs of most civilian families as well. Therefore, the opportunities to strengthen military families will align with your company's commitment to community-based priorities.

“\textit{The initial urge is to help veterans. If corporations supported military families, they could make a larger impact.}”

- Booz Allen Hamilton

**MILITARY FAMILIES: STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, & OPPORTUNITIES**

- **Education**
- **Employment**
- **Basic Needs & Financial Readiness**
- **Health & Wellness**
At every stage of the lifecycle, military families have education challenges. Often, education is interrupted for the military family due to deployment cycles, multiple moves, and the eventual transition period into civilian life.

“When the military child is doing well, it’s a huge relief and one less thing to worry about when on deployment overseas, where focus is critical for the service member.” - Microsoft

Military children, on average, attend six to nine different school systems. Different school districts and states have varying curricula and requirements, which may create roadblocks for transitioning military families and their children.

For families with children who have special needs, multiple moves can add stress finding the proper resources and support in a new community.

In addition, transitioning families who have special needs family members need to find new services since they will no longer be eligible for the military’s Exceptional Family Member Program, a service available to active duty families.

Military families can benefit from corporate support by:

- Providing post-secondary education scholarships for all members of military families
- Supporting quality, affordable and flexible childcare
- Sponsoring after-school programs for military children and youth
- Volunteering as mentors, tutors, and coaches
- Funding workforce development training programs that have flexible schedules and online opportunities
- Providing trainings that will help existing community programs better serve military connected families
- Advocating that the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children is being implemented in your local community

"Moving frequently may impact [my son's] ability to learn on an effective, consistent timeline, as well as form and retain social relationships.” - Army spouse

For more information
Blue Star Families, 2016 annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey
The Future of Children, Military Children and Families (2013)
Military Child Education Coalition, The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children
EDUCATION
OPPORTUNITIES
In addition to hiring military spouses and military youth, some of the ways that the business sector can help support military family members becoming gainfully employed include:

- Offering career counseling
- Expanding career services
- Supporting programs that provide skill and employment trainings
- Offering scholarships for post-secondary education, including certification trainings
- Supporting quality, affordable and flexible childcare
- Offering flexible schedules and telecommuting options for employees who are military spouses
- Creating military family-friendly policies
- Advocating for reciprocity across states for professional certification or degree licensure

“The best thing you can give a military service member is a job for their spouse.”
- Blue Star Families

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Blue Star Families, *2016 Annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey*
Department of Defense, *Military Spouse Employment Partnership*
Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University, *The Force Behind the Force: Training, Leveraging, and Communicating about Military Spouse as Employees*
Sorenson Impact Center, University of Utah, *The Social Cost Analysis of the Unemployment and Underemployment of Military Spouses*
Many military families face major financial strains which necessitate the need for help with financial stability and housing during their active duty years and/or the transition process. “Don’t be afraid to go after the hard issues. Financial stability is a tough challenge for military families. Thus, funding programs that promote upward mobility can have a big impact.” - Booz Allen Hamilton

OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to supporting employment and education opportunities, companies can help military families avoid financial distress by:

- Providing financial readiness workshops and counseling
- Funding programs and efforts that support military connecting to the local community
- Supporting affordable housing for military families, especially those transitioning to civilian life
- Assure that nonprofits providing basic needs are also serving military families
- Advocating for increase in government financial supports for military families

“We believe that honoring our veterans and military spouses requires more than saying ‘thank you.’ It’s about ... providing opportunities for veterans and their families. These men and women are making our company better.”

- Starbucks

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Blue Star Families, 2016 annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey
The Future of Children, Military Children and Families (2013)
Military OneSource, Status of Forces Survey of Active Duty Members (2013 & 2014)
HEALTH & WELLNESS

Frequent moves and deployments can take military families away from their close networks of family and friends. This sense of isolation can lead to an increase in stress levels and depression for military spouses and their children.

“The spouse is often left with the harder job of managing the home front. They need to carry on with the daily grind, while the service member has their mission to focus their time and energy on.”

- MetLife

OPPORTUNITIES

The business sector can strengthen military families by:

- Convening nonprofit, academic, military, civic, and business leaders in the community to address the unique needs of military families
- Sponsoring social events and opportunities that connect military families to each other and the larger community
- Funding mental health programs for military families that offer confidentiality by being close to military installations
- Providing caregivers of wounded and injured service members or children with special needs opportunities for self-care
- Advocating for better health and wellness programs for service members and their families who voluntarily separate or retire

“We do this work to help the transitioning service member as well as their spouse and children. This is vital to the well-being and overall success of the service member.”

- Microsoft

STRENGTHS & CHALLENGES

According to the 2016 BSF aMFLS Survey:

88% of respondents feel the general public does not understand sacrifices made by service members and their families

40% of active duty, guard, and reserve respondents feel that seeking mental healthcare will harm their career

Nearly 20% of currently serving military service members and military spouses admitted thoughts of suicide in the past year

1.1 million Post 9/11 military caregivers

Military caregivers experience more health problems, face greater strains in family relationships, and have more workplace issues than non-caregivers. Caregivers are most commonly the spouse:

- 63% employed
- 47% have a support network
- 37% age 30 or younger
- 32% have no health insurance

F OR M ORE I NFORMATION

Blue Star Families, 2016 annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey
Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Great Think: Creating Great Future for Military Families & Youth
The Future of Children, Military Children and Families (2013)
National Endowment for the Arts & Blue Star Families, Blue Star Museums
National Military Family Association, Health Care
Rand Corporation, Military Caregivers Study; Military Health and Health Care
Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers, Caregiver Resources
Points of Light, Community Blue Print
What assets does your company have that can be shared with, or help, military families?

- Cash
- Matching financial contributions
- In-kind product donations
- Professional expertise
- Staff volunteer hours

Who will be the champion for your military family efforts?

“Programs and initiatives such as these need executive leadership in order to motivate and encourage employee participation and volunteerism. We are lucky to have this level of leadership and commitment from the Executive Sponsor of our grassroots employee engagement group, the Veterans Community Network, which champions all of our veteran and military family efforts.”
- Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation

What connections does your leadership and staff have internally that can help your company identify the needs of local military families?

How engaged does your company want to be with military families?

- Short-term support
  Events are an example of short-term support.
- Long-term support or short-term support
  Long-term support involves continual engagement on specific projects that benefit military families and provide engagement for your company.

What kind of relationship works best for your company?

- Don't fund just because it’s popular
  “Make sure it’s a good fit.” - Uber
- Are there current partnerships that your company has or organizations that you support who could also engage with you to support military families?

“Our work with military really resonates with our employees. We were able to connect their desire to do something to help military families in tangible ways.”
- Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation
Identify which issue(s) makes the most sense for your company
- Talk with internal leadership and staff
  Determine if employees are connected to military issues or know of military family organizations in the community
- Ask local community leaders and organizations
  United Way, regional associations of grantmakers, community foundations, and local military base leaders are excellent starting points
- Ask other companies who are doing the work nationally

Assess if the issue(s) make sense for your company
- Does it meet business priorities and objectives?
- Does it resonate with your employees?
- Does it match your giving or marketing priorities?

Develop an internal-strategy to engage your company
- Facilitate groups of employees, vendors, shareholders and networks to work together
- Discuss potential incentives for employee engagement and volunteerism.

Decide the most appropriate type of support or community investment that fits with the issue(s) selected
- Financial contribution to nonprofits supporting military families
- Employee volunteers
- Sharing of professional skills or experience
- In-kind product donation

Define your marketing and communications strategy
- How will your support be communicated internally as well as externally to the broader community?

Identify potential collaborative partners

Find a suitable nonprofit or organization to partner with

Do your due diligence; research organizations to ensure they meet their missions before investing via Charity Navigator, Guidestar, or Council on Foundations

“In order to succeed with supporting the military community, survey the area your company is located, determine the impact you want to have and search for partners who align to your geography and goals.”
- MetLife

“By partnering with the Chamber of Commerce, we have been able to connect with military families on base.”
- Uber

“Engage with the folks who know the community.”
- San Diego Gas & Electric
The U.S. military deploys an all-volunteer force worldwide to protect our nation. Our military service members and their families willingly make significant sacrifices to keep us all safe. They’re extremely proud to serve all Americans, despite the added challenges.

In April of 2009, a group of military spouses created Blue Star Families: an organization connecting military families with community neighbors to ease the challenges of military life and provide a simple way for all Americans to help keep our military strong.

Blue Star Families’ groundbreaking research helps us innovate solutions to the most pressing problems of military family life. Our programs reach more than 1.5 million military families annually, providing career development, caregiver support, educational programming and supportive community connections.

Blue Star Families ensures that wherever American military families go, they can always feel connected, supported and empowered to thrive – in every community and around the globe.

Housed within the Nonprofit and Philanthropic Institute at the School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) at the University of San Diego, the mission of the Caster Center is to provide research, evaluation, and consulting services that build the leadership and strategic- and evaluative-thinking capacity of nonprofits.

The Caster Center strives to be the leading source of information, data, and research on the nonprofit sector. It offers resources and products that are grounded in systematic research and have direct applicability to the field. It also serves as an important training facility that enables doctoral students to directly engage in innovative and timely nonprofit research projects. The Caster Center works in collaboration, and under contract, with nonprofit service and charitable organizations on a wide range of projects.

The USAA family of companies provides insurance, banking, investments, retirement products and advice to 11.8 million active and former members of the U.S. military and their families. USAA membership is open to all who are serving our nation in the U.S. military or have received a discharge type of Honorable – and their eligible family members.

Founded in 1922 by 25 Army officers in San Antonio to fill the military community’s needs for automobile insurance, USAA is proud to carry on the legacy of its founders by addressing needs in the military community and its local communities through its corporate responsibility program. USAA employs strategic focus areas to prioritize its philanthropic investments in support of military family resiliency nationwide and improve the quality of living in the communities where USAA has a physical location and significant employee presence. For more information about USAA’s corporate responsibility program, visit usaa.com/corporateresponsibility.

Thank you to the following for sharing their knowledge and experience:

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MetLife
USAA

Microsoft
San Diego Gas & Electric
San Diego Grantmakers
Starbucks
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