

EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE SERIES

WORK-FAMILY INFORMATION ON: MILITARY FAMILIES

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WHY ARE MILITARY FAMILIES AN IMPORTANT WORKPLACE ISSUE?

"In support of our employees who personally sacrifice their time to serve in the Guard and Reserve, our benefits include two weeks of full pay, followed by a pay differential for the length of the active-duty deployment. In addition, while deployed, employees receive continued medical and dental benefits. We are proud to say that we have been recognized as a 5-star employer by Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) for our support of Guard and Reserve employees, and we continue to look for ways to assist our military employees and their families through our new Veteran's Employee Resource Group."

— Elisee Wright, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Aetna



NUMBER OF MILITARY FAMILIES

43% of all military personnel are parents, which totals close to 1 million.

Among all military personnel with children:

- 34.4% are married to a civilian
- 6.5% are single parents
- 2.1% are in a dual-military marriage

(Department of Defense, 2006)

UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY FAMILIES

Military life places unique demands on active-duty military families with children, including:

- Frequent moves
- Disruptions in schooling
- Family separation
- Financial difficulties
- Underemployment of military spouses
- Risk of injury or death of military personnel

Members of the National Guard and Reservists may face some of these issues as well as sudden and unpredictable calls for service. The unexpected nature of deployment requires advance planning for legal, financial, and family-care matters.



STATISTICS ON MILITARY FAMILIES

- "Both military men and women were nearly twice as likely to report higher levels of stress at work (39%) than in their family or personal lives (22%)" (Bray, Camlin, Fairbank, Dunteman, & Wheelless, 2001).
- Among spouses of Army personnel who have not deployed, 27% report being "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with their own employment opportunities, compared with 30% of spouses of Army personnel who are currently deployed and 32% of spouses of Army personnel who have deployed and returned (U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, n.d.).
- Of the spouses of active-duty military officers, 41% are employed in the civilian labor force, 10% are Armed Forces members themselves, and 7% are actively seeking work (Military Family Research Institute, 2005).

Want more **STATISTICS** or the full references for above statistics?

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HOW CAN EMPLOYERS SUPPORT MILITARY FAMILIES?

- Review human resources policies to ensure compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights Acts
- Offer pay differentials to cover pay cuts incurred by active duty
- Extend coverage of employees on active duty for health-care, dental and life insurance
- Provide employment opportunities for military family members, particularly spouses
- Grant paid leave for employees to spend time with their Guard or Reserve family members home on military leave
- Send cards, letters, and updates to service members during deployment
- Reach out and provide support to family members



REPORTS WITH MORE INFORMATION

- Geisel, J. (2008). Labor department clarifies expanded FMLA rules. *Workforce Management News in Brief*. Retrieved January 9, 2009, from http://www.workforce.com/section/00/article/25/96/85_printer.php
- U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center (n.d.). *Highlights: Survey of Army Families V, 2004/2005*. Retrieved January 9, 2009, from <http://www.army.mil/cfsc/documents/research/safv/SAFVSummary.doc>
- Watson, J. (2001). For better for worse. *All Hands*, 7, 14-21. Retrieved January 9, 2009, from <http://www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/acrobat/ah200107.pdf>

Want more **OVERVIEWS AND BRIEFS** or full references for these reports?

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SUGGESTED READINGS

- Military Family Resource Center. (2006). *Profile of the military community, 2006 demographics*. Arlington, VA: Author. Retrieved January 9, 2009, from <http://cs.mhf.dod.mil/content/dav/mhf/QOL-Library/Project Documents/MilitaryHOMEFRONT/Reports/2006 Demographics.pdf>
- Hoshmand, L. T., & Hoshmand, A. L. (2007). Support for military families and communities. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 35(2), 171-180.
- Huffman, A. H., Culbertson, S. S., & Castro, C. A. (2008). Family-friendly environments and U.S. army soldier performance and work outcomes. *Military Psychology*, 20(4), 253-270.
- McFadyen, J. M. (2005). Examining the impact of workplace supports: Work-family fit and satisfaction in the U.S. military. *Family Relations*, 54(1), 131-144.
- Rothrauff, T., Cable, S. M., & Coleman, M. (2004). All that you can be: Negotiating work and family demands in the military. *Journal of Teaching in Marriage and Family*, 4(1), 1-25.

Want more **READINGS**?

http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=38&type=2&linktype=suggested&area=All

The Effective Workplace Series provides a summary of the Military Families Topic Page.

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