

Department of Defense

**Annual Report to the Congressional
Defense Committees on
Plans for the Department of Defense for
the Support of Military Family Readiness**



Fiscal Year 2014

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**Plans for the Department of Defense for the Support of Military
Family Readiness**

**Annual Report to the Congressional Defense Committees
Pursuant to Section 1781b of Title 10, United States Code**

Fiscal Year 2014

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAFES	Army and Air Force Exchange Services
ACSI	American Customer Satisfaction Index
AP	Advanced Placement
CCR	Coordinated Community Response
CCSS	Common Core State Standards
CONUS	Continental United States
CSI	Customer Satisfaction Index
CY	Calendar Year
D.C.	District of Columbia
DeCA	Defense Commissary Agency
DMDC	Defense Manpower Data Center
DDESS	Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools
DoD	Department of Defense
DoDEA	Department of Defense Education Activity
DoDI	Department of Defense Instruction
DoDDS	Department of Defense Dependents Schools
DSLO	Defense State Liaison Office
FAP	Family Advocacy Program
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	Government Accountability Office
HBI	Healthy Base Initiative
IPT	Integrated Project Team
JFSAP	Joint Family Support Assistance Program
MCC	MilitaryChildCare.com
MCX	Marine Corps Exchange
MFLC	Military and Family Life Counselor
MSEP	Military Spouse Employment Partnership
MyCAA	Military Spouse Career Advancement Account
MWR	Morale, Welfare, and Recreation
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NEXCOM	Navy Exchange Services Command
NPSP	New Parent Support Program
ODASD(MC&FP)	Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy
OSD	Office of Secretary of Defense
P.L.	Public Law
PTR	Pupil-to-Teacher Ratio
RFY	Retail Fiscal Year
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test
SECO	Spouse Education and Career Opportunities
SOFS-A	Status of Force Survey of Active Duty Members
SY	School Year
U.S.C.	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pursuant to title 10, U.S.C., section 1781b, the Department of Defense (DoD) is submitting this annual report on the plans for the support of military family readiness. This report provides a summary of plans covering from Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 through FY 2019 pertaining to military family readiness and the FY 2014 assessment results of the following 13 major program areas.

- Child Care
- Youth Programs
- DoD Schools
- Minimizing Disruption for School Age Children of Military Families
- Military Spouse Education and Career Opportunities
- Expansion of Unemployment Compensation Eligibility for Trailing Military Spouses
- Personal Finance
- Promoting Enforcement of the Predatory Lending Regulation
- Military Commissary Benefits
- Military Exchange Benefits
- Non-Medical Counseling
- Family Advocacy Program
- Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Programs

To eliminate redundancy, this report no longer include (1) health care, (2) support for families of the wounded, ill, and injured, and (3) military families with special needs. Each of these three program areas has a dedicated report to Congress. Readers are invited to review the individual reports, which are listed in the introduction section, to learn more about program assessment in those areas.

Below are the highlights of the FY 2014 DoD-wide program efforts and assessment activities:

- The DoD State Liaison Office's two major initiatives achieved the overall goals this year.
 - Since 2008 DoD has been working to educate state lawmakers about the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children to help minimize school disruption for military children during military-related moves. In FY 2014, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the Compact, covering 100 percent of school-age military children with its provisions.
 - Expansion of employment compensation eligibility for military spouses who move with their Service members to another state achieved 97 percent coverage of spouses.
- Initial results from the 2014 Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) Survey suggest that community recreation centers, outdoor recreation, single Service member programs, and fitness centers would have the highest impact on the overall satisfaction with MWR and consequently, on mission readiness.
- The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy(ODASD(MC&FP)) commissioned Purdue University Military Family Institute to help the Services implement evaluation plans and develop an additional

evaluation plan for five select family readiness programs developed in Phase 1 of this project.

The goals and plans presented in this report will continue guiding the Departmental efforts in the coming years to ensure that Service members and their families have access to effective and sustainable family support programs and services. Facing ongoing budgetary challenges, there have been a number of existing and newly established initiatives, working groups, and studies across the DoD and the Military Departments to find further efficiencies and make informed decisions regarding the sustainment of critical family support programs and services. Each program area will continue refining its short-term plans reflecting the ongoing efforts for further efficiencies and program assessment results.

1. INTRODUCTION

After experiencing a fiscal austerity in FY 2013, the Department began FY 2014 with a brief period of government shutdown due to the absence of either an appropriations bill or a continuing resolution for DoD. The ongoing budget challenges and uncertainty continue to significantly affect our ability to provide critical family support and program services to Service members and their families. The Military Services, either temporarily or permanently, scoped down hours and operations of some family support programs. Staff shortages, reduction of programs and services, and reduced service hours and locations became a new norm in the military family support arena.

With the drawdown from Afghanistan and the restructuring of the forces, the focus of military family support has entered into a new phase in which reintegration after deployment, transitioning from the military to civilian life, and long-term care for wounded warriors and their families are taking center stage. DoD continues to place family support as a high priority issue, recognizing that a high quality All-Volunteer Force is the underpinning of our military. The Department will continue its efforts to provide effective and sustainable family support programs by implementing rigorous program evaluation and by building networks of support resources for military families available in civilian communities.

DoD defines family readiness as a family's preparedness "to effectively navigate the challenges of daily living experienced in the unique context of military service."¹ The family's support for military service has a direct impact on personal and mission readiness, performance, retention and recruitment.² Ultimately, family readiness contributes to the overall readiness of the U.S. military forces — the ability to "fight and meet the demands of the National Military Strategy."³ DoD has long recognized the significance of family readiness and its impact on military readiness, performance, retention and recruitment, and has been providing a wide range of support programs and services to Service members and their families.

In accordance with title 10, U.S.C., section 1781b, DoD is required to submit an annual report on the plans for the support of military family readiness for the next five fiscal years, including:

1. DoD plans for the support of military family readiness for the five-fiscal year period beginning with the fiscal year in which the report is submitted.
2. An assessment of the discharge by DoD of the previous plans submitted.

This report will present an overview of the DoD-wide plans on military family readiness programs, followed by a summary of the goals and metrics with the FY 2014 assessment data in the following 13 major program areas.

¹ See DoD Instruction 1342.22 Military Family Readiness (published on July 03, 2012).

² Defense Manpower Data Center. (2010). SURVEY NOTE: Spouse/significant other support to stay as a predictor of actual retention behavior: A logistic regression analysis (Note No. 2010-008; March 17, 2010).

³ Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Guide 3401 D. CJCS Guide to Chairman's Readiness System (published on November 10, 2010; Directive current as of November 25, 2013).

- Child Care
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- Family Advocacy Program
- Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Programs

Each program section concludes with plans on program implementation and assessment for the next five fiscal years.⁴

2. STRATEGIC PLANS AND EFFORTS ON MILITARY FAMILY READINESS

The Defense Strategic Guidance, “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense,” released in January 2012, continues serving as the Department’s guiding principle to implement and deepen program alignment. As outlined in the guidance, U.S. Forces are drawing down and restructuring to a smaller, leaner Joint force that is agile, flexible, technologically advanced, and highly deployable, while maintaining our most important military advantage, the health and quality of the All-Volunteer Force. To achieve the strategic goals in military family readiness, the Department has been accelerating its efforts to seek further efficiencies and improve program effectiveness by prioritizing objectives, eliminating duplication, and adopting innovative program deliveries using existing networks and resources in civilian communities.

The Office of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and the Military Departments continue to conduct reviews and studies of family support programs to identify and eliminate duplication of effort and find further efficiencies. The scope of these reviews is not limited to the quality and effectiveness of the programs, but also includes program delivery infrastructure, such as overhead and headquarters costs, business practices, and other support activities. Recent DoD survey data indicate that about three-quarters of Active Duty military families live in off-installation housing.⁵ Through initiatives and working groups, DoD has been collaborating with other Federal agencies, state and local government, academic researchers, industry experts and national and local non-profit organizations to leverage their expertise in the subject areas and existing network of support in civilian communities. This section discusses some of the ongoing DoD-wide efforts aligned with the strategic goals outlined in the Defense Strategic Guidance.

⁴ Please note that not all program areas have short-term plans, but not exactly plans for next five fiscal years.

⁵ According to the DMDC 2013 Status of Force Survey of Active Duty Members, 60 percent of Active Duty Service members live off installation; 70 percent of married Service members live off installation.

The Healthy Base Initiative

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data indicated that more than one-third of American adults and almost 17 percent of American youth were obese.⁶ Men and women in uniform are not immune to this growing problem in the nation. U.S. Military personnel are required to be physically and psychologically prepared to deploy on a moment's notice anywhere in the globe to extremely austere and demanding conditions. Obesity and tobacco use among U.S. military healthcare beneficiaries add over \$3 billion per year to the DoD budget in health care costs and lost duty days,⁷ and failure to meet weight standards is a leading cause of involuntary separation from the military. Obesity in the American youth population may pose a significant problem in recruiting qualified individuals in the future.⁸ Approximately 27 percent of potential military candidates cannot qualify for the military due to their weight.⁹

In response to health concerns regarding military Service members and their families, DoD has initiated the Healthy Base Initiative (HBI), a demonstration project that examines select military installations' efforts to support improved nutritional choices, increased physical activity, obesity reduction, and decreased tobacco use. HBI is part of Operation Live Well, the DoD program that supports the National Prevention Strategy for improving Americans' health and well-being through a prevention-oriented approach. HBI is charged with developing practical solutions that create an environment which encourages sustainable healthy lifestyles for Service members and their families. DoD gathered successful nutrition, physical activity, tobacco cessation, and community planning initiatives from both military and civilian communities. HBI is conducting assessments at 14 installations and a final report with findings and recommendations is projected for September 2015.

Five-Year Program Evaluation Study for DoD-Wide Family Support Programs

The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation Office requested ODASD(MC&FP) to conduct a five-year study to assess the effectiveness of military family support programs to encourage the use of evidence-based programs beginning in FY 2013. The objective of this effort is to develop logic models for program evaluation and develop outcome measures to assess the impact of family support programs across DoD and to move the portfolio of family support programs from performance measures toward outcome measures. Two DoD-wide family support programs, confidential non-medical counseling and Spouse Education and Career Opportunities, have been identified based on the critical need for outcome data to inform resource and programmatic decisions. This effort will also include developing data infrastructure for evaluation of family support programs, taking advantage of existing databases within DoD and other federal agencies.

⁶ The data are based on 2009-2010. Please see <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db82.pdf>

⁷ Department of Defense. (2008). *Survey of Health Related Behaviors Among U.S. Military Personnel*.

⁸ See Ogden, C.L., Carroll, M.D., Kit B.K., and Flegal, K.M. (2012). Prevalence of obesity and trends in body mass index among US children and adolescents, 1999-2010. *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, E1-E8.

⁹ The data is based on Center for Disease Control and Prevention 2012. <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html>

The Family Readiness Program Review Plan Development Project – Implementation Phase

In July 2012, DoD issued a new DoD Instruction (DoDI) 1342.22, “Military Family Readiness.” DoDI 1342.22 serves as DoD’s primary source of family readiness policy guidance, providing policy, responsibilities, and procedures for delivering family readiness services to Service members and their families. In recognition of the changing nature of today’s all-volunteer force and in response to lessons learned from a decade of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the DoDI modernizes the Department’s approach to family readiness as well. The policy requires that the impact of family readiness services shall be measured through program evaluation in order to support informed decisions regarding sustainment, modification, or termination of family readiness programs and services.

In 2012, ODASD(MC&FP) commissioned The Pennsylvania State University Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness to develop evaluation plans for family readiness programs that may need assistance in preparing for full-scope program evaluation. This project was part of an interagency partnership between DoD and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that allows DoD to take advantage of the Land-Grant University researchers’ expertise in program evaluation and other subject areas.¹⁰ DoD closely worked with the Services on this project. The Services nominated a total of seven programs to be reviewed from the following program areas: life skills education, mobilization and deployment, financial readiness, and the New Parent Support Program. The plans were completed in December 2013. The logic models and program evaluation plans developed in this project are aligned with the objectives of the newly launched, large-scale 5-year program evaluation study discussed in the previous section.

In 2014, ODASD(MC&FP) launched phase two of this effort. The Purdue University Military Family Research Institute was commissioned to implement the program evaluation plans developed in phase one. This phase of the effort will assist the Services in optimizing the evaluation implementation protocol, taking advantage of academic expertise provided by the Purdue University team and have the team conduct the initial data collection and analysis. The purpose of this project is to provide the Services with technical assistance to develop rigorous program evaluation practice for select programs to be replicated for other family support programs.

Enhancement Efforts to the Family Advocacy Program

Within OSD, ODASD (MC&FP) has a dedicated staff (hereafter called “OSD FAP”) to provide oversight of the DoD Family Advocacy Program (FAP) across the four Services. The OSD FAP continues to research and introduce evidence-based practices and tools to the military

¹⁰ In May 2010, an interagency partnership between the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and USDA was formally launched. This partnership sustains the interagency momentum developed through collaborations with USDA, including its affiliated 111 land-grant universities, and the Cooperative Extension Service in providing joint programs in support of military children, youth, and families. It is also responsive to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) recommendations by creating the partnership for military families to address future cross-cutting issues and challenges in supporting military families, particularly those who are geographically-dispersed.

community that enhance FAP service delivery. As part of this continued effort, the OSD FAP office created the Five-Year Strategic Plan for FAP Prevention. To fully meet requirements called for in section 543 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2011 (PL 111-383) and in the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report 10-923, “MILITARY PERSONNEL: Sustained Leadership and Oversight Needed to Improve DoD’s Prevention and Treatment of Domestic Violence,” the OSD FAP drafted a formal oversight plan that is currently in coordination with the Services. The oversight plan will assist OSD FAP staff in better providing oversight of the centrally-funded FAP budget, communications initiatives, policy compliance actions, family advocacy staffing, and metrics tracking.

Increased Focus on Prevention of Child Abuse and Domestic Abuse

The DoD FAP has also increased the focus on prevention both within DoD and the Services. The development and implementation of the Five-Year Strategic Plan for FAP Prevention (2014-2018) with the Services and other federal agencies was the first major DoD effort. In September 2013, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness directed a priority rapid review of the prevention of and response to child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse within the DoD as part of an ongoing proactive approach to improve prevention and coordinated community response (CCR). A Prevention of and Coordinated Community Response to Child Abuse and Domestic Abuse Working Group was established, comprised of representatives from each component of the CCR, including command, medical, legal, law enforcement, Chaplains, FAP, family members, Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, Department of Defense Education Activity, Child and Youth Program, and Family Programs in each Service and at OSD. The Working Group conducted two Rapid Improvement Events, in November 2013 and January 2014, resulting in a report containing 84 preliminary ideas to strengthen the CCR.

To continue with the second phase of this approach, an integrated project team (IPT) was established and chaired by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy. The IPT members are comprised of senior executives from the Military Departments and DoD offices with authority over each of the CRR functional components. The IPT started meeting in December 2014 and will continue to meet quarterly for one year to vet the 84 improvement ideas proposed by subject matter experts, generate a master list of actionable recommendations, and create a plan to monitor implementation. The third and final phase of the review will take place in FY 2016, including implementation and tracking of final recommendations. These IPT efforts will promote congruency between policy and practice, enhanced, targeted and coordinated prevention efforts, and military family relationships by reducing the number and severity of child abuse/neglect and domestic abuse incidents.

3. DoD-WIDE GOALS, METRICS, AND PLANS FOR FAMILY READINESS PROGRAMS

DoD military family readiness programs are designed to address a broad range of family life needs unique to military family life style. This report highlights 13 major DoD family readiness program areas, including child and youth programs, spouse education and career opportunities, financial readiness, and personal and family life readiness. Starting this year, this report no longer covers (1) health care, (2) support for the Wounded, Ill, and Injured and their families, and (3) Exceptional Family Member Program to eliminate redundancy with other reports to Congress. Your attention is invited to the following three reports on the subject areas that are no longer included in this report:

- **Families with Special Needs:** Annual report to Congress on the Office of Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs, mandated by Title 10 section 1781c(h). This report is due to Congress no later than April 30th each year.
- **Health Care for Military Families:** Report to Congress on Effectiveness of TRICARE Program Effectiveness: Access, Cost, and Quality FY 2014, mandated by section 717 of NDAA for FY 1996 (Public Law 104-106) and section 714 of NDAA for FY 2013.
- **Support for the Wounded, Ill, and Injured and Their Families:** Section 738 of NDAA for FY 2013 (Public Law: 112-239) established “a policy containing uniform performance outcome measurements to be used by each Secretary of a military department in tracking and monitoring members of the Armed Forces in Transition programs.” The Secretary of Defense is directed to submit an annual report on the performance of the military departments with respect to the aforementioned policy. The report is due to Congressional Defense committees no later than February each year beginning from 2014 to 2018.¹¹

In the next section, each program area presents a summary of the current DoD-wide goals and metrics with FY 2014 program assessment data, followed by short-term plans. Each program area is assessed by one or more DoD-wide measures that represent the objectives of each program. Measures of effectiveness are used when they are available or when a program is mature enough to assess its effectiveness; otherwise, measures of performance are used. DoD continues to develop better measures and methods to assess program effectiveness that can be uniquely attributed to individual programs. Program evaluation and research efforts are underway in some areas to collect outcome data using evaluation methods tailored to the particular program circumstances. The assessment results presented in this report are based on FY 2014 data unless noted in each section.¹² Each section concludes with short-term plans that are aligned with DoD strategic goals pertaining to military family readiness and set to be

¹¹ Please also refer to the DoD response to recommendations of the DoD Recovering Warrior Task Force (Exhibit 1-3) in the annual report.

¹² The Military Exchanges section presents Retail Fiscal Year (RFY) 2013 data, as their data collection cycle follows the civilian retailers for benchmarking. The section on DoD schools presents the school year 2013-2014 data. The FAP and Child Care sections present the data from FY2013 to better synchronize with the reporting cycle.

actionable within five years or less, depending on the maturity of a program or the urgency of family needs to which the program pertains.

3-1. Children and Youth

3-1-1. Child Care

For today’s U.S. Military, child care is essential to the overall mission readiness, retention, and recruitment. Approximately 43 percent of Active Duty Service members are parents, supporting a total of 1.2 million children age 0 to 22.¹³ Of those military children, 42 percent are 0-5 years old, and 31 percent are 6-12 years old.¹⁴ Many military families are dual-earner couples. About half (52 percent) of spouses of Active Duty members are either working in the civilian sector or serving in the Armed Forces. The DoD Child Development Programs provide quality, accessible, and affordable child care to Service members and their spouses by helping them balance the competing demands of work and family life. DoD serves approximately 200,000 children daily from 0 to 12 years old, operating over 760 Child Development Centers and School Age Care facilities at over 300 locations worldwide and approximately 3,300 Family Child Care homes.

Goals and Metrics

The metrics for DoD Child Development Programs consist of service availability and its quality (see Table 1). To synchronize with the data reporting and validation cycle, this section reports the data from FY2013. Child care availability is measured by demand accommodation rate, the percentage of child care needs met through military child care programs, such as Child Development Centers, School-Age Care, and Family Child Care, and through partnerships with local care providers. DoD set a long-term goal of 80 percent for demand accommodation rate. For FY 2013, the demand accommodation rate was 78 percent.

Table 1. Goals and Metrics for DoD Child Development Programs.

Outcome	Metric	FY13 Data*	FY14 Goal*
Meet child care needs of military families	Demand Accommodation Rate ¹	Goal: 80%	80%
		Actual: 78%	
Outcome	Metric	FY13 Data*	FY14 Goal*
Provide high quality child care	Accreditation Rate	Goal: 98%	98%
		Actual: 97%	
	Certification Rate	Goal: 100%	100%
		Actual: 100%	

Note: Due to the reporting cycle, this report provides program data from the previous fiscal year (FY 2013).

In addition to availability, meeting quality standards of child care is another important indicator to assess DoD child care services. DoD uses accreditation rate and certification rate to

¹³ By the DoD definition, children include minor dependents age 20 or younger or dependents age 22 and younger enrolled as full-time students.

¹⁴ Office of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy. (2014). The 2013 Demographics: Profile of the Military Community. Washington, D.C.

assess quality standards of DoD Child Development Centers. Accreditation rate is measured by the percentage of Child Development Centers on military installations that meet standards of quality established by a nationally recognized, independent accreditation body. Certification rate is measured by the percentage of Child Development Centers meeting DoD requirements validated by inspections conducted by Military Service Headquarters staff. As shown in Table 1, 97 percent of eligible programs were nationally accredited and 100 percent of programs were DoD certified in FY 2013. The goals for child care availability and quality will remain constant for the next five years.

Five-Year Plans

DoD Child Development Centers are currently meeting the goals for quality standards assessed by accreditation and certification rates. All programs are under strict oversight and achieve high quality standards through a systematic inspection process that includes comprehensive unannounced inspections for all facilities and programs with a mandatory correction of deficiencies within 90 days. Programs are inspected on an unannounced basis four times throughout the year to include three inspections conducted by installation personnel and one inspection conducted by Military Service Headquarters staff. This comprehensive, systematic approach to meeting the child care needs of military families enables DoD to deliver quality child care for infants through school-age children. In order to standardize the inspection process, all Services use overarching criteria as the basis for their inspection. An all-Service working group is developing standardized criteria for use by all programs beginning with the Child Development Program.

DoD is addressing the need to increase awareness and availability of child care options through MilitaryChildCare.com (MCC), a request for care system as identified in a U.S. GAO Report.¹⁵ This system provides a singular website that enables all DoD eligible customers access to worldwide military –operated child development programs and services that meet individual child and family needs. The goals of MCC include: a) expediting child care placement by using technology to automate placement tasks, resulting in offers made to families more quickly; b) providing an anticipated placement time to better inform parents on the availability of child care within their respective choices and manage their expectations; c) providing tools for the Services to manage changes in available child care program spaces by location and assist programs in waitlist management; d) increasing family independence and proactive child care planning by allowing them to manage and track their requests regardless of location, Service or when care is needed. The Department is implementing a staggered geographic zone-based global rollout of MCC beginning in 2015 (a 24/7 Help Desk is available to assist both parents and programs). Assessments will be conducted upon completion of each zone that analyzes the need for improvements in the system, training, and/or resources. MCC global rollout is anticipated to be complete by September 2016.

¹⁵ The United States Government Accountability Office. (2012). Military Child Care: DOD Is Taking Actions to Address Awareness and Availability Barriers: Report to Congressional Committees (Publication No. GAO-12-21). Retrieved from GAO website: <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-21>.

Funding construction of on-installation facilities represents one solution of a multi-faceted approach to increase the capacity to provide child care. In addition to building new facilities, there is a continued need for construction to repair and replace aging facilities.

Recent DoD survey data show that nearly three-quarters of military families live off the installation.¹⁶ To meet military families' child care needs, the Department must reach into the civilian community. Efforts to expand the availability of quality child care programs have been implemented at targeted locations initially located in 13 states. These states were identified through an analysis of multiple factors such as residential/demographic information and locations where a state's efforts to improve the quality of child care are in tandem with DoD's. In addition, an analysis of state licensing standards and lack of oversight congruity with DoD fee assistance programs in pilot states guide efforts to provide training and technical assistance. In 2013 and 2014, eight states were added to the quality initiative.

Central to the success of the strategy is the child care liaison who serves as a single point of contact for both the state and the Headquarters working group. At the beginning of the initiative, one liaison resided in each of the pilot states. As the initiative progressed, each of four liaisons work with multiple states and are tasked with developing communication strategies among various state partners to ensure duplication of effort is reduced and resources are effectively utilized. A comprehensive strategic plan developed in coordination with state stakeholders aligned state child care standards with DoD child care standards and identified ways to effect change through regulatory and non-regulatory processes and to leverage training resources. Assistance from the Defense State Liaison Offices (DSLO) supported legislative efforts to increase the quality and availability of child care.

Since 2012, approximately 20 state-level legislative actions intended to increase the quality of child care had been signed in several of the child care expansion pilot states. States outside of the pilots have begun to identify regulatory and legislative issues as possible avenues to increase the quality of child care for DoD and Coast Guard families. In addition to support through the child care liaison, the DoD-USDA Partnership has leveraged the expertise of multiple university researchers in providing training and technical assistance for this initiative. A 2014 program evaluation assessed trainings offered from November 2011 through January 2014 in select counties within the states. During this period child care providers and early childhood education professionals attended face-to-face trainings, train-the-trainer events, and low- or no- cost online trainings. More than 18,500 individuals completed over 31,000 on-line training modules and attended almost 600 face-to-face trainings hosted by the initiative. All the trainings hours are accepted for Child Development Associate formal education hours. In addition, most of the participating states credit the trainings towards state-approved professional development hours required to maintain licensing/certification or quality improvement ratings further increasing the viability of the initiative. The initiative includes a qualitative analysis of several trainings held in multiple states to determine if the strategies learned are helpful, if participants plan to incorporate strategies learned into their work with children, and if they gained new ideas that help them to be more self-aware, informed, and communicative care providers for their children and families. A cross-state process evaluation report developed by

¹⁶ According to the DMDC January 2012 Status of Force Survey of Active Duty members, 68 percent of Active Duty Service members live off installation; 77 percent of married Service members live off installation.

the University of Minnesota Extension has important implications for states interested in learning how best to maximize local, state, and federal partnerships and collaboration efforts to support and sustain early childhood educational initiatives.

3-1-2. Youth Programs

Military children make tremendous sacrifices and deserve quality choices of youth development activities. DoD offers dynamic, innovative and successful youth programs to more than 1 million children, ages 6-18, of Active Duty and Reserve Component members in the United States and overseas. There are approximately 290 DoD youth and teen centers worldwide. DoD has a long history of, and has earned the reputation for, providing positive youth programs that focus on alternative activities for youth during out-of-school hours.

DoD promotes positive youth development by designing programs to recognize the achievements of youth and by fostering partnerships with other nationally recognized youth-serving organizations that augment and support military families. DoD promotes core programming areas to support character and leadership development, sound education choices, healthy life skills, the arts, sports and recreation, mentoring, as well as programs to recognize the achievements of youth. Many programs offer summer day camps and youth employment.

Based on geographic demand, military youth center capacity is usually increased either through community partnerships, construction of new youth centers, or both. Partnering with other federal and non-federal youth-serving organizations enables the Department to offer a wealth of resources in a variety of domains. Military youth are able to participate in programs such as: Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Big Brothers Big Sisters, National 4-H Council, YMCA, Department of Labor summer employment program and other local and national youth organizations. DoD continues to be committed to military children and youth by providing consistent guidance, dynamic and predictable, quality programs that include command and community support, on and off military installations and in communities where they live.

For several years now, the DoD has supported military children and youth going through the military family deployment cycle with camp opportunities across the country. These camps support all military youth, regardless of Service branch, whose parents are deployed, deploying or have recently returned from deployment. Each camp is developed with the idea of providing participants with the necessary skills to navigate the deployment cycle.

In addition, DoD collaborates with several universities to offer adventure camps for military teens aged 14 to 18. Through partnering with these universities, DoD is able to use the expertise of university faculty and staff and offer amazing camp experiences. These camps are not limited to the summer: there are opportunities to participate in winter-themed camps. Camps designed specifically for military youth and teens with special needs are also offered as a part of this camp program.

Goals and Metrics

Each Military Service determines demand for and capacity of its youth programs based on its youth population, including facility-based operations, based on geographic youth population data obtained from the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC). Service components set participation goals at a minimum of 35 percent of eligible youth. The 35 percent goal is a macro calculation defined through projected and historical usage and availability of other community partnership programs utilized by military youth. The goal may vary slightly from installation to installation (e.g., metro vs. rural), depending on demand and capacity.

Five-Year Plans

Military youth represent families who are making great personal sacrifices – to protect and defend our nation and keep America’s values strong. DoD has made it a priority to ensure that our military youth are given the gift of a great future. In the next five years, DoD will continue to provide consistent, predictable and dynamic youth programs that include command and community support, on installations and in communities where military families live. Opportunities that strengthen youth resiliency skills and promote life-skill development with an emphasis on communication, problem solving, responsibility, and the formation of positive relationships will be provided by:

- Recognizing the achievements of youth;
- Continuing to strengthen our partnerships with national youth-serving organizations that augment and offer valued resource; and
- Preparing youth to meet the challenges of military life, adolescence, and adulthood with programs in the five core areas including: character development and leadership development; education support and career development; health and life skills; the arts; and sports, fitness and recreation.¹⁷

3-1-3. DoD Schools

There are over 1.2 million school-age children who have a parent serving in the U.S. military. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) is a DoD field activity, operating two unique school systems serving students world-wide, crossing far more than school district and state boundaries, with schools on three continents. DoDEA maintains three geographic areas of operation: Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) in the United States, and Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) in Europe and in the Pacific. DoDEA is responsible for planning, directing, coordinating, and managing prekindergarten through 12th grade educational programs on behalf of the DoD. A total of 181 accredited schools in 14 school districts are operated in 12 foreign countries, seven states, Guam, and Puerto Rico. Over 78,000 children of Active Duty military and DoD civilian families are attending DoDEA schools worldwide. DoDEA is committed to ensuring that all school-aged children of military families are provided a world-class education that prepares them for postsecondary education and/or career success and to be leading contributors in their

¹⁷ These areas are identified in DoDI 6060.4: Department of Defense (DoD) Youth Programs (YPs) (published on August 23, 2004).

communities as well as in our 21st century globalized society. Currently all DoDEA schools are accredited and in good standing with their regional accrediting agency.

Of the 1.2 million school-age military children, approximately 80 percent attend public schools in the United States. Through collaboration and outreach efforts, DoDEA shares its experience and resources to support educational opportunities for children from military families through a grant program. Through the Non-DoD Schools Program, DoDEA may provide an educational allowance to assist in defraying the costs of educating school age dependents in an overseas area where a school operated by the Department is not reasonably available. The allowance for tuition, transportation, and fees funded by DoDEA for enrollment in a Non-DoD school is guided by the Department of State Standardized Regulations education allowance for their assigned location. This program serves nearly 2,800 children in 132 foreign locations.

Goals and Metrics

DoDEA has an established and rigorous system-wide assessment program to measure educational effectiveness and student academic performance. This report presents results for the following two areas: student academic performance and pupil-to-teacher ratio (PTR) as identified in the balanced score card. The assessment data from School Year 2013–14 (hereafter referred to as the 2014 data) are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Terra Nova Results for DoD School Students

Grade	2014 Number of Test Takers	Reading NCE	Language NCE	Math NCE	Science NCE	Social Studies NCE
3	6,902	58.5	58.2	59.5	64.0	63.4
4	6,334	59.1	57.9	58.0	58.6	59.7
5	6,131	57.6	58.2	58.3	61.1	58.2
6	5,739	62.0	60.9	58.1	60.9	62.2
7	4,968	60.9	61.7	60.4	60.8	61.9
8	4,666	60.7	63.4	61.7	62.9	62.8
9	3,964	65.4	62.1	62.8	64.0	62.0

DoDEA measures student progress with multiple performance-based assessments, such as TerraNova and the SAT®, which provide nationally comparable data. TerraNova is a standardized achievement test in which student scores are compared to the scores from a national representative sample of students. The goals are set to ensure military children are receiving an education comparable to their peers in stateside schools and to minimize the number of students performing at or near the margin of academic failure.

- TerraNova 3: Results for DoDEA from the 2013-2014 school year reflects DoDEA’s continued success at performing better than the national average on the Terra Nova. In all subject areas and at each grade level (i.e., 3-9), DoDEA average performance was above the nation. Terra Nova measures in Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE). The NCE is a measure of where a student falls on the normal curve, indicating a

student’s rank compared to the students on the same test. The NCEs are equal-interval scale conversions of percentile ranks. The NCE for the nation is 50. DoDEA’s NCE for all grades and for all subjects were above 50. Table 2 shows the results by grade level:

- SAT®: In 2014, DoDEA students’ average score in critical reading was 508, eleven points above the national average score of 497. The DoDEA SAT® writing score of 487 was the same as the national average score. The DoDEA average score in math was 497, 16 points below the national average score of 513.
- DoDEA had a participation rate of 75 percent which is significantly higher than the national average participation rate of 52 percent.
- DoDEA’s scores for its African American and Hispanic students were significantly higher than the national average. African American students in DoDEA had an average score of 1,363, which is 85 points higher than the national average for African American students’ score of 1,278. DoDEA’s Hispanic students had an average score of 1,442 which was 89 points higher than the national average score of 1,353 for Hispanic students.
- SAT scores for White students and Multiple Race students within DoDEA were either equal to or better than the national average. White students in DoDEA had an average score of 1,576 which is the same score for White students nationally. DoDEA’s students with more than one race designation had an average SAT score of 1,447, which is higher than the national average of 1,441.
- SAT scores for Asian students in DoDEA were not as strong as the national average. The average SAT score for DoDEA Asian students was 1,490 compared to the national average of 1,651.
- DoDEA’s Pupil Teacher Ratio averages continues to be the same as last year as reflected in the Table 3 below:

Table 3. Pupil Teacher Ratios (PTR) for DoD Schools

Outcome	Metric	SY2013-2014 Data	SY2014-2015 Goals
Maintain K–3 Pupil-to-Teacher Ratio (PTR) of not greater than 18; Maintain 4–12 PTR of not greater than 24	DDESS ¹ Pupil-to-Teacher Ratio	20.6:1 (K–12 PTR Average)	No less than 18.0:1 nor greater than 24.0:1
	DoDDS ² Pupil-to-Teacher Ratio	20.6:1 (K–12 PTR Average)	No less than 18.0:1 nor greater than 24.0:1

¹DDESS: Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DoD schools in the continental United States)

²DoDDS: Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoD schools overseas)

Five-Year Plans

Common Core State Standards: The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Initiative originated as a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. The standards were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and experts, to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce. The CCSS were developed to

create a rigorous common core of academic standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics for grades kindergarten through 12 (K–12). The CCSS are research and evidence-based, internationally benchmarked, and aligned with college and workforce expectations. The standards are reflective of important cross-disciplinary skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, logical reasoning, communication, and team work. They are clearly written and user-friendly to educators and parents. The CCSS will replace, in part, the current DoDEA curriculum standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts. Science and Social Studies standards will follow. Since the CCSS have been adopted in 44 states, the District of Columbia, and four territories, DoDEA’s implementation will help mitigate some of the issues military children face when transitioning between states and DoDEA schools.

DoDEA senior leaders and subject matter experts have begun a multi-year implementation of this education reform. A formal crosswalk, (i.e., Math audit) demonstrating the alignment of CCSS with the DoDEA curriculum standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts has been completed. The results from that study have not been published; however, it can be said that there was close alignment across DoDEA’s primary grades and less alignment with upper grades in the area of mathematics. DoDEA is looking to implement Pre K-5 Mathematics starting during the 2015-2016 school year. The remaining part of the 5-year plan has DoDEA implementing grade 6-12 math standards and then K-12 literacy standards. Implementation of CCSS includes a focus on Continuous School Improvement and teaching, learning, and leading for 21st Century competencies and skills in order to create student-centered learning opportunities and environments in DoDEA schools.

Instructional Enhancements: DoDEA is an educational agency which maintains instructional quality while responding to the diverse needs of individual students. Additional strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Increasing rigor in classroom instruction based on the inclusion of critical thinking skills, depth of knowledge levels, and standards-based instruction;
- Administering a K–3 Reading Diagnostic Assessment that measures the reading progress of students throughout the school year and across years with the goal of differentiating instruction and increasing reading proficiency;
- Adding Advanced Placement (AP) courses and monitoring student success in coursework and AP exams;
- Using student data to identify Advancement Via Individual Determination students and provide additional instructional support in critical reading/writing skills that will lead to improved performance on AP, Preliminary SAT, and SAT assessments;
- Using data to tell the story of student and school performance so that goals can be set to guide instruction;
- Preparing students for college and career readiness through a focus on Science Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics;
- Placing new mathematics, social studies, and English Language Arts curricular materials in schools to provide a focus on college and career readiness; and
- Increasing the mathematics requirements for students to increase rigor in our middle and high schools.

DoDEA 21st Century Teaching, Learning, and Leading: DoDEA has adopted a new 21st century teaching, learning and leading framework to assist students in the mastery of specific skills, content knowledge, expertise and literacies required for success in college and career in the 21st century. The framework is comprised of the following elements:

- Mastery of core subjects (e.g., math, economics); competencies (e.g., global awareness, financial literacy); and innovation skills (e.g., creativity and collaboration);
- Adoption of 21st century educational standards and assessments (i.e., Common Core State Standards);
- Adoption of 21st century curriculum and instructional practices (e.g., digital materials, project-based learning, real-world applications);
- Implementation of 21st century educator professional development (e.g., technology-enhanced instruction);
- Creation of 21st century learning environments (e.g., new school facility designs).

DoDEA initiated the creation of new school facility designs in April 2011, when DoDEA hosted three symposia to define the requirements of a 21st century education, and to determine how educational requirements subsequently affect school design. The first symposium, which included thought-leaders in education, contributed to definition of a 21st century education and identified skill sets needed for DoDEA students either to enter the work force or to continue on to higher education. The second symposium collected input from concerned DoDEA stakeholders to include students, teachers, administrators, military leaders and the community. The final symposium brought together architects and engineers from design firms already engaged in the design and construction of 21st century schools that provided the framework for subsequent specifications development for education facilities.

The consolidated results of these symposia led to the production of draft design specification for education facilities. Comments concerning the draft facilities specifications were again solicited from the educational community through web outreach. Final review and incorporation of comments resulted in publication of new DoDEA education facilities specifications supporting a 21st century education. The DoDEA Education Directorate is collaborating with all stakeholders to develop and implement a comprehensive action plan that addresses the professional development, communication, and transition required to transform DoDEA classrooms as models for 21st century education.

Key elements of the 21st Century Teaching, Learning, and Leading are:

- A student-centered education;
- Differentiated instruction for students at different performance levels;
- Multi-modal instruction to account for the varying ways in which students learn;
- Blended instruction to integrate the use of technology;
- Project based learning for relevance to real-world situations; and
- Multi-disciplinary instruction to illustrate synergistic gains versus discipline instruction in isolation.

The school facility will complement these elements by providing:

- Student-centered spaces for collaborative work;
- Variably sized spaces to support differentiated and multi-modal instruction;
- An infrastructure allowing access to current and envisioned technology;
- Greater use of the facility as a teaching tool to reinforce instruction;
- A facility allowing greater appreciation for sustainability and energy conservation;
- Flexible and adaptable construction allowing easier and more cost-effective changes to support evolving educational requirements; and
- “Green” features to highlight sustainability, energy conservation, and energy production to focus student attention on these areas of increasing national concern. DoD schools continue to serve as a standard of educational excellence for the nation.

3-1-4. Minimizing Disruption for School Age Children of Military Families

Military children move across state lines and overseas much more often than most of their civilian peers. On average, military children attend six to nine different school systems from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Frequent relocations across state lines can hamper educational opportunities for military children because of different policies applied to transferring students between the “sending” state and the “receiving” state. Removing these educational barriers will help provide stability in the lives of military children during military moves. Some of the provisions of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (hereafter called “the Compact”) also help support military school-aged children during parental deployments.

In cooperation with the Council of State Governments, DoD developed the Compact in collaboration with an array of Federal, state and local officials as well as national stakeholder organizations. DoD has identified the adoption of the Compact by states as one of the 10 state-level key issues that have a strong impact on military families. The DSLO has been working to educate state lawmakers about the Compact since 2008. The goal of the Compact is to institute a comprehensive mechanism to assist transitioning military children by providing uniform policy in every school district in every participating state across four key areas of transition issues: eligibility, enrollment, placement and graduation.

Goals and Metrics

Effectiveness of this effort is assessed by the percentage of military school-aged children (5-18 years old) covered by the provisions of the Compact (see Table 3). The percentage is based on the population of military school-aged children of each state, not the number of states covered. With the addition of Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, and Oregon in FY 2014, all 50 states (and D.C.) adopted the Compact covering 100 percent of military school age children with its provisions.

Table 4. Goals and Metrics for Minimizing Disruption for School Age Military Children.

Outcome	Metric	FY14 Data	FY15 Goal
Increase the coverage of Military Children by Interstate Compact Provisions	% of Military Children Covered by Interstate Compact Provisions	Goal: 100% ¹	Action Complete ²
		Actual: 100%	

¹ Percentage is number of children, not number of states.

² DoD has met its intended goal, to cover 75% of the military population in the U.S. by FY 2013. However, as there were additional states that wished to join the Interstate Compact, DoD had established additional targets for FY 2011 – FY 2014.

Five-Year Plans

With the completion of legislation within the 50 states, DoD is shifting its focus to providing assistance to the Commission responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Compact. The Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission (MIC3) is established by the Compact and is comprised of Commissioners from the 50 member states. Additionally, each member state has a State Council chaired by the State Commissioner and includes educators, legislators and a representative of the military community as a non-voting member. DoD is responsible for designating the military representatives and is involved in assisting MIC3 with educating military parents on what the Compact can and cannot do, as well as advise military parents on the status of the implementation of the Compact in the states.

3-2. Spouse Education and Career Opportunities

3-2-1. Military Spouse Education and Career Opportunities

As a result of the demands of military life, military spouses find themselves with a unique set of challenges with regard to the pursuit of education and workforce participation. Most notably, frequent relocations and extended periods of family separation and single-parenting due to deployments and unaccompanied training and assignments of their Service members are major challenges for military spouses to pursue their educational and career goals. Military families move 14 percent more often than their civilian counterparts and move more frequently across state lines.¹⁸ These relocations have undesirable impacts on spouses’ careers and employment status as they prevent or interrupt workforce participation, employment continuity, upward career mobility, and efforts to pursue and complete job-related education and training. Depending on the spouse’s career field, they may be required to seek professional licenses and credentials in each new state in which they live and work.

The 2012 Survey of Active Duty Spouses data show that one in four (25 percent) of military spouses in the labor force is unemployed, which accounts for approximately 90,000 spouses.¹⁹ Furthermore, when military spouses are employed, their income levels lag behind

¹⁸ Data Source: The U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey 2007-2009.

¹⁹ Defense Manpower Data Center. (2013). The 2012 Survey of Active Duty Spouses Tabulation Volume.

their civilian counterparts.²⁰ A recent study showed that female military spouses with full-time jobs earned 25 percent less than their civilian counterparts.²¹

For military spouses, continuing educational goals are also difficult to pursue. Results from the 2012 Survey of Active Duty Spouses indicated that 43 percent of military spouses expressed their interest in attending school, while many identified the cost of education and family responsibilities as major reasons that hold them back.²² DoD recognizes the importance of spouse well-being and work-life balance as Service members' resilience, readiness, and retention decisions are closely linked to their family members' financial health and well-being.

In response to the mobile military lifestyle challenges that military spouses face, DoD established a spouse-centered Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO) program.

DOD Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO) Program: DoD is committed to strengthening the SECO initiatives to continue the positive effects that spouse education and employment continuity have on overall satisfaction with military life, family financial stability, the health and wellness of the military community, and the overall readiness and retention of the Armed Forces. The SECO Program has four distinct lifecycle stages: (1) Career exploration, (2) Education, training, and licensing, (3) Employment Readiness, and (4) Career Connections. DoD is committed to strengthening and evaluating each lifecycle stage in its continuing effort to produce better spouse employment outcomes.

Military spouses need opportunities and financial assistance to seek education, training, licenses and certifications required to launch portable careers and to find entry level employment. To address these needs, master's level certified SECO education and career counselors provide specialty consultations via the Military OneSource SECO Spouse Career Center (1-800-342-9647). These counselors assist spouses in exploring careers, portable career fields and occupations, and what type of education a spouse would need to achieve their goals. Counselors also help spouses make connections to employers who have pledged to recruit, hire, promote and retain military spouses throughout their Service member's career. For spouses who are further along in their careers and educational pursuits, SECO counselors provide information and additional referrals to financial aid for those who need licenses or credentials in new states as a result of relocations, career mentors, and connections to military friendly employers who offer all levels of employment, including mid-career and senior level positions. SECO counselors help guide spouses to virtual employment, part-time and seasonal employment, community volunteer and self-development opportunities, and prior learning assessments that may lead to college credits. Help in documenting these work and educational experiences is also available through the MySECO website (<http://myseco.militaryonesource.mil>), where military spouses can access tools and resources to assist them at any point in their career. During FY 2013, the Career Center received an average of 12,000 phone inquiries about SECO programs per month for a total of more than 144,000 requests for SECO assistance.

²⁰ Results from the 2010 Military Family Life Project Survey show that 84 percent of military spouses have some college, 25 percent have a bachelor's degree, and 10 percent have an advanced degree.

²¹ Kniskern, M. K., & Segal, D. R. (2010). Mean Wage Differences between Civilian and Military Wives. College Park, MD: Center for Research on Military Organization, University of Maryland, College Park.

²² Defense Manpower Data Center. (2013). The 2012 Survey of Active Duty Spouses Tabulation Volume.

Military Spouse Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) Scholarship: DoD offers the MyCAA Scholarship to the spouses of junior Service members who are serving on Title 10 orders and in the pay grades of E-1 to E-5, W-1 to W-2, and O-1 to O-2. MyCAA offers up to \$4,000 of financial assistance for an associate's degree and education, training or occupational licenses/credentials needed for a portable career. In FY 2014, 30,469 spouses established MyCAA accounts, and 24,644 applied for and received financial assistance for career related education. The majority of military spouses used their financial assistance to obtain education in the health care services. Other frequently sought career fields included business management, technology, education, skilled trades, and animal services.

Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP): MSEP is a targeted recruitment and employment solution that connects military spouses with employers seeking the essential 21st century workforce skills and attributes that military spouses possess. MSEP employers sign a Statement of Support pledging to increase employment opportunities for military spouses, maintain employment status for military spouses as they relocate, provide career promotion opportunities for military spouses, and ensure pay equity for military spouses commensurate with their level of training, work experience, accomplishments, and credentials. Spouses are referred to meaningful employment opportunities and other resources that help them find employment in local communities across the nation and overseas, and that give them the stability they need to make physical relocations and financial and career transitions easier. To this end, DoD continues to expand and recognize the number of MSEP Partner Employers who reach spouse employment goals to reduce military spouse high unemployment rates, close wage gaps and improve employment continuity and career advancement opportunities.

MSEP's partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's "Hiring Our Heroes" military spouse program has maximized military spouse participation at over 400 "Hiring Our Heroes" job fairs across the country and over 40 special events designed to meet the specific needs of military spouse job seekers. This partnership has allowed the DoD to promote opportunities for military spouses through a model that is consistent and provides spouses with a place to meet vetted employers with guaranteed career opportunities. MSEP also provides an online career portal which connects military spouses with available opportunities posted by MSEP Partner Employers online.²³ Since the MSEP program launch on June 29, 2011:

- 266 Partner Employers have joined the MSEP Partnership;
- More than 3.3 million jobs have been posted on the MSEP Career Portal;
- More than 70,000 military spouses have been hired by MSEP Partners; and
- MSEP has connected Military Services Installation Employment Readiness Service Providers at over 300 military installations with MSEP Partners, Account Managers and Liaisons to facilitate job connections and participation in hiring events.

During FY 2013, SECO also launched the Spouse Ambassador Network, bringing together MSEP partners with existing community networks to connect military spouses with employment resources in the communities where they live and work. MSEP Partners who are participating in this network have completed comprehensive, coordinated quarterly promotions

²³ URL: <http://www.MSEPJobs.militaryonesource.mil>.

of resources that support spouse caregivers of our wounded, ill and injured Service members; spouses who are transitioning back to civilian communities at the end of their Service members' military careers; and spouse appreciation, career connections and success stories. Future promotions will center around resources which help spouses network effectively and become their own best advocate for employment opportunities, career advancement and work-life balance.

Goals and Metrics

SECO program has the following two overarching goals: (1) reduce the 25 percent military spouse unemployment rate; (2) close the 25 percent wage gap experienced by military spouses. To ensure steady progress towards accomplishing SECO's overarching goals, DoD will measure the degree to which it accomplishes the following objectives in FY2014:

Reduce the 25 percent military spouse unemployment rate by:

- Increasing opportunities for private-sector careers by expanding the number of MSEP Partner Employers, referring small businesses to Military Installation Employment Readiness Service Providers, and linking military spouses who have completed SECO/MyCAA Scholarship programs of study with MSEP Partner Employers who have job openings and want to hire them in their chosen career fields.
- Continuing dialogue with the Office of Personnel Management, the Department of Labor, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service and the Defense Acquisition Career Management Program to remove barriers to Federal careers and improve communications to energize spouse employment within the Federal workforce.
- Identifying and promoting state best practices for portability of occupational licenses and credentials within all fifty states and U.S. territories.
- Promoting states' unemployment compensation eligibility for trailing military spouses to help sustain them during their job searches following relocation to new communities.
- Improving communications with military spouses by continuing to execute a comprehensive strategic communication plan including social media.

Reduce the 25 percent wage gap experienced by military spouses by:

- Increasing access to educational opportunities including the SECO/MyCAA Scholarship
- Establishing a database of military spouse-specific scholarships provided by MSEP Partner organizations and their industry partners, community colleges and Service member Opportunity Colleges who are committed to the Military Student Bill of Rights.
- Linking spouses to mentors and increasing networking opportunities through career fairs and online platforms.
- Assisting MSEP employers in identifying, sharing and adopting best practices for hiring, relocating and retaining military spouse talent.

Five-Year Plans

To ensure SECO's continued success, ODASD(MC&FP) has a team of subject matter experts to manage the SECO program and develop a streamlined infrastructure to guide and oversee long-term SECO program and policy development and implementation. A DoD SECO advisory group, with representatives from the Military Services and Military Department Secretariats, and four MSEP working groups have been established to address needs for strategic organization, partner development and stewardship, mentoring, information and portal technology, strategic communications, and reporting.

The five-year program evaluation study for DoD-wide family support programs identified the SECO program as a core program area for evaluation. Sponsored by ODASD(MC&FP), RAND Corporation is conducting multi-year evaluation projects to examine the impact of SECO services (MyCAA, MSEP, or both) on spouse employment. The project will further examine whether that employment is sufficient to meet earnings and professional mobility needs of military spouses. As a part of these projects, RAND published a report on MyCAA scholarship use among Active duty spouses, analyzing the 2012 Survey of Active Duty Spouses, in January 2015.²⁴ Results show that cost was the key reason for not pursuing higher education. The study also found that nearly 20 percent of eligible spouses used MyCAA and more than half of eligible non-users were unaware of MyCAA. Barriers to both education and employment among interested spouses included competing family responsibilities and difficulties with child care.

3-2-2. Expansion of Unemployment Compensation Eligibility for "Trailing" Military Spouses

One of the factors that indiscriminately and negatively impacts the military spouse's employment is frequent relocation due to a Permanent Change of Station of the Service member. Frequent relocation often hinders the development of a spouse's career and can cause financial instability in the family due to the difficulty of maintaining seniority and finding a job with a comparable salary at the new duty location. As a result, military spouses are more likely to earn less and experience higher rates of unemployment than their civilian counterparts.²⁵ Although military spouses have no alternative choices in the matter, statutes and policies in many states view a spouse leaving a job due to a military move as voluntary. Granting unemployment compensation eligibility to working spouses in transition (those "trailing" the military member) provides a much-needed financial bridge for military families during mandatory moves, and supports spouses while they seek suitable employment.

²⁴ Friedman, E.M., Miller, L.L., & Evans, S.E. (2015). "Advancing the Careers of Military Spouses: An Assessment of Education and Employment Goals and Barriers Facing Military Spouses Eligible for MyCAA," RAND Corporation: Santa Monica, VA.

²⁵ Kniskern, M. K., & Segal, D. R. (2010). Mean Wage Differences between Civilian and Military Wives. College Park, MD: Center for Research on Military Organization, University of Maryland, College Park.

Goals and Metrics

Expansion of unemployment compensation eligibility for military spouses who move with their Service members across the states is one of the 10 state-level key issues identified by the DoD as having a strong impact on military families. DSLO has been working with state lawmakers to resolve these issues since 2004. In the first year, 11 states provided unemployment compensation eligibility for military spouses who move with their Service members, representing 37 percent of military spouses. Progress is measured by the percentage of spouses

Table 5. Goals and Metrics for Expanding Unemployment Compensation Eligibility for Trailing Military Spouses

Outcome	Metric	FY14 Data	FY15 Goal
Increase coverage of Trailing Military Spouses by State Unemployment Compensation	% of Military Spouses Eligible for Unemployment Compensation During Mandatory Relocation	Goal: 98%	Action Complete
		Actual: 97%	

¹ Percentage is number of spouses, not number of states; some states have a proportionally larger number of military spouses over others.

² DoD has met its goal to have sufficient number of states comport with DoD guidance to cover 75 percent of target military population living in the United States by FY 2013. Since DoD has already reached the intended goal in 2009, and there are additional states that may be willing to grant access to unemployment compensation to military spouses, DoD has established additional targets for FY 2011 – FY 2014.

covered by state legislation affording unemployment compensation (see Table 4). To date, 46 states and the District of Columbia provide unemployment compensation to trailing military spouses, bringing the percentage of spouses covered under legislation to 97 percent in FY 2014.

Five-Year Plans

Virginia and Vermont enacted legislation in 2014, bringing the percentage of military spouses living in states with laws supporting their eligibility to 97 percent. DSLO will continue to bring the issue forward to the remaining states (Idaho, Louisiana, North Dakota and Ohio); however, because so few states still need to enact legislation, the issue will not be listed among the key issues. Additionally, states that track military spouse usage have said that few eligible military spouses request unemployment compensation. DoD will continue to inform military spouses of this important entitlement.

3-3. Financial Well-Being

The American Psychological Association's 2013 Stress in America™ survey indicated that money was one of the leading stressors reported by American adults (71 percent).²⁶ Research has consistently shown that financial stress has negative impacts on workers' health, family relations, and productivity. In the military, personal financial health is also a readiness issue. Emergencies or financial mismanagement can quickly escalate into major financial problems and negatively impact personal readiness and mission readiness. Personal financial security also helps Service members maintain the security clearances they need to perform their

²⁶ American Psychological Association. (2014). Stress in America: Are Teens Adopting Adults' Stress Habits? American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.

assigned duties. DoD and the Military Services have programs and initiatives to sustain and strengthen financial readiness of Service members and their families.

3-3-1. Personal Finance

To ensure basic financial skills and access to helpful financial management tools, each Military Service provides a wide variety of financial education programs and resources both online and in person through personal financial managers at Military and Family Support Centers on military installations or within the community. In 2003, DoD launched the Financial Readiness Campaign to ease financial stressors and enhance personal financial readiness. The Campaign augments the financial readiness efforts of the Military Services and their commanders to support overall mission readiness. The Campaign fulfills its mission through financial educational programs, collaboration, counseling, legal protections, and other resources designed to help Service members and their families reach their financial goals.

Goals and Metrics

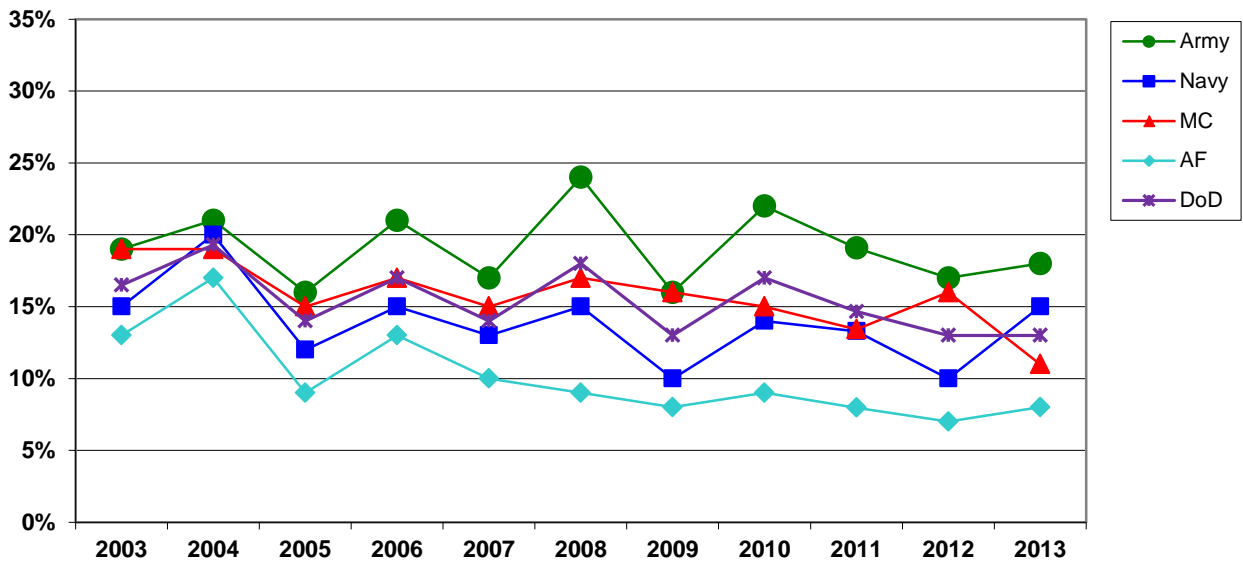
Of 1.37 million Active Duty personnel, approximately 43 percent are 25 years old or younger.²⁷ Generally speaking, junior enlisted members and their families are financially more vulnerable, compared with officers and senior enlisted members. Junior enlisted members earn less, but necessary expenses to support their families can be high; many of them are still learning how to manage their finances. To assess the overall financial readiness of Service members, DoD has been monitoring the annual trend of the junior enlisted members' (1) perceived financial conditions and (2) problematic financial behaviors, using data from the DMDC Status of Force Survey of Active Duty Members (SOFS-A). Due to the change in the data collection cycle of SOFS-A, we report data one year cycle behind in this report.

Figure 1 shows the trend of the Active Duty junior enlisted in pay grades E1 to E4 who reported their financial conditions as "not comfortable" from 2002 to 2013. In 2013, those percentages slightly increased for the Army, Navy, and Air Force by one to five percentage points, while decreasing for the Marine Corps by five percentage points. Although the percentage changes for the Navy and Marine Corps are five percentage points, they were still within the margin of errors. The data indicate that the proportion of the junior enlisted members who feel financially uncomfortable has been gradually declining over the past 10 years.

Data from the same survey showed that the percentage of the junior enlisted who experienced one or more problems in paying bills (e.g., "bounced 2 or more checks", "fell behind in rent or mortgage.") declined in 2013, compared with 2012 (see Figure 2). However, we cannot make any trend analyses going back further because the 2011 SOFS-A did not include the debt questions. Using DoD-wide personnel survey data, DoD will continue monitoring the junior enlisted members' perception and behavior regarding personal finances.

²⁷ The Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy. 2014. The 2013 Demographics Report: Profile of the Military Community, Washington, D.C. (p.33)

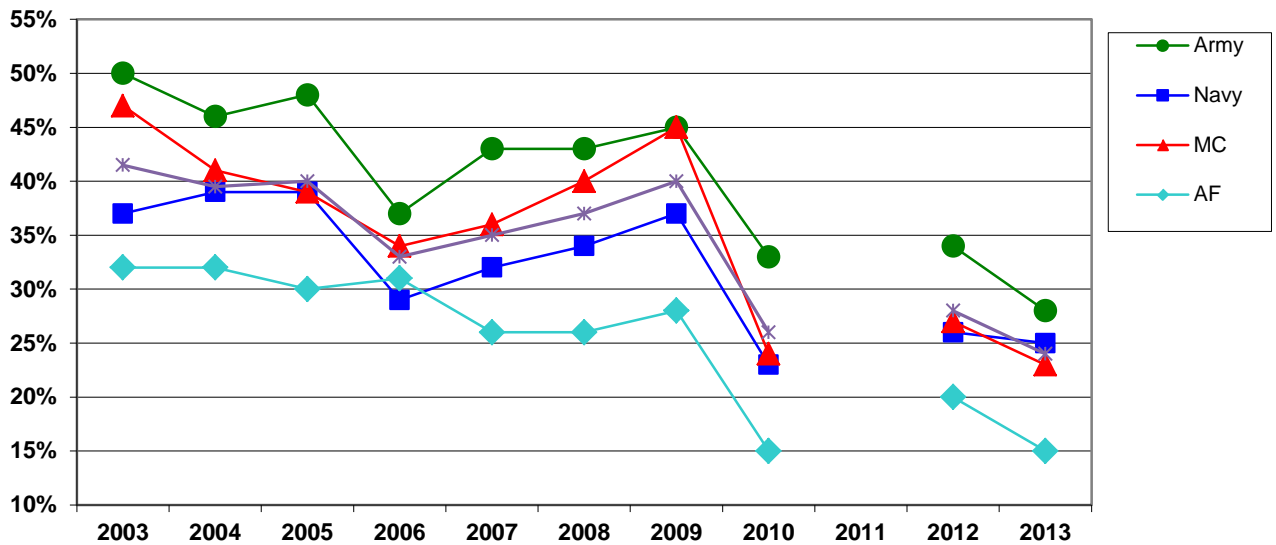
Figure 1. E1-E4 Self-Assessment of Overall Financial Condition: Percentage of Reporting Financial Difficulties by Service (2002 -2013).



Data Source: DMDC Status of Force Survey of Active Duty Members (SOFS-A).

Note: The percentages presented in the figure are based on the number of E1-E4 choosing 4 or 5 from the following five choices to describe their overall financial condition: 1. Very comfortable and secure; 2. Able to make ends meet without much difficulty; 3. Occasionally have some difficulty making ends meet; 4. Tough to make ends meet but keeping your head above water; 5. In over your head.

Figure 2. E1-E4 Experiencing One or More Bill Payment Problems by Service (2002-2013).



Data Source: DMDC Status of Force Survey of Active Duty Members (SOFS-A).

Note: The percentages presented in the figure are based on the number of E1-E4 answering yes to one or more of the following episodes that happened to them or their spouses in the past 12 months: a. Bounced 2 or more checks; b. Failed to make a monthly/minimum payment on credit card, AAFES, NEXCOM account, or Military Star card; c. Fell behind in rent or mortgage; d. Was pressured to pay bills by stores, creditors, or bill collectors; e. Had telephone, cable, or internet shut off; f. Had water, heat or electricity shut off; g. Had a car, household appliance or furniture repossessed; h. Failed to make car payment; and i. Obtained payday loan.

As with the Active Component, effective management of personal finances is critical to the readiness of Reserve component members and their families, such as the impact of mobilization/activation on household income and financial stability. To assist Reserve component members and families, DoD provides them with information, referral resources, and counseling through Military OneSource and through personal financial counselors surged at the request of the state. The financial readiness of Reserve component members is also supported by law through the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act which protects re-employment rights. Aspects of Guard and Reserve financial well-being are assessed annually through DMDC's Status of Forces Survey-Reserve that is fielded annually and the Reserve Component Spouse Survey that is fielded every other year.

Five-Year Plans

DoD and the Services will continue executing the Financial Readiness Campaign to improve the personal financial readiness of the Total Force for the next five years. The Department continues its efforts to develop quantifiable metrics to link the changes in personal finance behaviors to military-sponsored financial education programs. Developing meaningful metrics is particularly challenging because there are few longitudinal evaluation studies looking at the impact of preventative, financial literacy programs on individual financial behaviors over time.

To address this issue, the Services submitted some of their financial education programs to a DoD-sponsored project to develop evaluation plans for family support programs. ODASD(MC&FP) commissioned the Pennsylvania State University Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness (hereafter called "Penn State Clearinghouse") to develop comprehensive evaluation plans for select family support programs nominated by the Services. The following financial education programs were included in the project: Navy Command Financial Specialist Training; Army GPS Core Personal Financial Planning for Transition; and Airman & Family Readiness Center Community Readiness Consultant Model Personal Financial Readiness. The Navy program submitted is a training program for service providers. The Army and Air Force programs are designed to provide Service members with education and training on financial literacy topics and necessary financial skills to face financial challenges from entry into military service through the transition to civilian life. The objectives of these two programs are to increase financial literacy, enhance financial self-efficacy, improve preparedness for unforeseen financial costs, maintain financial stability, and develop awareness of available financial resources.

The Penn State University Clearinghouse team conducted a program information review and site visits to develop evaluation plans, including a logic model, measures of expected outcomes, data collection timeline, and research design. The project was recently completed and final reports were provided to the DoD and the Services. The project is now in the implementation assistance phase. Purdue University researchers are assisting the Army in implementing the program evaluation plan developed by the Penn State University team and are developing a program evaluation plan for a financial education program for the Navy. Through these ongoing efforts in evaluation of personal finance programs, DoD will continue to develop

quantifiable and meaningful outcome measures for personal finance programs in the next five years.

3-3-2. Promoting Enforcement of the Predatory Lending Regulation

Predatory short-term loans are one of the financial practices that can cause financial problems for Service members and their families very quickly, which can negatively impact their quality of life and personal readiness. Financial problems may lead Service members to lose security clearances, which will impede their deployability while serving, as well as job opportunities after leaving the military. The significance of this issue prompted Congress to enact title 10, U.S.C., section 987, which authorized DoD to regulate certain predatory products and practices. The implementing regulation, Part 232 of Title 32 Code of Federal Regulations, “Limitations on Terms of Consumer Credit Extended to Service Members and Dependents,” which went into effect October 1, 2007, covers all financial institutions and sets limits on three forms of short-term credit: payday loans, vehicle title loans, and tax refund anticipation loans. All states follow the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council Interagency Guidelines for the regulation when examining financial institutions; however, depending on the way their state statutes are written, not all states have the authority to enforce the regulation.

Goals and Metrics

Effectiveness of this initiative is measured by the percentage of Service members residing in states that provide their financial regulators authority to enforce the predatory lending regulation or prohibit the short-term credit covered by the regulation. This percentage is calculated based on the military demographics of each state, not just the number of states covered. To date, 37 states enforce the regulation, providing protection for 77 percent of Service members and their families (see Table 6).

Table 6. Goals and Metrics for Promoting State Enforcement of the Predatory Lending Regulation.

Outcome	Metric	FY14 Data	FY15 Goals
Protect Service members and their families from predatory lending practices	Percentage of military members "protected" ¹	Goal: 79%	No change ²
		Actual: 77%	

¹“Protected” = protected from these regulated lending practices either because the states do not allow those practices or have the ability to enforce 32 Code of Federal Regulations Part 232.

²The regulation is under revision, consequently DoD will not seek additional commitment for state enforcement until after any changes to the regulation have been finalized.

Five-Year Plans

In response to Congressional request in the House Report accompanying the NDAA for FY 2013, DoD provided a report in April 2014. The report concluded that most Service members report sufficient access to safe, low-cost credit products, report few problems managing their finances, and report little use of, or impact by, high-cost credit. Nevertheless, the DMDC survey results of active duty Service members featured in the report also tended to indicate that a substantial minority of Service members continue to report difficulty managing their finances,

and little access to safe, low-cost credit options. The report also provided instances where existing laws allow creditors to offer high-cost credit that is not covered by the existing definitions in the regulation implementing the Military Lending Act (MLA).

Concurrent with the development of the report to Congress, DoD convened a working group of Agencies (Prudential Regulators and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau) designated in the MLA to consult on development of implementing regulations. With their assistance, DoD developed proposed changes to the regulation that would extend the definition of consumer credit to encompass the types of credit that already are subject to the protections of the Truth In Lending Act, other than loans secured by real estate and purchase-money loans, including loans to purchase vehicles. This definition includes all forms of payday and vehicle title loans, as well as installment loans and credit cards. The proposed rule was published in the Federal Register for public comment and was open between September 29 and December 26, 2014. The 577 comments submitted during the public comment period have been adjudicated and the interagency working group has now finished drafting the final rule. The rule is in final Departmental coordination.

3-3-3. Military Commissary Benefits

The commissary benefit is a major component of the non-monetary compensation package and is critical to the financial readiness of military families. During FY 2014, the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) operated a worldwide network of stores, providing groceries and household items to the military community, beginning the year with 246 stores and ending FY 2014 with 242 stores due to four scheduled OCONUS closures. Authorized patrons include approximately five million sponsor households comprised of Active Duty and Reserve Component (Reserve and National Guard) members and their family members, retirees and their family members, and DoD civilian employees overseas.²⁸ Patrons save an average of 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial supermarkets. Patrons purchase grocery and household items from the commissary at cost plus a five percent surcharge. The surcharge is used for commissary replacement and restoration construction projects and recapitalizing stores. Commissary operations are funded with an annual appropriation to the DeCA Working Capital Fund.

Goals and Metrics

FY 2014 was DeCA's ninth year using the Balanced Scorecard concept. This management tool assesses performance and helps achieve long-term strategic goals that optimize customer satisfaction and business productivity. The DeCA Balanced Scorecard provides excellent data for program evaluation by specifying expected performance during FY 2014- FY 2018. Table 7 presents the data extracted from the DeCA Balanced Scorecard and Annual Financial Report. The key metrics for the commissary benefit consist of the following measures: value of the benefit, cost control, surcharge obligations, customer savings, and customer satisfaction.

²⁸ Defense Commissary Agency FY 2014 Annual Financial Report, available at <https://www.commissaries.com/documents/whatsnew/afr.pdf>.

In FY 2014, actual annual commissary sales reached \$5,625.0 million. Customer savings are measured annually by comparing commissary prices to commercial supermarket competitors worldwide. By pricing commissary goods at cost plus a five percent surcharge, the customer savings in FY 2014 reached 30.0 percent, which met this year’s goal of 30.0 percent. When considering the return on investment, the value of the benefit consisted of \$1.89 savings to the customer for each appropriated dollar of taxpayer cost, 5.8 percent below the \$2.00 goal. DeCA continues to maintain costs within the annual operating budget received from the Department which establishes limitations annually for cost authority and capital expenditures. Commissary operating costs, when adjusted to FY 2000 base-year costs in constant dollars, were \$778.8 million in FY 2014, exceeding the projected goal (less than \$1.019 million) through stringent management of costs. Surcharge obligations, which reflect capitalization programs for the stores, obligated at \$264.9 million, 91.2 percent of the annual goal of \$290.4 million.

Each year, levels of customer satisfaction are measured externally by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)²⁹ and internally by the Commissary Customer Service Survey (CCSS). For FY 2014, DeCA achieved an ACSI score of 80, exceeding the ACSI grocery industry average index of 78. For the CCSS, the actual score in FY 2014 was B: 4.46, which did not meet the annual goal of A: ≥ 4.60 .³⁰ Though there was an improvement from the prior year’s CCSS score of 4.35, factors that may have contributed to not meeting the CCSS goal include: 1) residual effects of the hiring freeze, and 2) the recruitment time to fill vacancies and restore manning levels required to effectively operate.

Table 7. Goals and Metrics for Military Commissaries

Outcome	Metric	FY 14 Data	FY 15 Goal	Remarks
Achieve a return on investment (ROI) consisting of 2:1 savings to the customer divided by the cost of operations of the commissary	Value of the Benefit	Goal ROI > \$2.00 Customer Savings to \$1.00 Appropriated Costs	ROI > \$2.00 Customer Savings to \$1.00 Appropriated Costs	ROI below target
		Actual \$1.89		
Achieve results less than or equal to FY 2000 base year costs, when adjusted to FY 2000 dollars	Cost Control (\$M) in FY 2000 dollars	Goal \leq \$1,019	\leq \$1,019	Exceeded goal for cost control measure
		Actual \$778.8		
Achieve results less than or equal to Surcharge obligation authority provided by OUSD(C)	Surcharge Obligations (\$M)	Goal \$290.4	\$283.5	Surcharge obligations are 91.2% of target
		Actual \$264.9		
Maintain 30% of customer savings	Sustain Customer Savings	Goal 30.0%	30.0%	Customer savings on target
		Actual 30.0%		
Meet or exceed annual grocery industry average ACSI score	American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)	Goal FY 14 Industry Average 78	Meet or exceed industry average	Customer satisfaction above target
		Actual 80		
Meet or exceed annual goal for the Commissary Customer Service Survey score	Commissary Customer Service Survey	Goal A: 4.6-5.0	A: 4.6-5.0	Customer satisfaction below target
		Actual B: 4.46		

Five Year Plans

DeCA's efforts remain focused on the vision to "Understand our customers and deliver a 21st century commissary benefit." This vision ensures a relevant benefit for military patrons while balancing the Agency's fiscal responsibility to stakeholders. DeCA continues to evaluate its environment based on input from patrons and stakeholders, and is emphasizing key Agency strategic priorities to efficiently support military family readiness and align with DoD's strategic goals and direction. DeCA is committed to a more modern business approach that is responsive and accountable to those being served, by pursuing concepts and initiatives to identify and evaluate the needs of an evolving customer base.

DeCA is continuing to reengineer its business processes and structure for efficiencies; exploring shopper insights; employing social media; testing and evaluating e-commerce initiatives; and seeking cost effective ways to improve store operations and customer service. This will ensure resources are focused in the areas that provide the greatest value and service to military members and their families. Key functions and processes improved and underway during FY 2014 are as follows:

- **Leveraging Business and Technology Practices:** To meet the many challenges ahead (budget issues, workforce recruitment challenges, changing retail trends, declining force structure, patron needs and desires), DeCA continues transformational and change initiatives that include: an Enterprise Business Solution to replace legacy business systems, a branding revitalization study, and researching business model efficiencies based on commercial practices. These changes are essential to meeting current and future challenges and maintaining the relevance of the commissary benefit in the 21st century.
- **Category Management:** During FY 2014, DeCA completed its Sales Directorate reorganization, mirroring state of the art retail processes, using modern retail analytical techniques and merchandising methods. Category Management Units were established to interact more efficiently with industry under the new sales alignment and will be accountable for their performance. This will improve the synergy of DeCA's product buying, promotional, marketing, and product placement activities based on real-time business analytics and annual buying plan. Today's grocery industry is being shaped by consumers who, through the Internet and smart phone technology, have more information to make their shopping decisions. By realigning the category management system, DeCA is positioning itself to ensure the commissary benefit and its savings remain relevant to the patrons.
- **Store Support:** During FY 2014, DeCA refined and automated store operations and customer service improvements through the following initiatives: 1) reengineered store-level functions and administrative tasks not directly contributing to selling groceries, that are best performed at headquarters, similar to commercial market operations; 2) continued deployment of electronic shelf labels at remaining U.S. stores to replace paper labels and reduce pricing errors; 3) refined and upgraded the Commissary Advanced Resale Transaction Pricing System front-end system at stores to improve system response times, the patron's shopping experience, and checkout

waiting time; and 4) updated and initiated deployment of meat and produce department automated systems to standardize the systems and pricing across stores and improve customer service.

- **HBI:** DeCA is directly supporting DoD's HBI effort, a continuing demonstration project under the Department's Operation Live Well program to improve the health and wellness of Service members, their family members, and DoD civilians and family members. DeCA is a key HBI partner in the effort to create sustainable healthy lifestyles. The commissary is uniquely positioned to be the community classroom for nutrition, food selection, and food preparation education and demonstrations to help guide patrons to healthier food options and eating habits. The goal is for families to learn food skills that are essential to preparing healthy meals, which all starts with what goes into the shopping cart. The Agency is also working with its industry partners to continue to support and expand special activities and promotions such as the summertime farmer's market events. Teaching skills that families can use when shopping (i.e., how to identify the best produce, what is a whole grain, and how to read a nutrition label) can help them choose healthier items lower in sugar, salt, and saturated fat.
- **Commissary Rewards Card:** DeCA expanded its Commissary Rewards Card Program that represents another benefit for patrons. The Agency's digital coupon redemption system allows commissary patrons to access and clip coupons and store them on their card to be scanned at the store. Since its inception in August 2012, rewards card users have topped 320,000, and nearly 4.8 million digital coupons have been redeemed, saving customers over \$5.4 million on their groceries. That means increased savings for patrons on top of the commissary's savings of 30 percent. Customers have several ways to access the digital coupons. There are two apps – one for iPhone/iPad and one for Android – both of which allow for on-the-go coupon clipping. The apps also feature information on the commissary closest to the customer along with promotions and contests. A website is also available for those who prefer to use a computer to track their coupons.
- **Value Brand Products:** In FY 2015, in response to growing patron demand for products comparable to low-cost private label items sold in civilian stores, DeCA is re-energizing Commissary Value Brand products (originally known as the Best Value Item program in prior years). Commissaries worldwide will provide greater visibility of offerings to patrons and highlight about 300 Value Brand products in 33 categories, such as frozen vegetables, pizza and entrees; pet foods; health and beauty care; cereals; cleaning supplies; soft drinks; coffee; canned fruit, soup and fish; disposable lunch and storage bags; condiments; and more. The average patron savings for Commissary Value Brand items will be about 25 percent or more when compared to commercial store brand and private label items. Commissary patrons looking for Value Brand items will see new shelf signage, posters, banners, and some special displays, as well as information on DeCA's website, commissaries.com.
- **Workforce:** Workforce special emphasis programs continue to target and increase

recruitment of wounded warriors, individuals with targeted disabilities, and minorities, as well as focus on leadership development and succession planning in the workforce. DeCA remains a key provider of military-related employment, with 64.5 percent of the commissary U.S. civilian workforce being composed of military spouses and family members, Guard and Reserve members, military retirees, and service compensable veterans. Also, military family members comprise a significant percentage of employees of our industry partners, who provide store support.

3-3-4. Military Exchange Benefits

The Exchange programs are an integral part of non-pay compensation for Military Service members. The Exchanges serve more than 13.4 million patrons.³¹ The mission of the Exchange programs is two-fold: to provide authorized military patrons with merchandise and services at a savings, and to generate nonappropriated earnings as a source of funding for MWR programs. The Exchange Programs are provided through three separate Exchange systems: (1) the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES); (2) the Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM); and (3) Marine Corps Exchange (MCX). The Exchanges operate major retail stores on 432 military installations worldwide, and support numerous deployed, contingency, and disaster and emergency relief locations throughout the world. The Exchange retail stores include 273 main stores, and approximately 5,000 specialty stores (e.g., military clothing, barbershops, book stores, laundry and dry cleaning, gas stations, convenience stores, etc.) and over 2,000 nationally/regionally branded fast food restaurants. The Exchanges also offer online shopping options for patrons.

Goals and Metrics

The Military Departments assess the effectiveness of their Exchange systems through measures of customer savings, sales, profits, and customer satisfaction. Table 7 summarizes metrics for the Retail Fiscal Year (RFY)³² 2013 and goals for the RFY 2014. The Military Departments set savings and sales volume goals that will produce profits to support recapitalization of Exchange facilities and a steady stream of dividends for MWR programs. Those goals are consistent with DoD guidance to achieve a minimum average of 15 percent savings on a market basket (excluding alcohol and tobacco products) that is compared to commercial shelf prices (excluding sales tax). In the RFY 2013, all three exchanges exceeded their respective savings goals of 15 percent for AAFES and NEXCOM and 20 percent for MCX, by a range of 15 to 24 percent.

Exchange customer satisfaction is measured annually in two ways: ACSI, which is an independent, nationally recognized benchmarking tool to compare commercial counterparts, and

³¹ Regarding eligibility for access to the exchanges, please refer to Department of Defense Instruction 1330.21, "Armed Services Exchange Regulations".

³² The Exchanges operate based on the retail fiscal year, which runs roughly from the beginning of February to the end of January of the following year to benchmark program performance comparison with the commercial retail industry. Due to this operation cycle, this report presents the data from the retail fiscal year 2013 (February 2013 through January 2014).

the CSI, which is an indicator based on customized customer surveys to measure and understand what drives customer satisfaction in their stores. ACSI scores in the RFY 2013 are reaching the industry average score for department and discount stores. CSI scores met or exceeded the annual goals in RFY 2013.

Five-Year Plans

AAFES

- **Workforce Initiatives:** AAFES saves taxpayer dollars by ensuring less than 3 percent of all operating expenses are supported by appropriated funds. Beyond a self-sufficient structure, AAFES saves the federal government \$688 million annually through dividends, providing at-cost DoD school meals, operating overseas bakery plants, as well as funding capital improvement expenditures and contingency operations. In addition to saving federal resources, AAFES generates dividends that benefit military families the world over. In the past ten years, AAFES has contributed more than \$2.4 billion to youth services, arts and crafts, aquatic centers, bowling centers and other MWR programs. In an environment of tightening budgets, AAFES remains focused on continuing the trend of reduced costs and maximized returns for Airmen, Soldiers, retirees and their families, and takes a proactive approach to reducing costs.

- AAFES is helping to combat rising unemployment rates affecting veterans returning from war by participating with **Joining Forces: Veteran Military Spouse and Family Employment Programs**. In RFY 2013, Veteran hires accounted for 10.1 percent of the total workforce which includes local nationals. AAFES partners with several organizations that offer career assistance and create opportunities for those who have selflessly served.
 - Approximately 24.5 percent of AAFES associates are military family members.
 - In RFY 2013, 3,692 or 32 percent of all new hires were military spouses and more than 965 received promotions.
 - With each sponsor Permanent Change of Station, the Spouse Continuity and Employment Preference programs allow spouses to build a career.

- **Patron Outreach:** AAFES is taking actions to include right-sizing inventory, offering an expanded assortment both online and in-store, and listening to customers through a robust customer comment program and a variety of social media channels. Customer outreach events include partnering with Army Wives Field Training, supporting Exchange Retiree Advisory Council conventions, and the annual Snowball Express to communicate the benefit and value of the Exchange. Additionally, in support of Active Duty, the National Guard and Reserve, and retiree outreach initiatives, the general managers in the continental United States supported multiple events to help communicate the benefit and value of the Exchange to our diverse customer demographic.

NEXCOM

- **Strategy:** NEXCOM's business strategy continues to evolve, focusing on an Omni-channel strategy that ties its brick and mortar Navy Exchange stores with its E-Commerce platform, call centers, social and mobile platforms with an objective of a seamless customer experience across all channels to remain relevant and competitive in the retail space. A new state of the art E-Commerce platform was deployed in August 2014 as part of this effort.
- **Customer Outreach:** NEXCOM launched a new e-commerce site, myNavyExchange.com, on August 25, 2014. The new web store features a more user-friendly and contemporary look and feel. In addition to the many upgrades on the new site, other benefits include the ability to use and purchase Navy Exchange (NEX) Gift Cards and e-Gift Cards, ship orders to select NEX stores, and free standard shipping for all orders paid for with the Military Star Card. My Navy Blue Rewards, NEX's new rewards program launched November 1, 2014, rewards online shoppers with additional discounts. This is Phase 1 of a multi-year project. Phase 2, which includes the addition of Navy uniforms into the same shopping journey, is in its preliminary planning stages and will offer an even more seamless customer shopping experience.
- **Efficiencies:** NEXCOM continues to seek efficiencies within its six business lines. The NEX and Ships Store Program partnered to utilize the NEX's supply chain and distribution services to support forward deployed ships in the Pacific with resale merchandise; thus, generating distribution economies while improving Ships Store in stocks. Additional Ships Store logistics support is also being provided by NEX Rota to support ships home-ported in Rota, Spain. In addition, NEXCOM continues to partner with the Navy MWR program to provide services such as loss prevention, auditing and Equal Employment Opportunity support through agreements that leverage infrastructure while mitigating the need for separate infrastructure within Navy MWR programs.
- **Navy Connection:** The NEXCOM Enterprise continues to execute a re-branding effort as part of its core business strategy to cement its value proposition and relevance to Sailors and the Navy family. With a goal of ensuring NEXCOM is the Sailor's first choice for retail, services and hospitality needs, every touch point of the Enterprise – headquarters, NEX stores, Navy Lodges, Ships Stores, Uniform Project Management Office, Telephone Program Office, and Navy Clothing Textile and Research Facility – is being revisited to distinguish our brand experience through a culture of PREMIER Customer Service, a focus on value and facilities, and signing and communications that embody a distinct personality reflecting the Navy culture and values. These enhancements have not only built a strong connection with the mission of the installations and the Navy, but also are connecting with our Sailors and families on a personal level. In the 2012-2013 Navy Personnel and Family Readiness Survey, Navy Exchanges were ranked number two in satisfaction among Navy Programs by enlisted service members, both married and single.

Table 8. Goals and Metrics for Military Exchanges.

Outcome	Metric	Retail Fiscal Year 2013 data		Retail Fiscal Year 2014 goal
Achieve customer savings of 15% in all Exchange systems	Customer savings	AAFES	Goal 15%	15%
			Actual 23%	
	NEXCOM	Goal 15%	24%	
		Actual 24%		
	MCX	Goal 20%	20%	
		Actual 23.5%		
Maintain sales volume and profitability that supports a steady stream of capital investment and MWR dividends	Sales and earnings			
	Sales (\$M)			
	AAFES	Goal	\$ 8,540.7	\$ 7,350.2
		Actual	\$ 7,782.8	
	NEXCOM	Goal	\$ 2,836.2	\$ 2,742.1
		Actual	\$ 2,660.5	
	MCX	Goal	\$ 1,048.4	\$ 52.6
		Actual	\$ 976.5	
	Earnings (\$M)			
	AAFES	Goal	\$ 312.4	\$ 296.8
		Actual	\$ 331.5	
	NEXCOM	Goal	\$ 56.2	\$ 83.0
		Actual	\$ 73.4	
	MCX	Goal	\$ 71.6	\$ 52.6
Actual		\$ 63.2		
Meet or exceed ACSI department and discount store industry average	ACSI Customer Satisfaction			
	AAFES	Goal	76	Goal 76
		Actual	75	
	NEXCOM	Goal	77	Goal 77
		Actual	79	
	MCX	Goal	77	Goal 77
Actual		83		
Meet or exceed past 3 year average customer satisfaction index (CSI)	Exchange Customer Satisfaction Index			
	AAFES	Goal	78	Goal 80
		Actual	79	
	NEXCOM	Goal	85	Goal 85
		Actual	85	
	MCX	Goal	79	Goal 79
Actual		79		

- **Navy Integration:** Navy Exchanges continue to be an important instrument within the Navy for shaping and implementing Navy policy. In support of the Secretary's 21st Century Sailor and Marine Initiative and in support of a fit and physically ready Navy, the NEXCOM continues to grow "A Better You" business strategies to increase the range of products and pulls together product categories with in store messaging and signing that support a healthy lifestyle. Sales have increased more than 10 percent overall in categories such as athletic apparel, footwear, sporting goods, digital fitness, fresh food, and sports nutrition.
- NEXCOM has also launched a new fresh food program in 2014 supporting DoD's HBI and NEXCOM's "A Better You" by providing convenient, high quality grab-n-go items, which are produced daily and made with truly fresh ingredients. This program is currently available within Continental United States (CONUS) at 40 NEX locations with another 55 locations being implemented throughout 2015. The demand for these items is driven by consumers desire for convenient, fresh products free of preservatives supporting an active, health conscious lifestyle, at affordable prices.
- **Military Employment:** NEXCOM remains committed to providing employment opportunities to Navy family members and veterans, and supports First Lady Michelle Obama's "Joining Forces Initiative." Approximately 36 percent of NEXCOM's 12,500 U.S. citizen associates are military dependents, veterans or Active Duty members. Navy family members alone account for 26 percent of the NEXCOM's U.S. citizen workforce. NEXCOM also maintains a Continuity of Employment Program to support Navy family members when they transfer to new duty stations with their Service member spouses and is a partner in the DoD's MSEP.
- **Installation Partnership:** NEXCOM participates in a wide variety of family events, such as health and wellness fairs, holiday celebration events, family appreciation events, fitness fairs, safety fairs and military recognition events on installations. Of particular note are two annual overseas customer appreciation events held in partnership with vendors, Navy MWR, DeCA, and other installation partners. These unique weekend-long events feature visits by celebrity personalities, entertainment, skills and products demonstration by national artists, special sales promotions and giveaways including a new car. These events are intended to recognize and offer a small token of appreciation to forward-deployed service members for their contributions to the nation.
- **Customer-centric initiatives:** NEXCOM analyzes store demographics by segmentation, allowing tailoring of merchandise to an individual store's customer base. By utilizing customer input through annual satisfaction surveys and focus groups, NEXCOM provides key merchandise and services the military customer desires. Examples include providing name-brand merchandise, including Macy's exclusive labels, offering food concepts that satisfy installation customers, and enhancing customer service training to improve the customer shopping experience.

MCX

- **Keeping faith:** One of the Commandant's highest priorities is keeping faith with Marines, Sailors, and their families. For MCX, "keeping faith" means ensuring relevancy to their environment and lifestyle. The MCX program continues to provide a valued non-pay benefit of products, food, and services sold below market price while contributing to overall community health and investments in community programming and infrastructure. The savings families receive on life necessities also contribute to the financial health of military families; for example, the "Xtreme Value" program provides everyday staples like bread, milk, and baby formula at MCX cost and selected named brand items at an unmistakable value. Additionally, MCX is committed to collaborative efforts with First Lady Michelle Obama's initiative "Joining Forces," Sister Services, and industry organizations to promote veteran and family member employment; 34 percent of the MCX workforce are veterans or military family members. MyMCX.com utilizes YouTube and Facebook as tools in connecting with Marines and families in a current, relevant way.
- **Healthy Living:** MCX supports the Secretary of the Navy's 21st Century Sailor and Marine initiative with price parity on tobacco products. Additionally, tobacco cessation products are available at MCX cost to Marines and families. In August 2013, the Commandant issued an alcohol sales guidance memo for all Marine Marts adjacent to barracks to remove distilled spirits. Additionally, the memo limited alcohol sales times to 0800 thru 2200, and stipulated that alcoholic products and displays should be limited to no more than 10 percent of the total retail space. The MCX has an incentive program, "Geared Up," which provides motorcycle safety equipment at MCX's cost to authorized patrons who have completed the requisite safety training. The Marine Corps resale system is also pleased to support DoD's HBI at the two Marine Corps pilot sites: Quantico and Twentynine Palms. HBI is aimed at assisting in tobacco cessation and reducing obesity within the military community. To support HBI, MCX instituted an integrated marketing campaign for tobacco cessation at all MCX outlets. The four-phase campaign focused on print, email, social media, point of purchase, and promotions to inform and support authorized patrons interested in quitting tobacco. Additionally, MCX increased the number of healthy grab-and-go offerings at Marine Marts. MCX also highlights "Better For You" products that make it easy to find healthy snack and meal options.
- **Transformation and resource optimization:** In this resource-constrained fiscal environment, MCX seeks to avoid unnecessary costs by executing programs in the most efficient way, and our MCX-generated dividend has become even more important. As expected, trends in merchandise categories, both outside the gate and at MCX, and end strength reductions contributed to challenges in FY 2013 topline sales. We are working to mitigate the loss in challenged categories through new business opportunities. We've seen the benefits of the strategies over the past several years (i.e., developing an organizational brand strategy, maturing our centralized buying, and executing an aggressive capitalization strategy for our Marine Marts). Our focus over the next few years is on transforming our supply chain, implementing

back room improvements and efficiencies that support the entire Marine Corps Community Services organization, and advancing technological solutions to support best in class processes to reduce redundancies and become more efficient. This year saw continued cooperative efforts with our Sister Services as a part of daily business practices. We are actively engaged in the Cooperative Efforts Board and routinely examine opportunities for cooperation within logistics, private label, non-resale procurement and policy and legislation.

- MCX focuses on taking care of Marines, Sailors and their families. From providing high quality goods at a great value to reinvesting dollars in the Marine Corps community, we strive to “keep faith.” At home and deployed, MCX provides lifestyle relevant products and services Marines and families need and desire, below market price, to support household and financial health. We will continue our aggressive pursuit of efficiency measures and a robust transformation strategy to protect this valued benefit.

3-4. Personal and Family Life

3-4-1. Confidential Non-Medical Counseling

DoD offers confidential non-medical counseling services to help Service members and their families experiencing the normal range of reactions to life challenges associated with deployments, frequent relocation, reintegration, and other aspects of military life. Confidential non-medical counseling is aimed at preventing the development or exacerbation of mental health conditions that may detract from military and family readiness. Active Duty and National Guard and Reserve members and their families have access to confidential help, such as non-medical, short-term counseling services at no cost through two delivery systems: *Military OneSource* and the *Military and Family Life Counseling (MFLC) program*. During FY 2014, the primary reason for receiving Military OneSource and MFLC non-medical counseling support was for relational/relationship issues.

Military OneSource provides 24/7/365 comprehensive information, referral and assistance on every aspect of military life. Military OneSource services are available worldwide and provided at no cost through a call center and website to Active Duty, Guard and Reserve services members and their families. Military OneSource non-medical counseling is available worldwide via telephonic, on-line or face-to-face sessions. Military OneSource non-medical counselors provide sessions in a traditional 50-minute session. Military OneSource face-to-face non-medical counseling sessions (CONUS only) are provided within 15 miles or 30 minutes of the service member/family member, at the Military OneSource counselor’s office within the local community. During FY 2014, the average distance service members/family members traveled to the Military OneSource counselor’s office was three miles.

Military and Family Life Counselors (MFLCs) provide in-person non-medical counseling sessions and briefings, both on and off military installations. During FY 2014, MFLCs were at the following locations: Family centers, child and youth programs, schools, youth summer programs, embedded within military units, providing ‘surge’ support for emerging issues and on-demand support for up to 3-5 days at events such as Yellow Ribbon events, full-time

assignments to support National Guard and Reserve Component Joint Family Support Assistance Programs in all 50 states, four territories, and the District of Columbia, and throughout the community. Military and Family Life Counselor interactions may vary in duration from a few minutes to 2 hours on an as needed basis.

Both the Military OneSource and MFLC programs provide seamless support to National Guard and Reserve members regardless of activation status as well as Active Duty personnel and their families. The non-medical counseling providers for both programs are masters or PhD level, licensed, and credentialed providers who have undergone a criminal history background check as well as focused training on military culture and military life.

During FY 2014, Military OneSource counselors provided more than 175,000 50-minute face-to-face non-medical counseling sessions. In addition, Military OneSource counselors provided more than 5,200 50-minute telephonic and online non-medical counseling sessions. During FY 2014, MFLCs provided nearly 4.2 million in-person contacts, to include briefings/presentations and non-medical counseling sessions. Military OneSource and MFLC non-medical counseling sessions include individual, couple and family sessions.

The MFLC program also provides surge support. During FY 2014, the MFLC program experienced an increase in requests for surge support particularly from the Guard and Reserves. Prior to September 2014, the Guard and Reserve community received support through the Joint Family Support Assistance Program (JFSAP), consisting of a small team of full-time MFLC/PFCs in each state, the territories and the District of Columbia. The program redesign resulted in the elimination of full-time MFLCs and personal financial counselors collocated in each state. While services were still available, the method of providing support changed. Consequently, the uptick in surge support requests can be attributed to the continued drawdown of Armed Forces and the redesign of the JFSAP program. During FY 2014, 51 surges were provided to Active Duty members and 66 to the National Guard and Reserves, in over 40 states, territories and countries.

Goals and Metrics

Non-medical counseling is aimed at preventing the development or exacerbation of psychological challenges that may undermine military and family readiness. The confidential nature of the counseling program addresses the concern that Service members and their families have: seeking help could reflect poorly on a military career. Although confidentiality of the counseling may reduce the stigma associated with seeking help, this very nature of the service makes it significantly more difficult to assess program outcomes. The Department has been developing outcome measures to assess the effectiveness of non-medical counseling services. In the meantime, we rely on usage and satisfaction data to assess program performance.

Five-Year Plans

The military community has taken advantage of confidential help, to include non-medical counseling, widely and both Military OneSource and the MFLC Programs have helped in reducing the stigma that Service members and their families have to seek help. Furthermore, the military community has reported a need for increased support such as financial counseling and

expanded modalities for non-medical counseling support; thus, the Military OneSource Program will implement a video non-medical counseling modality in FY 2015; whereas, the MFLC Program has begun to receive additional requests for Personal Financial Counselors, offered under the MFLC Program, to augment the support provided by the financial counseling programs already offered on installations and via Joint Force Headquarters.

Per direction from the Director of the OSD Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, OASD (MC&FP) began a five-year study to assess the effectiveness of military family support programs in FY2013. Non-medical counseling was identified as one of the critical programs that needed outcome data to inform resource and programmatic decisions. The objective of this effort is to measure the impact of family support programs across DoD and to move the portfolio of family support programs from performance measures toward outcome measures. This evaluation will assess whether individuals who access face-to-face non-medical counseling from Military OneSource and MFLC counseling services obtain the care that they need and experience improvements. Sponsored by ODASD(MC&FP), the RAND Corporation is conducting the study. The study team started data collection for MFLC clients in the fall of 2014 and will last one year. Participants will be asked to complete two short surveys. The study will contribute to assessing the impacts of nonmedical counseling programs on the lives of service members and their spouses and determining where improvements in the program can be made.

3-4-2. Family Advocacy Program

The Department is committed to preventing child abuse and domestic abuse in the military community. FAP addresses child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse³³ in military families through public awareness and prevention, early identification, victim advocacy, and treatment for offenders when appropriate. A FAP office is located at every U.S. military installation worldwide where the command sponsors families. FAP provides a wide range of prevention programs, including classes, workshops, and seminars on various topics (couples communication, effective parenting, anger management, conflict resolution, stress management, etc.), leadership training, New Parent Support Program, and counseling. When an allegation of abuse is reported, FAP gathers information from victims, suspected offenders, and other family members to develop recommendations for follow-up action. FAP is equipped to provide a comprehensive coordinated response in collaboration with medical and legal personnel, family support centers, chaplains, military units, military and civilian law enforcement agencies, and civilian social service agencies. When an abuse incident happens, FAP victim advocates work to ensure the safety of victims and help affected military families. The ultimate goal of FAP is to strengthen family functioning and resiliency in order to increase the competency and self-efficacy of military families.

³³ DoD defines domestic abuse as both domestic violence, including violation of a military or civilian protective order, and a pattern of behavior resulting in emotional/psychological abuse, economic control, and/or interference with personal liberty that is directed toward a person who is a current or former spouse, a person with whom the abuser shares a child in common, or a current or former intimate partner with whom the abuser shares or has shared a common domicile.

Goals and Metrics

FAP has developed a set of metrics to measure program outcomes for leadership FAP awareness, child abuse prevention, domestic abuse victim advocacy, and domestic abuser treatments. For some metrics, however, reporting standards still require further refinement to ensure data consistency across the Services. This report presents the metrics for the following two key FAP programs: the New Parent Support Program (NPSP) and treatment programs for substantiated spouse abusers. Due to the timing of data aggregation, FAP data presented here are from FY 2013. Table 9 shows the data from FY 2013 and the goals for FY 2014.³⁴

NPSP: In an effort to strengthen the protective factors associated with decreasing the risk for child abuse and neglect, DoD adopted an intensive, voluntary home visitation program, NPSP. This model was developed specifically for vulnerable parents in the Active Duty component who live on or off the installation. The service is offered to expectant parents and to parents of children ages 0-3 years through self-referrals and referrals from health care providers and other service providers in the community.

Table 9. Goals and Metrics for Family Advocacy Programs.

Outcome	Metric	FY13 Data ²	FY14 Goals ²
No child abuse or neglect in high-risk families who received intensive NPSP services (at least 2 visits/month)	% of families who received 6-month intensive NPSP services who are not reported in incidents that met criteria for child abuse or neglect within 1 year after the program completion.	Goal: 85%	85%
		Actual: 94 %	
Allegedly abusive spouses who do not recidivate after completing FAP treatment	% of allegedly abusive spouses who successfully completed FAP treatment and are not reported in incidents that met criteria for spouse abuse within 1 year after treatment completion.	Goal: 75%	75%
		Actual: 95%	

The outcome of NPSP is measured by the percentage of Active Duty families who received a minimum of 6-month intensive NPSP service and are not reported in incidents that met FAP criteria for child abuse or neglect within one year following the completion of the program (see Table 10). Since the assessment began in 2005, DoD continues to meet its goal that 85 percent of participating Active duty families will not be reported in incidents that met FAP criteria in the year following NPSP case closure. In FY 2013, the percentage of NPSP participants who were not reported for child abuse or neglect for 12 months after the program completion was 95 percent.

Treatment to Reduce Spouse Abuse Recidivism: At military installations, FAPs provide treatment and/or coordinate treatment with local agencies to help alleged domestic abusers end their abusive behavior. Progress in prevention of repeat domestic abuse is difficult to measure because civilian treatment programs vary by the local agencies that provide them. Research has suggested that alleged abusers who have completed a treatment program are less likely to

³⁴ Please note that FAP reports annual program data from FY 2011 due to the timing of data aggregation.

recidivate than those who did not finish.³⁵ Since FY 2009, FAP has collected data on the effectiveness of treatment programs for alleged spouse abusers to reduce spouse abuse recidivism. A metric adopted here is the percentage of alleged spouse abusers who completed a FAP treatment program and are not reported in incidents that met FAP criteria for spouse abuse within one year after completion of treatment. In FY 2013, FAP treatment programs prevented recidivism in 96 percent of domestic abusers who had completed treatment. Despite these very positive figures, the goals for both programs remain constant for the next five years as DoD further refines the metrics to measure the effectiveness of these programs.

Five Year Plan

Domestic Abuse Overview and Initiatives. The individuals substantiated for domestic abuse do not represent a homogenous group. Abuse differs in degree, intensity, etiology and function. Such differences serve to reaffirm FAP's goal to prevent and reduce abuse through innovative and evidence supported services. In incidents that meet the FAP criteria for domestic abuse, the abuser may be an Active Duty Service member or a civilian. The FY 2013 FAP report indicates that 59 percent of alleged spouse abusers were Active Duty Service members and 41 percent were civilian spouses. Of the total number of alleged abusers, 65 percent were male and 35 percent were female. FAP makes treatment available to both Active Duty and civilian alleged abusers. Command support of treatment recommendations for the Active Duty alleged offender is a key component to the success of treatment. Lack of military jurisdiction over civilian alleged abusers may impact the civilian abuser's willingness to participate in recommended services.

Acts of domestic abuse also vary, to include emotional abuse without violence, physical violence, and sexual violence. The DoD FAP office has changed the criteria for these types of acts to ensure a high level of consistency across installations and across all four Services. As a result of the heterogeneous nature of domestic abuse, treatment varies. Men who have committed repeated acts of physical or sexual violence against their spouses are more likely to be treated as "batterers" within group psycho-educational approaches mandated by state standards, even if such approaches have significant recidivism. Women who commit only a few acts of emotional abuse are more likely to be treated with cognitive behavioral therapy and may have lower rates of recidivism.

FAP is placing increased focus on providing effective interventions at all levels of service. As a result, pending FAP standards require the Services to adopt approaches for prevention and intervention that are evidence-based, culture and gender sensitive, and applicable to a military population. OSD is working closely with the Military Family Readiness Clearinghouse to identify potentially promising approaches for the military family population.

In coordination with the Military Services, FAP continues to review data collection systems as well as the validity and reliability of the data being entered in to the collection systems. Research on determining severity of abuse across all domestic maltreatment types and

³⁵ See pp. 429-432 in Sartin, Robert M., David J. Hansen, and Matthew T. Huss. 2006. "Domestic Violence Treatment Response and Recidivism: A Review and Implications for the Study of Family Violence." *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 11(5): 425-440.

risk for repeated physical spouse abuse has led to the development of tools that will serve to aid clinicians in accurately and reliably assessing these two data elements. The Incident Severity Scale Project has completed the development of the web-based assessment tool and on-line training to support implementation. Field testing is scheduled for early 2015. Depending on the field testing results, the tool will be implemented in late 2015 or early 2016. The Intimate Partner Physical Injury Risk Assessment Tool project has completed the development of the assessment tool, and the development of web-based implementation training is ongoing. Field testing is projected for spring 2015, contingent on the completion of the web-based training. Implementation of the tool is scheduled for later in 2015.

3-4-3. Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Programs

MWR programs are designed to improve the quality of life of Service members, their families, and other eligible patrons by promoting active living through a comprehensive network of leisure and support programs. MWR provides a wide range of recreational programs both on and off installations, including fitness and sports programs, libraries, recreation centers, skills development programs, outdoor recreation, leisure travel, recreation lodging, community centers and single Service member programs. MWR programs directly contribute to the readiness, resiliency and retention of Service members and their families.

MWR programs are operated under each of the Service branches: Army Family and MWR, Marine Corps Community Services, Navy MWR, and United States Air Force Services. For Guard and Reserve members and their families, MWR programs are provided through MWR Outreach. MWR Outreach is also available to Active Duty members who are not stationed at or near a military installation so they may maintain necessary fitness levels. MWR Outreach includes opportunities such as YMCA and private fitness center memberships for eligible personnel, online library services 24/7 worldwide, and various military recreation offerings on the Military OneSource webpage.

In FY 2014, more than 5,000 individual memberships were offered to eligible military members at participating YMCA and private fitness center locations. Additionally, more than 4,500 family memberships were offered at participating YMCA locations. In FY 2014, more than 2,500 children participated in the respite care program with more than 18,000 hours of respite care provided. Respite child care is offered at participating YMCAs and provides up to 16 hours of free child care per month per child for families of deployed Active Duty, Guard and Reserve personnel, along with children whose Active Duty parent(s) are assigned to an approved command which is not near a military installation. Feedback from participants indicates access to YMCA programs and services provides not only great stress relief, but also a sense of community and belonging; this significantly helps ease the loneliness and isolation felt by spouses and family members during their Service member's deployment.

The Internet has been a useful means of delivering MWR programs to Reserve Component families that are more likely to be geographically isolated than Active Duty families. DoD has purchased approximately 25 online library databases and services and made them available to Service members and their families 24/7. Customers of all ages took advantage of the resources, learning how to repair cars, write college papers, explore new hobbies, take

practice tests, find out about other cultures, download eBooks/audio books, prepare for deployment, and further their professional goals. Library services extend beyond providing access to quality library databases. In FY2014, more than 256,000 live online tutoring sessions were provided to military children in grades K-12 through access to Tutor.com. More than 65,000 participants participated in the 2014 DoD MWR summer reading program. Participants read a total of 311,184 books, 3,342,978 pages, and approximately 18.6 million minutes during the 2014 program. The total number of minutes read increased by approximately four million minutes when compared to the 2013 program. The summer reading initiative enriched the lives of the youth in military families, boosting reading achievement and improving literacy skills. The military recreation link on the Military OneSource website provides access to a variety of information on each Service's MWR programs, affordable vacation opportunities, and recreation facilities. Tickets and tours offerings, lodging links, and other MWR program highlights are also featured on the website.

The MWR program includes inclusive and adaptive recreation to support wounded warriors returning from combat deployments. The capability for injured Service members to participate in recreation is an important component of rehabilitation and reintegration. "Inclusive Recreation for Wounded Warriors" is a joint Service training course that trains installation MWR recreation staff to integrate wounded warriors into existing MWR recreation programs and activities. Taught by Penn State University faculty members, the four-day course includes discussion on post-traumatic stress disorder, limb amputations, traumatic brain injury, and spinal cord injuries, adaptive/specialized equipment, accessible design, age appropriate inclusive recreation programming, and societal and cultural issues. Students develop a plan of action to add inclusive recreation programs at their installation, which is evaluated six months after course completion. More than 600 recreation programmers from all military Services have completed the training. As a result of the training, dedicated professionals with enhanced programming skills are engaging wounded warriors and families with special needs in recreation.

Military spouses have indicated that communication is the single most important factor in coping with deployments. To keep families connected during deployment, MWR funds approximately 107 free MWR Internet Cafés in the Middle East. MWR Internet Cafés offer computers, web cameras, and voice over Internet protocol phone service at approximately \$.04 per minute. The results of the MWR Internet Café Program Customer Satisfaction Survey for 2014 indicated that overall satisfaction with the program was 92.9 percent. Customer satisfaction with wireless services increased from 93.3 percent in 2013 to 95.2 percent in 2014. Overall network availability remained above 99 percent in FY 2014. In addition to the MWR Internet Cafés, MWR provides portable Morale Satellite Units known as Cheetahs. These Cheetahs contain four to six web camera enabled computers that support personnel located in remote areas in theater. There are currently approximately 110 Cheetahs in operation.

Goals and Metrics

MWR began conducting the comprehensive DoD MWR CSI Survey in 2009. The MWR CSI Survey is modeled after the ACSI, a customer satisfaction survey widely used by civilian industries for benchmarking. The survey is an example of a program assessment tool that was developed collaboratively by representatives from OSD and the Services. The third DoD MWR CSI Survey was conducted in summer 2014. The sample was drawn from Active Duty, National

Guard and Reserve Service members worldwide; more than 32,700 Service members from all four Services completed the survey online. Table 10 summarizes the CSI scores at DoD and for each Service. In the 2014 survey, the overall CSI score of 67 decreased by two points from the 2011 survey.

The DoD MWR CSI Survey provides scores for the MWR program overall and for each of nine program areas. The survey also measures the impact of the overall MWR satisfaction on three key organizational outcomes: readiness, retention, and unit cohesion. Impacts on these organizational outcomes were measured within the MWR programs, independent of other military family readiness programs. Initial 2014 survey results indicate that community recreation centers, outdoor recreation, single Service member programs, and fitness centers are top priority areas and would have the highest impact on the overall satisfaction with MWR and consequently, on mission readiness.

Table 10. Goals and Metrics for MWR Programs

Outcome	Metric	2009 survey data	2011 survey data	2014 survey data	Remarks
Identify high impact program areas and level of customer satisfaction	MWR Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) ¹ - Overall for DoD	69	69	67	MWR established a self-benchmark for CSI score in 2009. The FY11 score for DoD overall decreased by two points from 2011 to 2014.
	Army CSI Score	68	70	69	Decreased 1 point
	Navy CSI Score	72	71	69	Decreased 2 points; highest satisfaction for military Services
	Air Force CSI Score	70	67	65	Decreased 2 points
	Marine Corps CSI Score	65	67	63	Decreased 4 points

Note: ¹Within the context of this study, scores in the 60s are interpreted as "fine but could use work," the 70s as "good job but keep working on it," and the 80s as "excellent - keep it up." It is unlikely that any program will or should achieve a score higher than 85.

As a result of the 2011 survey findings, the Military Services initiated actions to improve fitness and outdoor recreation programs. The Military Services have modernized fitness facilities, increased equipment availability, improved equipment quality, and introduced comprehensive strength and conditioning programs to reduce the likelihood of injuries. The Services made improvements in outdoor recreation by increasing staff training, improving equipment, and offering Service members, who are reintegrating from repeated, high adrenaline/stress deployments, uniquely-designed programs that involve high adventure activities like white water rafting and rock climbing. These types of activities maintain combat readiness, reinforce unit cohesion, and facilitate unit and family reintegration upon return from deployments. While it is still too early to assess the actions resulting from the recently completed 2014 survey, the Military Services will continue to use MWR CSI Survey data as an important program evaluation resource to ensure a balanced portfolio of quality MWR programs.

Five-Year Plans

Results of the MWR CSI Surveys have been used for developing MWR strategic plans and as future funding justification for improvements to the MWR programs at the Services and DoD levels. Although CSI surveys can provide comparable customer satisfaction data found in civilian industries, there is no single civilian industry offering the same level and scope of services that MWR programs do. As an alternative measure, DoD is developing its own benchmark using the data from these surveys. DoD is planning to conduct another MWR CSI Survey in 2016 and will use the data gathered to facilitate ongoing MWR innovation efforts focused on leveraging partnerships, technology and improved service delivery techniques.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Facing ongoing budgetary challenges, there have been a number of existing and newly established initiatives, working groups, and studies across the DoD and the Military Departments to find further efficiencies and make informed decisions regarding the sustainment of critical family support programs and services. The goals and plans presented in this report will continue guiding the Departmental efforts in the coming years to ensure that Service members and their families have access to effective and sustainable family support programs and services. Each program area will continue refining its short-term plans reflecting the ongoing efforts for further efficiencies and program assessment results.

Given that the majority of DoD family readiness programs are community-oriented, prevention-focused, and voluntarily-participated programs, DoD strives to adopt innovative program evaluation techniques to better capture measurable outcomes. DoD continues fostering a culture of program evaluation to provide effective and sustainable family support programs by implementing rigorous program evaluation and by building networks of support for military families available in civilian communities.