

**Department of Defense**

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



**Fiscal Year 2015**

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## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAFES	Army and Air Force Exchange Services
ACSI	American Customer Satisfaction Index
ADSS	Survey of Active Duty Spouses
CCSS	Common Core State Standards
CFPB	Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CONUS	Continental United States
CSI	Customer Satisfaction Index
DeCA	Defense Commissary Agency
DMDC	Defense Manpower Data Center
DoD	Department of Defense
DoDEA	Department of Defense Education Activity
FAP	Family Advocacy Program
FAPISS	Family Advocacy Program Incident Severity Scale
FY	Fiscal Year
HBI	Healthy Base Initiative
MCC	MilitaryChildCare.com
MCX	Marine Corps Exchange
MFLC	Military and Family Life Counselor
MLA	Military Lending Act
MOS	Military OneSource
MSEP	Military Spouse Employment Partnership
MyCAA	Military Spouse Career Advancement Account
MWR	Morale, Welfare, and Recreation
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NEX	Navy Exchange
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
PEER	Personalized Experiences, Engagement and Resources
RFY	Retail Fiscal Year
SECO	Spouse Education and Career Opportunities
SOFS-A	Status of Force Survey of Active Duty Members
U.S.C.	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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Pursuant to title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.), section 1781b, the Department of Defense (DoD) is submitting this annual report on the DoD policy and plans for military family readiness. This report provides a summary of plans on military family readiness, for five fiscal years (FY), and the FY 2015 DoD-wide program assessment results of the following 11 major program areas.<sup>1</sup>

- Child Care
- Youth Programs
- DoD Schools
- Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO)
- Personal Finance
- Promoting Enforcement of the Predatory Lending Regulation
- Military Commissary Benefits
- Military Exchange Benefits
- Non-Medical Counseling
- Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR)
- Family Advocacy Program (FAP)

Below are the highlights of the DoD-wide program efforts and assessment activities for this reporting cycle:

- The DoD State Liaison Office has achieved the overall goals for promoting enforcement of the predatory lending regulation this FY. A significant revision to the regulation implementing the Military Lending Act (MLA) became effective October 1, 2015, with an initial compliance date of October 3, 2016. DoD continues to work with the associated agencies on full implementation of the rule.
- FAP measures the effectiveness of the New Parent Support Program (NPSP), a prevention program for child abuse and neglect, using the percentage of at-risk families who received 6-month intensive NPSP services but were not reported in child abuse or neglect incidents within one year after completion of service. This year 97 percent of families who received the 6 intensive NPSP services were not reported in child abuse or neglect incidents within one year after completion.

Facing ongoing budgetary challenges, each program area listed above will continue refining its short-term plans and goals, to reflect the ongoing efforts to seek further efficiencies and program effectiveness. The goals and plans presented in this report will continue guiding the Departmental efforts to ensure that Service members and their families have access to effective and sustainable family support programs and services.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to this annual report, readers are invited to DoD's other periodical reports to Congress on the following family readiness-related program areas: military families with special needs; health care for military families; and support for families of the wounded, ill, and injured. These reports are listed in the introduction section.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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In accordance with title 10, U.S.C., section 1781b, DoD is required to submit an annual report on the policy and plans for military family readiness for the next five FYs, 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.

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. The family's support for military service has a direct impact on personal and mission readiness, performance, retention and recruitment.<sup>2</sup> 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.”<sup>3</sup>

Family readiness is defined as a family's preparedness “to effectively navigate the challenges of daily living experienced in the unique context of military service.”<sup>4</sup> DoD military family readiness programs are designed to address a broad range of family life needs unique to military family lifestyle, and there is no static set of family readiness programs. This report will present DoD-wide assessment data in the following 11 major family readiness program areas from FY 2015, followed by plans for the next five fiscal years in each program area. In the program areas in which a five-year plan has not been developed, short-term plans are presented instead.

- Child Care
- Youth Programs
- DoD Schools
- SECO
- Personal Finance
- Promoting Enforcement of the Predatory Lending Regulation
- Military Commissary Benefits
- Military Exchange Benefits
- Non-Medical Counseling
- MWR Programs
- FAP

Family readiness programs are dynamic and agile in order to meet military families' evolving needs. The 11 program areas highlighted in this report are not the only program areas considered to be family readiness programs. There are other important family readiness program areas, such as military families with special needs, health care for military families, and support for the Wounded, Ill, and Injured and their families. Each of these major program areas has its own dedicated report to Congress on program activities and assessment as listed below.

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<sup>2</sup> 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).

<sup>3</sup> 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).

<sup>4</sup> See DoD Instruction 1342.22 Military Family Readiness (published on July 03, 2012).

- **Families with Special Needs:** Annual report to Congress on the Office of Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs, mandated by title 10, U.S.C., section 1781c(h). This report is due to Congress no later than April 30th each year.
- **Health Care for Military Families:** Annual Report to Congress on Effectiveness of TRICARE Program Effectiveness: Access, Cost, and Quality, mandated by section 717 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 1996 (Public Law 104-106) and section 714 of the NDAA for FY 2013 (Public Law 112-239).
- **Support for the Wounded, Ill, and Injured and Their Families:** Section 738 of the NDAA FY 2013 (Public Law: 112-239) established a policy on 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 on this policy. The report is due to Congressional Defense committees no later than February each year, beginning from 2014 to 2018.<sup>5</sup>

## **2. DoD-WIDE GOALS, METRICS, AND POLICY AND PLANS FOR FAMILY READINESS PROGRAMS**

This section presents a summary of the current DoD-wide goals and metrics with FY 2015 program assessment data, followed by a five-year, short-term plan in each of the 11 program areas.<sup>6</sup> 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 its efforts in program evaluation to collect standardized outcome data and develop better measures to assess program effectiveness uniquely attributed to family readiness programs.

### **2-1. Children and Youth**

#### **2-1-1. Child Care**

Child care is essential to the overall mission readiness, retention, and recruitment in the U.S. Military. Approximately 42 percent of Active Duty Service members have children, supporting a total of 1.1 million children age 0 to 22.<sup>7</sup> Of those military children, 42 percent are 0-5 years old, and 32 percent are 6-11 years old.<sup>8</sup> The majority of military families are dual-earner couples. Over half (55 percent) of spouses of Active Duty members are either working in

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<sup>5</sup> Please also refer to the DoD response to recommendations of the DoD Recovering Warrior Task Force (Exhibit 1-3) in the annual report.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> According to 10 U.S.C. section 1072, children include minor dependents age 20 or younger or dependents age 22 and younger enrolled as full-time students.

<sup>8</sup> Office of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy. (2015). The 2014 Demographics: Profile of the Military Community. Washington, D.C.

the civilian sector or serving in the Armed Forces.<sup>9</sup> 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 770 Child Development Centers and school age care facilities at over 300 locations worldwide, and approximately 3,000 Family Child Care homes.

Goals and Metrics

There are two metrics used for DoD child development programs: service availability and its quality (see Table 1). To synchronize with the data reporting and validation cycle for the childcare program, this report uses the data from FY 2014. 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 2014, the demand accommodation rate was 78 percent.

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

Outcome	Metric	FY14 Data*	FY15 Goal*
Meet child care needs of military families	Demand Accommodation Rate	Goal: 80%	80%
		Actual: 78%	
Outcome	Metric	FY14 Data*	FY15 Goal*
Provide high quality child care	Accreditation Rate	Goal: 98%	98%
		Actual: 96%	
	Certification Rate	Goal: 100%	100%
		Actual: 100%	

\* Due to the reporting cycle, this report provides program data from the previous fiscal year (FY 2014).

In addition to availability, DoD uses accreditation rate and certification rate to 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, 96 percent of eligible programs were nationally accredited and 100 percent of programs were DoD certified in FY 2014. The goals for child care availability and quality will remain constant for the next five years.

Five-Year Plans

All DoD Child Development 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

<sup>9</sup> Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC). (2015). The 2015 Survey of Active Duty Spouses Tabulations of Responses (DMDC Report No. 2015-028, October 2015). DMDC, Alexandria, VA.



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 Military Services use overarching criteria as the basis for their inspections. An all-Service working group has developed standardized criteria for use by the Child Development and School Age Programs. The Navy, Marine Corps, and Army are currently piloting the standards with full implementation by all Military Services planned for 2017.

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. Government Accountability Office Report.<sup>10</sup> This system provides a singular website that enables all DoD eligible customers access to worldwide military-operated child development programs and services. 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 branch, or when care is needed. DoD started implementing a staggered geographic zone-based global rollout of MCC in 2015 with a 24/7 help desk, which is available to assist both parents and programs. Approximately 40 percent of installations are online, with the global rollout to be completed in December 2016.

As mentioned earlier, meeting child care needs of military families is one of the goals for the DoD Child Development programs. Funding for construction of on-installation facilities represents one part of a multi-faceted approach to increase the capacity to provide child care. There is a continued need for repairing and replacing aging facilities in addition to building new facilities. To meet military families' child care needs, DoD must reach into the civilian community as nearly three-quarters of Active Duty military families live off the installation.<sup>11</sup> Efforts to expand the availability of quality child care programs have been implemented at targeted locations 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 efforts. In addition, DoD looked at state licensing standards and consistency with the DoD fee assistance programs in pilot states. The findings guided efforts to provide training and technical assistance in those states. In 2013 and 2014, eight states were added to this 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

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<sup>10</sup> 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>.

<sup>11</sup> According to the DMDC January 2014 Status of Force Survey of Active Duty members, 60 percent of Active Duty Service members live off installation; 71 percent of married Service members live off installation.

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 that duplication of effort is reduced and that resources are effectively utilized. A comprehensive strategic plan, developed in coordination with state stakeholders, aligned state child care standards with the DoD child care standards and identified ways to impact change through regulatory and non-regulatory processes and to leverage training resources.

In addition to support through the child care liaison, the DoD-United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) collaboration has leveraged the expertise of multiple university researchers in providing training and technical assistance for this initiative. Since 2011, the initiative sponsored more than 1,100 face-to-face training sessions. Over 54,000 training modules resulting in almost 94,000 online training hours have been completed by participants in the project states. All the training 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 children and their families. A cross-state process evaluation report developed by 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.

### **2-1-2. Youth Programs**

Military youth make tremendous sacrifices in support of their parents' service to the country and deserve quality choices of youth development activities. DoD offers dynamic and innovative youth programs for military children ages 6-18. Over one million school-age children of Active Duty and Reserve Component members participate in DoD youth programs worldwide. There are approximately 290 DoD youth and teen centers worldwide. DoD promotes positive youth development 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.

DoD's partnership with other federal and non-federal youth-serving organizations enables military youth 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 also supports 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 designed to provide participants with the necessary life skills to navigate the deployment cycle.

In addition to deployment-focused camps, DoD collaborates with several Land Grant Universities through the DoD-USDA partnership, to offer adventure camps for military teens aged 14 to 18. Working with these universities enables DoD to take advantage of the expertise of university faculty and staff to offer special camp experiences tailored for military youth. These camp opportunities are available throughout the year, are not limited to the summer. Camps designed specifically for military youth 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 and facility-based operations based on its youth population data provided by 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. In 2014, DoD-sponsored youth and family camps served 1,025 youth participants and 123 adult participants. Reintegration camps served 1,724 youth, 443 adult family members; and 248 families' camps were offered in 21 states.

### Five-Year Plans

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 a major focus of DoD youth programs. These opportunities will be provided by:

- Recognizing the achievements of youth;
- Continuing to strengthen our partnerships with national youth-serving organizations that augment and offer valued resources; 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, sports, fitness, and recreation.<sup>12</sup>

### **2-1-3. DoD Schools**

There are over 1.2 million school-age military connected children. Approximately 80 percent of them attend public schools in the United States. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) is for planning, directing, coordinating, and managing pre-kindergarten through 12th grade educational programs on behalf of the DoD. DoDEA is globally positioned, operating through two separate school systems: a total of 172 accredited schools in 14 districts located in 11 foreign countries, seven states, Guam, and Puerto Rico.

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<sup>12</sup> These areas are identified in DoDI 6060.4: Department of Defense (DoD) Youth Programs (YPs) (published on August 23, 2004).

DoDEA employs approximately 15,000 employees who serve more than 74,000 children of Active Duty military and DoD civilian families.

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 communities as well as in our 21st century globalized society. DoDEA's schools are divided into three geographic areas: Europe, the Pacific, and the Americas. Within each of these three areas, schools are organized into districts. Currently all DoDEA schools are accredited and in good standing with their regional accrediting agencies.

Through collaboration and outreach efforts, DoDEA shares its experience and resources to support educational opportunities for children from military families that are not enrolled in DoDEA schools. Through a grant program, the administration of the DoD Impact Aid program, and 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 the assigned location. This program serves approximately 3,200 children in 138 foreign locations.

### Goals and Metrics

DoDEA measures student progress with multiple performance-based assessments such as TerraNova<sup>13</sup>, the SAT®<sup>14</sup>, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress<sup>15</sup>. DoDEA annually assesses students in grades 3-8 in reading, math, language, science, and social studies. DoDEA's annual assessment also includes the CAT Plus, Second Edition, Levels I and II and LAS Links assessments for students identified with English as a second language. Assessment results for DoDEA schools are located on the DoDEA website.<sup>16</sup>

### Five-Year Plans

DoDEA's Community Strategic Plan (School Year 2013/14 - 2017/18) articulates its long-term plan for achieving levels of excellence in the five areas most critical to becoming one of our Nation's best school systems. These areas include: student excellence, school excellence, talent excellence, organizational excellence, and outreach excellence.

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<sup>13</sup> The TerraNova, Third Edition, Multiple Assessments is a norm-referenced, standardized achievement test developed by CTB/McGraw-Hill. The TerraNova student scores are compared to the scores from a national representative sample of students.

<sup>14</sup> The SAT is a test that measures a student's academic skills and is used for admission into college. The components include verbal reasoning, critical reading, math problem solving, and writing. The SAT is intended to supplement the secondary school record in assessing readiness for college-level work.

<sup>15</sup> The NAEP is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.dodea.edu/datacenter/accountability/index.cfm>.

- Strategic Goal 1 - Student Excellence: Challenge each student to maximize his or her potential and to excel academically, socially, emotionally and physically for life, college, and career readiness.
- Strategic Goal 2 - School Excellence: Develop and sustain each school to be high-performing within an environment of innovation, collaboration, continuous renewal, and caring relationships.
- Strategic Goal 3 - Talent Excellence: Recruit, develop and empower a diverse, high-performing team to maximize achievement for each student.
- Strategic Goal 4 - Organizational Excellence: Build a great, enduring and responsive organization that provides the appropriate resources, direction and services in pursuit of highest student achievement.
- Strategic Goal 5 - Outreach Excellence: Foster family, school and community partnerships to expand educational opportunities for students.

The Community Strategic Plan also forms the foundation for all other strategic and operational planning and aims to strengthen organizational accountability and transparency. The full Community Strategic Plan can be viewed on the DoDEA website.<sup>17</sup>

DoDEA's top education priority is for our students to be college and career ready. To be successful after high school, all graduates must possess the knowledge, habits, and skills that can only come from a rigorous, rich, and well-rounded pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 education. Graduates need to be prepared for some postsecondary education and/or training if they are to have options and opportunities in the job market. College and career readiness in DoDEA is grounded in college and career ready standards in the areas of mathematics and literacy which set a foundation for even greater student success and growth with grade-by-grade learning expectations for students. Additionally, the college and career ready standards support a cohesive education for the highly-mobile military-connected student.<sup>18</sup>

## **2-2. Spouse Education and Career Opportunities**

One of the factors that negatively impact military spouses 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 education, and can cause financial instability in the family as it may prevent or interrupt workforce participation, employment continuity, upward career mobility, and job-related education, training and professional development. Military families move 14 percent more often than their civilian counterparts and move more frequently across state lines.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.dodea.edu/CSP/strategicGoals/index.cfm>.

<sup>18</sup> For a full complement of information on DoDEA's work focused on college and career ready students, please visit: <http://www.dodea.edu>.

<sup>19</sup> Data Source: The U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey 2007-2009.

Research consistently shows there are significant financial impacts on military spouses' employment and career development. The 2012 Survey of Active Duty Spouses (ADSS) data showed that one in four (25 percent) civilian military spouses in the labor force is unemployed (jobless, but actively seeking employment), which is substantially higher than the civilian unemployment rate.<sup>20</sup> A recent study shows that female military spouses with full-time jobs earned 25 percent less than their civilian counterparts.<sup>21</sup>

Research also suggests that pursuing educational goals is difficult for many spouses. Results from the 2015 ADSS indicate that nearly half (43 percent) of military spouses are not currently enrolled in school or training, but would like to be. Those spouses identified the cost of education (76 percent) and military family responsibilities (65 percent) as major reasons that hold them back.<sup>22</sup> DoD recognizes these impacts and the importance of military spouse education and employment, as Service members' resilience, readiness, retention and transition success are closely tied to family financial health, quality of military life satisfaction and overall well-being.

*SECO Program:* In response to the mobile military lifestyle challenges that military spouses face, in 2010 DoD established the spouse-centric SECO program to strengthen and expand the positive effects that spouse education and employment have on creating and maintaining strong military families and overall readiness and retention of the Armed Forces. Targeted assistance continues to be provided to spouses in four distinct spouse career lifecycle stages: (1) Career exploration; (2) Education, training, and licensing; (3) Employment readiness; and (4) Career connections.

Central to SECO support service delivery are Military OneSource (MOS) SECO Career Center (1-800-342-9647) master's level, certified counselors who assist spouses in exploring portable career fields and occupations as well as educational opportunities needed to achieve related goals. MOS counselors help spouses make connections to employers who have committed to recruit, hire, promote, and retain them. Specialty consultations are also provided to address needs for personalized resume reviews, mock interviews, job search coaching, career mentoring, scholarships, and connections to employers who offer mid-career and senior level positions. To round out support services, SECO counselors help guide spouses to a growing need for virtual, part-time, and seasonal employment; self-development opportunities; and prior learning assessment services that can lead to college credits. In FY 2015, SECO counselors fielded 173,000 calls to and from spouses seeking education, employment, and career advancement opportunities.

*My Career Advancement Account Scholarship (MyCAA):* To help jump start spouse careers, DoD offers the MyCAA Scholarship to eligible spouses of Service members who are on title 10 orders and in pay grades E-1 to E-5, W-1 to W-2, and O-1 to O-2. Such assistance provides up to \$4,000 for an associate's degree or education and training needed for occupational licenses or credentials that are conducive to the mobile military lifestyle. In FY 2015, 32,686

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<sup>20</sup> Defense Manpower Data Center. (2013). The 2012 Survey of Active Duty Spouses Tabulation Volume.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> Defense Manpower Data Center. (2016). The 2015 Survey of Active Duty Spouses Tabulation Volume.

spouses established MyCAA accounts, and 21,638 requested and received tuition assistance for related education and training in the following high demand career fields: health care, business management, technology, education, and skilled trades.

*Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP):* Since MSEP's launch in June 2011, 298 employer partners and military support organizations have signed a DoD Statement of Support pledging to recruit, hire, promote and retain military spouses. Through these collaborative outreach efforts, employers are able to connect with Military spouses seeking employment. To date, over 4.5 million jobs have been posted on the MSEP Career Portal, which resulted in more than 84,000 spouses being hired.

### Goals and Metrics

The NDAA for FY 2015 required DoD to evaluate SECO's effectiveness of the MSEP program in addressing underemployment of military spouses; matching military spouse's education and experience to available employment positions; and closing the wage gap between military spouses and their civilian counterparts. Subsequently, DoD, in collaboration with RAND, launched a series of program evaluation studies to assess the degree to which military spouse needs for education, employment and career advancement opportunities are being met. Phase one of this multi-year study determined that MSEP provides a well-balanced, diverse array of employment partners who are offering the types of jobs military spouses are seeking. At the same time, the study identified opportunities to improve employment opportunities for spouses. Those opportunities include the need to review MSEP partnership eligibility criteria to accommodate more job opportunities which are regional and local in nature (e.g., school systems and child development employers) as well as special considerations for employers who are less than five years old (e.g., emerging technology companies). The RAND study also recommended improved career portal job search functionality, regular textual analysis of job postings and search queries to identify spouse-employer needs and mismatches, and changes in program evaluation data collection to support long-term tracking of program effectiveness.

Beginning in 2016, the next phase of the RAND study will be initiated, including tasks related to spouse perception of how much SECO and its component programs have helped them reach their educational and career goals; reduce/eliminate the barriers to education and employment opportunities; and improved the gap between spouse needs and job offerings posted on the Spouse Career Portal.

To ensure steady progress in meeting the established program goals, SECO continues to pursue the objectives listed below. The RAND study will provide recommendations on specific data needed to measure progress.

#### Goal 1: Reduce the 25 percent military spouse unemployment rate.

##### Objectives:

- Increase 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 funded programs of study with MSEP partner employers who have job openings and want to hire them in their chosen career fields.

- Continue dialogue with Federal Partners to remove barriers to Federal careers and improve communications to energize spouse employment within the Federal workforce.
- Identify and promote state best practices for portability of occupational licenses and credentials within all 50 states and U.S. territories.
- Promote states' unemployment compensation eligibility for trailing military spouses to help sustain them during their job searches following relocation to new communities.
- Improve outreach and communications with military spouses by continuing to execute a comprehensive strategic communication plan including social media.

Goal 2: Close the wage gap by improving employment continuity and career advancement opportunities for military spouses.

Objectives:

- Increase access to job-related educational resources which lead to potential career advancement opportunities by connecting spouses to the SECO scholarship database and MyCAA tuition assistance.
- Increase the number of spouses who use MyCAA to fund and complete job-related courses of study.
- Expand the database of military spouse-specific scholarships provided by MSEP partner organizations and their industry partners, community colleges and Service member Opportunity Colleges that are committed to the Military Student Bill of Rights.
- Link spouses to career and employment mentors, including potential employers who can provide employment and career continuity.
- Increase spouse networking opportunities through the Spouse Ambassador Network, job fairs, social media connections and online career platforms.
- Assist MSEP employers in identifying, sharing, and adopting best practices for hiring, relocating, retaining, and paying military spouses wages commensurate with their talent, experience, skills, and educational levels.

Five-Year Plan

To determine program impact, a five-year program evaluation study for DoD-wide family support programs identified SECO as a core program area for further evaluation. The aforementioned RAND program evaluation study is part of this larger effort. In January 2015, RAND published a report on MyCAA scholarship use among Active Duty spouses, analyzing data from the 2012 ADSS.<sup>23</sup> Results showed 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. As a result, community outreach efforts are being strengthened and expanded.

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<sup>23</sup> 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, CA.



Through the DoD-USDA collaboration, Penn State University has been engaged to develop spouse transition assistance information and materials which can be accessed by spouses worldwide through face to face and virtual service delivery methods. Beginning in FY 2016, the resulting Military Spouse Transition Program, will support spouses in finding and using the SECO support services which best meet their education and career goals at three key “transition” touch points: New to the Military, mid-career, and at the end of Military Service.

## **2-3. Financial Well-Being**

### **2-3-1. Personal Finance**

Financial stress has negative impacts on one’s health, family relations, and productivity. In the military, personal financial health is 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 that they need to perform their assigned duties.

DoD and the Military Services have programs and initiatives to sustain and strengthen financial readiness of Service members and their families. To ensure basic financial skills and access to helpful financial management tools, each Military Service provides Service members and their families with 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 by augmenting the financial readiness efforts of the Military Services and their commanders through financial educational programs, collaboration, counseling, legal protections, and other resources.

#### Goals and Metrics

Of 1.33 million Active Duty personnel, approximately 43 percent are 25 years old or younger.<sup>24</sup> In general, 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 Forces 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 E-1 to E-4 who reported their financial conditions as “not comfortable” from 2002 to 2014. In 2014, those percentages remained almost the same as those of the previous year. Although the percentages slightly decreased for the Army, Navy, and Air Force by two to four percentage points, these changes were within the margin of error. The data indicate that the vast majority of the junior

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<sup>24</sup> The Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy. (2015). The 2014 Demographics Report: Profile of the Military Community, Washington, D.C. (p.33)

enlisted members feel financially comfortable or at least make ends meet without too much difficulty.

Data from the same survey showed that the percentages of junior enlisted members who experienced one or more problems in paying bills (e.g., bounced two or more checks, fell behind in rent or mortgage) further declined in 2014 (see Figure 2) and reflect a significant decrease since 2002. In fact, the 20 percent of E-1 to E-4 members who reported experiencing one or more financial problems in 2014 was half of the percentage who indicated they experienced financial problems in 2004, 2005, and 2009 (40 percent each of those years). Using the data from the Department-wide personnel surveys, DoD will continue monitoring the junior enlisted members' perception and behavior regarding personal finances. The Personal Financial Managers at each military installation continue to provide face to face financial counseling and also conduct education classes for Service members on various financial topics. Financial counseling is also available to family members who seek financial assistance to maintain financial well-being.

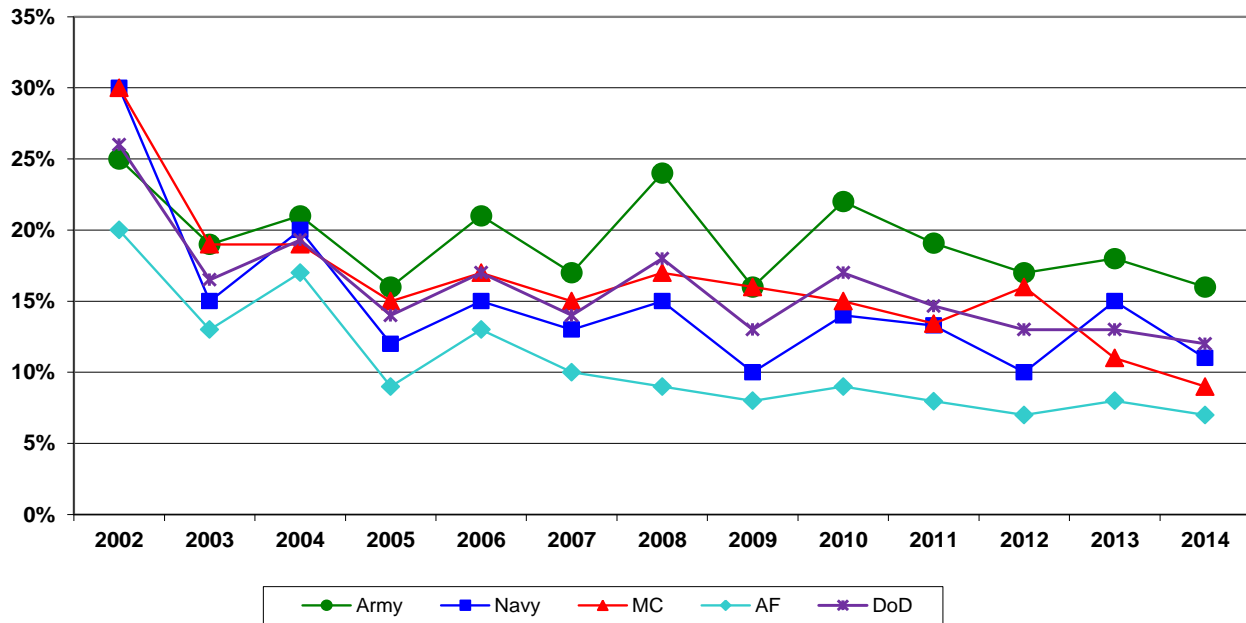
Effective management of personal finances is equally important to the readiness of Reserve component (National Guard and Reserve) members and their families. The impact of mobilization/activation on household income and financial stability is one of the unique financial situations faced by Reserve component members. 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. The overall financial well-being of Reserve component members is assessed annually through DMDC's Status of Forces Survey of Reserve Component Members; similar financial well-being data is also collected from their spouses biannually through the Reserve Component Spouse Survey.

### 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.

Commissioned by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy (ODASD(MC&FP)), the Pennsylvania State University Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness (hereafter called "Penn State Clearinghouse") recently completed a project 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

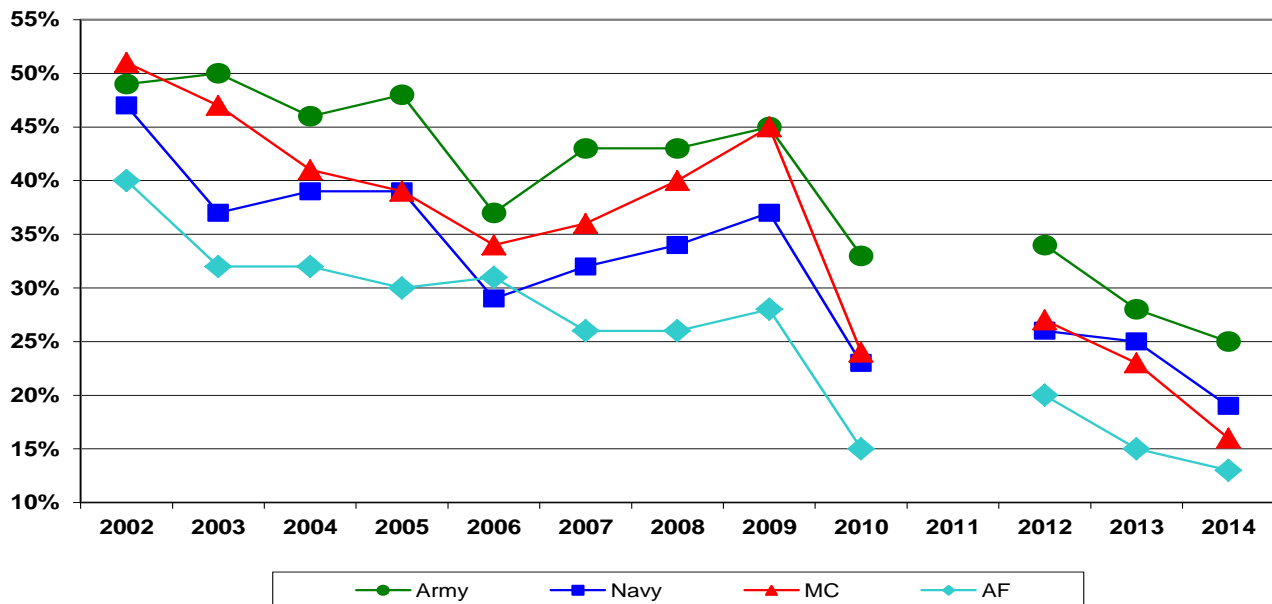
**Figure 1. E1-E4 Self-Assessment of Overall Financial Condition: Reporting Financial Difficulties by Service (2002 -2014).**



Data Source: DMDC Status of Force Survey of Active Duty Members (SOFS-A) 2002-2014.

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 (2002-2014).**



Data Source: DMDC Status of Force Survey of Active Duty Members (SOFS-A) 2002-2014.

Note: The 2011 SOFS-A did not include the debt questions.

The percentages 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 account; 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; i. Obtained payday loan (2004-2005) or i. Filed for personal bankruptcy (2008-2014).

Readiness Consultant Model Personal Financial Readiness. 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 is currently in the implementation assistance phase. In this phase, Purdue University is assisting the Army in implementing the program evaluation plan developed by the Penn State University team and is 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.

### **2-3-2. Promoting Enforcement of the Regulation against Predatory Lending**

Predatory 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 and military readiness. Financial problems may lead Service members to lose security clearances, which may impede military readiness, as well as job opportunities after leaving the military. DoD initially approached states in 2004 to adjust their laws to protect Service members and their families from lending practices that had a greater potential of causing them financial difficulty, focusing primarily on payday and vehicle title loans. In 2006, as part of the NDAA for FY 2007, the Congress approved the MLA, which authorized the Department to write a federal regulation restricting terms for any form of credit that the Department determined to be potentially harmful to Service members and their families.

In 2007, DoD released a regulation published at the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 32, Part 232 (32 CFR Part 232), covering payday loans, vehicle title loans, and tax refund anticipation loans. Since payday and vehicle title loans were primarily regulated under state laws, the Department requested states to include the new rule in their examinations and provide their regulators with authority to take enforcement action when needed. A total of 37 states (providing protection to 77 percent of Active Duty Service members and their families) established authority for their regulators to enforce the regulation.

As part of the NDAA for FY 2013, the Congress amended the MLA, to create a private right of action for consumers, require a review of the regulation every two years, revise the list of consulting federal agencies and allow the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and Federal Trade Commission to have the authority to enforce 32 CFR Part 232. The CFPB has authority to examine and take enforcement action against payday and vehicle title lenders.

Additionally, the House Report accompanying the NDAA for FY 2013 requested the Department to review the types of credit covered by the 2007 rule. The Department convened the consulting federal agencies, designated<sup>25</sup> and developed a Rule that includes all forms of consumer credit covered by the Truth in Lending Act (with the exception of mortgages and purchase loans, which are excluded from the MLA). This broad definition of consumer credit includes payday loans, vehicle title loans, tax refund anticipation loans, pawn loans, traditional

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<sup>25</sup> CFPB, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, FTC, Federal Reserve Board, National Credit Union Administration, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and the U.S. Department of the Treasury

installment loans, lines of credit and credit cards, thereby providing great protection to Service members and their families.

A significant revision to the regulation implementing the MLA was published on July 22, 2015, and became effective October 1, 2015, with an initial compliance date of October 3, 2016. Oversight and enforcement of all of these forms of consumer credit is shared among federal and state regulatory agencies, and consequently, DoD views enforcement requirements as sufficiently covered. DoD continues to meet regularly with private sector users of DMDC systems used to identify covered borrowers and covered policyholders under military consumer protection laws to learn about issues facing such users and to develop ways of addressing such issues. DoD will also submit to the congressional defense committees a report on plans to strengthen the capabilities of the DMDC systems, including staffing levels and funding, in order to improve the identification of covered borrowers and covered policyholders under military consumer protection laws.

### **2-3-3. 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 2015, the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) operated a worldwide network of stores, providing groceries and household items to the military community, beginning the year with 242 stores and ending FY 2015 with 240 stores due to two scheduled closures – one overseas (Hannam Village, Korea) and one in Continental United States (CONUS) (Sugar Grove, West Virginia). Authorized patrons include approximately 5.4 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.<sup>26</sup> Commissary patrons can save an average of up to 30 percent or more if buying the majority of their groceries at the commissary. Patrons purchase grocery and household items from the commissary at cost plus a five percent surcharge. Commissary operations are funded with an annual appropriation for the DeCA Working Capital Fund.

#### Goals and Metrics

FY 2015 was DeCA's tenth 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 2015- FY 2019. Table 2 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.

In FY 2015, actual annual commissary sales reached nearly \$5,510 million. Customer savings are measured annually by comparing commissary prices to commercial supermarket

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<sup>26</sup> Defense Commissary Agency FY 2015 Annual Financial Report, available at [http://www.commissaries.com/inside\\_deca/afr.cfm](http://www.commissaries.com/inside_deca/afr.cfm)

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 the goal of 30.0 percent. FY 2015 savings results are pending. When considering the return on investment for FY 2014, 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. FY 2015 results are pending. 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 \$786.7 million in FY 2015, which was well below the projected number (less than \$1,019 million) through stringent management of costs. Surcharge obligations, which reflect capitalization programs for the stores, obligated at \$267.8 million, 94.5 percent of the annual goal of \$283.5 million.

**Table 2. Goals and Metrics for Military Commissaries**

Outcome	Metric	FY 15 Data	FY 16 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	Pending	
		Actual not yet available		
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 ≤\$1,019	Goal ≤\$1,019	Exceeded goal for cost control measure
		Actual \$786.7		
Achieve results less than or equal to Surcharge obligation authority provided by OUSD(C)	Surcharge Obligations (\$M)	Goal \$283.5	\$291.4	Surcharge obligations are 94.5% of target
		Actual \$267.8		
Maintain 30% of customer Savings	Sustain Customer Savings	Goal 30.0%	30.0%	
		Actual not yet available		
Meet or exceed annual grocery industry average ACSI score	American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)	Goal FY 15 Industry Average 76	Meet or exceed industry average	Customer satisfaction below target
		Actual 72		
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	CCSS results below target
		Actual B: 4.44		

Each year, levels of customer satisfaction are measured externally by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)<sup>27</sup> and internally by the Commissary Customer Service Survey (CCSS). For FY 2015, DeCA achieved an ACSI score of 72, four points below the ACSI supermarket industry average index of 76. The DeCA ACSI was conducted using a new

<sup>27</sup> The ACSI is used by major retailers and grocery stores nationwide to measure customer satisfaction. Meeting or exceeding the ACSI business line indices provides a good indication of how exchanges and commissaries compare with their private sector counterparts.

methodology that used on-line surveys and targeted younger shoppers. This change had a significant negative impact to the score. For the CCSS, the actual score in FY 2015 was B: 4.44. This did not meet the annual goal of A:  $\geq 4.60$ .<sup>28</sup> Over the past year there were some operational issues that impacted the CCSS score to include Deli and Bakery contracts at some Central and West locations and a six-month West Coast port work slow down by the dock workers that caused out of stock conditions at commissaries in Korea and Japan.

### Five Year Plans

DeCA's efforts remain focused on the vision to "Understand our customers and deliver a 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

Consequently, the NDAA for FY 2015 directed DoD to conduct an independent review of commissaries and the impact that recommended efforts would have on commissary patrons. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs contracted with Boston Consulting Group to conduct the study, which recommended the areas of variable pricing, private label, and non-appropriated fund operation for consideration and pilot testing. These three areas are under further research and study to develop an implementation plan for pilot testing going forward.

DeCA continues to reengineer its business processes and structure for efficiencies, explore shopper insights, employ social media, test and evaluate e-commerce initiatives, and seek cost effective ways to improve store operations and customer service. These ongoing efforts will ensure resources are focused in the areas that provide the greatest value and service to Service members and their families. Improvements to key functions and processes that were made or underway during FY 2015 are as follows:

- Leveraging business and technology practices: To meet 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 15 legacy business systems, a branding revitalization program, 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 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Category management: During FY 2015, DeCA continued to refine its sales Directorate reorganization, mirroring state of the art retail processes, using modern

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<sup>28</sup> The CCSS uses a 1.0 to 5.0 scoring system (poor to excellent), with performance represented by a letter grade based on scoring range (a score of 4.60-5.00 = A, 4.20-4.59 = B, 3.80-4.19 = C, and below 3.80 = D).

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, promotion, 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 have more information to make their shopping decisions through the Internet and smart phone technology. By realigning the category management system, DeCA has positioned itself to ensure the commissary benefit and its savings remain relevant to the patrons.

- **Store support:** During FY 2015, DeCA further refined and automated store operations and customer service improvements. Some examples of initiatives included: 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) completed 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 System front-end system at stores to improve system response times, the patron's shopping experience, and checkout waiting times; 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.
- **Customer Support:** DeCA implemented a customer service initiative in FY 2015, to enhance a customer service culture that places a focus on in-store customer communication. DeCA is looking to improve awareness in all stores on customer service and to increase positive patron feedback through customer service communication channels, such as DeCA's Your Action Line patron digital feedback platform.
- **Healthy Base Initiative (HBI):** DeCA directly supported DoD's HBI effort under the Department's Operation Live Well program to improve the health and wellness of Service members, DoD civilians, and their 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 skills that are essential to preparing healthy meals, which all starts with what goes into the shopping cart. The Agency also works with its industry partners to continue to support and expand special activities and promotions such as the summer time farmer's market events. Teaching skills that families can use when shopping (e.g., how to identify the best produce, what is a whole grain, and how to read a nutrition label) can help them choose healthier items, which are lower in sugar, salt, and saturated fat. DeCA is currently pursuing a nutrition label program in its stores to begin during 2016.
- **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 955,000, and nearly 7.76 million digital coupons have been redeemed, saving customers over \$8.5 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 previous years). Under the new program, Commissaries worldwide provides greater visibility of offerings to patrons and highlight about 456 Value Brand products in 56 categories, such as frozen vegetables and entrees, pet foods, cereals, cleaning supplies, soft drinks, coffee, etc. The average patron savings for Commissary Value Brand items is about 23 percent or more, compared to commercial store brand and private label items. Commissary patrons looking for Value Brand items are seeing new shelf signs, posters, banners, and some special displays, as well as information on the DeCA website, [commissaries.com](http://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 65.8 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.

#### **2-3-4. Military Exchange Benefits**

The Exchange programs are an integral part of non-pay compensation for Military Service members. 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 military installations worldwide, and support numerous deployed, contingency, and disaster and emergency relief locations throughout the world. The Exchange retail stores include 210 main stores, approximately 3,820 specialty stores (e.g., military clothing, barbershops, book stores, laundry and dry cleaning, gas stations, convenience stores) and more than 2,390 nationally/regionally

branded fast food restaurants. The Exchanges also offer online shopping options for their authorized 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 3 summarizes metrics for the Retail Fiscal Year (RFY)<sup>29</sup> 2014 and goals for the RFY 2015. 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 2014, all three exchanges exceeded their respective savings goals of 21 percent for AAFES, 24 percent for NEXCOM, and 27 percent for MCX.

Exchange customer satisfaction is measured annually in two ways: ACSI, which is an independent, nationally recognized benchmarking tool to compare commercial counterparts, and the Customer Satisfaction Index (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 2014 are reaching the industry average score for department and discount stores. CSI scores met or exceeded the annual goals in RFY 2014.

### 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 more than \$685 million annually through dividends, providing at-cost DoD school meals, operating overseas bakery plants, and contingency operations. 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 the current budgetary constrained environment, AAFES remains focused on continuing the trend of reduced costs and maximizing returns for Airmen, Soldiers, retirees, and their families, and taking a proactive approach to reducing costs.
- AAFES continued to combat rising unemployment rates affecting Veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce through its active participation in the Joining Forces program. In RFY 2014, Veteran hires accounted for about 10 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 27 percent of AAFES associates are military family members.

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<sup>29</sup> 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 2014 (February 2014 through January 2015).

- In RFY 2014, 33 percent of all newly hired employees (4,558 of 13,627) were military spouses and more than 922 received promotions.
- 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 Exchanges 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 (NEX) 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.
- Customer Outreach: NEXCOM's e-commerce site, myNavyExchange.com, offers customers options to use and purchase 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. NEX's rewards program, called My Navy Blue Reward, provides online shoppers with additional discounts.
- 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, which resulted in 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 their families. 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<sup>30</sup> 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.

- **Navy Integration:** NEX continues to be an important catalyst 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 expanded its fresh food program supporting DoD's Healthy Base Initiative (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 the Continental United States at nearly 100 NEX locations. The demand for these items is driven by consumer's 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. Approximately 38 percent of NEXCOM's 12,600 U.S. citizen associates are military dependents, veterans or Active Duty members. Navy family members alone account for 28 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. New events are continually being added to recognize and offer a small token of appreciation to forward-deployed service members for their contributions to the nation.

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<sup>30</sup> PREMIER is a formal term that stands for: Personal connection, Relationships, Enhancements, Memorable, individual care, Empowerment, and Risk taking.

**Table 3. Goals and Metrics for Military Exchanges.**

Outcome	Metric	Retail Fiscal Year 2014 data		Retail Fiscal Year 2015 goal	
Achieve customer savings of 15% in all Exchange systems	Customer savings				
	AAFES	Goal	15%	15%	
		Actual	21%		
	NEXCOM	Goal	15%	15%	
		Actual	24%		
	MCX	Goal	20%	20%	
Actual		27%			
Maintain sales volume and profitability that supports a steady stream of capital investment and MWR dividends	Sales and earnings				
	Sales (\$M)				
	AAFES	Goal	\$ 7,350.2	\$6,864.3	
		Actual	\$ 7,329.2		
	NEXCOM	Goal	\$ 2,742.1	\$ 2,693.3	
		Actual	\$ 2,661.7		
	MCX	Goal	\$ 900	\$ 845	
		Actual	\$ 898.8		
	Earnings (\$M)				
	AAFES	Goal	\$ 296.8	\$366.2	
		Actual	\$ 373.3		
	NEXCOM	Goal	\$ 83.0	\$ 57.5	
		Actual	\$ 65.9		
	MCX	Goal	\$ 52.6	\$47	
Actual		\$ 55.7			
Meet or exceed ACSI department and discount store industry average (77 in 2014)	ACSI Customer Satisfaction				
	AAFES	Goal	76	Goal	76
		Actual	68		
	NEXCOM	Goal	77	Goal	80
		Actual	79		
	MCX	Goal	77	Goal	75
Actual		70			
Meet or exceed past 3 year average customer satisfaction index (CSI) AAFES: 80 NEXCOM: 85 MCX : 80	Exchange Customer Satisfaction Index				
	AAFES	Goal	80	Goal	80
		Actual	80		
	NEXCOM	Goal	85	Goal	86
		Actual	86		
	MCX	Goal	79	Goal	80
Actual		79			

## MCX

- The Marine Corps Exchange 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.
- Transforming and Innovating: The Marine Corps continues to transform and innovate its integrated MCX, MWR, and Warfighter and Family Services organization by leveraging technology and expanded partnerships in pursuit of a new service delivery model. This model and supporting strategies focus on the core Marine population with emphasis on mobile technologies and transition from facility-centric and direct programming approach to more self-directed and enabling platforms that are popular in today’s American society. There have been tangible benefits of the strategies over the past several years, which include developing an organizational brand strategy, maturing the centralized buying, and executing an aggressive capitalization strategy for the Marine Marts. These efforts will transform our critically important businesses and enhance the overall value proposition to our entire customer base. In FY 2014, sales declined due to troop end-strength reductions, which negatively impacted foot traffic. MCX seeks to avoid unnecessary costs by executing programs in the most efficient way. MCX continues to focus on transforming its 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. Developing and implementing standard staffing structures and staffing metrics will optimize payroll dollars and ensure staffing supports delivering a branded customer experience. In concert with our strategic plan, one strategic priority is to continue to improve our culture by leveraging talent management principles and objectives and the devotion of our valued human capital to drive organizational success. In 2014, the resale organizations continued cooperative efforts with our Sister Services as a part of daily business practices.
- Healthy Living: MCX supports the Secretary of the Navy’s 21st Century Sailor and Marine initiative with price parity on tobacco products. Tobacco cessation products are available at cost to Marines and families and 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. The Commandant of the Marine Corps issued an alcohol sales guidance memo for all Marine Marts adjacent to barracks to remove distilled spirits. 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. 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. The Marine Corps Exchange, Cornell University, and the National Association of Convenience Stores have joined with Pepsi & Coca-Cola in an effort to test new ways of promoting healthy consumption choices. An alternative merchandising option tested in select stores is placing water and functional water at eye level and over traditional soft drinks to see if more consumers will make a healthier choice if it is presented right in front of them. Additionally, soda is merchandised with low/no calorie options over full calories options that are placed at the bottom. Results have shown an increase in water sales with no appreciable decrease in sales of carbonated beverages.

## **2-4. Personal and Family Life**

### **2-4-1. Non-Medical Counseling**

DoD continues to offer 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, 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: MOS and the Military and Family Life Counseling (MFLC) program. During FY 2015, the primary reasons for receiving MOS and MFLC non-medical counseling support were marital/relationship issues.

MOS provides 24/7/365 comprehensive information, referral and assistance on every aspect of military life. MOS services are available worldwide and provided at no cost to Active Duty, Guard and Reserve service members and their families through a call center and website. MOS non-medical counseling is available worldwide via telephonic, on-line, video or face-to-face sessions. MOS non-medical counselors provide sessions in a traditional 50-minute session. MOS 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 MOS counselor's office within the local community. MFLCs provide in-person non-medical counseling sessions and briefings, both on and off military installations. MFLCs provide support 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, drill weekends, and annual training events to support National Guard and Reserve Components.

Both the MOS 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 2015, MOS counselors provided more than 164,000 50-minute face-to-face non-medical counseling sessions. In addition, MOS counselors provided more than 11,700 sessions of 50-minute telephonic and online non-medical counseling. While overall numbers for non-medical counseling sessions have remained steady from last year, the numbers depict a shift from face-to-face counseling towards greater use of online, telephonic and video counseling modalities. During FY 2015, and following research indicating that speaking with a provider who is a veteran or is the spouse of a veteran fosters openness and trust, the MOS confidential suite of services expanded to include peer-to-peer specialty consultations where service members and their spouses can schedule consultations with master's degree-level professionals who have firsthand, military-life experience. During FY 2015, MFLCs provided nearly 4.6 million in-person contacts, briefings/presentations and non-medical counseling sessions. MOS and MFLC non-medical counseling sessions include individual, couple and family sessions.

The MFLC program also provides surge support. In FY 2015 the MFLC program continued to see strong use of surge MFLCs and child and youth MFLCs for support of National Guard and Reserve units, most of which were preparing for or returning from deployments. Personal financial counselors, also provided through the MFLC program, complemented the services of surge non-medical counselors by addressing financial readiness concerns. During FY 2015, 102 surge assets were provided to Active Duty units and 165 surge assets supported the National Guard and Reserves, in over 40 states, territories and countries.

Caregiver's role in promoting the health and well-being of wounded, ill, or injured Service members was recently validated in RAND's report on *Hidden Heroes: America's Military Caregivers*. In the report, RAND estimated there are approximately 1.1 million family members, friends, and neighbors who act as caregivers to individuals who served in the military after 2001; nearly a quarter providing care to somebody currently in Active Duty or the Reserves. The report highlighted the need for structured social support programs targeting caregivers aimed at minimizing adverse consequences that may arise from caregiving duties, including promoting physical and mental well-being. Past research has shown that caregivers who participated in such programs exhibit improved social outcomes, psychological health, decreased burden and depressive symptoms. In 2014, the Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD), under the Joining Forces Military Caregiver Support Initiative, established Military Caregiver Personalized Experiences, Engagement and Resources (PEER) Forums. The forums, facilitated by MFLCs, provide opportunities for caregivers to share experiences and support one another through monthly in-person meetings on over 62 military installations worldwide.

### 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, and both MOS and the MFLC Programs have helped in reducing the stigma faced by Service members and their families in seeking help. Furthermore, the military community has reported a need for increased support such as financial counseling and expanded modalities for non-medical counseling support; as a result, the MOS program incorporated a video modality for non-medical counseling, financial counseling and health and wellness coaching in FY 2015. Additionally, the MFLC Program approved more than 30 additional requests for Personal Financial Counselors in FY 2015, to augment support provided by the financial counseling programs already offered on installations and via Joint Force Headquarters.

Per direction from the Director of the Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation in OSD, ODASD(MC&FP) began a five-year study to assess the effectiveness of military family support programs in FY 2013. 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 MOS 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. Data collection will conclude in the summer of 2016 and a final report is due to MC&FP by December 2016. Participants are being asked to complete two short surveys about their experience using non-medical counseling. The study will contribute to assessing the impacts of non-medical counseling programs on the lives of Service members and their spouses and determining where improvements in the program can be made.

In FY 2015, ODASD (MC&FP) also commissioned the RAND Corporation to conduct a qualitative program evaluation on the Military Caregiver PEER Forums to assess how the newly implemented Military Caregiver PEER forums are used, how those who participate benefit from them, and how the program complements other social services available to caregivers. The study plan is currently being reviewed for regulatory compliance.

### **2-4-2. Family Advocacy Program**

DoD is committed to preventing child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in the military community. FAP addresses child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse<sup>31</sup> 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,

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<sup>31</sup> 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.

etc.), leadership training, the New Parent Support Program (NPSP), and counseling. FAP serves as a key element of the DoD’s Coordinated Community Response system to prevent and respond to reports of child abuse/neglect and domestic abuse in military families in cooperation with civilian social service agencies and civilian law enforcement.

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 occurs, 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.

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 NPSP and treatment programs for substantiated spouse abusers. Due to the timing of data aggregation, FAP data presented here are from FY 2014. Table 4 shows the data from FY 2014 and the goals for FY 2015.<sup>32</sup>

**Table 4. Goals and Metrics for Family Advocacy Programs.**

Outcome	Metric	FY14 Data <sup>2</sup>	FY15 Goals <sup>2</sup>
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: 97%	
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: 91%	

*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.

<sup>32</sup> Please note that FAP reports annual program data from FY 2014 due to the timing of data aggregation.

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 reported in incidents that met FAP criteria for child abuse or neglect within one year following the completion of the program. 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 meet FAP criteria in the year following NPSP case closure. In FY 2014, the percentage of NPSP participants who were not reported for child abuse or neglect for 12 months after the program completion was 97 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 recidivate than those who did not finish.<sup>33</sup> 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 2014, FAP treatment programs prevented recidivism in 91 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 homogeneous 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 2014 FAP report indicates that 61 percent of alleged spouse abusers were Active Duty Service members and 39 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 abuser is a key component to the success of treatment. On the other hand, 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.

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

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<sup>33</sup> 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.

prevention and intervention that are evidence-based, sensitive to culture and gender, and applicable to a military population. DoD is working closely with the Penn State University 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 data systems. Research on determining severity of abuse across all domestic maltreatment types and 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. Field testing of the web-based FAP Incident Severity Scale (FAPISS) training, test, tool and support was completed in FY 2015 and all the Military Services officially implemented FAPISS in early FY 2016. The FAPISS will now be the basis from which clinicians will determine incident severity. DoD policy will be updated accordingly. Development of the Intimate Partner Physical Injury Risk Assessment Tool is complete and the development of training manuals and web-based implementation training is ongoing. Limited beta testing of the web-based training is scheduled to occur in the early 2016. DoD-wide implementation of the Risk Assessment Tool and training instruments is scheduled for later in 2016.

### **2-4-3. 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, and directly contributes 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 Air Force Services.

One of the successful MWR programs that contributes significantly to Service member readiness is the Armed Services YMCA Military Outreach Initiative. This initiative provides fitness center memberships to eligible military personnel and families who are not stationed at or near a military installation so they can maintain necessary fitness levels. In FY 2015, the initiative covered more than 6,600 individual memberships to eligible military members at participating YMCA and private fitness center locations, and more than 3,800 family memberships were covered at participating YMCA locations. An additional aspect of the initiative is to provide up to 16 hours per month of free respite child care at participating YMCAs for families of deployed Active Duty, Guard and Reserve personnel, along with children whose Active Duty parent(s) are assigned to an approved command that is not near a military installation. In FY 2015, more than 2,300 children participated in the respite care program with more than 15,000 hours of respite care provided.

The Internet has been a useful means of delivering MWR programs to military families. DoD has purchased more than 20 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 FY 2015, more than 277,000 live online tutoring sessions were provided to military children in grades K-12 through access to Tutor.com. Additionally, more than 4,300 Skills Center sessions were used and more than 60,000 participants participated in the 2015 DoD MWR summer reading program. Participants read a total of 249,721 books, 2,547,559 pages, and approximately 41.7 million minutes during the 2015 program. The summer reading initiative enriched the lives of the youth in military families, boosting reading achievement and improving literacy skills.

Recreation and travel content is featured on several of the MOS pages, since its 2015 revamp. Whether you're searching in Family and Relationships, Health and Wellness, On and Off Base Living, or even Deployment and Transition, relevant recreation and travel content is there to connect Service members and their families with MWR programs and services. The Marine Corps also began developing and testing a Joint Service Travel Program website to allow all eligible MWR customers to shop for and purchase leisure travel products online rather than requiring that they stop into an installation Ticket and Travel office. This online booking option is intended to extend MWR leisure travel service benefits to MWR eligible customers that do not live or work close to a military installation; however, it also benefits those that do but would prefer to shop and book travel products from the comfort of their home.

Participating in recreation is an important part of rehabilitation and reintegration for injured Service members. Since 2008, DoD has collaborated with Pennsylvania State University to offer in-person classroom training on recreation inclusion for 720 MWR professionals from all branches of Service. The final three "Inclusive Recreation for Wounded Warriors" classes were conducted in March and April, 2015. The in-person classroom training was replaced with the online "Inclusive Customer Service" course that went live on the MOS's My Training Hub. This online course was also developed by Pennsylvania State University, and is intended to train MWR employees at all levels with information and strategies for serving people with disabilities. The course covers general disability etiquette, provides information about some of the most common disabilities experienced by today's Service members, and lays out a strategy for serving anyone with a disability. The Marine Corps is developing a follow-on inclusion management online course through Pennsylvania State University targeted at supervisors. When completed, this course will also be available through My Training Hub. Our goal is to equip MWR employees at all levels with information and skills to engage wounded warriors, families with special needs, and other eligible customers with temporary or permanent disabilities in recreation activities.

Military spouses have indicated that communication is the single most important factor in coping with deployments, and the MWR Internet Café and Morale Satellite program meets that need. Customers continue to express appreciation for the connectivity provided by the Internet Cafes to keep in touch with their families and loved ones during deployments. DoD funds both wired and wireless Internet Cafés across Afghanistan and the Middle East. More than 50 wired Internet Cafés offer computers, web cameras, and voice over Internet protocol phone service at

approximately \$.04 per minute, while the MWR wireless hotspots provide the troops with free Wi-Fi connectivity in 41 locations. The results of the Internet Cafe program customer satisfaction survey for 2015 indicated that overall satisfaction with the program was 92.3 percent, and network reliability remained high, with availability over 99.9 percent in FY 2015 and less than 30 minutes, on average, of downtime each month. In addition to the Internet Cafés, MWR provides portable Morale Satellite units known as Cheetahs. Cheetahs contain web camera enabled computers that support personnel in remote and isolated locations in theater. At the close of FY 2015 there were approximately 53 Cheetahs in operation.

Goals and Metrics

DoD began conducting the comprehensive DoD MWR CSI Survey in 2009. The DoD MWR CSI Survey provides scores for the MWR program overall and for each of nine program areas (see Table 5). 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. 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 2014. The sample was drawn from Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve members worldwide from all four Services. DoD is currently preparing to field the next MWR CSI survey in 2016 and will include feedback from military spouses for the first time in 2016.

In March 2016, the Military Services will report on MWR programmatic improvements initiated from the 2014 MWR CSI survey findings. The MWR CSI Survey data is an important program evaluation resource to ensure a balanced portfolio of quality MWR programs.

**Table 5. 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) <sup>1</sup> - Overall for DoD	69	69	67	MWR established a self-benchmark for CSI score in 2009.
	Army CSI Score	68	70	69	
	Navy CSI Score	72	71	69	
	Air Force CSI Score	70	67	65	
	Marine Corps CSI Score	65	67	63	

Note: <sup>1</sup>Within 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.

## 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 Service 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. DoD is planning to conduct another MWR CSI Survey, and for the first time to include spouses, in 2016, and will use the data gathered to facilitate ongoing MWR innovation efforts focused on leveraging partnerships, technology and improved service delivery techniques.

Finally, the DoD initiated the Common Service Effort a few years ago, as a way to work across program areas throughout the MWR portfolio to improve effectiveness, increase economies of program delivery, and reduce overhead costs. Working group coalitions are used to serve as the foundation, promoting cross-Service support and collaboration. These coalitions assess programs and work together to determine opportunities to create standardization, pool resources, and garner efficiencies. There are currently 27 recommendations actively being pursued, covering program areas such as fitness, libraries, MWR information technology and leisure travel.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

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DoD continues to place family support as a top priority issue, recognizing that a high quality All-Volunteer Force is the underpinning of our military. Under the current fiscal environment and force restructuring, 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, improve business processes, and make informed decisions regarding the sustainment of critical family support programs and services. Program assessment data are playing a pivotal role in these efforts. 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.