

Military Family Life Project

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is this survey about?

With increased deployments, the demands on military spouses and families have gotten even more difficult. The Defense Department wants to know how families adjust to overcome these challenges – which programs work well? Which ones need adjusting? Are there any that should be discontinued? The *Military Family Life Project* will allow DoD to better capture military spouse's experiences today and again next year.

The intent is to capture the long-term impact of deployment on spouses and children before, during and after deployments.

How were results used from the last survey? For example, what programs were created?

In 2008, 69 percent of the participating spouses indicated their husband/wife had been deployed in the previous three years. When asked, "What would be the most helpful to you and your children while your spouse is deployed?" Spouses responded most frequently:

- Increased communication/contact with spouse
- More rest and relaxation(R&R) with spouse
- Assistance/resources for childcare

DoD responded by:

- Improving communication with deployed service members by providing Internet services in family support centers, libraries, and youth centers.
- Increasing child care, counseling, and recreational services to decrease the negative impact of deployments on spouses and children.
- Enhancing support through Military OneSource (1-800-342-9647 or <http://www.militaryonesource.com>)

How many surveys were sent out?

In early May, DoD sent invitations via the U.S. mail to 100,000 active duty military spouses. In that letter, they were invited to participate in the survey online starting May 10, 2010. The survey will remain available online for approximately three months. Spouses who don't complete the online survey will receive a paper copy as part of the survey protocol. The spouses will be contacted again next year for a follow-on survey.

The 2010 May *Status of Forces Survey of Active Duty Members* includes items that mirror Military Family Life Project items. The 2010 May *Status of Forces-A* sample will include up to 40,000 servicemembers of Military Family Life Project sample spouses. This unique sampling design will provide a comprehensive view of active duty family functioning. Surveys to servicemembers will be sent in late May.

How were participants selected?

The Defense Manpower Data Center Active used scientific research procedures to randomly select a sample that represents the military community by age, gender, ethnicity and military service affiliation.

Will the survey be confidential?

Yes, the survey is voluntary and confidential. No information that can personally identify spouse participants will be associated with responses and only group responses will be reported. No individual responses will be reported. (Even the military servicemembers won't have access to their spouse's answers.)

Why are you doing this survey now?

We are now eight years into the current conflict and recognize that there are still gaps in our ability to understand the emerging and changing needs of military families as well as the cumulative effect of multiple deployments.

May I have a copy of the survey?

Yes. Copies of the survey will be available online after May 10th. See MilitaryHOMEFRONT (<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil>).

Why aren't you including spouses in the National Guard and the Reserves? They deploy, too, don't they?

This is an important first step to gather concurrent input from a key group of people. We are interested in feedback from families and those serving in the National Guard and Reserves and these spouses just completed a regularly scheduled spouse survey; the Reserve spouse survey was fielded in 2009.

Is there a reason to conduct a separate survey; that is, separating Guard/Reserve from active duty?

Those who serve in the National Guard or Reserves have different challenges and issues that the active duty service member doesn't – for example, they live away from a military installation, and when not on active duty, have another fulltime job. The cross-sectional surveys are intended to capture information specific to their challenges and issues.

Who is conducting this survey?

This is a joint project between the Office of Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy and the Defense Manpower Data Center.

Will the findings be published?

Yes. Findings will be announced and posted to the Defense Department Web sites, including Military HOMEFRONT.

How is this survey different from other surveys?

The unique sampling design captures a DoD-wide sample of both the spouse and their service member over time to provide a comprehensive view of Active duty family life that can be used to help develop better programs for service members and their families.

How can participants find out the results?

Results will be posted on Military HOMERFRONT
(www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil).

Where can participating spouses go if they have any questions about this survey?

Participants may contact DMDC staff at (800) 881-5307 or via e-mail at mflp@osd.pentagon.mil.

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