

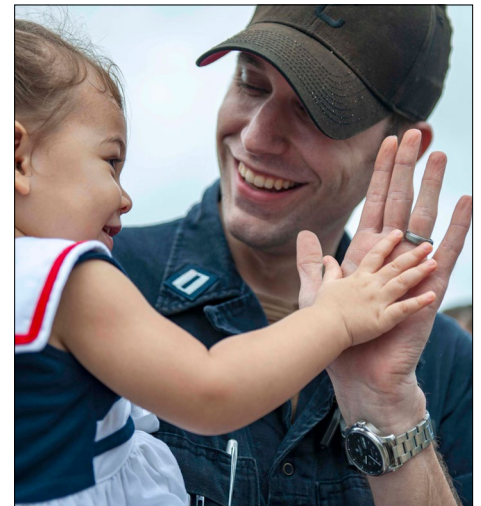


## Key Message

By including members of the military community, states can ensure that unique operational requirements and military family priorities are considered across pertinent policy areas.

## Discussion Points

1. State boards and councils can be mandated by the governor or appointments designated by state law. These panels generally make recommendations on important issues for the community, which often includes military families.
2. Military community representation provides a basis for a wider reach and understanding of the military in relation to important advisory functions.
3. The aforementioned ensures that mission and family readiness, economic security and quality of life concerns are considered. For example:
  - The Defense Department and Department of Veterans Affairs have significant interest and deploy significant resources toward the mental health requirements of constituents. Assigning representatives who are knowledgeable about the military community to state mental health and suicide boards provides opportunities for the coordination of resources, policies and activities to better meet the needs of the military within a state.
  - Including a military community representative on councils coordinating early childhood development programs provides increased opportunities for collaboration and the extension of vital services for military-connected children.
  - Designating a military community representative to serve on a state's disability-related board provides insight from the military community as to the considerations and barriers that military families often encounter.
  - Military spouses have unemployment rates nearly seven times the national average. But including a military spouse liaison on a state workforce development board can assist in the understanding of military family lifestyle and inform the military community of initiatives being undertaken by the state.



Adding a military perspective to state health improvement boards and other councils promoting wellness, nutrition and mental health can improve community-level, health-related, quality of life scores, increase readiness and retention and address the needs of isolated service members and their families.