



**For Immediate Release**

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**New Survey of Military Families Reveals Most Valued Programs and Services**  
*Survey gives voice to military families and sets Military Family Advisory Network advocacy agenda for new year*

WASHINGTON — A new survey by the Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN) reveals that childcare, healthcare, employment assistance and commissaries are among the services that are most important to military families. The “Military Family Support Programming Survey 2014 Report” summarizes the results of the first open-ended survey about resources that military family members find most valuable, details MFAN’s research into the services available to military families and the perceived quality of these programs, and identifies gaps between military family needs and the resources offered.

Drawing on more than 17,000 unique survey responses from more than 1,500 participants, MFAN developed the following recommendations, which serve as the basis for the nonprofit’s 2015 advocacy agenda:

- Investigate whether it would be more efficient for independent government programs to partner with nonprofit agencies.
- Work to prevent budget cuts to commissaries.
- Support more childcare opportunities for military families and streamline existing child care services.
- Make sure the care system gives families access to timely, high-quality care, both direct and purchased within the Defense Health System.
- Advocate for employment support tailored to the specific needs of military families.

“Similar to the military family population itself, many of the resources that support this community are interconnected,” said MFAN advisor Shelley Kimball, Ph.D., who served as the survey’s primary investigator. “What does commissary funding have to do with morale, welfare and recreation and other base services? According to our findings, a lot.”

Shannon Razsadin, MFAN’s executive director, added, “This survey gave military families the opportunity to share what services they value. It is the first inside look into which programs are integral to military family life, as indicated by families themselves.”

The Syracuse University Institute for Veterans and Military Families acted as a third-party reviewer at the completion of the research process.

Among key findings is the critical role commissaries play in the lives of military family members, a service that was almost slashed by \$100 million during the most recent defense budget negotiations. In a cost-saving effort, government officials proposed cuts to military compensation and commissary funding as part of the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act. Thanks to a last-minute compromise, appropriators restored 90 percent of the anticipated cut, echoing lawmakers' caution that such decisions should await the findings of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) report to the president and Congress, due to be released this February. MFAN's research and recommendations will be considered in MCRMC's report.

"Part of MFAN's mission is to provide a voice to military families and make sure that voice is heard by decision-makers," Razsadin said. "We understand that in the current political climate, budget cuts are inevitable, but MFAN is committed to working with policymakers and advocates to make sure the way military families use services is fully understood."

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The Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN) is a 501(c)(3) dedicated to building a community of military and veteran families at home and abroad who are well-informed about resources designed to serve them; equipped with tools for success; connected to leaders who serve the military family community; and embraced by the general public. We translate the needs of military families in a way that service providers can understand, and translate services in a way that speaks to our families. To learn more about MFAN, visit [www.militaryfamilyadvisorynetwork.org](http://www.militaryfamilyadvisorynetwork.org).