Strengthening the MILITARY FAMILY READINESS SYSTEM for a Changing American Society
STUDY SPONSOR
Office of Military Community and Family Policy
U.S. Department of Defense
KENNETH W. KIZER, Atlas Research (Chair)
DAVID ALBRIGHT, University of Alabama
STEPHEN J. COZZA, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
ELLEN DEVOE, Boston University
ABIGAIL GEWIRTZ, University of Minnesota
MARY KELLER, Military Child Education Coalition
PATRICIA LESTER, University of California, Los Angeles

SHELLEY MACDERMID WADSWORTH, Purdue University
LAURA L. MILLER, RAND Corporation
TRACY NEAL-WALDEN, Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Easterseals
DANIEL F. PERKINS, The Pennsylvania State University
ASHISH S. VAZIRANI, National Military Family Association
IVAN C. A. WALKS, Ivan Walks & Associates
STAFF AND CONSULTANTS

SUZANNE LE MENESTREL, Study Director
DAVID BUTLER, Scholar & Director, Office of Military and Veterans Health
SHEILA MOATS, Program Officer (until June 2018)
PRIYANKA NALAMADA, Associate Program Officer
STACEY SMIT, Senior Program Assistant
JUDITH JONES, Archer Fellow
LAURA MINERO, Christine Mirzayan Science and Technology Fellow
SUNDONIA WILLIAMS WONNUM, Consultant, U.S. Air Force
STATEMENT OF TASK

• What can be learned from the positive experiences military families have and the protection conferred on them through supports provided by the DoD and service branches?

• How do the challenges presented by military life, such as frequent moves, exposure to trauma, and economic and other stresses for parents, influence children’s social-emotional, physical, biochemical, and psychological development?

• What are the mechanisms by which resilience can be fostered in military children and families?

• What is needed to strengthen the support system for military families?
STUDY METHODOLOGY

• Six in-person closed session meetings to deliberate findings, conclusions, and recommendations
• Virtual meetings and conference calls
• One public information-gathering session
• Comprehensive review of the scientific literature
• Memos from 14 individual experts and 8 organizations
• Commissioned papers on digital interventions, big data analytics, community engagement programs, implementation science, and success factors for effective systems of support for military families
SUPPORTING THE WELL-BEING OF MILITARY FAMILIES IS ESSENTIAL TO ENSURING THE READINESS OF MILITARY PERSONNEL.
WHAT IS THE ‘MILITARY FAMILY READINESS SYSTEM’?

• A portfolio of programs and services aimed at promoting the quality of life of Service members and their families

• Serves both active duty and reserve component Service members and families

• Majority of services & activities delivered by individual military Services

• Includes community partners
1. DoD recognizes the centrality of families to the performance of service members and has built a Military Family Readiness System to actively support families. There is no U.S. civilian equivalent.

2. Continuous conflict over the past two decades and the associated increases in operational tempo, prolonged duration, and regular reliance on the reserve component, with an all-volunteer force, have increased the need for and demands on the Military Family Readiness System.
3. DoD and the Service branches do not employ a coordinated and comprehensive approach to matching the unique needs of individual families to available programs.

3. DoD programs for military families should be evidence-based, or evidence-informed, and include the infrastructure to continuously assess program quality, relevance, and population impact so programs may be adapted or retired when necessary.

4. DoD must be ready to rapidly develop and deliver interdisciplinary family-centered services for emerging threats to military family well-being within a Military Family Readiness System that is flexible, adaptive, and responsive to the needs of families as they exist.