

# Putting Research to Work for Military Families



**Focus:**  
Multiple  
Branches

## National Guard Service Members Returning Home After Deployment: The Case for Increased Community Support

Blow, A., MacInnes, M. D., Hamel, J., Ames, B., Onaga, E., Holtrop, K., ... Smith, S. (2012). National Guard service members returning home after deployment: The case for increased community support. *Administrative Policy and Mental Health*, 39(5), 383-393. doi:10.1007/s10488-011-0356-x

**SUMMARY:** Michigan residents were surveyed via telephone about their support for National Guard members and programs to support their reintegration. Many residents report knowing a National Guard member, being supportive of multiple services to support these Service members, and being willing to pay an additional tax for these services.

### KEY FINDINGS:

- Twenty-nine percent of participants knew a National Guard member who had deployed to a combat zone.
- Ninety-seven percent did not support deploying both parents at the same time, and 69% did not think that single parents should be deployed at all.
- Fifty-nine percent reported that the federal government should be responsible for supporting National Guard members upon homecoming from deployment.
- Over 80% of respondents supported tax dollars paying for all medical and rehabilitative services for National Guard members who sustained a physical or emotional injury.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Disseminate information regarding community employment assistance programs available to National Guard members to increase awareness of their programs and services
- Offer education in community centers about the unique experiences of National Guard personnel and their families and how community members can be supportive
- Provide specialized services for families in which both parents deploy simultaneously

### IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Continue to support collaboration between the DoD and employment assistance, community mental health, and medical care facilities to develop programs to meet the unique needs of returning National Guard members
- Encourage professional development workshops for community healthcare personnel about the distinct challenges and needs of National Guard personnel and their families
- Recommend that single military personnel be provided sufficient notice prior to deployment to be able to make arrangements for childcare during their absence.

This product is the result of a partnership funded by the Department of Defense between the Office of Military Community and Family Policy and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through a grant/cooperative agreement with The University of Minnesota.



# Putting Research to Work for Military Families



## METHODS

- A statewide random survey was conducted in Michigan in 2008 through random digit dialing telephone interviews.
- Interviews averaged 27 minutes in length.
- Interviews assessed perceptions of the needs of Michigan National Guard members and opinions regarding the support that should be provided to military families.

## PARTICIPANTS

- Nine hundred fifty-three Michigan adults participated.
- Data were weighted to make results representative of the general Michigan population.
- No additional demographic information was reported.

## LIMITATIONS

- Very little demographic data were presented making it difficult to know how these participants compare to other residents.
- No participation rate was specified making it difficult to assess interest in participation; it may be that those who participated were more interested in military issues and could bias the results.
- The survey instruments used were not described in detail, making replication of the current study difficult.

## AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Conduct this research nationally to see if these attitudes are similar or different in sites beyond Michigan
- Assess the level of tax that residents would be willing to pay to support these changes
- Examine what returning Service members and families deem helpful from community members during the reintegration process

## ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



For more information about the Assessing Research that Works rating scale visit:  
<https://reachmilitaryfamilies.umn.edu/content/assessing-research-that-works>