



Military Community & Family Policy

Department of Defense Report to Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention On Federal interagency relationships

“Joining Forces to Strengthen our Military Families” Meeting America’s Commitment

In May 2010, President Obama directed the National Security Staff to develop a coordinated Federal Government-wide approach to support military families. This effort resulted in the release of the January 2011 report *Strengthening Our Military Families: Meeting America's Commitment*. A statement of support was signed by each member of the Cabinet ensuring that the priorities receive the necessary resources and support needed to move forward. This effort was divided into four priorities:

1. Enhance the well-being and psychological health of the military family;
2. Ensure excellence in military children's education and their development;
3. Develop career and educational opportunities for military spouses;
4. Increase child care availability and quality for the Armed Forces.

Priorities were accompanied by a number of initiatives that each Department committed to develop. In tandem with the government-wide commitment, the First Lady & Dr. Biden introduced Joining Forces in April 2011. In essence, Joining Forces extended the federal commitment to mobilizing all sectors of society in support of military Service members and their families. The three areas of focus for Joining Forces were employment, education and wellness, which included suicide prevention. These issues impacted the overall resiliency of the total force fitness.

The attached is a copy of the *Strengthening Our Military Families* report for your review. The report captured the unprecedented national commitment taken by the Federal Government to improve and strengthen our military families. The goal was to centralize the information so that we could see where there was duplication of effort and need, and partner with other entities when appropriate.

The creativity and drive of this initiative is very fitting to share with the members of the Coordinating Council on the topic of federal interagency relationships. Our military families are among the most resilient families in the nation. The support by other federal agencies leveraged state, local agencies and non-profit partners for our families resides in communities throughout our nation. The collaboration employed and built upon the knowledge to anticipate and respond to trends, opportunities, and emerging issues facing many families today. The collaboration in this report included the following:

- **Department of Health and Human Services:**
 - Addressed the shortfall in military child care; the invisible scars of PTSD; traumatic brain injury and depression



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- Used block grants to incentivize states' engagement on issues affecting military families
- **Department of Education:**
 - Supported the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for military children in the public schools
 - Provided professional development for school leaders and teachers
 - Favored grant applications that met the needs of military-connected students
 - Provided dedicated training to military parents of children with special needs
- **Department of Agriculture:**
 - Supported the positive development of military youth through various camps and other community based efforts supporting military families
 - Leveraged efforts to expand and enhance resources and initiatives for military families especially those geographically dispersed families through the Land Grant Universities and Cooperative Extension support
- **Department of Commerce:** Linked veterans and military spouses to local employment opportunities, and shared best practices across corporate America
- **Department of Labor:** Provided education, training and employment of military spouses and veterans; and supported our military members transitioning into the private sector workforce
- **Department of Veterans Affairs:** Provided Veterans better health care, especially in rural areas; and increased access for the family members supporting Veterans
- **Department of Homeland Security:** Institutionalized support to Service members, Veterans and their families
- **Department of the Interior:** Created employment opportunities for military youth in conservation, and participated in a wide range of educational, recreational, and cultural programs
- **Department of Justice:** Responded to the growing need for veterans courts and the National Drug Court Initiative creating a curriculum for "Veterans only" drug courts; youth mentoring initiative supporting military youth with private sector youth organizations
- **Department of Housing and Urban Development:** Worked with VA to reduce homelessness among Veterans
- **Department of the Treasury:** Increased protections for military families from unfair, deceptive, or abusive financial practices
- **Office of National Drug Control Policy:** Incorporated issues specific to military families in the President's National Drug Control strategy.
- **Office of Personnel Management:** Promoted the hiring of military spouses and Veterans
- **Financial Literacy and Education Commission:** provided and continues to provide educational resources and support to our military families and youth.