

the **2-1-1** Barometer



February 2012

SUPPORT FOR CONNECTICUT'S ACTIVE MILITARY, VETERANS & THEIR FAMILIES

The 2-1-1 Barometer utilizes 2-1-1 data and other information to explore issues affecting Connecticut residents. 2-1-1 tracks the type of help that callers are seeking in order to create a database that serves as a barometer of the needs present in the state.



INTRODUCTION

Since September 11, 2001, over two million American service men and women have been deployed to the conflicts in Iraq or Afghanistan. With the shift to an all-volunteer military, there is now a higher percent of service members who are married and who have children. Close to three quarters of officers and 40 percent of enlisted personnel are married and 42 percent have children.¹ This means that there are many spouses and children, in addition to soldiers, who need support for the multiple deployments and long tours of duty that are characteristic of these conflicts. In Connecticut, there are an estimated 10,000 children in military families, nationwide that number is 1.9 million (Table 1).

This 2-1-1 Barometer will review current data on the military and veteran populations in Connecticut, as well as data on the impact of recent conflicts on military families, and the state and federal resources available for veterans, active military, Reserve and National Guard soldiers and their families.

CONNECTICUT'S MILITARY AND VETERAN POPULATIONS

According to the Department of Defense, over 14,000 Connecticut service men and women have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan since 2001. Currently, nearly 9,000 active duty military personnel are from Connecticut. There are reported to be approximately 120 members of the Connecticut National Guard stationed overseas, with that number expected to grow to 1,000 by the end of 2012. Since 2001, 45 Connecticut soldiers have been killed and over 370 have been wounded.²

In addition, there are over 220,000 veterans in Connecticut who have served from World War II to the current conflict in Afghanistan (Figure 1). Twenty-two percent of this population lives with a disability and 4 percent have incomes that are below the federal poverty level. Veterans have historically experienced higher rates of unemployment. In Connecticut, the unemployment rate for veterans is 15.5 percent, compared to 8.4 percent for the general population.

■ Nationwide, there are **1.9 million** children in military families.

■ Of all military children, **765,000** have active duty parents including **225,000** who have a parent who is currently deployed.

■ **73,000** Service members are active duty single parents, and **40,000** are active duty dual military parents.

Source: U.S. Department of Defense

¹Sheppard, Sean, Jennifer Weil Malatras and Allen C. Israel, *The Impact of Deployment of U.S. Military Families*, American Psychologist, September 2010.

²U.S. Department of Defense, Casualty Statistics, January 2012.

IMPACT OF DEPLOYMENT ON MILITARY FAMILIES

Military families often have access to supports during periods of deployment which can increase their resilience during this time. However, these families do experience multiple stressors when a family member is deployed. The stresses that are common include fear of injury or death, limited communication, disruption of the family structure, the assumption of new roles for the parent who stays behind and financial concerns. These stresses can lead to increased rates of anxiety and depression for adults and children alike prior to, during and after deployment. Families of a Guard or Reserve member can have the added stress of being geographically isolated since they may not live near other military families.

Reactions to deployment by children depend largely on their age, developmental stage, pre-existing behavioral issues and the stability of the household in general. While many families have strong coping mechanisms and supports to help children deal with the impact of deployment, research shows some of the behavioral vulnerabilities that children can be prone to exhibit. Very young children can tend to exhibit separation anxiety and changes in eating habits while school-age children may experience a decline in academic performance and have mood changes or physical complaints. Adolescents may become angry and act out, or withdraw and show signs of apathy.³

Many families must also cope with living with a parent who returns profoundly changed by war. Research with veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts shows that 37 percent received a mental health diagnosis upon completion of service; 22 percent were diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and 17 percent with depression⁴. In addition, veterans younger than 25 years had higher rates of diagnosis for PTSD and alcohol and drug use disorders compared with active duty veterans older than 40 years. Women had a higher risk for depression than men, but men had over twice the risk for drug use disorders.

Table 1 - Connecticut Military Children by Age and County

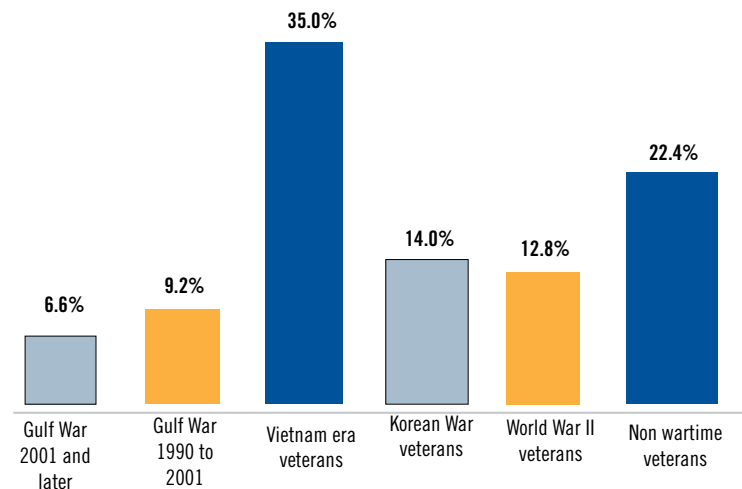
County	Age Groups			Total
	0-5	6-12	13-18	
Fairfield	248	248	199	695
Hartford	532	660	440	1,632
Litchfield	82	138	73	293
Middlesex	154	144	87	385
New Haven	427	493	339	1,259
New London	2,223	1,722	990	4,935
Tolland	118	145	104	367
Windham	159	214	155	528
Total	3,943	3,764	2,387	10,094

Active Duty CT National Guard, Army, Air Force, Navy & Marine Reserve children as of 9/30/2010. Does not include children of veterans.

Source: Military Child Education Coalition

Figure 1 – Connecticut Veteran Population by Period of Service

Veterans comprise 8% of Connecticut's population.



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2010

³American Psychological Association Task Force on Military Deployment Services for Youth, Families and Service Members (February 2007). The psychological needs of US military service members and their families: A preliminary report. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

⁴Seal, Karen H. et al, *Trends and Risk Factors for Mental Health Diagnoses Among Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Using Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care, 2002–2008*, retrieved on January 24, 2012 from <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2008.150284>

While many families and military personnel cope and recover with the support of family, friends, and community, others need additional help from service providers to readjust to life after they come home.

Task forces formed by the American Psychological Association and the U.S. Department of Defense to explore the mental health needs of service members and their families found that more resources are needed to adequately support the psychological health of service members and their families during conflicts. Among other things, these task forces recommended ensuring that treatment is available to service members and their families, establishing mental health clinics around the country, embedding mental health providers in combat units and educating military leadership about the importance of mental health care for service members and families.



“Veterans don’t return home to a federal institution; they return home to a family unit. They are often symptomatic and don’t get connected to the help they need. We have to develop more help where vets live so that they have local choices for support and don’t lose housing or a job because they need to be near the VA.”

– Jim Tackett, Director Veterans Services, DMHAS

UNITED WAY 2-1-1 RESOURCE LISTINGS FOR VETERANS, ACTIVE MILITARY & FAMILIES

UNITED WAY 2-1-1 has an extensive listing of resources for active military, veterans and their families in the 2-1-1 database and in the 2-1-1 eLibrary. Below are links to a sample of eLibrary papers and links to housing, employment and financial assistance resources.

2-1-1 eLibrary Papers

- Active Military And Their Families Resources And Support
- Connecticut Women Veteran Resources
- Employment Services For Veterans – Connecticut
- Property Tax Exemptions for Veterans
- Veterans Benefits and Organizations

Search the 2-1-1 database for resources for Military and Veterans for:

■ Housing:

- Transitional Housing/Shelter Veterans
- Homeless Permanent Supportive Housing Veterans
- Property Tax Rebate Information
- Rent Rebate Information
- Mortgage Payment Assistance

■ Employment and Job Training Resources

- Job Corps Veterans
- Job Finding Assistance Veterans
- Career Counseling Veterans
- Small Business Development Veterans

■ Financial Assistance

- Active Military
- Families of Military Personnel/Veterans
- Retired Military
- Veterans

2-1-1 Veteran Resource Directory

The United Way 2-1-1 Veteran Resource Directory was developed at the request of the state Department of Veterans’ Affairs. The directory includes information on benefits assistance, career counseling, housing, health care and more for Connecticut Veterans, Active Duty, National Guard and Reserves. The directory can be found at www.211ct.org/Documents/vetresources.pdf.

CONNECTICUT RESOURCES FOR VETERANS, ACTIVE MILITARY & FAMILIES

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Department of Veterans' Affairs website includes links to state, federal and local resources for veterans. The agency provides assistance to veterans, their spouses and dependents seeking to obtain veterans benefits and administers the Veterans Home, which provides rehabilitative care, substance abuse treatment, transitional living, and educational and employment services for homeless or income eligible veterans. <http://www.ct.gov/ctva/site/default.asp>

CONNECTICUT'S MILITARY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Connecticut's Military Support Program (MSP) was established in 2007 to provide behavioral health services to Connecticut's National Guard and Reserve service members and their families. MSP includes:

- **Statewide Panel of Clinicians** provides free, confidential outpatient counseling services to Guard and Reserve service members and their families.
- **Embedded Clinician Program** provides clinician support to units in the deployment cycle.
- **The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program** coordinates events for service members and their families 360, 180, 90 and 30 days prior to deployment. The events connect soldiers and families with behavioral health agencies and other resources.
- **24/7 Call Center** provides callers with contact information for clinicians. (866) 251-2913
- **Community Case Management** provides intensive community case management services to National Guard/Reserve members, veterans and their families.

OPERATION MILITARY KIDS

Operation Military Kids (OMK) is focused on helping children who are experiencing the deployment of a loved one. 2-1-1 Child Care is part of the statewide coalition that has created local community support networks and four programs:

- **Hero Packs** are filled by non-military youth and community organizations with mementos designed to help keep military kids connected with their deployed parent.
- **OMK Mobile Technology Labs** are available to military youth to help them share events with their absent parent by sending messages overseas.
- **Speak Out for Military Kids** helps generate community awareness about issues faced by military youth when a parent is in the deployment cycle.
- **Ready, Set, Go!** provides training to educators, counselors and other community members about military culture and the deployment cycle. www.operationmilitarykids.org



LINKS TO FEDERAL VETERAN RESOURCES

VA Medical Centers

- Newington Campus
- West Haven Campus

Community Based Outpatient Clinics

- Danbury Outpatient Clinic
- John J. McGuirk (New London) Outpatient Clinic
- Stamford Outpatient Clinic
- Waterbury Outpatient Clinic
- Windham Outpatient Clinic
- Winsted Outpatient Clinic

Vet Centers

- Danbury Vet Center
- Norwich Vet Center
- Hartford Vet Center
- New Haven Vet Center

LINKS TO FEDERAL RESOURCES FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

- Military One Source
- OurMilitary.MIL
- Military HOMEFRONT
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service

www.va.gov

The mission of the United Way of Connecticut is to help meet the needs of Connecticut residents by providing information, education and connection to services. United Way of Connecticut provides services with support from the State of Connecticut and Connecticut United Ways.

To access other issues of the 2-1-1 Barometer online go to: www.ctunitedway.org/barometer.asp