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Technical Report 965

Army Community Support Programs: Needs and Access Among Army Families

Patricia Devine, Stephanie Bullman, and Melissa Gaston
Caliber Associates

October 1992

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Technical review by

D. Bruce Bell
Jacquelyn Scarville

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13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) This report examines the patterns of community support program use among Army soldiers and their spouses. The data for the report are from a 1989 Army-wide survey of a probability sample of 11,035 soldiers in 528 active component Army units and 3,277 Army spouses conducted in 1989. The report examines • The perceptions of program usefulness and the perceptions of Army policy impact on family members, the quality of Army family programs, and the helpfulness of Army community service personnel, and • User demographic characteristics and indicators of potential program or service need for over 30 separate Army services. Overall, patterns of program use vary by soldier rank and, to some extent, geographical location. All soldiers and spouses, however, believe that the Army community support services are essential to the well-being of the Army community.				
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Patricia Devine, Stephanie Bullman, and Melissa Gaston
Caliber Associates

Leadership and Organizational Change Technical Area
Paul A. Gade, Chief

Manpower and Personnel Research Division
Zita M. Simutis, Director

U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences
5001 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22333-5600

Office, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel
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FOREWORD

The Army Family Research Program (AFRP) is an integrated research program started in November 1986 in response to research mandated by the CSA White Paper, 1983: The Army Family and subsequently, The Army Family Action Plans (1984-1992). This mandate was spelled out in the AFRP "charter": the Letter of Agreement dated 18 December 1986 ("Sponsorship of ARI Army Family Research") between the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) and the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center (CFSC).

The object of the research was to support the Chief of Staff, Family Action Plans, and the CFSC through research products that would (1) determine the demographic characteristics of Army families, (2) identify motivators and detractors to soldier retention, (3) improve soldier and family sense of community and adaptation to Army life, and (4) improve operational readiness.

The research is being conducted by ARI, with the assistance of Research Triangle Institute, Caliber Associates, HumRRO, and Decision Science Consortium, Inc. It is funded by the Army research and development funds set aside for this purpose under Management Decision Package (1U6S).

This report presents the results of analyses of community support program use among Army soldiers and their spouses. The findings presented in this report should be helpful to Army leadership, policymakers, and service providers in planning and implementing more effective community support programs.

ARI has provided AFRP results to CFSC and other interested Army agencies in the form of draft reports and briefings throughout the life of the project. The material in this report was presented to CFSC at a briefing in October 1991. The information has been useful to CFSC in determining relative priorities among Army community support programs.



EDGAR M. JOHNSON
Technical Director

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A number of people contributed to this report and we gratefully acknowledge their contributions. Analyses and statistical advice were provided by Alvin Rosenthal. Dennis Orthner of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Janet Griffith of the Research Triangle Institute provided valuable comments on the preliminary findings.

We would also like to acknowledge D. Bruce Bell and Jacquelyn Scarville of the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences for their assistance with this report. Their insightful reviews of the analysis plans, initial findings, and draft reports helped shape the final document.

Finally, we acknowledge the contribution of the Army soldiers and families who participated in the Army Family Research Program survey. Their willingness to participate and the thoughtful responses they provided were crucial to the success of this effort.

ARMY COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMS: NEEDS AND ACCESS AMONG ARMY FAMILIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Requirement:

This research supports the Army Family Action Plans by identifying patterns of community support program use among soldiers and spouses. The research also examines reported perceptions of program usefulness and the quality of Army family support. The research supports the needs of Army leadership, policymakers, program developers, and delivery service personnel for specific information about soldiers and families who are using Army community support programs.

Procedure:

The data were collected from a random sample of 11,035 soldiers and 3,277 spouses via the 1989 Army Soldier and Family Survey. The analyses were conducted on approximately 9,700 soldiers and 3,100 spouses who responded to the questions on the use and usefulness of 39 Army community support programs. Additional survey items were used as measures of program need. Such measures included indicators of financial and marital stress as well as indicators of need for daycare, youth services, spouse employment programs, and single soldier services.

Cross-tabulations were conducted to identify user demographic characteristics and indicators of potential program or service need. For purposes of analysis, Army community support programs were initially grouped as general services or targeted services; within the targeted services category, programs were grouped by target population.

Findings:

The data show that the majority of soldiers and spouses think that the Army community support programs are essential to community well-being. For most programs, soldiers and spouses provided a higher usefulness rating if

they had used the program. For these services, the usefulness rating provides a rudimentary measure of program satisfaction. The usefulness rating for certain programs was unaffected by program use; such programs as family advocacy and certain emergency or intervention services were perceived by most soldiers and spouses as "very useful" irrespective of whether the respondents had used the program.

The data also show that general services such as libraries and recreation and relocation services were used most frequently by soldiers and spouses. Among soldiers, proportionately more officers than enlisted personnel used libraries, recreation activities, housing location referrals, and relocation support services. The level of utilization among targeted services was relatively low among officers. In contrast, proportionately more enlisted personnel than officers used targeted programs (i.e., counseling, family advocacy, emergency services).

Most of the soldiers and spouses stated that the overall quality of Army community programs at their current locations was high. Despite reasonably high ratings for the quality of family programs and the usefulness of Army community service personnel, one-fifth of Army spouses reported a belief that using community services could hurt the soldier's career.

There is an association between the use of general services and job performance ratings and family adaptation. Soldiers who use programs have higher perceptions of leader support for families than those who do not. A relationship also exists between use of Army community support programs and retention plans. These findings suggest that family support services and programs are an important vehicle for integrating families into the military environment. More research is needed, however, to explore in-depth the findings of this preliminary analysis.

Utilization of Findings:

The findings from this research will be of use to Army leadership and providers of community support programs. The need for Army leaders to continue to publicly support families and the utility of community support programs is documented; Army leadership support has been shown as the most effective means of encouraging community support program use. This report informs community support program providers of the characteristics of program users and indicators of additional program need. In addition, the appendixes provide profiles of user characteristics and perceptions of usefulness for each of the 39 community support programs included in the report.

ARMY COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMS: NEEDS AND ACCESS AMONG ARMY FAMILIES

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ARMY COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMS: NEEDS AND ACCESS AMONG ARMY FAMILIES

Introduction

During the 1980's, the Army made a major commitment to soldiers and Army families. The 1983 White Paper, the annual Army Family Action Plans, the development of new policies and programs and the allocation of resources to family programs together demonstrate the strength of this commitment to the issues of Army soldiers, their families and their quality of life.

The Army offers a wide array of services that are designed to support soldiers and their families. The services include general programs such as libraries, recreation and child care as well as targeted programs such as family counseling, alcohol treatment and emergency assistance. There is a growing body of literature that establishes direct and indirect relationships between the quality of Army community support and successful family adaptation, soldier readiness and soldier retention. Little is known, however, about the users and impact of specific Army community support programs.

The 1989 Army Soldier and Family Survey collected information about use and perceptions of usefulness for 39 specific Army community support programs. The purpose of this report is three-fold:

- To identify patterns of Army community support program use among soldiers and spouses
- To assess soldier and spouse perceptions of the usefulness of specific Army community support programs
- To assess soldier and spouse perceptions of the quality of Army family support.

The survey requested Army soldiers and spouses to provide information on whether they had used the 39 Army community support programs at their current location. The survey also asked soldiers and spouses to rate their perceptions of the program's usefulness to Army families (whether or not the program had been used). The data from these two questions provided the foundation for the analysis conducted for this research.

Collected as part of the Army Research Institute's Army Family Research Program, the data for the analysis are based on a stratified probability sample of soldiers worldwide. The results from this analysis provide detailed information

about user characteristics for each of the 39 Army community support programs as well as soldier and spouse perceptions of the usefulness of these programs to the Army community.

The report is organized around the major components of the Army community support program research. The next section presents a review of the literature that describes the evolution of Army community support programs, the major Army stressors for family members, barriers to using the programs, and the relationship between community support and family adaptation, soldier readiness and soldier retention. This is followed by a brief description of the research methodology. The next section provides the findings from the survey data analysis, including the patterns of use and perceptions of usefulness among soldiers and spouses, of the specific Army community support programs. The report concludes with a summary of major findings and recommendations for the Army with respect to community support programs.

Literature Review

Community support programs and services are specifically designed to address the unmet needs of community residents or to serve as formal substitutes for missing informal support systems such as friends, neighbors or voluntary organizations (Orthner, Early-Adams, Devall, Giddings, Morley and Stawarski, 1987). This review of the literature describes the need for and the emergence of Army community support programs. The variety of military lifestyle-induced stressors and members of the Army population most likely to be affected by these stressors are also discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of previous research findings that identify the relationship between community support and family adaptation and demonstrate the impact of Army community support on soldier readiness and retention.

The Need for Family Support Programs

The number of military families has increased since the conclusion of World War II. Following the war, the need for a large standing Army during peacetime mitigated the usefulness of policies designed to limit the number of married personnel. By 1960, the number of family members surpassed the number of service members; today, there are more than 1.1 million spouses, children and other dependents of active duty personnel. (Morrison, Vernez, Grissman & McCarthy, 1989; Bell & Iadaluca, 1987.)

The military environment subjects the families of service members to a variety of stressors, including long, frequent family separations, deployment, numerous moves and combat or war stress (Jensen, Lewis & Xenakis, 1986; Kirkland & Katz, 1989; Orthner & Bowen, 1990, Hunter, 1982). Additionally, families must cope with the customs and authority of the military which may impinge on the independence and privacy of family members (Vernez & Zellman, 1987; Jensen, Lewis & Xenakis, 1986).

These military life experiences present families with unique challenges for adaptation. The ability of families to respond to these challenges depends, in part, on a variety of factors including: previous life experiences, previous experiences with the military, the intensity of the military-related stress, the availability of social supports, socio-economic status, family and individual characteristics and coping capabilities (Lewis, 1984; Lewis, 1986; Bell & Quigley, 1991; Jensen, Lewis & Xenakis, 1986; Jacobs & Hicks, 1987; McCubbin & Lester, 1977). Data on military families suggest that most families cope reasonably well and are satisfied with military life; satisfaction, however, varies as a function of rank, income, housing and other military life style factors (Jensen, Lewis & Xenakis, 1986).

Problems of military families mirror their civilian counterparts. The military lifestyle, however, can induce stressors that exacerbate even the smallest of difficulties. Specific aspects of military life which create major stress include relocation, separation, housing, spouse employment and child care. Service members and/or their families may resort to aberrant behaviors in response to this stress, including alcohol dependence and spouse/child abuse. These issues are discussed briefly below.

Relocation is considered to be one of the most stressful aspects of military life (Hunter, 1982; Teitlebaum, 1988). Relocation impacts all aspects of family life including housing, and the availability of social support, spouse employment opportunities, child care and recreation. (Croan, LeVine & Blankinship, in process).

When a family relocates outside of the continental United States (OCONUS), the stresses are intensified. Since the family must adapt to a new culture, the military community takes on added importance since it represents the more familiar U.S. culture (Ozkaptan, Sanders, & Holz, 1986). The emphasis on family activities, quality of child care, and spouse employment support is much greater than when the family is stationed within the United States. OCONUS families are more apt to look to the installation for a sense of community (Croan, Janofsky & Orthner, 1987; Ozkaptan et al., 1986), as demonstrated by the fact that OCONUS families use family support programs and quality of life (QOL) programs more often than CONUS families (Griffith, Stewart & Cato, 1988).

Separation has also been identified as a major cause of family stress (Hunter, 1982; Jacobs & Hicks, 1987). Military induced separations have been shown to exacerbate a variety of family problems such as substance abuse, child abuse and marital problems (Hunter & Hickman, 1981). Children, specifically, tend to be negatively affected by separation which can lead to behavioral and school problems (Hunter & Hickman, 1981).

Housing, particularly on-post housing, is considered to be one of the benefits of Army life. Junior enlisted, however, tend to be ineligible for on-post housing and must live "on the economy" thereby creating financial hardships (Lewis, 1986). Research has demonstrated that many Army families are forced to live in housing which is substandard (Vernez & Zellman, 1987; Jensen et al., 1986). In addition to causing financial hardship, off-post living may create psychological isolation. No matter what grade level, families who live off-post, whether they choose to do so or not, tend to feel more socially isolated from the Army and are less likely to depend on Army services in times of need (Croan et al., 1987).

Spouse employment. Army spouses who want to work often have difficulty finding a job. This is due to a variety of reasons:

- Employers may not want to hire employees whom they know will move within a few years
- Spouses may not find adequate child care
- Spouses may be over-qualified for jobs within the area to which they have relocated
- Spouses may find it difficult to maintain their career paths in light of the frequent relocations.

Also, because of their frequent moves, spouses frequently start at the base pay rate because they are the most recently hired (Perrine, Croan, Devine, Bullman & Thomas, 1989). Spouses who seek employment but are unable to obtain it are more likely to be dissatisfied with military life (Ickovics & Martin, 1987).

Child care. Problems with child care arise because of the erratic schedules of service members and their long duty hours. Child Development Services offer child daycare which is designed to address these problems. However, at any given installation the demand for daycare far exceeds the Army's ability to provide child daycare slots. While the majority of military parents manage their child care needs through civilian resources and/or informal arrangements, the lack of child care has interfered with the employment goals of spouses and may interfere with the service member's job performance (Griffith, Stewart & Cato, 1988; Army Science Board, 1989).

Substance abuse. Review of the literature (Jensen et al., 1986) identified factors that contribute to increased alcohol abuse within the military as compared to the civilian population:

- Availability of alcohol
- Decreased cost of alcohol
- Boredom (especially in isolated areas)
- Fear
- Family separations.

Jensen et al., (1986) indicated that studies suggest, however, that the numbers of military personnel who engage in heavy drinking have been declining as has illicit substance abuse. These changes have been attributed to deterrence and prevention programs.

Child abuse. The relative incidence of child abuse in the military compared to the civilian population is unclear. Some researchers assert that child abuse rates are higher, while others maintain they are lower because reliable civilian estimates are generally not available (Blankinship, Mensch, Bullman & Sorenson, 1989). Possible factors affecting the incidence of spouse or child abuse are the frequent separations and reunions, isolation from family and friends and the financial burden for lower enlisted (Jensen et al., 1986; Blankinship et al., 1989).

The types of stress created by the military lifestyle and the difficulty of many soldiers and their families in coping with this stress heightened the Army's resolve to provide assistance through community support services. The following sections present an overview of the emerging Army community support systems.

Emergence of Army Community Support Programs

As the number of Army families increased during the 1950's, the incidence of family-related problems also increased; a situation for which the Army had no institutionalized response. As a result the Army established the Army Community Services (ACS) in 1965 (Bell & Iadaluca, 1987).

The initial mission of ACS was to increase support to soldiers and their families through better coordination of services and better use of volunteer labor. Today, ACS has five major objectives:

- Assist the installation commander in solving community problems and improving the quality of life for members within the command
- Improve the well being of members of the command by helping to solve personnel, family and community problems
- Serve as a primary resource agency for coordination and development of the installation, soldier and family support system
- Establish community services that foster growth and development of children of Army families
- Provide assistance to junior enlisted families in adjusting to Army life and maintaining financial stability.

To meet these objectives, the ACS at each installation is required to provide the following programs: Information and Referral, Consumer Affairs and Financial Services, Exceptional Family Member Program, Foster Care program, Family Advocacy services, and Relocation Assistance. The Army also established the Youth Activities (YS) program, in 1968, to meet the social, cultural and recreational needs of youth (Croan et al., 1987).

The 1983 White Paper on families served to focus leadership attention to the Army's commitment to family well-being. The White Paper also supported the 1984 Army Family Action Plan (AFAP), which outlined major family issues and required actions. In the same year, the Army Community and Family Support Center (CFSC) was established as the central field administrative unit for most of the Army QOL and family support programs. Included under the CFSC umbrella are the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs which provide a variety of recreational activities, Child Development Services (CDS) and ACS.

Today, there are approximately 65 programs which support soldiers and their families including all of the programs within the CSFC purview. The size of the installation however, determines the quantity of community support services. Programs which are required at all installations include: alcohol and drug prevention and treatment; legal assistance; sponsorship and Chaplain programs. Depending on the installation size and availability of resources, other community support programs include financial assistance, housing referral services, continuing education and child development services (Army Science Board, 1989).

In studying Army community support programs, researchers have attempted to develop a classification system to better understand patterns of use and the impact of these services on readiness and retention. Orthner et al., (1987) classified the range of military support programs within four categories depending on the primary program purpose and the target population. These categories include:

- Prevention and wellness, such as marital enrichment, parent education and respite care.
- Normative programs, including programs which may be used by all soldiers and their families during the soldier's career. Examples include child development services, relocation assistance and financial counseling
- Crisis intervention programs such as crisis hotlines and family shelters were included in this category.

- Treatment, such as individual and family counseling, family advocacy and substance abuse services.

Vernez and Zellman (1987) classified programs as providing either general or targeted services. General services include benefits and services that are designed to be available to and used by all members of the population, such as housing and health services, commissary and exchange, recreation (MWR) and child care. Targeted services are designed to be used by those military families with special problems and needs such as counseling, family advocacy, financial management and substance abuse programs.

This classification system was developed to assist in the analysis of military community support programs, particularly the patterns of use among soldiers and their families. Vernez et al., observed that since general programs and services are designed for all types of Army families, using these programs lacks the stigma or negative perceptions associated with using programs designed for family problems. Therefore, researchers should expect to find very different use patterns among general versus targeted programs.

In fact, the research on use of family support programs supports the general and targeted program categorization (Vernez & Zellman, 1987; Orthner et al., 1987). The focus of most research on Army community support programs has been on the barriers to using targeted programs offered by ACS and other providers. Findings from this research are summarized below.

Barriers to Using Army Community Support Programs

Soldiers and family members do not use family support services for a variety of reasons. These reasons include: a lack of knowledge about services, the availability of alternative social supports, the inaccessibility of services and the fear of being stigmatized by program use (Bowen & Richman, in press).

Research indicates that most family members are uninformed about the programs and services which are available. This lack of information has presented an obvious barrier to program use (Orthner & Bowen, 1990).

Another factor related to program use is the strength of an individual's social supports. Numerous studies suggest that individuals, when confronted with a personal problem, will more readily rely on friends or family or other informal social support networks than seek help from formal, professional systems (Bowen & Richman, in press). In particular, military members are more likely to seek help from their own or other military family members in troubled times (Hunter, 1982).

An informal social network rather than formal systems within the larger community are the primary source of support for military families (Hunter, 1982).

Research conducted at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) has identified Army family coping mechanisms used when faced with the leading sources of family stress. Informal support networks such as family support groups were found to be successful in mediating Army-induced stress (Teitlebaum, 1990; Kirkland & Katz, 1989; Wood & Gravino, 1987; Lewis, 1984; Martin & Ickovics, 1986; Johnson, 1984).

Studies have shown that inaccessibility of Army support programs is a major barrier to program use. One study found, for example, that families who live off-post were under-utilizing Army community support programs because they lacked knowledge of the program and/or transportation to the installation (Croan et al., 1987). The Army has responded to research findings by implementing outreach programs to families who live off-post (Army Science Board, 1989).

The types and accessibility of programs and services offered by the civilian community also affects military program use. Studies have found that military families use civilian programs and services because they are easier to access, they are perceived to be of better quality and/or they ensure confidentiality (Vernez & Zellman, 1987).

Perhaps the most invasive factor related to program use is "social acceptability", the key distinction, as mentioned earlier, between general and targeted programs and services (Vernez & Zellman, 1987.) A "socially unacceptable" program is seen by potential program users as stigmatizing; it is believed that program use would discredit the user (Jones, Farina, Hastorf, Markus, Miller & Scott, 1984). For example, there is no stigma attached to using library services or relocation assistance because these programs are seen as reinforcing positive societal values (such as reading and learning). But use of a targeted program such as counseling or therapy implies a personal or family problem even if the program is being used for preventive purposes (Vernez & Zellman, 1987).

Sandburg, Schumm, & Kennedy (1988) found an interesting distinction in the reported use of family life education versus family therapy services. Officers compared to enlisted personnel were much more likely to use family life education or enrichment programs, quite possibly because educational or enrichment programs are seen as more socially acceptable and less of a threat to career progression.

The perceived social unacceptability of using support programs has been identified as a particular barrier to program use among senior military personnel. Croan et al., (1987) reported that among the Army population there is a general perception that ACS programs are designed for enlisted personnel, E6 and below, and their families. Families with serious problems are believed to be concentrated among junior enlisted grades, which is where, according to the belief system, programs should be targeted. As a result, senior personnel are fearful that program use would adversely impact their careers.

Researchers have also found, however, that Army installation leadership can combat the stigma associated with use of targeted services by their open and public support of the programs. The Army Science Board (1989) concluded that the success of all Army family programs is primarily dependent on support from the chain of command, from unit leaders to senior commanders. Another study determined that Army leaders are able to directly encourage or discourage family support program use by their attitudes toward family problems and solutions (Vernez & Zellman, 1987).

Family Adaptation, Soldier Readiness, and Soldier Retention

Researchers have also determined that there is a relationship between community support program use and family adaptation to the military. Recent investigations indicate that military support programs contribute to family adaptation in both symbolic and direct ways. These studies have shown that perceptions of improved military support via community services for families yield higher levels of service satisfaction and perceptions of a better, Army-family fit (Orthner & Bowen, 1990). This represents a symbolic benefit in that the Army is seen as "taking care of its own".

Examples of programs that contribute directly to the successful adaptation of military families include relocation assistance, overseas orientation and emergency services for loans, home furnishings and food. Use of these programs has resulted in higher levels of community satisfaction, which in turn is associated with successful family adaptation to the military (Orthner et al., 1987; Teitlebaum, 1990; Griffith, Stewart & Cato, 1988).

The potential contribution of a "psychological sense of community" has been identified in several investigations by WRAIR. For example, the Evaluation of the Unit Manning System and studies of family factors impacting separation and deployment indicated that formal and informal social supports are essential to mediating stress and enhancing family support for the service member's career (Van Vranken, Jellen, Knudsen, Marlow & Segal, 1984; Teitlebaum, 1990; Rosen & Moghadam, 1989). Etheridge (1989) concludes from her review of prior

research linking family factors to soldier retention that awareness of the existence of community programs (even when they are not used) increases satisfaction with military life and enhances retention. Etheridge also concludes, however, that the relationship between retention and specific family programs is less clear.

The literature on general services suggests that at least some of the services affect military outcomes. Services such as relocation, sponsorship and spouse employment offer support to ease the stress of frequent Permanent Change of Stations (PCS), which has been shown to be of primary importance to readiness and retention (Army Science Board, 1989). Similarly, the relationship between child care and readiness appears to be direct: a soldier's problems with child care reduce the time available for work. Lost time and absences occur when parents do not have dependable child care (Vernez & Zellman, 1987).

For other services, the relationship between readiness and retention and service use is more complex. Satisfaction with a particular program appears to affect, if only slightly, overall satisfaction which in turn may influence career decision making (Vernez & Zellman, 1987; Orthner & Bowen, 1990).

Other research has demonstrated that spouse support positively affects soldier retention (Etheridge, 1989). Data suggests that when a spouse feels supported by the Army, the spouse is more likely to support the soldier's career (Griffith, Stewart & Cato, 1988). For example, it has been shown that family support groups and outreach programs are important tools for easing the strain on families of combat and deployment stress as well as providing an important link in the unit-soldier-family interaction that is related to readiness and retention (Army Science Board, 1989). Orthner et al., (1987) theorized that spouses will support the Army member's military career decisions if the spouses think that the Army is providing a positive community environment with sufficient support programs to adequately meet their needs.

The literature describing the linkage between family support and quality of life programs and readiness and retention maintains that the relationship may be direct or indirect, depending on the service provided. The following paragraphs briefly identify Army programs and their relationship to military outcomes.

Relocation assistance and sponsorship programs help ease the stress of Permanent Change of Station (PCS). These programs have a direct relationship to readiness and retention because they directly impact the families' perception of community support and enhance family adaptation to the military lifestyle.

Separations caused by combat or deployment are the main stressors of military life. Outreach, family support groups and ACS-sponsored assistance is

crucial to families' integration within and linkage to the Army (Bell & Quigley, 1991). Studies show that services, formal or informal, which are designed to help spouses with separation are linked to readiness and retention.

Spouse employment programs impact retention and have an indirect affect on readiness (Army Science Board, 1989). The major reasons why spouses of enlisted soldiers work is to help meet basic expenses, to save money for the future and/or to establish a career (Army Science Board, 1989). If a spouse's employment goals are frustrated, satisfaction with the military lifestyle is affected. Frequent moves and moves to places without an expansive job market are perceived as impediments to spouse employment which impacts readiness and retention (Etheridge, 1989).

Youth services affect both readiness and retention. These services offer social and interpersonal development programs, as well as sports and recreation opportunities. Military and civilian youth face the same difficulties associated with adolescence, however, military youth development issues are compounded by the stress of relocation, family separation and fear of harm or death to the service member. Parents who have children with behavior problems may experience lost duty time and decreased morale. Additionally, children of military personnel are more likely to join the military if they were satisfied with the experience as a child (Army Science Board, 1989).

Child Development Services. The quality and availability of child care is an important factor to readiness and retention. With the increase in single parents, dual military parents and two-worker families, child care services are becoming increasingly important. Readiness is often impaired by inadequate child care (Army Science Board, 1989). Data from a 1984 Army survey found that more than 61,000 families of enlisted personnel and 10,000 officers' families lost duty or job time or missed an Army-sponsored activity because of the difficulty of finding child care (Vernez & Zellman, 1987.)

Other programs do not directly address readiness and retention but meet valid Army needs and, indirectly, impact readiness and retention. For example, MWR services provide constructive outlets for non-duty time and contribute to a sense of community (Army Science Board, 1989). Vernez and Zellman (1987) report that MWR survey respondents frequently listed readiness-related outcomes, such as improved morale, improved reaction time and increased job skills, as potential benefits of MWR programs.

Medical care and housing are benefits that also have indirect impacts on readiness and retention. If the medical and housing needs of families are being met, the soldier is free to focus on mission responsibilities (Army Science Board,

1989; Teitlebaum, 1990). Evidence further indicates that these aspects of military life become more important to career decision making after the first term, when pay seems to dominate (Vernez & Zellman, 1987).

Conclusion

Family programs enhance family members' perceptions of community support, which in turn enhances family adaptation and support for the military life style. Programs and services also directly or indirectly impact readiness and retention.

Though the junior enlisted population is more likely than officers to use services, both officer and enlisted families tend to use services more if they have young children or are stationed OCONUS.

Barriers to program use include a lack of awareness of services, inability to access services (i.e., living off-post with no transportation), use of civilian services and the perceived stigma associated with using socially unacceptable programs.

Senior enlisted personnel and officers are most likely to avoid using services that seem socially unacceptable for fear of hurting their careers. Research indicates however, that Army leadership, at all levels, is an important medium for communicating support for family programs thereby combatting barriers to program use. The attitude of leadership toward the use of general and targeted programs sets the tone for the installation which, in turn, enhances the relationships among soldiers, family members and the Army community.

Methods

The data used in this report were collected in the Army Family Research Program (AFRP) 1989 Army Soldier and Family Survey, which was conducted under contract with the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences. The survey was carried out by a contractor team led by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) and included Caliber Associates, Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO), and Decision Sciences Consortium, Inc. (DSC).

The survey collected data from a probability sample of units and soldiers, together with spouses of sampled soldiers. Data were also collected from other sources, including: supervisor ratings of soldier performance; ratings of unit readiness by soldiers and supervisors; information on unit and installation family programs and activities; and soldier personnel file data. Detailed information on sampling and copies of the survey are located in the AFRP Analysis Plan (Research Triangle Institute, 1990). This report only utilizes data from the soldiers' and spouses' surveys.

This portion of the report describes the research questions which guided the analysis, the soldiers and spouses who participated in the survey, the survey questions used in this report and the analysis conducted.

Research Questions

The primary purpose of the analysis was to identify soldier and spouse patterns of use and perceptions of usefulness for 39 programs and services at the installation level. To meet this purpose, the following research questions were addressed:

- What are the patterns of program use among soldiers and spouses for general services such as libraries, recreation and relocation support?
- What are the patterns of program use among soldiers and spouses for targeted services such as budget counseling, emergency food, spouse and child abuse services and services for single soldiers?
- Which of the general and targeted programs and services do soldiers and spouses perceive as most useful and least useful for the Army to provide?
- Do Army spouses think that using support services could hurt the soldier's military career?

- What are the relationships between use of community support programs and family adaptation? How do these factors relate to soldier retention?

The findings presented in this report are organized by general and targeted programs and services. The patterns of use among soldiers and spouses are reported followed by an analysis of soldier and spouse perceptions of usefulness for each of the general and targeted programs. The findings conclude with a description of spouse perceptions of the impact of program use on the soldier's military career and a discussion of the relationship between general program use, family adaptation and soldier retention.

Sample

During the data collection phase of The Army Family Research Program, 11,035 soldiers completed the 1989 Army Soldier and Family Survey. Among the 11,035 soldiers completing the survey, approximately 9,700 responded to the questions on use and usefulness of community support programs. In addition, 3,277 spouses completed the spouse version of the 1989 Army Soldier and Family Survey. From this group, approximately 3,100 spouses responded to the community support program survey questions. Responses from the 9,700 soldier surveys and 3,100 spouse surveys formed the initial databases for the analyses conducted for this project.

Soldiers' and spouses' responses were weighted to reflect the total number represented by the sample. The sample of 9,700 soldiers represented approximately 401,049 soldiers and the 3,100 spouses represented approximately 250,000 spouses.

The Survey

The soldier version of the AFRP Soldier and Family Survey contains 164 items covering the soldiers' background, unit environment, the soldiers' personal plans regarding the Army as a career and other aspects of life in the Army. The spouse version of the survey has 97 items covering the spouses' background, spouse employment and Army and community life. Each survey contained one two-part question that queried use and perceptions of usefulness for 39 Army community support programs. The responses to this two-part question are the primary focus of this report.

Programs were collapsed into two categories: General Program Use (respondent used one or more programs offered to all members of Army population while at current location) and Targeted Program Use (respondent use one or more

programs designed to meet the needs of a targeted Army population while at current location). The programs categories are defined below.

- **General Program Use** - use of one or more programs such as Recreation Services, Libraries, Legal Services, Housing Location Referrals, Directory of Community Services, Information and Referral Services, Sponsorship Assistance, Community Orientation, Lending Closet, Premove Information, Services for Families Off-post, Services for Geographically Separated Families and Relocation Counseling.
- **Targeted Program Use** - use of one or more programs such as Emergency Furnishings, Emergency Loan Service, Budget Counseling, Emergency Long Distance Phone Calls, Emergency Food, Crisis Hotline, Services for Spouses During TDY, Services for Foreign-born Spouses, Spouse Abuse Services, Youth Recreation Programs, Child Day Care, Youth Employment Programs, Single Parent Services, Counseling and Therapy, Substance Abuse Treatment, Programs for Singles, Premarriage Counseling, Services and Programs for Spouse Employment and Financial Class for PCS.

Other survey questions were used to identify soldier and spouse demographic characteristics as measures of program or service need. The variables and coding used in this analysis include:

- Ability to pay bills in the last year was recoded to: (1) none; (2) one to two months; and (3) three or more months.
- Family status was recoded to: (1) single, no children; (2) single, with children; (3) married, no children; and (4) married with children.
- Current housing was recoded to: (1) on post housing; (2) off post housing; and (3) other.
- The extent to which soldiers and spouses felt they could count on Army agency staff to help was recoded to: (1) very great extent; (2) great extent; (3) moderate extent; and (4) negative extent.
- The career impact of using Army services for help was recoded to: (1) agree; (2) neither agree nor disagree; and (3) disagree.
- The perceived quality of Army family programs and services for families was recoded to: (1) good; (2) neither good nor bad and (3) bad.

- The Family Adaptation Scale was categorized as Low (below -.5), Medium (-.5 through +.5), and High (over +.5). The Family Adaptation Scale responses ranged from a minimum of -3.728 to a maximum of 1.732 with a mean of 0.003 and standard deviation of 1.02. A detailed description of the Family Adaptation Scale construction is presented in Orthner, D.K., Zimmerman, L.I., Bowen, G.L. and Gaddy, G. (1991).
- Leader support for families scales (for scale construction see Appendix D of the AFRP Analysis Plan, Volume II) were collapsed:
 - Low support (3-7)
 - Moderate support (8-12)
 - High support (13-15).

Data Analysis

The data analyses used in this report were based on crosstabulations of the soldier and spouse data. The findings are summarized in the text, and figures and table presenting key findings are included. All results presented in this report were significant at the $p < .01$ level. A full set of tables presenting the results of the basic crosstabulations is included in the Appendix.

Findings

This chapter of the report presents findings from the analysis of the Army community support programs included in the 1989 Army Soldier and Family Survey. The purpose of the analysis was to examine the patterns of program use and perceptions of program usefulness among soldiers and spouses.

The analysis focused on two data items included in the 1989 Army Survey; the data were provided by the following survey questions:

- "How useful is it (or would it be) for the Army to provide the following programs and services at your current location?"
- "... have you ever used these services and programs at your current location?"

To provide a context for the analysis of Army program use rates, each of the programs and services are identified by the sponsoring Army agency. The analysis was limited, however, by the fact that data on the availability of Army programs and services is not available at the installation level. Therefore, the reported use rate for each of the Army programs could not be analyzed within the context of program availability of the installation level. General information about program and service availability is provided therefore in terms of whether programs are always available, mostly available or seldom available.

To further clarify the reported use of specific Army programs, use rates were developed for the target populations. For example, use of daycare services was analyzed for soldiers with pre-school age children and use of youth employment programs was analyzed in terms of soldiers with teenage children. In the absence of a specific target population for Army programs (i.e., libraries), the identification of soldier and spouse characteristics was included to provide a general profile of Army program users. A detailed analysis of the soldier and spouse characteristics for each of the program's users was also conducted and is provided as an appendix to this report.

Limited data were available from the survey as to soldier and spouse perceptions of the overall quality of Army support for families. The findings from the analysis of these data are included in this chapter. Relationships between program use and soldier retention were also examined and this chapter concludes with a description of these findings.

Description of Army Community Support Programs

This section presents a brief description of the Army community support programs included in the study. Programs are identified by their sponsoring Army agency so as to provide a context for the analysis. An indication of the availability of programs and services at the installation level is also provided since an examination of the use rate for specific programs, Army-wide, is misleading for those programs which are available only at a limited number of installations. Programs were grouped for purposes of analysis; the section concludes with a description of the rationale for the program groupings.

A total of 39 different Army community support programs and services are included in the soldier and spouse survey instruments. These programs represent the major services offered by the Army to support soldiers and their families within Army community life. The programs included financial information and emergency assistance, relocation assistance, community programs such as libraries and recreation services, youth services and programs directed to individuals with special needs such as drug and alcohol treatment, family advocacy and services for foreign-born spouses.

Over two-thirds of the programs included in the survey are offered by the Army Community Services (ACS) through the major ACS program offices including:

- Information, Referral and Follow-up which provides information regarding military and community resources
- Relocation Assistance which coordinates and provides relocation support to soldiers, family members and Department of Army (DA) civilians
- Consumer Affairs and Financial Assistance which aims to improve soldiers' personal financial status and address consumer information needs
- Exceptional Family Member Program which provides comprehensive support to families with special needs
- Family Member Employment Assistance Program which is designed to minimize the employment problems of family members caused by relocation

- Outreach Program which coordinates military and civilian support services for soldiers and family members who are disadvantaged by geographic isolation (living off-post) or separation from military sponsors
- Family Advocacy Program which addresses child abuse and neglect and spouse abuse.

Other programs included in the survey are offered by Youth Activities (youth recreation), Child Development Services (child daycare), Judge Advocate General (legal services), Morale, Welfare and Recreation and the installation Housing Referral Office and Medical Treatment Facilities. The sponsoring agency or Army unit for several of the programs included in the survey varies, depending on the installation. Programs such as individual counseling, marriage and family therapy and premarital counseling may be offered by ACS, the Army Chaplain or the Medical Treatment Facility. Social programs for singles may be offered by the unit or ACS. All of the programs that were included in the survey and their corresponding Army agency are listed in Table 1, following this page.

As previously stated, the programs included in the survey are not universally available at all Army installations. While most installations provide general services such as libraries and recreation programs, many installations do not provide the more targeted services. Comprehensive information about specific program offerings at the installation level is not available; however, limited information about ACS installation programs is collected through the ACS Army-wide reporting system. A review of ACS reports suggests that all installations provide such programs as an information and referral service and a lending closet and most installations (approximately 90 percent) provide budget counseling, family member employment assistance, and relocation assistance. Less than two-thirds of the installations, however, reported offering overseas orientation, services for bi-cultural families and an outreach program. As previously stated, the interpretation of use rates for each of the survey programs must include a caveat that there was limited availability for many of the programs. Therefore, the use rate may reflect a lower utilization among soldiers and spouses than actually occurred.

Table 1**Listing of Army Community Support Programs Included in Survey**

<u>Army Agency or Unit</u>	<u>Programs Included In Survey</u>
Army Community Services (ACS)	Budget Counseling Child Abuse Services Crisis Hotline Community Orientation Directory of Community Services Emergency Food Emergency Home Furnishings Emergency Loan Services Emergency Long-Distance Phone Calls Financial Class for PCS Information and Referral Services Lending Closet Remove Information Programs for Spouses during TDY/Deployment Relocation Counseling Services for Families Who Live Off-Post Services for Foreign-Born Spouses Services for Geographically-Separated Families Services for Handicapped Family Members Single Parent Support Groups Sponsorship Assistance Spouse Abuse Services Spouse Career Planning Spouse Employment Referrals Spouse Employment Skills Training Youth Employment Programs
Youth Activities (YA)	Youth Recreation
Judge Advocate General (JAG)	Legal Services
Child Development Services (CDS)	Child Daycare - Drop-In Child Daycare - Full Day Special Child care for Single Parents
Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR)	Libraries Recreation Services
Housing Referral Office	Housing Location Referrals
Medical Treatment Facilities (MTF)	Drug and Alcohol Treatment
Sponsor Varies by Installation	Individual Counseling Marriage and Family Therapy Premarital Counseling Social/Recreation Programs for Singles

For purposes of analysis, the list of 39 Army community support programs included in the survey were assigned to two major categories including:

- General services which are designed to be available to and used by all members of the Army community
- Targeted services which are designed to be used by specific groups or by people with specific needs.

As stated in the literature review, it is important to separate Army community support programs in terms of general and targeted services. The primary distinction between the two categories is that the use of general services is socially acceptable, while the use of targeted services implies some personal or family problem, and, therefore, may have a negative association. The literature predicts that there are clear differences in utilization rates and associated issues between the two types of Army community support programs (Vernez and Zellman, 1987).

The following sections of the report present the findings from the analysis of program usage among soldiers and spouses and their perceptions of the usefulness, to the Army community, of providing the service. The sections are organized by program type beginning with general service programs and followed by the targeted services. For each group of programs, rates were calculated for program use and perceptions of usefulness. These rates were then analyzed by those soldier and spouse characteristics which proved to have a significant influence on the use and usefulness ratings.

General Community Services

Twelve of the 39 Army community support programs were categorized as general services. These 12 programs included services which were specifically designed to provide relocation support. Therefore, the general community services includes two sub-categories: (1) general services - total population and (2) general services - relocation support. The usage rates for each of the programs within these two sub-categories were calculated and are presented in Table 2.

Most of the general services were used by a significant proportion of the Army community. Fully two-thirds of all soldiers had used recreation services while a similar proportion of soldiers (64.5%) and spouses (65.3%) had used libraries. Housing location referrals were also used frequently by soldiers (41.8%) and spouses (47.2%). Approximately one-third of the soldiers and spouses had used the directory of community services and the information and referral services.

Table 2

Patterns of Use Among Army Soldiers and Spouses for General Services

<u>PROGRAMS AND SERVICES</u>	<u>USE AMONG</u>	
	<u>SOLDIERS</u>	<u>SPOUSES</u>
General Services - Total Community	%	%
Recreation services	66.8	58.7
Libraries	64.5	65.3
Legal services	52.5	51.0
Housing location referrals	41.8	47.2
Directory of community services	28.1	38.0
Information and referral services	27.8	30.7
Services for families who live off-post	13.7	17.5
General Services - Relocation Support		
Sponsorship assistance	24.0	20.5
Community orientation	23.6	20.3
Lending closet	20.4	28.3
Premove information	20.0	23.7
Relocation counseling	7.3	6.3

Services for families who live off-post were used less frequently. The lower use rates for these services result from the fact that this program is specifically designed for a sub-set of the population and from the fact that not all installations provide this service.

This point is demonstrated by an analysis of the use of services for families who live off-post and soldiers' paygrade and housing location. Whereas approximately 14 percent of all soldiers reported using this service, the use rate varied significantly by soldier paygrade. Almost one-half (49%) of the junior enlisted (E2 - E4) reported using services for families who live off-post while two-fifths (40%) of the senior enlisted (E5 - E9) reported using this service. This contrasts markedly with the officers' (O1 - O6) reported use rate of approximately 11 percent. Similarly, one in ten of all soldiers who live on-post reported using services for families who live off-post compared to almost one in five (18.5%) of all soldiers who live off-post.

Over one-fifth of all soldiers and spouses reported using relocation support services with the exception of relocation counseling. Soldiers (24.0%) reported using sponsorship assistance most frequently while spouses (28.3%) made most use of the lending closet. Less than one in ten soldiers (7.3%) and spouses (6.3%) reported using relocation counseling. The relatively lower level of reported use for relocation support services can be explained partially by the fact that soldiers and spouses would only use these services either directly before or directly following a relocation. A more detailed analysis of relocation support programs is presented in Croan, Blankinship and LeVine (in process).

A soldier's rank significantly influenced the use of general services. Program use was unaffected by the soldiers' rank for only one program: relocation counseling. Otherwise, officers used the general services at a higher rate than enlisted personnel. For example, approximately three-fourths of all officers used recreation services and libraries as compared with less than two-thirds of all enlisted personnel. The use rate for directories of community services among officers (47.8%) was almost double the use rate among enlisted personnel (24.9%).

The majority of program users, however, were enlisted personnel. For example, whereas 74 percent of all officers and 63 percent of all enlisted personnel reported using libraries, the proportion of total library users was 83 percent enlisted personnel and 17 percent officers. Enlisted personnel and officers used the general services in approximately the same proportion as represented in the total Army population. These data are presented for each program in the appendix to this report.

According to the survey, officers are also much more likely than enlisted personnel to use relocation support programs and services. Over one-half of the officers (50.8%) reported using sponsorship assistance as compared with less than two-fifths of the enlisted personnel (19.6%). This pattern was similar for premove information, community orientation and lending closets². These data are presented in Table 3.

² Previous research found that officers' spouses had a higher level of satisfaction than spouses of enlisted personnel with all overseas orientation services. This was partially attributed to the fact that officers are more frequently provided an overseas sponsor. (Devine, Bishop, Perrine & Bullman, 1988).

Table 3

General Services--Soldiers' Program Use by Rank

<u>PROGRAMS AND SERVICES</u>	<u>USE AMONG</u>	
	<u>ENLISTED PERSONNEL</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>
General Services - Total Community	%	%
Recreation services	65.3	77.0
Libraries	63.1	74.1
Legal services	50.4	65.9
Housing location referrals	38.8	59.7
Directory of community services	24.9	47.8
Information and referral services	26.3	36.8
Services for families living off-post	13.3	16.2
General Services - Relocation Support		
Sponsorship assistance	19.6	50.8
Premove information	17.1	37.3
Community orientation	22.4	31.1
Lending closet	19.3	27.6
Relocation counseling ¹	7.2	7.6

¹ Differences between enlisted personnel and officer use rates were not statistically significant.

Program use varies significantly by region for seven of the general services programs including three of the relocation support programs. Proportionately more soldiers who lived in Europe used libraries, housing location referral services, directories of community services and services for family members who live off-post than soldiers in CONUS and other OCONUS locations. These data are presented in Figure 1. Similarly, proportionately more soldiers and spouses used community orientation, sponsorship assistance and lending closets in Europe and other OCONUS sites than in CONUS sites.

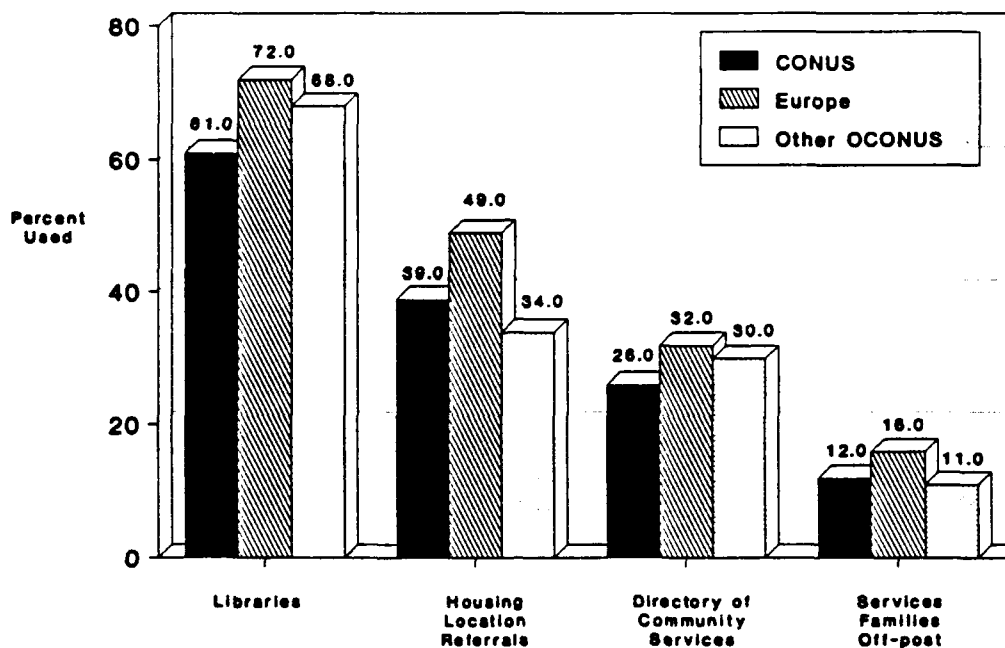


Figure 1. Use of General Services--Total Community by Region (Soldier Data)

Previous research of program use also found that soldiers and spouses stationed abroad were more frequent users of community support programs. This is primarily due to the fact that members of the OCONUS Army communities have fewer options for externally-provided support given the cultural differences/barriers, the lack of readily accessible civilian resources and extended family members and the frequently prohibitive costs of recreation and other supports in foreign lands.

Housing location was also related to use of several general service programs. The use rate for libraries and recreation services was similar for soldiers who lived on-post and soldiers who lived off-post while a higher proportion of soldiers who lived off-post used the other general services. For example, three-fifths of the soldiers who lived off-post reported using legal services as compared with less than one-half of the soldiers who lived on-post. Soldiers living off-post were almost twice as likely to use housing location referral services due perhaps to the fact that off-post residents were actively seeking on-post housing. Information and referral services, directories of community services and relocation support services were also used at a higher rate by soldiers who lived off-post. These data are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

General Services--Soldiers' Program Use by Housing Location

<u>PROGRAMS AND SERVICES</u>	<u>USE AMONG SOLDIERS WHO LIVE</u>	
	<u>ON-POST</u>	<u>OFF-POST</u>
General Services - Total Community	%	%
Legal services	46.6	59.8
Housing location referrals	29.8	55.4
Information and referral services	25.1	31.3
Directory of community services	26.5	31.0
Services for families living off-post	9.5	18.5
Recreation services ¹	68.2	66.6
Libraries ¹	65.0	65.2
General Services - Relocation Support		
Sponsorship assistance	20.5	28.8
Community orientation	22.0	26.3
Lending closet	17.2	24.4
Premove information	17.7	23.3
Relocation counseling ¹	6.5	8.2

¹ Differences between on-post and off-post use rates were not statistically significant.

Perception of Usefulness. On the whole, soldiers thought that the programs included in the general services category were valuable to the Army community. Approximately one-half of all soldiers stated that the general services programs were "very useful". In fact, with the exception of relocation counseling and sponsorship assistance, general services programs were considered to be at least "somewhat useful" by over 90 percent of the soldiers.

Spouses were even more enthusiastic about the usefulness of general services programs. From approximately one-half to three-fourths of all spouses rated each of the general services programs as "very useful". Figure 2 presents a summary of these findings.

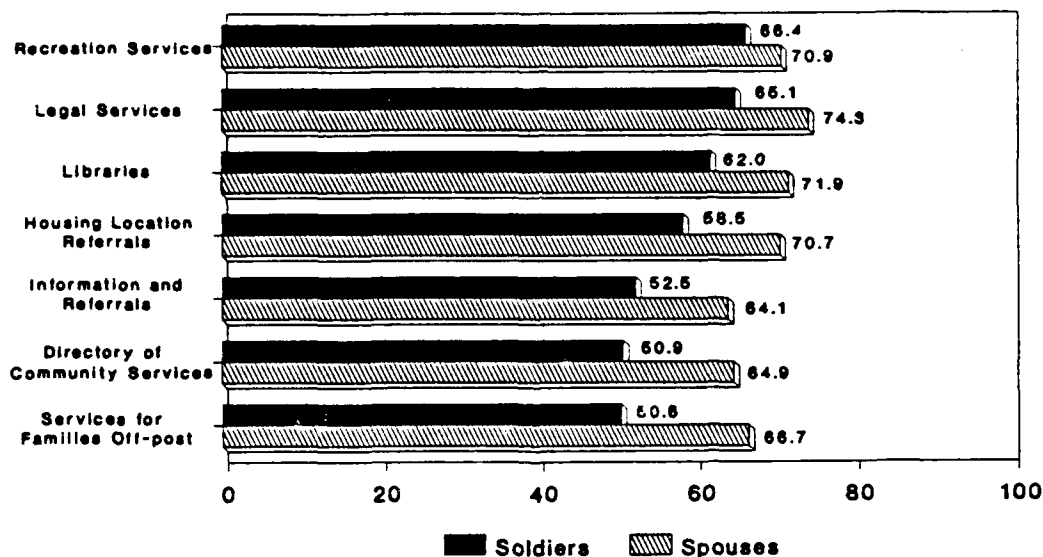


Figure 2. General Services--Proportion of Soldiers and Spouses Who Rated Services as "Very Useful"

Soldiers' and spouses' perceptions of program usefulness were greatly affected by whether they had used the program or service. Usefulness ratings were compared between soldiers and spouses who had used the program and those who had not used the program. Without exception, a higher proportion of program users than non-program users stated that the general services programs were "very useful" or "somewhat useful". For example, over three-fourths of the soldiers who had used recreation services, lending closets and libraries as compared with approximately one-half of non-users rated these programs as "very useful". Similarly, approximately four-fifths of spouse program users as compared with approximately one-half of non-users rated directories of community services, information and referral services, libraries, legal services, recreation services and lending closets as "very useful". These data are presented in Figure 3 and Figure 4.

Information about soldiers and spouses who had used a program and rated it as "not useful" is of importance since this reflects a measure of dissatisfaction with the program. Five of the 12 general services programs were rated as "not useful" by more than five percent of the soldier users. These programs include: housing location referrals, services for families who lived off-post, relocation counseling and sponsorship assistance. A smaller proportion of spouse program



Figure 3. General Services--Effect of Program Use on Soldiers' Perceptions of Usefulness: Proportion of Soldiers Who Rated Services as "Very Useful"

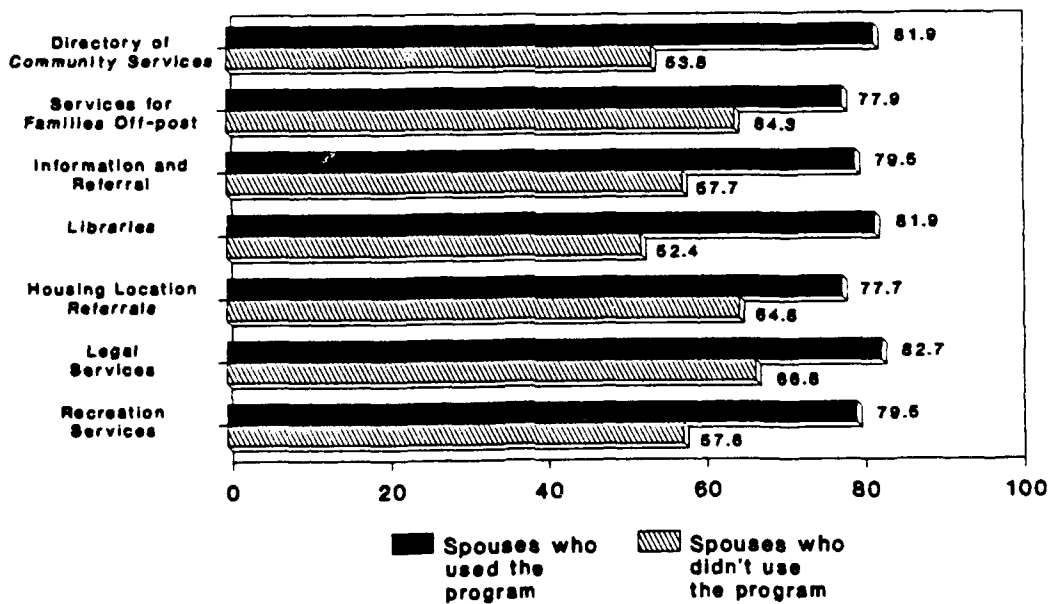


Figure 4. General Services--Effect of Program Use on Spouses' Perceptions of Usefulness: Proportion of Spouses Who Rated Services as "Very Useful"

users were dissatisfied with the general service programs. Only housing referral services and services for families who lived off-post were rated as "not useful" by a sizeable proportion (3-5%) of the spouse users.

Targeted Programs

As previously stated, targeted programs were defined, for purposes of this report, as services which were designed for specific population sub-sets and/or for individuals or families with special needs. Approximately two-thirds of the Army community support programs included in the survey are targeted programs and have been organized within the following categories:

- Financial and emergency services
- Programs for spouses
- Children and youth programs
- Counseling and treatment programs
- Program for single soldiers.

Patterns of use and usefulness have been analyzed for each of these program groups and the findings are presented below.

Financial and Emergency Services

The Army, through ACS, provides several programs and services which have been designed to assist soldiers and their families in times of financial stress or economic need. These services range from counseling and training (budget counseling, financial classes to support PCS) to the emergency provision of money, food or home furnishings. With the exception of budget counseling, these programs and services are provided to support short-term hardships caused principally by relocation. Given the integrated systems of support available to soldiers and their families, it is reasonable to expect that the need for financial and emergency services (i.e., emergency home furnishings, emergency phone calls and emergency food) would be low and limited to those soldiers with the fewest financial resources.

Program Use. The findings from the analysis of soldier and spouse program use are consistent with the literature. The use rate for financial and emergency services ranged from approximately three percent for crisis hotlines to approximately 20 percent for emergency loan services. Less than one in ten soldiers and spouses made use of emergency food, loans, home furnishings and long-distance phone calls while just over one in ten soldiers reported using budget counseling. These data are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Patterns of Use for Financial and Emergency Services

<u>PROGRAMS AND SERVICES</u>	<u>SOLDIERS</u>	<u>SPOUSES</u>
Financial Services	%	%
Emergency loan services	17.7	20.6
Budget counseling	11.7	7.6
Financial class for PCS	6.3	3.6
Emergency Services		
Emergency home furnishings	7.1	9.3
Emergency long-distance phone calls	5.4	4.1
Emergency food	4.2	4.6
Crisis hotline	2.9	2.6

Program use varied significantly by soldier rank. The proportion of officers who used financial and emergency services ranged from less than one percent for emergency food to over four percent for emergency home furnishings. While one in five enlisted personnel used emergency loan services and over one in ten used budget counseling, a much smaller proportion (5-8%) of enlisted personnel used the other emergency services. There was no difference between the proportion of officers and enlisted personnel who used crisis hotlines. These data are presented in Figure 5.

These findings are consistent with previous research which demonstrated that services such as emergency provisions and budget counseling are targeted for the more junior enlisted grades. In fact, budget counseling has frequently been mandated for junior enlisted personnel by their leaders if there is evidence of problems managing personal finances. Also, officers are assumed to have more financial resources, given their higher pay scales and more extensive informal support networks.

Soldiers' use of financial and emergency services varied by region for one program and by housing location for two programs. Proportionately more soldiers used emergency home furnishings at OCONUS installations (12.1%, other OCONUS; 11.4%, Europe) than CONUS installations (4.6%). Soldiers who lived

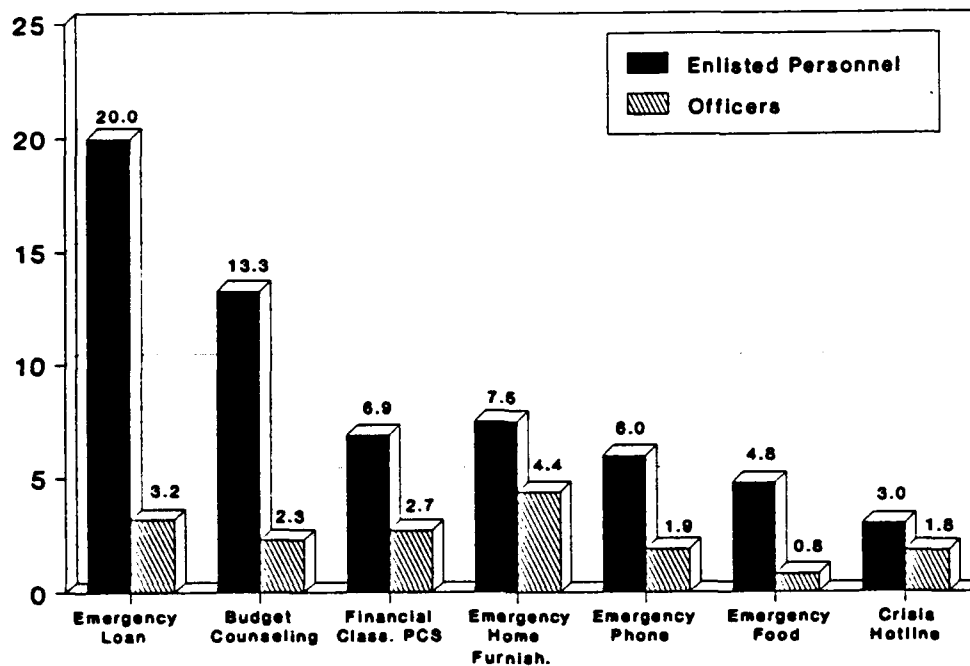


Figure 5. Financial and Emergency Services - Program Use by Rank

off-post used emergency loan services (20.5%) and emergency home furnishings (8.6%) more frequently than soldiers who lived on-post (15.2% and 5.8% respectively). These findings are consistent with the expectation that financial and emergency needs would occur at a higher rate among soldiers who had recently relocated to an OCONUS site and/or who had more limited financial resources due to more costly off-post housing.

To assess the utilization of financial and emergency services among soldiers who experienced financial hardship, survey data were analyzed for the question: "In the last 12 months, how many months, if any, have you not had enough money to pay your bills?" Responses to this question were coded as "none", "one to two months" and "three or more months;" these indicators of financial need were then analyzed by use of financial and emergency services.

The analysis showed that there was a positive correlation between program use and the number of months a soldier was unable to pay monthly bills. Over one in five enlisted personnel who reported not being able to pay bills for three months or more also reported using budget counseling and one in eight who were unable to pay bills for up to two months used the program. In contrast, budget counseling was used by less than one-tenth of enlisted personnel who reported

having no problems paying their bills. Although used at a much lower rate, more officers who could not pay their bills (6.6%) used budget counseling than other officers (1.7%). The use of budget counseling did not differ, however, among officers who could not pay their bills for one to two months (6.5%) and officers who could not pay their bills for three or more months (6.4%). These data are presented in Figure 6.

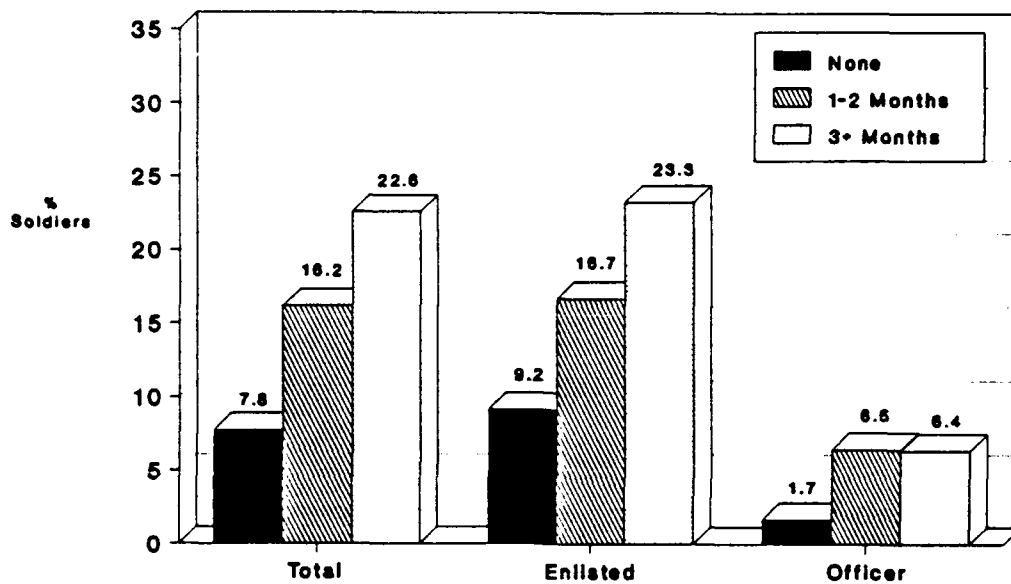


Figure 6. Relationship Between Ability to Pay Bills and Budget Counseling Use

The inability to pay monthly bills also correlated with use of emergency loan services. A higher proportion of enlisted personnel who could not pay bills for three months or more (32.3%) or who could not pay for up to two months (27.8%) used emergency loan services than enlisted personnel who were able to pay their bills (14.1%). Similarly, a higher proportion of officers who could not pay their bills (approximately 10%) used the service than the other officers (2.4%). These data are presented in Figure 7.

The utilization rates for financial and emergency services suggest that these targeted programs are at least partially reaching those soldiers with the greatest need. The fact that not all soldiers who were unable to pay monthly bills were using financial counseling services also suggests the extent to which soldiers who need the services are not being reached.

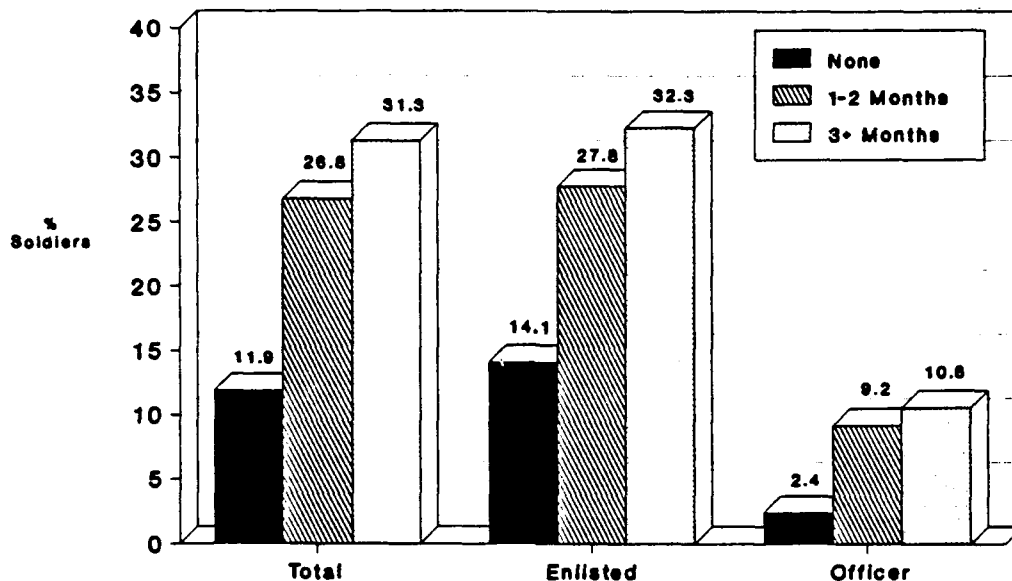


Figure 7. Relationship Between Ability to Pay Bills and Use of Emergency Loans

Perceptions of Usefulness. Generally, soldiers and spouses thought that financial and emergency services were useful for the Army to provide. Emergency food was perceived as most useful by soldiers (62.7%) and spouses (75.8%) followed by emergency loans (61.4 % soldiers, 71.3% spouses) and crisis hotlines (60.3% soldiers and 74.3% spouses). Financial class for PCS and budget counseling were perceived as least useful; less than one-half of the soldiers stated that these programs were "very useful" while over one-tenth thought that they were "not useful". Figure 8 presents these data.

Several programs were perceived as more useful among soldiers who had used the program than among soldiers who had not. For example, approximately three-fourths of the soldiers who had used emergency food and emergency home furnishings thought these programs were "very useful" as compared with less than two-thirds of the soldiers who had not used the programs. Among spouses, program usefulness was rated higher by program users for only one program: emergency loan services. There was no difference in the perceptions of usefulness between program users and non-users for the other financial and emergency services. These data are presented in Figure 9.

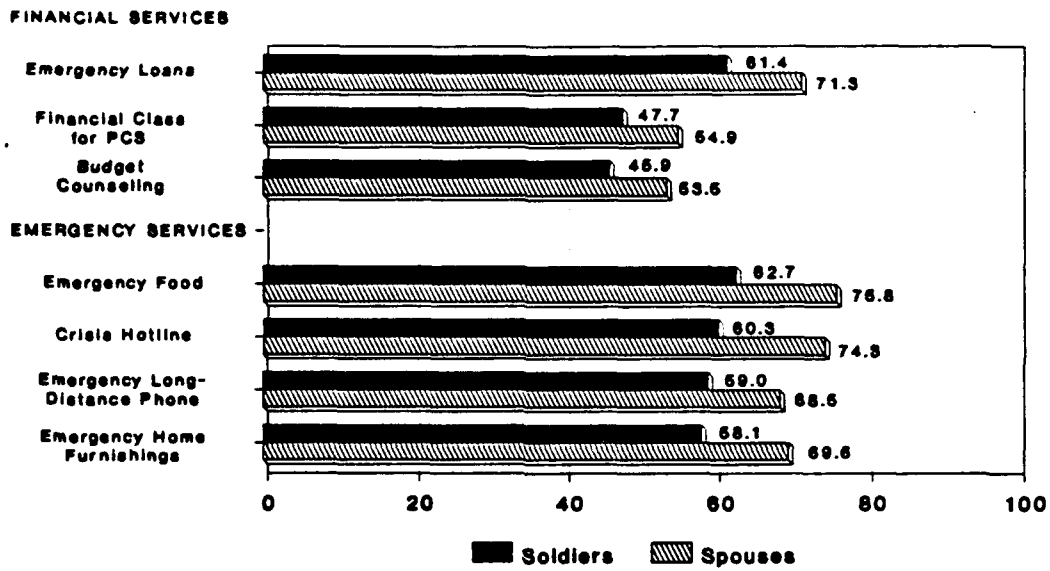


Figure 8. Financial and Emergency Services--Proportion of Soldiers and Spouses Who Rated Services as "Very Useful"

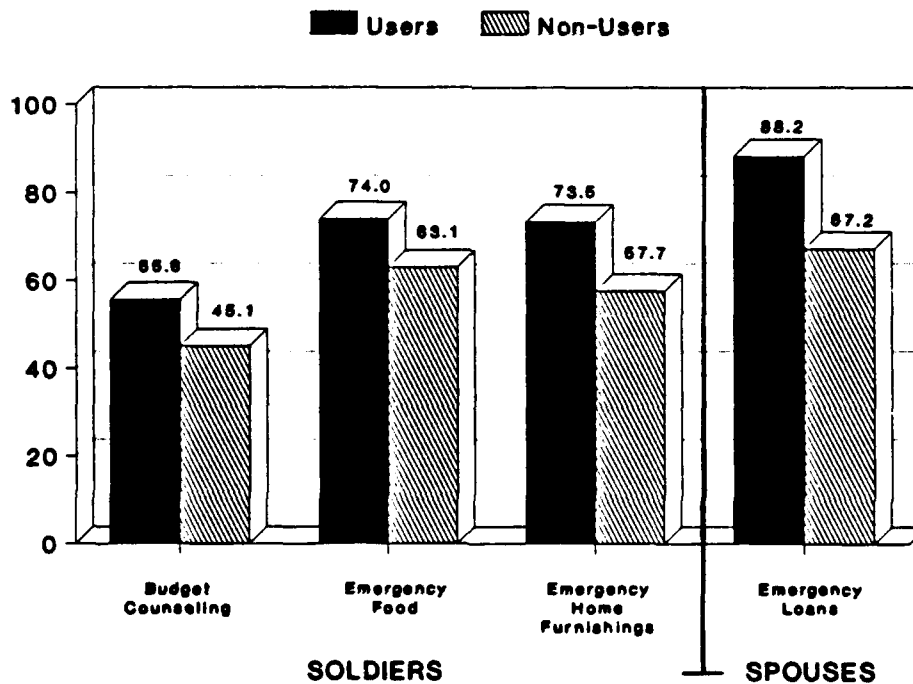


Figure 9. Perceptions That Programs are "Very Useful" Among Soldier and Spouse Program Users and Non-Users

Programs for Spouses

The Army, through ACS, provides several programs specifically designed to meet the needs of Army spouses. For purposes of analysis, these programs were assigned to two categories including:

- Spouse employment services
 - Spouse employment referrals
 - Spouse career planning
 - Spouse employment skills training
- Programs targeted for special needs
 - Program for spouses during TDY/deployment
 - Services for foreign-born spouses
 - Spouse abuse services.

There are two sources of ratings of use and usefulness of programs for spouses: the soldiers and the spouses. Since spouse reports of their service use is likely to be more accurate than the soldier's reports, we analyzed spouse data. The following paragraphs present a summary of the findings for each of the categories of spouse programs. The discussion begins with a description of factors associated with program use followed by a description of perceived usefulness.

Spouse Employment Services - Program Use. Spouse employment services are offered by the ACS Family Member Employment Assistance Program designed to address the range of problems spouses experience in finding jobs. The program has been evolving since 1985 and, at the time of the survey (1989), was relatively new and not fully implemented at each Army installation. Spouse employment referrals was the most firmly established program component, while spouse career planning and skills training were available on a more limited basis.

The data on program use reflect, at least partially, the availability of the program components. The most frequently used service was spouse employment referrals; over one in five spouses (22.5%) reported using this program. Approximately seven percent of the spouses used spouse career planning (6.9%) and spouse employment skills training (6.7%)

Use of spouse employment referrals differed by region. Proportionately more spouses used spouse employment referrals in Europe (29.1%) than CONUS (20.4%) and other OCONUS (15.7%) sites. These differences reflect, in part, the fact that spouses relocating to Europe have serious problems finding jobs in the

local economy because of "status of forces" agreements with foreign governments and other restrictions on local hiring.

Spouses with higher levels of education were more likely to use spouse employment referral services. One-fourth of the spouses with college degrees (25.4%) or post-graduate studies (25.2%) used the program as compared with approximately one-fifth of the spouses with high school educations. Spouses who lacked high school diplomas or GED's (12.1%) were least likely to use spouse employment referrals.

Previous research has demonstrated that while educational attainment does not determine the desire to work among military spouses, the reasons for seeking employment vary among different educational groups. While spouses with high school educations may seek employment to supplement the family income, spouses with college degrees are more likely to be career-oriented and to have higher salary expectations. Also, spouses who attended college are more experienced in using services such as spouse employment referrals to assist in guiding their career paths (Army Service Board, 1989; Griffith et al., 1988; Etheridge, 1989).

Use of spouse employment services was related to the amount of problems the spouses were experiencing finding work. Over two-fifths of the spouses for whom finding employment was a serious problem (44.9%) and over one-third of the spouses for whom it was somewhat of a problem (37.0%) used spouse employment referral services compared to one-fifth of the spouses who reported not having a problem finding employment (20.4%).

Spouse labor market status was also associated with use of spouse employment services. Proportionately more spouses who were unemployed and looking for work used each of the three services (employment referrals, career planning and skills training) than all other spouses. Spouses who were employed were proportionately the second largest group who had used the services. It is not possible to determine, however, if use of employment services resulted in becoming employed. These data are presented in Figure 10.

Spouse Employment Services - Perceptions of Usefulness. Spouse employment services were generally perceived as useful for the Army to provide. With the exception of spouse career planning, over one-half of all soldiers and spouses stated that these programs were "very useful". Proportionately more soldiers than spouses held negative opinions about the usefulness of spouse employment services. More than one in ten soldiers stated that spouse

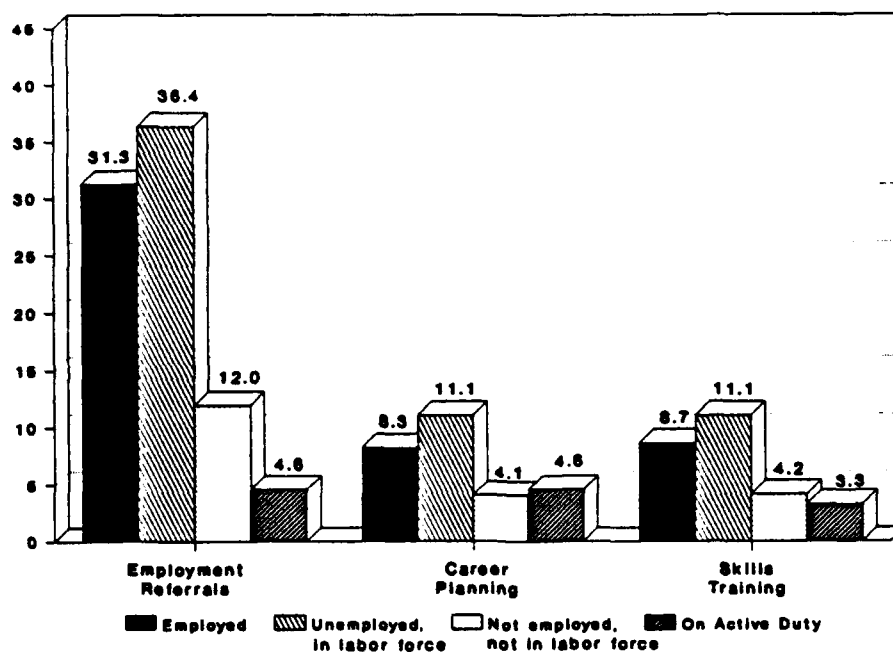


Figure 10. Use of Spouse Employment Services by Labor Market Status

employment services were "not useful" for their Army community. Spouses, however, were more enthusiastic; whereas approximately 50 percent of soldiers thought employment referrals and skills training were "very useful", over 60 percent of spouses provided this rating. These data are presented in Figure 11.

Programs Targeted for Special Needs - Program Use. As previously stated, ACS provides programs which are targeted for special needs of spouses. Given the specialized nature of these programs, a relatively low use rate would be expected. In fact, very few spouses reported using these programs; less than five percent of all spouses used programs for spouses during TDY/deployment, and less than two percent used spouse abuse services (1.9%).

Programs Targeted for Special Needs - Perceptions of Usefulness. Despite the relatively low level of program use, both soldiers and spouses perceived these programs to be "very useful" for the Army to provide. Approximately two-thirds of all soldiers (65.6%) and over three-fourths of all spouses (78.9%) thought that spouse abuse services were "very useful". Similarly, approximately three-fifths of all soldiers (57.7%) and spouses (65.7%) stated that it was "very useful" for the Army to provide programs for spouses during TDY/deployments. These data are presented in Figure 12.

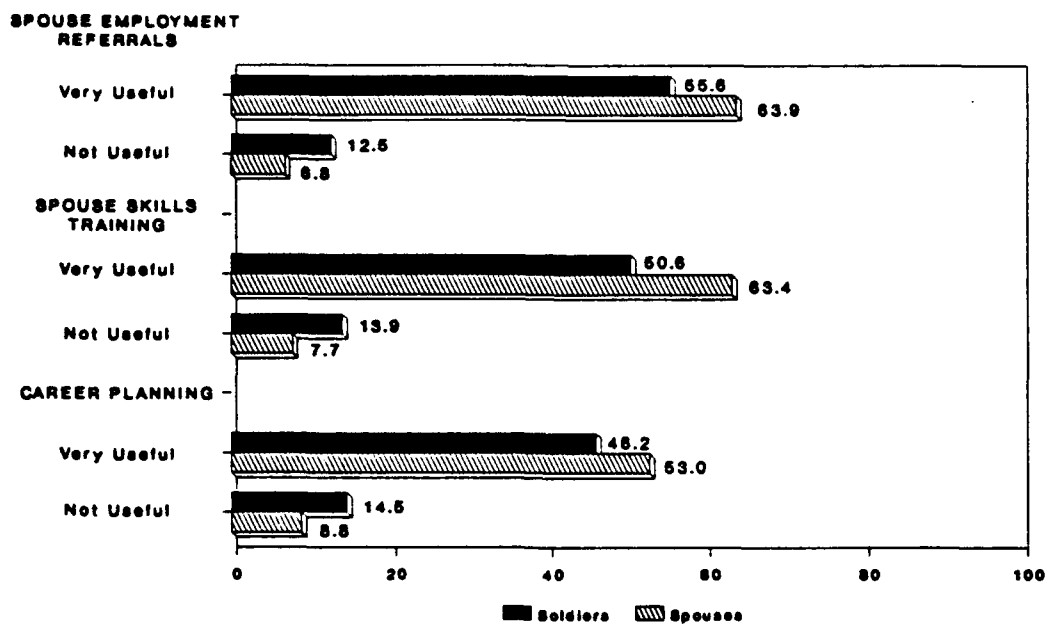


Figure 11. Spouse Employment Programs--Proportion of Soldiers and Spouses Who Rated Programs as "Very Useful" and "Not Useful"

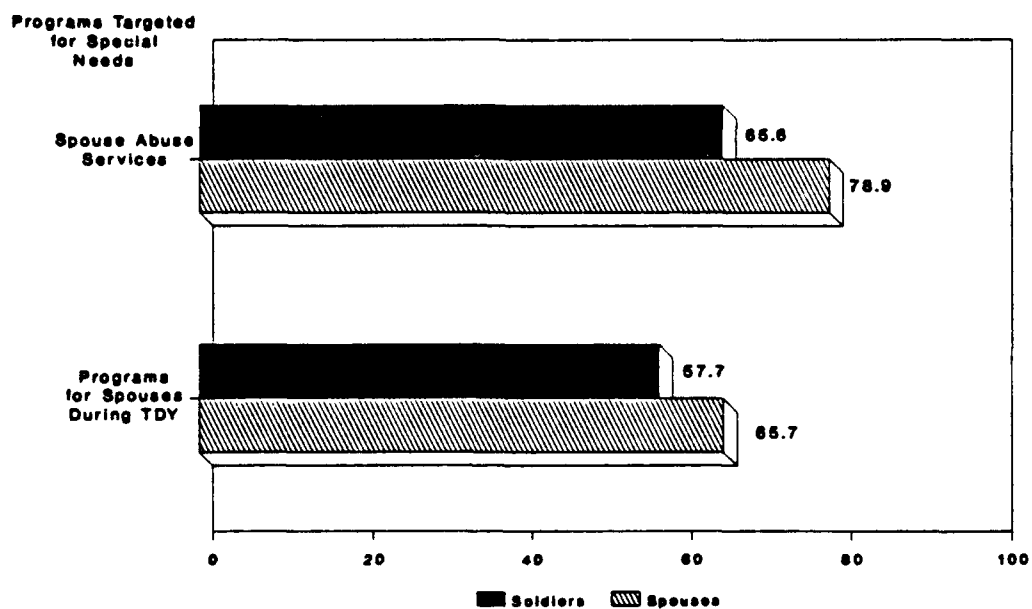


Figure 12. Programs Targeted for Special Needs--Proportion of Soldiers and Spouses Who Rated Programs as "Very Useful"

The usefulness ratings provided by both soldiers and spouses for these specialized intervention programs suggest that certain "safety net" -type services are perceived as essential for the health of the Army community. While few families may never need family advocacy programs, for example, there is clearly a widely held belief that these services should be available. For example, spouse abuse services are not used by a high percentage of Army families yet, the usefulness ratings provided by the majority of Army community residents suggest that this program is important.

Child and Youth Programs

Programs designed specifically for children and youth are provided by various Army agencies at the installation level including the Army Community Services, Youth Activities and Child Development Services. The survey included six programs which address the needs of children and youth. These six programs are further categorized as general and targeted programs and include:

- General -- those programs which can potentially benefit all children and youth including:
 - Child daycare (drop-in and full day)
 - Youth recreation
 - Youth employment
- Targeted -- those programs which were developed to address specific needs of either children or their parents including:
 - Child abuse services
 - Single parent support groups
 - Special child care for single parents.

The patterns of use and perceptions of usefulness for each of these programs are provided in the following paragraphs.

General Child and Youth Programs - Program Use. Child Development Services (CDS) provide child daycare at most installations throughout the Army. These programs frequently are provided at a CDS facility or daycare center; services are also provided through licensed homes and other arrangements. Flexibility has been built into the program offerings so as to best meet the child care needs of the military member in performing his or her duties. As a result, child daycare centers and other providers offer both full-day and drop-in services. The patterns of child daycare program use were analyzed using the soldier and

spouse survey responses; soldier responses are reported in the following paragraphs since these provided a more comprehensive picture of child daycare user characteristics.

Over one-fourth (27.0%) of soldiers with children between the ages of 3 and 5 years reported using drop-in child care. A slightly smaller proportion of soldiers with children between the ages of 1 and 2 years (23.7%) and less than one year old (18.5%) reported using this service. Approximately one in five (22.0%) soldiers with children between the ages of 3 and 5 years reported using full-day child care. Approximately 15 percent of soldiers with children younger than 3 years reported using full-day child care.

At Army installations, child daycare services are provided, on a priority basis, to specific military members and this prioritization appears to have affected program use. Among Army families with young children, proportionately more dual military families (30.7%) used full-day daycare than non-dual military families (18.5%). Also, single parent families (29.1%) used child daycare at a higher rate than two parent families (19.0%).

Most installations offer youth recreation services through the Youth Activities program. Soldiers' reported use of youth recreation services differed by the age of the children living in the household. For example, almost one-half (45.7%) of soldiers with children between the ages of 10 and 14 years reported using youth recreation services while over one-third (36.2%) of soldiers with children between 6 and 9 years reported using these services.

Use of youth recreation services differed among families who lived on-post and families who lived off-post, depending on the age of the child(ren). Fully two thirds of all soldiers with children age 10 to 18 used youth recreation services, whether or not they lived on post. Among soldiers with children under age 10, however, significantly more on-post families (78.6%) than off-post families (69.7%) used these services. This finding reflects, in part, the fact that youth recreation activities tend to be offered at youth activities centers which are more convenient to on-post residents with young children.

Youth employment programs are offered by ACS through the Family Member Employment Assistance Program. At a minimum, the program consists of (1) the provision of information on part-time and summer employment opportunities and (2) publication of information on installation summer hire programs.

Overall, approximately 10 percent of soldiers with children reported using youth employment services. However, three in ten soldiers (29.6%) with children

who were 18 years old and older and one-fourth (26.0%) of soldiers with children between the ages of 15 and 17 reported using youth employment services.

General Child and Youth Programs - Perceptions of Usefulness. The usefulness of general child and youth programs was rated quite highly by all soldiers and spouses, whether or not they had children. Approximately two-thirds of the soldiers and over three-fourths of the spouses rated the general child and youth programs as "very useful". Proportionately more soldiers (66.8%) and spouses (79.4%) rated child daycare as "very useful" than the other programs. Youth employment programs were rated the least highly; just over one-half of the soldiers and two-thirds of the spouses rated this program as "very useful". These data are presented in Figure 13.

Soldiers and spouses who had used the programs themselves or who had family members who had used the programs tended to perceive them as more useful than soldiers and spouses who had not used the programs. The proportion of soldier program users who reported a "very useful" rating ranged from 73 to 85

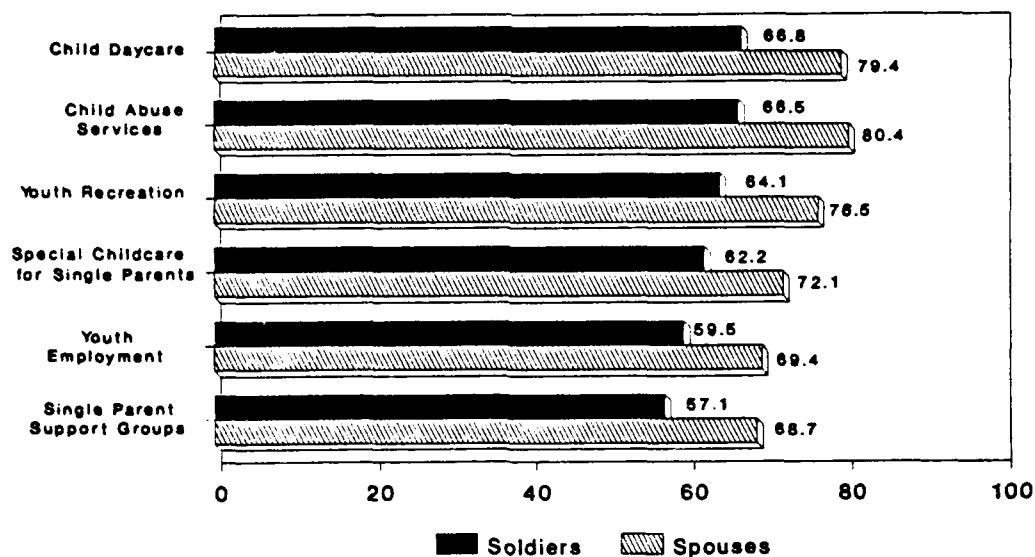


Figure 13. Child and Youth Programs--Proportion of Soldiers and Spouses Who Rated Programs as "Very Useful"

percent while the corresponding proportion of non-program users ranged from 60 to 66 percent. Over 85 percent of spouse users rated these programs as "very useful" compared to approximately 75 percent of non-users. These data are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Child and Youth Programs--Effect of Program Use on Soldier and Spouse Perception of Usefulness

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>SOLDIER</u>		<u>SPOUSE</u>	
	<u>Users</u>	<u>Non-Users</u>	<u>Users</u>	<u>Non-Users</u>
	%	%	%	%
Child Daycare - Full Day	85.2	66.4	94.1	73.5
Child Daycare - Drop-In	80.6	64.6	95.0	77.3
Youth Recreation	82.3	62.3	90.2	72.7
Youth Employment	73.2	59.5	85.4	68.8

Note: Percent of respondents who stated program was "very useful"

Youth Programs to Meet Special Needs - Program Use.

Several programs designed to meet the special needs of children and/or their parent(s) were included in the survey. In keeping with the specialized nature of these programs, reported program use was relatively low.

Approximately two percent of all soldiers and spouses with children reported using child abuse services. Although the proportions were very small, a higher proportion of enlisted personnel than officers reported using this service.

Use of single parent support groups and special child care among single parents was analyzed for single parents to identify program need and the extent to which the need was being met. Of the total single parent population, over seven percent had used child care for single parents.

Approximately one in ten single parents had used single parent support groups (9.7%). In other words, approximately 10 percent of the Army single parent population is being reached by the programs specifically targeted to this group.

Youth Programs to Meet Special Needs - Perceptions of Usefulness.

Programs designed to meet the special needs of youth and single parents are perceived as very useful for the Army to provide by both soldiers and spouses. With the exception of single parent support groups, approximately two thirds of the soldiers and three-fourths of the spouses stated that these programs were "very useful". These ratings are unaffected by program use suggesting that soldiers and spouses consider certain youth programs, no matter how specialized or infrequently used, to be essential services that should be provided by the Army community.

Counseling and Treatment Programs

The Army provides several counseling and treatment programs for soldiers and their families including individual counseling, marriage and family therapy and drug and alcohol treatment. Whereas drug and alcohol treatment is provided as a medical service at the installation medical treatment facility, the counseling services are provided either by ACS, the Chaplain or through other programs.

Program Use. Of the three counseling programs, individual counseling was used most frequently by soldiers (12.0%) followed by marriage and family therapy (7.6%) and drug and alcohol treatment (7.5%). Proportionately fewer spouses used these programs; just under one in ten spouses used individual counseling (9.1%) and marriage and family therapy (9.5%) while less than three percent of all spouses used drug and alcohol treatment (2.4%).

The use rates for counseling and treatment programs among Army spouses are more indicative of the availability of these services than they are of spouse need. Typically, such services as individual counseling and drug and alcohol treatment are accessible to Army spouses on a space available basis, only, at the installations. Given that these services are frequently more accessible off-post through CHAMPUS, and given that off-post services ensure greater anonymity, spouses are more likely to seek these treatments within their local civilian communities.

Program use differed by soldier rank for individual counseling only. Over ten percent of enlisted personnel (13.1%) used this program compared with just over five percent of officers (5.3%). Proportionately more soldiers who lived in off-post

housing (9.2%) used marriage and family therapy than soldiers who lived in on-post housing (6.0%); housing location did not significantly affect use rates for the other two programs.

The soldier and spouse surveys provided information with which to assess the level of need for marriage and family therapy. One survey question asked the extent to which soldiers and spouses had troubled thoughts concerning their marriage in the past twelve months. The specific survey questions and the proportion of soldier responses include:

- Think marriage might be in trouble (35%)
- Seriously think about getting a divorce or separation (25%)
- Seriously discuss the issue of divorce or separation (22%)
- Actually file for divorce or separation (5%).

Responses to this question were analyzed with respect to use of marriage and family therapy.

The findings show that program use increased with the level of marital troubles. Of the soldiers who thought their marriage was in trouble and of the soldiers who reported thinking about getting a divorce, approximately one in five had used marriage and family therapy. Of those who discussed divorce, just under one-fourth had used marriage and family therapy while a similar proportion (24.4%) who had filed for divorce/separation had sought counseling. These data are presented in Figure 14.

These findings demonstrate that married couples who need marriage and family therapy are using the service. These findings also demonstrate that the need for the service is still quite high and more aggressive outreach might be warranted to assist soldiers with marital problems.

Perceptions of Usefulness. As with all other programs, the counseling and treatment programs were perceived as useful by both soldiers and spouses. Approximately two-thirds of the soldiers and three-fourths of the spouses stated that drug and alcohol treatment was "very useful", while over one-half of the soldiers and two-thirds of the spouses thought marriage and family therapy and individual counseling were very useful.

The association between program use among soldiers and perceptions of usefulness was positive for individual counseling and negative for drug and alcohol treatment. Approximately two-thirds of the soldiers who had used individual counseling rated it as "very useful", while just over one-half of the soldiers who

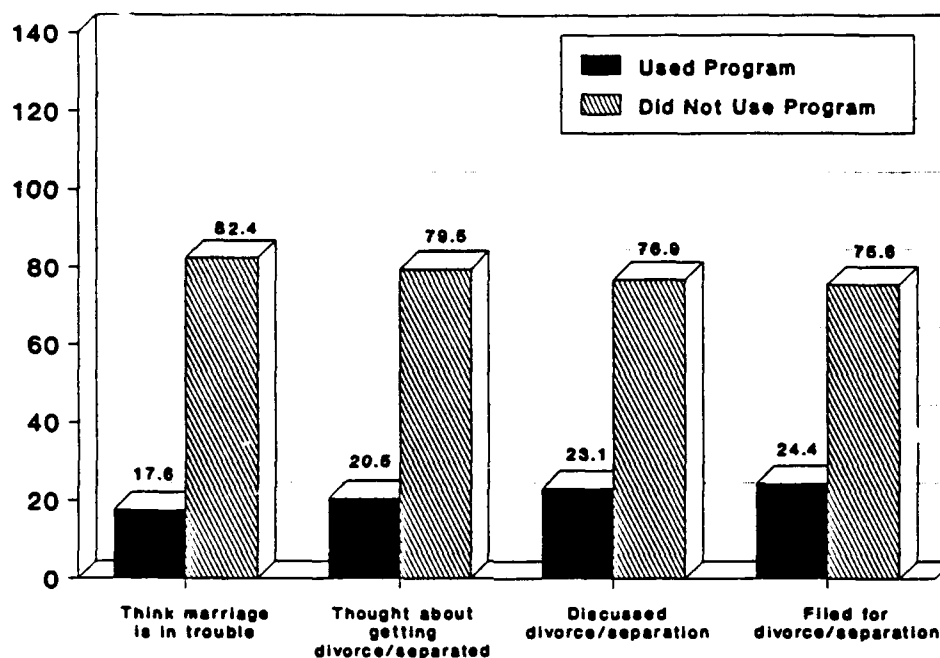


Figure 14. Use of Marriage and Family Therapy by Soldiers Who Reported Marital Stress

had not used the program provided this rating. A smaller proportion of drug and alcohol treatment users (58.5%) however rated this program as "very useful" when compared with non-users (64.0%). In fact, over one in ten of the program users (12.8%) rated drug and alcohol treatment as "not useful" compared with seven percent of the non-users. These findings suggest that a significant minority of soldiers who had used drug and alcohol treatment were not satisfied with the program perhaps because they had been required to seek treatment and/or because the service lacked confidentiality.

Programs for Single Soldiers

During the 1980's, as the Army was increasing its efforts to meet the community support needs of soldiers and their families, the unique needs of single soldiers emerged as issues to be addressed. As a result, single soldier concerns were included in the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) process whereby issues were identified and corrective actions were prescribed. Specific programs emerged, from the AFAP and other community planning processes, which addressed the single soldier. Two programs, social/recreation programs for singles

and premarital counseling, were included in the 1989 Army Soldier and Family Survey. The analysis of the use and usefulness data for these two programs is presented below.

Program Use. Of the total single soldier population, approximately 14 percent reported having used social recreation programs for singles. Program use differed by soldier rank; approximately one in eight single enlisted personnel used social programs for singles compared with less than four percent of the single officers. Use of programs also differed by housing location. Proportionately more soldiers who lived on-post (10.1%) than off-post (3.7%) used social programs for singles.

Less than five percent of all soldiers (4.0%) and spouses (4.3%) reported that they had used premarital counseling at their current location. These proportions did not vary by rank, region or housing location. Among soldiers who were single at the time of the survey, less than 4 percent reported using the program at their current location. Proportionately more single soldiers who were involved with someone (4.8%) had used premarital counseling than soldiers who were not involved with someone (1.9%).

Perceptions of Usefulness. Approximately one-half of soldiers and spouses reported that social programs for singles and premarital counseling were "very useful" for the Army to provide at their current location. Spouse and soldier perceptions of usefulness of social programs and premarital counseling were not related to whether or not they had actually used that service at their present location.

Soldier and Spouse Perceptions of Army Support for Families

The analysis of program use and perceptions of program usefulness described above provides information about specific Army community support programs. The data collected by the Army survey, however, also provides information about the overall quality of community support provided by the Army, as perceived by soldiers and spouses. Specific questions which addressed the quality of Army family support included:

- Extent that soldiers and spouses feel that they can count on an Army service agency to help with a family problem
- Spouse perceptions of the negative impact on a soldier's career of going to a military service provider for help

- Soldier and spouse perceptions of the quality of family programs, in general.

An analysis of the data collected via these survey items is presented in the following paragraphs.

Helpfulness of Army Family Service Agencies

The survey asked both soldiers and spouses: "To what extent can you count on staff of an Army service agency (e.g., ACS or Chaplain) for help with a personal or family problem?" Responses to this survey question are summarized below.

Overall, soldiers and spouses reported being able to count on Army agency staff to help with their problems. Proportionately more soldiers (39.7%) than spouses (23.1%) stated that they could count on Army agency staff to a "great" or "very great" extent. Approximately one-half of all respondents stated that they could count on Army staff to a "moderate" extent while one in ten soldiers (10.2%) and over one-fourth of the spouses (26.3%) expressed a negative view ("slight" or "not at all").

Soldier responses differed by rank and family status. Proportionately more enlisted personnel (40.6%) than officers (33.7%) reported that they could count on Army staff to a "great" or "very great" extent. Similarly, married soldiers (41%) were more positive about support from Army staff than single soldiers. These data are presented in Figure 15.

Career Impact of Using Army Services for Help

Prior to the mid-1980's, many Army spouses believed that if they or the military member revealed family or marital problems, the military member's career would be penalized. Army leadership, throughout the ranks, has been diligent in their efforts to dispel this belief. To assess the extent to which Army spouses still hold this concern, the survey asked spouses if they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: "If a spouse goes to military service providers (ACS, Chaplains, etc.) for help with a problem, it could hurt the soldier's military career."

The analysis shows that over one in five of both officers' and enlisted personnel's spouses believe that their seeking help with a problem could hurt the soldier's career. The majority of spouses (49.7%), however, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. The remaining three-tenths of the spouses neither agreed nor disagreed. These findings were consistent across soldier rank, region and spouse educational levels.

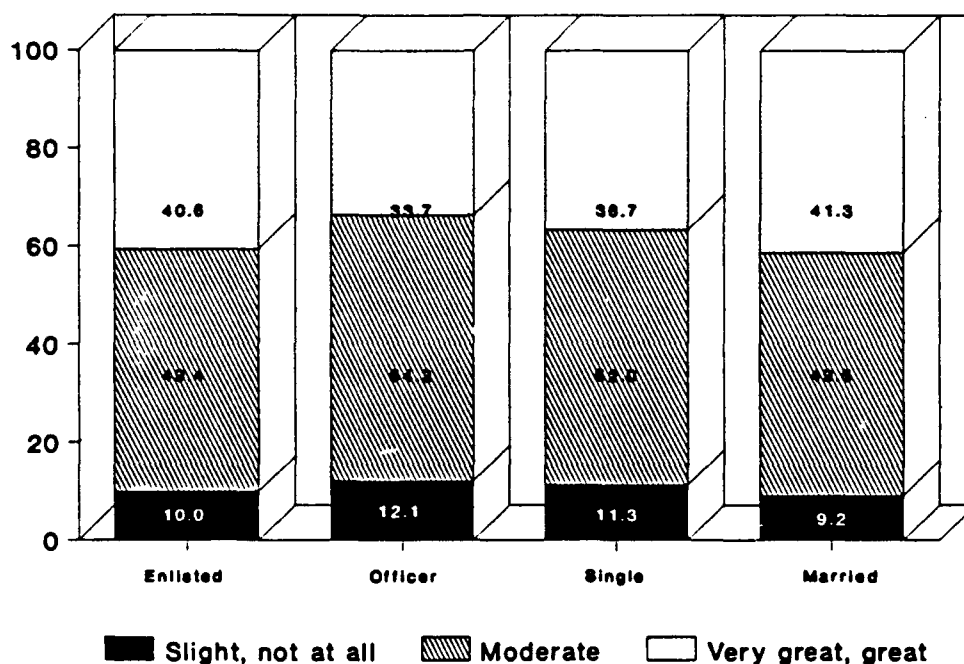


Figure 15. Measure of Extent Soldiers Thought They Could Count on Army Agency Staff to Help With Problems

The fact that one-half of the spouses did not think that seeking help would have negative repercussions suggests that the Army is successfully communicating a more open, supportive attitude toward families. It is also significant, however, that over 20 percent of the spouses are concerned that their seeking help could hurt the soldier's career. This suggests that one-fifth of all Army spouses perceive a barrier to using vital community support services.

Perceived Quality of Army Family Programs

In addition to information about specific Army community support programs, the survey provided an indication of the perceived quality of Army family programs, in general. Soldiers were asked: "How good or bad are programs and services for families at this location?"

The majority of soldiers stated that programs and services were "good" or "very good." Responses, however, differed by soldier rank. More officers' (54.4%) stated that family programs were "good" than enlisted personnel (44.6%).

Over one in ten soldiers stated that family programs were "bad" or "very bad." Again, responses differed by rank; more enlisted personnel (16.1%) than officers (12.5%) were negative about the quality of Army family programs. Also, single soldiers with children (48.1%) were more positive about the Army family programs than married soldiers with or without children (38%). These data are presented in Figure 16.

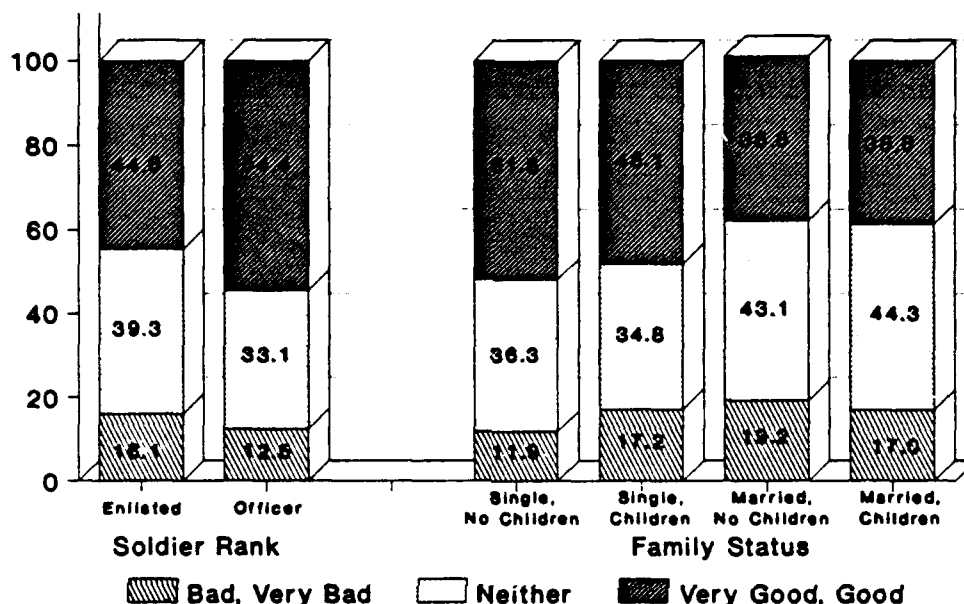


Figure 16. Perceptions of the Quality of Army Family Programs by Soldier Rank and Soldier Family Status

Relationship Between Program Use and Military Outcomes

The objectives of Army family programs are two fold. The first objective is to provide instrumental support to families in need of services. The second objective is to raise the awareness among soldiers and their families that the Army is committed to providing family and community support. Previous research indicates that program use is related to the availability of social supports, increased perceptions of leader support for families, family adaptation, and retention. Using scales created to measure these outcomes, these relationships were tested using AFRP data.

All of the community support programs were divided into two categories: general program use and targeted program use. These groupings correspond with the groupings described previously. When categorized into the two types of programs, 68 percent of the soldiers reported using general programs and 43

percent of the soldiers reported using targeted programs. For spouses, a higher percentage reported using general programs (73%) and targeted programs (55%) than soldiers. This finding supports the literature which suggests that spouses (females) are more likely to seek help from formal social supports than soldiers (males).

Perceptions of Leader Support for Families and Program Use

Among soldiers, general program use is associated with perceptions regarding the degree of leader support for families. Of the program users, 48 percent reported high levels of leader support for families compared to only 39 percent of non-users. Overall, however, the majority of soldiers reported moderate leader support for families and only 2 percent of users and 4 percent of non-users reported low degrees of support. These data are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Perceived Leader Support for Families by Program Use

<u>Perceived Leader Support for Families</u>	<u>PROGRAM GENERAL USE</u>	
	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
High	48.6	35.5
Medium	49.6	56.9
Low	1.7	3.5

Job Performance and Program Use

General program use was associated with the commanders' assessment of soldier job performance. Of the soldiers who used general programs, 50 percent were rated as one of the best or above average by their commanders compared to 41 percent of soldiers who did not use programs. These data are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Unit Commander's Assessment of Job Performance and General Program Use

Commander Assessment of Job Performance	Yes Used Program	No Did Not Use Program
One of the Best	17.6	12.3
Above Average	33.0	28.8
Average	39.8	46.5
Below Average	8.0	9.7
One of the Worst	1.4	2.5

Family Adaptation and Program Use³

Family adaptation is related to the use of general programs; family adaptation is not, however related to the use of target programs. A higher proportion of soldiers who did not use general programs (34.7%) reported low levels of family adaptation as compared to the proportion of soldiers (28.95) who did use the general programs. These data are presented in Table 9.

³ Family adaptation is defined as characteristics of the family that indicate adjustment to external organization demands. It is operationalized by three measures: Army - Family Fit, Spouse Support for the Army and Family Adjustment to the Army. For a detailed discussion of the construction of this measure, refer to Ortner, D.K., Zimmerman, L.I., Bowen, G.L., Gaddy, G. and Bell, D.B. (1991); Development of a measure of family adaptation to the Army. (Technical Report) Alexandria, Va: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

Table 9

Family Adaptation by Use of General Programs

<u>Level of Family Adaptation</u>	<u>Soldiers Who Have</u>	
	<u>Used Program</u>	<u>Not Used Program</u>
High adaptation	37.5	34.2
Moderate adaptation	33.4	31.0
Low adaptation	28.9	34.7

Retention and Program Use

Use of both general and targeted programs is associated with soldiers' plans for retention. Among soldiers who have used general programs, over one-third reported a high probability that they would reenlist compared to just over one-fourth of the soldiers who had not used general programs. Only one in five program users reported that there was no chance that they would reenlist at the end of their current obligation compared to approximately one in three soldiers who did not use programs. These data are presented in Table 10.

Table 10.

Retention Plans By General Program Use

<u>Retention Plans - Soldier Reported Plans to Reenlist</u>	<u>Soldiers Who Have</u>	
	<u>Used Program</u>	<u>Not Used Program</u>
High probability	36.0	28.1
Likely	18.0	15.5
Not likely	23.4	22.0
No chance	22.6	34.4

Among targeted program users, almost two-fifths of the users reported a high probability that they will reenlist compared to less than one-third of the non-users. Twenty percent of program users reported no chance of reenlisting while over 30 percent of soldiers who had not used programs reported that they would not reenlist upon completing their current obligation (Table 11).

Table 11.

Retention Plans by Targeted Program Use

Retention Plans - Soldier Reported <u>Plans to Reenlist</u>	Soldiers Who Have	
	<u>Used Program</u>	<u>Not Used Program</u>
High probability	38.5	29.4
Likely	17.6	16.7
Not likely	23.7	22.3
No chance	20.2	31.5

Conclusions and Recommendations

The information about Army community support programs collected by the 1989 Soldier and Family Survey provides valuable information for specific Army service providers as well as Army leadership. The value of continuing Army support for families via policies, programs, and services is supported by the findings included in this report.

Major Findings

The 1989 Army Soldier and Family Survey confirms that the Army provides a variety of community support programs including general services, which are designed to be used by the total Army community, and targeted services, which are designed for specific populations and/or specific personal or family needs.

Examples of general services include libraries and recreational services as well as legal services and a range of relocation support. Targeted services, for purposes of this research, are defined to include programs for specific population sub-sets (spouse employment, youth recreation) and intervention programs such as emergency services, counseling and alcohol treatment. Whereas general services are typically available at most installations, many of the targeted services are offered at fewer sites and may be provided by different agencies across installations. The limited availability of certain services may have resulted in the under-reporting of actual utilization rates within the preceding sections.

Research has theorized that general services differ from targeted services with respect to social acceptability. The use of targeted services may have an associated social stigma since program use implicitly suggests that the user has personal or family problems. The impact of these differences may be far-reaching in terms of the effect of social stigma on utilization rates for targeted programs. All segments of the Army population may be affected; officers, senior NCOs and the more junior enlisted personnel alike may be fearful that use of targeted programs would attract unnecessary negative attention from Army leadership, thereby adversely affecting their career advancement.

The analysis of the Army Soldier and Family Survey data identified clear trends in the characteristics of community support program users; these trends tend to substantiate the theories about targeted program use. Proportionately more officers used the "socially acceptable" general services such as libraries, recreational services and relocation support as well as the more socially acceptable targeted programs (youth recreation, child daycare). Proportionately more enlisted personnel, however, used the less socially acceptable targeted services such as family advocacy, personal counseling and emergency services. One interpretation of these findings is that officers, who are socially and economically better off than

their enlisted colleagues, are better able to access the more positive community support which is designed to enhance the quality of life. Officers tend to have more personal resources through informal social networks and/or the more costly civilian resources for personal and/or family problems. In contrast, enlisted personnel who have fewer personal resources, are proportionately under-utilizing the quality of life programs such as recreation and libraries while making more use of the intervention programs. Given the perceived negative repercussions of targeted program use, it is probable that these programs are used more often in times of crisis rather than as preventive measures.

Soldiers and spouses alike, however, believe that the availability of Army community support services are essential to the well-being of the Army community. With few exceptions, the majority of soldiers and spouses of all paygrades reported that the community support services were "very useful" for the Army to provide at their current location. Again, with few exceptions, less than one in ten soldiers and spouses stated that the Army community support programs were "not useful."

Program use had a positive impact on the perceptions of program usefulness. When program usefulness reports were analyzed by whether or not soldiers and spouses had used the program, significantly higher proportions of program users had rated the program as very useful when compared to non-users. This suggests a measure of user satisfaction since it is reasonable to assume that program users' satisfaction with the service influenced their reported usefulness rating.

Generally, the quality of Army family programs and the helpfulness of Army agency staff were highly rated by soldiers and spouses. A significant minority of both officers' and enlisted personnel's spouses, however, still believe that use of Army community support programs may interfere with the soldier's career.

Community support programs are an important vehicle for communicating Army support for families. Soldiers who used family programs reported higher perceptions of leader support for families than soldiers who did not use programs.

Job performance and retention plans are associated with general program use. Job performance is associated with general program use for such programs as MWR services and relocation assistance; these programs have been documented by the research as helping the soldier focus on performance. Retention plans are also associated with targeted and general program use. Soldiers who used programs reported a higher probability of retention than those who did not use programs.

Recommendations

Army leadership should continue their efforts to publicly support families both through the units and through the community support program networks. As demonstrated in the literature review section of this report, Army leadership support of family programs was the most effective antidote to the perceptions of social stigma and/or negative career repercussions of community support program use. This is especially important among the more junior ranks; junior enlisted personnel with families are the least economically advantaged, the least sophisticated and potentially the most socially isolated of the Army community population. These socio-economic factors render the more junior enlisted the most vulnerable to the stress of Army life and therefore the most in need of community support systems. Fearfulness of program use is counter-productive; these fears among all Army personnel should be alleviated.

Concurrently, enlisted personnel should be encouraged to make full use of all programs, including those designed to enhance the quality of their non-duty hours. Service goals for recreational and child support programs, in particular, should target enlisted personnel and their families so as to ensure the maximum use of these programs across the total Army community.

Marketing efforts should be intensified for several of the targeted community support programs. The survey provided preliminary data on the need for such programs as marriage and family therapy and support for single soldiers. Given that a relatively small proportion of the need was being reached through program use, more extensive marketing efforts may be warranted.

More formal, standardized feed-back mechanisms should be implemented to enable program providers to better identify client needs, use and satisfaction. The Army Soldier and Family Survey data provides general information about program use among specific segments of the Army population. For the information to be useful to program planners and service providers, more program-specific data are needed. More specific information would be useful for developing marketing efforts, targeting resources and tailoring the program offerings to specific soldier and family member needs.

At the same time, further analyses of the Army Soldier and Family Survey community support program data should be conducted. Considerably more information is available from further analyses of the survey data; additional analyses exceeded the scope of this report. More sophisticated modeling techniques, for example, would enable the identification of more specific user

characteristics as well as provide predictors of use for certain programs. The full breadth of information collected by the survey should be examined prior to funding additional Army community support program data collection and/or research.

The importance of Army community support programs to the enhancement of family adaptation, soldier performance and soldier retention should be recognized. The information from previous research together with the analysis of the Army survey data indicates that there is a clear relationship between adaptation, readiness and retention and Army community support. As Army leadership is continually faced with difficult resource allocation decisions, the importance of Army community support should not be minimized; this study has added to the understanding that family programs are essential rather than incidental to the fundamental Army manpower development goals.

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