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Strengthening Health, Wellness, and Financial Security Through Total Force Fitness

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Strengthening Health, Wellness, & Financial Security Through Total Force Fitness





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Today's Presenters



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Health Directorate



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Enhancing Health and Wellness Through Total Force Fitness

Dr. Theresa Santo, Deputy Director, Health Promotion and Wellness, DHA Public Health Ms. Joanna Reagan, Public Health Nutritionist, Health Promotion and Wellness, DHA Public Health Ms. Robyn Alama Mroszczyk, Financial Education Program Manager, Directorate of Prevention, Resilience, and Readiness, HQDA

August 29, 2024



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Learning Objectives

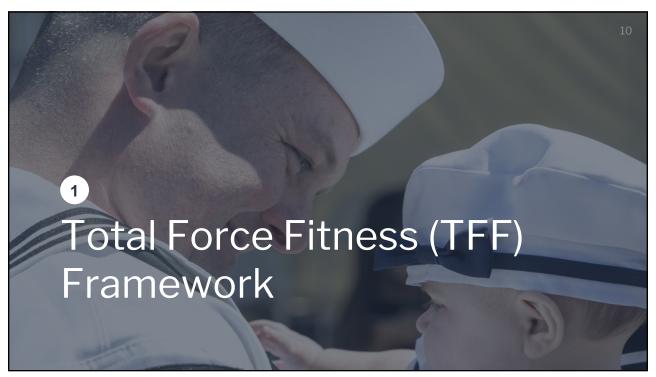
- **1** Define the eight dimensions of wellness in the Total Force Fitness concept.
- 2 Describe how the eight dimensions of wellness, including financial fitness and nutritional fitness, affect each other.
- 3 Outline the risk factors for food insecurity impacting the U.S. military.
 - Define food insecurity and its severity levels (high, medium, and low).
 - Compare rates of food insecurity within military and civilian populations.
- 4 Define methods for identifying and assisting food insecure Service members.

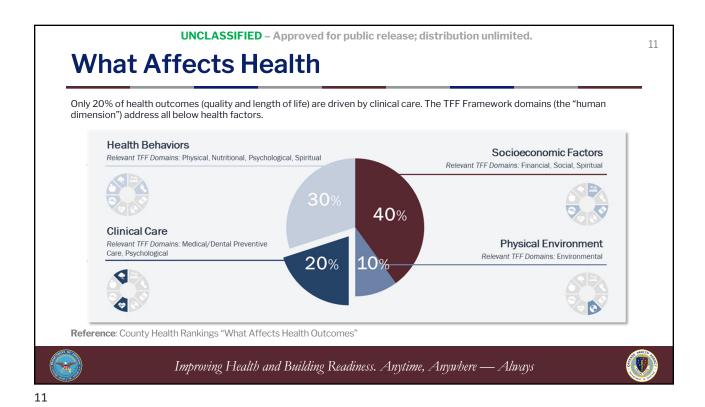


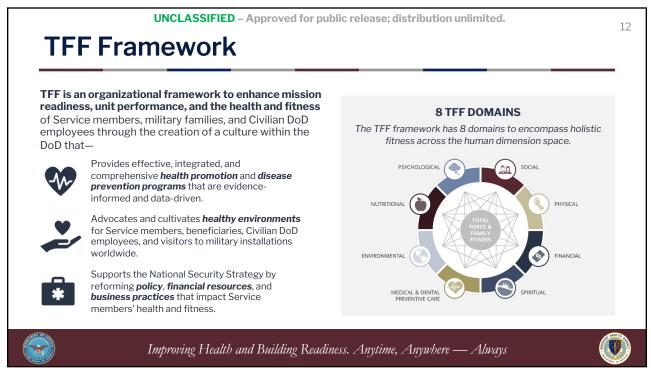
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Call to Action: Current State Challenges

The Joint Force is facing a **multitude of threats to readiness and retention across the human dimension** that impact our nation's diverse Service members and their families. Currently, many DoD policies and programs aim to mitigate threats to readiness. However, **the Department lacks a synchronized approach** to measuring, optimizing, and sustaining evidence-informed activities that anticipate and address the most pressing challenges facing the fighting force.



?







Inadequate Oversight

A lack of program oversight results in inefficiencies and wasted resources. 1,2

Lack of Programming Visibility

The number, funding, and efficacy of programs spanning the human dimension is unknown. 2,3

Insufficient Evaluation

Programs are not systematically evaluated for effectiveness. 1,2,4,5,6

Inconsistent Metrics

A lack of standardized human dimension metrics inhibits meaningful analysis.⁴

Declining Readiness Metrics

While the DoD is spending increasing amounts on health, behavioral health readiness trends are declining.

References: 1) Sexual Assaulted and Coast Guard Should Ensure Laws Are Implemented to Improve Oversight of Key Prevention and Response Efforts (GAO-22-103973) 2)
Defense Health Care: DOD Needs to Fully Assess Its Non-clinical Suicide Prevention Efforts and Address Any Impediments to Effectiveness (GAO-21-300) 3) Improving Oversight and Coordination of DoD Programs that Address Problematic Behaviors Among Military Personnel (RAND) 4) Domestic Abuse: Actions Needed to Enhance DoD's Prevention, Response, and Oversight (GAO-21-289) 5) Sexual Harassment and Assault: The Army Should Take Steps to Enhance Program Oversight, Evaluate Effectiveness, and Identify Reporting Barriers (GAO-22-104673) 6) Sexual Assault: Actions Needed to Improve DOD's Prevention Strategy and to Help Ensure It Is Effectively Implemented (GAO-16-61) 7) Military Wellness Initiative (IMWI) Congressional Inquiry 2022



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TFF Priorities

Activate and Engage Partners

Amplify the TFF Framework and rally stakeholders in support of the Vision. Collaboration without encroachment is key.

Emphasize Personnel and Readiness Efforts

Reduce time spent on separations and other administrative tasks to focus leader time on holistic personnel and readiness efforts

Enhance Data Capabilities

Identify standardized metrics within each TFF domain to enable meaningful comparisons and identify best practices; leverage the best available data and analytical techniques to inform evaluation.



Codify the Vision

Leverage senior leader vision and stakeholder partnerships to communicate, develop, and implement TFF guiding

Establish TFF Governance

Create a strategic plan for TFF Framework implementation across the DoD; establish an oversight body of TFFrelated programs.

Standardize the Approach to TFF-Related Programs

Establish and maintain standards for TFF-related activities across the human dimension to ensure reliance on evidence, evaluation, and continuous quality improvement.



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TFF: Path to Promote a Culture of Excellence

TFF aims to build a culture of excellence across the human dimension and ensure programming is high-quality, using a data-driven, evidence-based approach to preventive activities across the enterprise.

Fewer Preventable Conditions

High-quality prevention programming can promote positive behavior changes.

Optimized Resource Allocation

Oversight will provide transparency into program efficacy, enabling data-driven funding and resourcing decisions.

Effective Upstream Engagement

Program standards will enhance program quality and efficacy and allow the DoD to get "left of boom."

Increased Readiness & Resilience

By enabling positive behavior change, the DoD can increase readiness, health, and resilience.

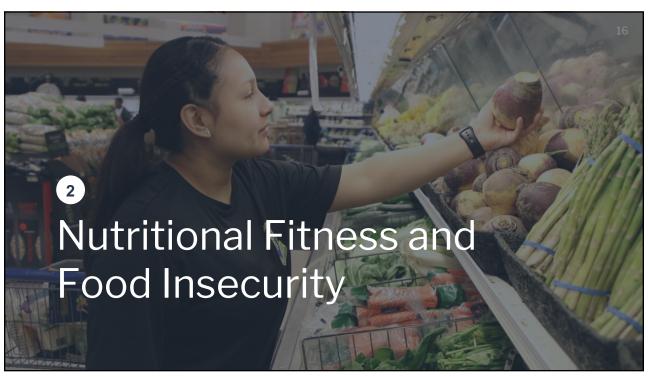
Reduced Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) Utilization Intervention before clinical services are needed to reduce the burden on MTFs.



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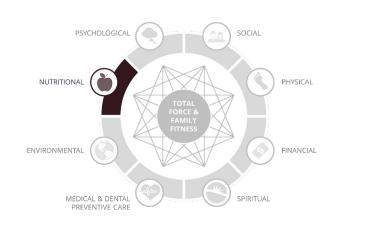


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Nutritional Fitness

Nutritional Fitness

Access to high-quality foods, mission-driven macro- and micro-nutrient requirements, dietary supplement use, and healthy dietary choices





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Quick Look at Nutritional Fitness

Athlete's



MyPlate





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Food Insecurity Defined

Food insecurity is a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. $^{\!1}$

It **differs from hunger**—an individual physiologic condition—although may result in hunger. It is not identical to malnutrition but may result in malnutrition.²

Food insecurity is related to but is **not the same as nutrition insecurity**.

Food insecurity is considered a **social determinant of health** or a health-related social need, alongside things like housing and transportation access.³

Food insecurity is the inverse of food security.

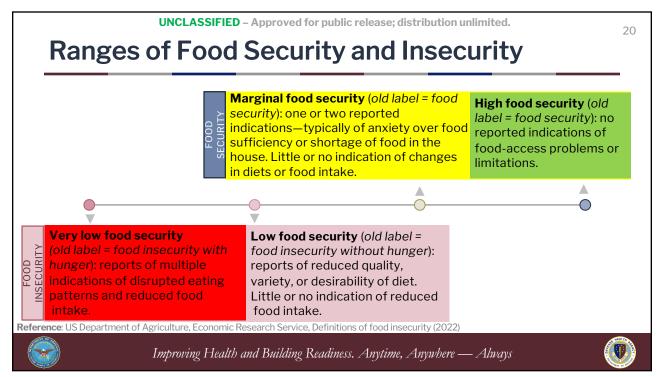
References: 1) US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, <u>Definitions of food insecurity</u> (2022) 2) Healthy People 2030 <u>Literature Summary: Food Insecurity</u> 3) Healthy People 2030 <u>Social Determinants of Health</u>





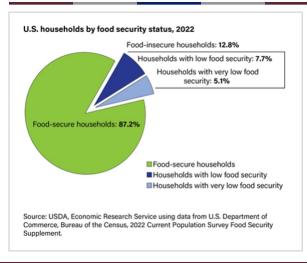
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Food Insecurity: Is this an issue in the United States?



Household food insecurity (low food security and very low food security) affected 12.8% (17.0 million) of **U.S.** households at some time during 2022.

Reference: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, <u>Food Security in the US</u> (2022)



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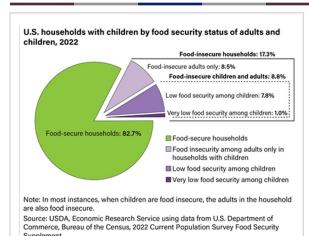


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Food Security Status of U.S. Households with Children



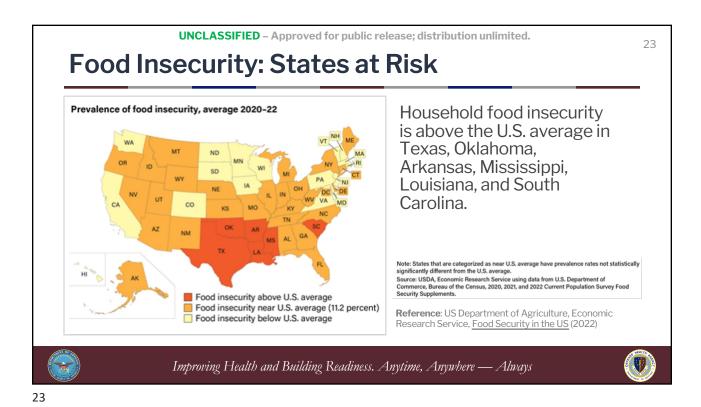
Household food insecurity affected 17.3% (6.4 million) of households with children in 2022.

Reference: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, <u>Food Security in the US</u> (2022)



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Food Insecurity: Is this really a military issue?

Food Insecurity Rates for Active Duty	Approximately 15.4% of all Active-Duty personnel would be classified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as having low food security in 2018. Another 10.4% would be classified as having very low food security. ¹ From 2018 Status of Forces of Active-Duty Members (SOF-A) data			
Pandemic Impacts on Army Food Insecurity	Food insecurity rates reported in Army personnel worsened after the pandemic, going from 19% to 33%. ²		>	
Food Insecurity in Enlisted Families	14% of enlisted families report food insecurity, with the highest rates (29%) in the lowest ranks (E4 and below). ³			

References: 1) Asch B, Rennane S, Trail T, et al. Food Insecurity in the U.S. Military. RAND Corporation (2023); 2) Rabbitt MP, Beymer MR, Reagan JJ, Jarvis BP, Watkins EY. 2022. "Food insecurity among active duty soldiers and their families during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic." Public Health Nutr 25(8):2329-36. doi:10.1017/S1368980022000192; 3) 2020 Military Family Lifestyle Survey Comprehensive Report (2022) Syracuse University (accessed Feb 2024).



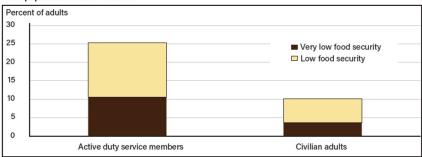
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Comparing Food Insecurity: U.S. Military & Civilian Adult Populations

Prevalence of food insecurity was 2.5 times higher among the military population compared to the civilian adult population in 2018 and 2020



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Defense, Office of People Analytics, Status of Forces-Active Duty Members and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Rabbitt MP and Beymer MR. 2024. Comparing food insecurity among the U.S. military and civilian adult populations (Report No. ERR-331). U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Available at: https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/108943/err-331.pdf?v=5803.2.



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Food Insecurity: Why do we care?

Addressing food insecurity is a **DoD priority**, as it has the potential to affect health and readiness,^{1,2} and it is a **White House priority**.³

As a **social determinant of health**, it has the potential to impact personal and family disease risk, wellness, and achievement of health goals.⁴

The Joint Commission made addressing **Health Related Social Needs (HRSNs)** a Patient Safety Goal.⁵ Food insecurity is listed as a possible HRSN to target.

References: 1) Secretary of Defense memo to Senior Pentagon Leadership, "Strengthening Economic Security in the Force" signed 17 Nov 2021; 2) OUSD P&R publication "Strengthening Food Security in the Force: Strategy and Roadmap", published July 2022; 3) White House National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health; 4) Healthy People 2030 Literature Summary: Food Insecurity LD.04.03.08; 5) The Joint Commission. National Patient Safety Goal to Improve Health Care Equity. Published December 2022



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Food Insecurity Screening: Two Questions

The Hunger Vital Sign screens for food insecurity with two simple questions.¹

- "I/We worried whether our food would run out before I/we got money to buy more"
- "The food I/we bought just didn't last and I/we didn't have money to get more"

If either (or both) questions are "sometimes true" or "often true" (vs "never true"), that household is at risk for food insecurity. The Hunger Vital Sign was originally developed to screen families with young children and also validated in youth and adults.



Reference: Hager, ER, Quigg AM, Black MM, Coleman SM, Heeren T, Rose-Jacobs R, Cook JT, Ettinger de Cuba SE, Casey PH, Chilton M, Cutts DB, Meyers AF, and Frank DA. 2010. "Development and Validity of a 2-Item Screen to Identify Families at Risk for Food Insecurity." *Pediatrics* 126(1):26-32. doi:10.1542/peds.2009-3146.



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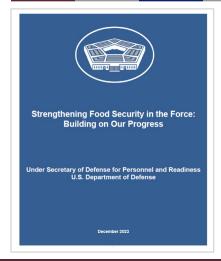


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Building on the Progress



Strengthening Food Security in the Force – Lines of Effort

- 1. Increase access to healthy food.
- 2. Enhance spouse employment opportunities.
- 3. Review Service member pay and benefits.
- 4. Reinforce financial resources and awareness.
- 5. Encourage Service members and families to seek available resources and services.
- 6. Expand data collection and reporting.

Reference: Military OneSource: <u>Strengthening Food Security in the Force: Building on Our</u> Progress



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Highlights of LOE 1: Increasing Access to Healthy Food



Culinary Outpost Kiosk Within the 1st Armored Division Combat Aviation Brigade footprint at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Strengthening Food Security in the Force – LOEs

- Increase Access to Healthy Food: Many efforts are currently on-going with each of the Services; efforts are in collaboration with the DoD Nutrition Committee
 - Development of Campus Style Dining efforts for meal card holders
 - Increase in meal preparation choices
 - · Increase in kiosks
 - Increase in food trucks



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Highlights of LOE 6: Expand Data Collection and Reporting



Strengthening Food Security in the Force - LOEs

- 6. Expand Data Collection and Reporting
 - Medical Treatment Facilities screen to meet The Joint Commission's new national patient safety goal.
 - Referrals can be to dietitians, social workers, and personal financial counselors.
 - Military and Family Life Counselors (MFLCs) and Personal Financial Counselors (PFCs) now screen for food insecurity.
 - Further research opportunities will be conducted.



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UNCLASSIFIED - Approved for public release; distribution unlimited. 31 **Reasons for Food Insecurity ACUTE AND CHRONIC REASONS** Spouse income Changes in and Financial mismanagement unreimbursed special and incentive pays expenses when families move Lack of financial Chronic spouse Support of extended family literacy unemployment Reference: Asch B, Rennane S, Trail T, et al. Food Insecurity in the U.S. Military. RAND Corporation; 2023. Improving Health and Building Readiness. Anytime, Anywhere — Always

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Barriers to Accessing Food Assistance



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Stigma (social and career)



Lack of knowledge about support resources



Limits with food pantries



Low SNAP eligibility as Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) is included in family income



Reference: Asch B, Rennane S, Trail T, et al. Food Insecurity in the U.S. Military. RAND Corporation; 2023.



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Key Messages: Leaders

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Implement food policies or philosophies

Share Resources

Connect with the Community

Support research efforts







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Addressing Food Security/Insecurity at the Unit Level



Leadership Engagement

- Town hall highlighting resources
- · Asking the questions



Resources



 Video offering suggestions on how to discuss food insecurity and use the Hunger Vital Sign: www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVh LUSjaZp8





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Opportunities for Dialogue

- ✓ Nutrition Knowledge
- Nutrition Behavior
- Budgeting
- ✓ Basic Meal Planning
- Healthy Shopping
- Cooking Skills
- ✓ Food Safety
 - = FOOD SECURITY









Encourage use of local resources!



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Financial Fitness

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Financial Fitness

Debt-management skills, responsible money management, insurance and emergency planning, and investment-wealth strategies





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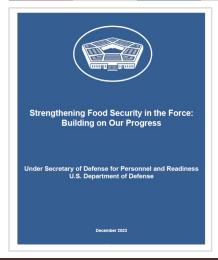


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Building on the Progress



Strengthening Food Security in the Force – Lines of Effort

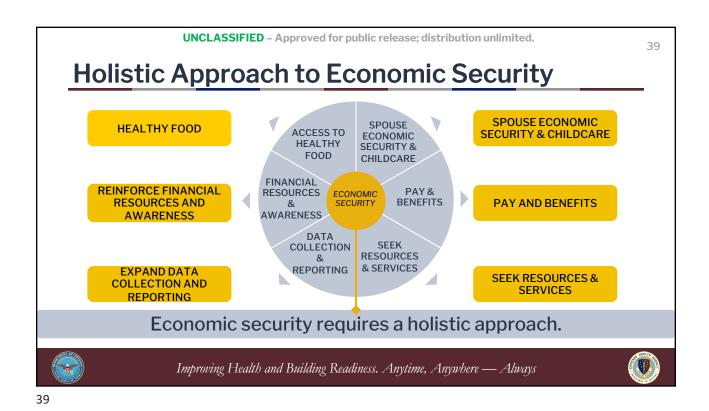
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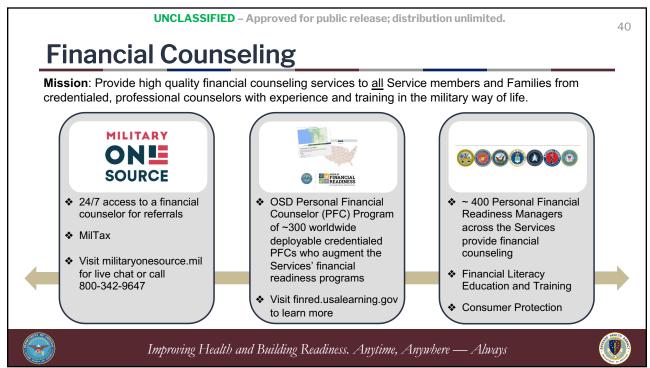
Reference: Military OneSource: <u>Strengthening Food Security in the Force: Building on Our</u> Progress



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Resources and Links



Download the Economic Readiness Resource Guide under "Event Materials" https://oneop.org/learn/160049/





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Key Takeaways

8 Domains of Total Force Fitness

The 8 TFF domains, including Nutritional and Financial fitness, address critical and holistic factors that impact health outcomes.

Impacts of Food Insecurity

Food insecurity impacts considerable proportions of the military and civilian populations and has the potential to affect health and readiness.

Holistic Approach to Increase Performance

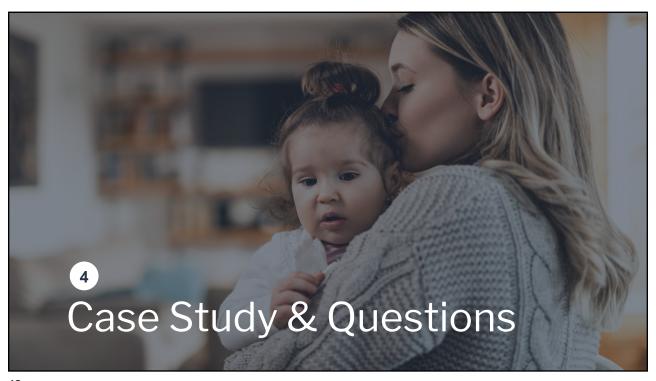
Economic and food security both require a holistic approach.
Addressing these challenges can help with performance, retention rates, and quality of life.

The military has strategies, policies, and resources to support the food and economic security and well-being of service members and their families.



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The Howards - Family Profile

Joseph Howard

- Active-duty service member, Army
- 30 years old
- Father

Read the entire Howard Family Case Story: oneop.ora/2024-mfra-case-story



Margaret Howard

- Military spouse, married to Joseph
- Civilian
- 29 years old
- Mother
- Teacher

Maya Lynn Howard

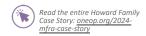
- Margaret and Joseph's child
- 2 years old
- Has developmental disabilities

family icon by musmellow from Adobe Stock / alt.



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Considering The Howards



"One of the expenses the Howards have minimized is their grocery bills.

They have faced food insecurity as a result of their reduced grocery purchases.

During this time, Joseph was losing sleep. This impacted his ability to perform while on duty and during training."



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MFRA Evaluation Survey

Thank you for participating in Economic Readiness and Military Family Well-Being!

We would value your feedback on your experience participating in the 2024 Military Family Readiness Academy.

Survey opportunity opens October 2024.

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Continuing Education



This webinar has been approved for **1.0 continuing education (CE) credit** from:

- American Association for Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS)
- Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education (AFCPE)
- Center for Financial Certifications (FinCert)
- Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC)
- Commission for Dietetic Registration (CDR)
- National Council on Family Relations (NCFR)
- Patient Advocate Certification Board (BCPA)
- University of Texas at Austin, Steve Hicks School of Social Work (Social Work, LPC, LMFT)
- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- OneOp certificate of attendance available

Evaluation Link

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Questions?

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Upcoming MFRA Event



Balancing Military Spouse Employment with Family Economic Well-Being September 12 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT

This webinar addresses the ways in which the Department of Defense endeavors to positively influence the career trajectories of military spouses, contributing to their families' economic stability and overall well-being.

EVENT PAGE:

https://oneop.org/learn/160050/





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