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Today's Army Spouse Panel Methodology

2018 and 2022 Cohorts

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and U.S. Army conduct surveys of military spouses (e.g., Military OneSource, undated) to obtain feedback from Army families, but there is a considerable lag between fielding of the surveys and reporting of the results, which limits the surveys' ability to inform near-term policy decisions and provide on-demand answers to Army senior leader questions.

Other organizations, such as Blue Star Families and the Military Family Advisory Network, conduct regular surveys of military families and publish their results relatively quickly, but the results of those surveys are not meant to be representative of the Army (Military Family Advisory Network, 2019; Sonethavilay et al., 2018). Instead, these surveys are useful for understanding the issues that some military spouses face. However, their lack of representativeness (they do not use statistical sampling) and focus on military-connected families as a whole (rather than just Army soldiers and spouses, or just Army spouses) makes them less useful for understanding the actual scope of an issue among Army families specifically.

One way to obtain information about the extent of challenges Army spouses are facing is through a panel of Army spouses who have agreed to participate in short, on-demand surveys

examining topics relevant to Army decisionmaking. This type of survey panel conveys several benefits over other types of surveys. For one, panel participants can be randomly sampled from the target population to be representative of specific characteristics of that larger population. In addition, having a group of participants willing to participate in surveys enables researchers to efficiently and quickly collect data from participants who have already been recruited through rigorous methods.

KEY FINDINGS

- The intention of the Today's Army Spouse Panel (TASP) is to have a sample representative of the population of U.S. Army spouses in terms of pay grade, whether or not they have dependent children, and whether they have an address within the continental United States or outside it.
- We will refresh the ongoing TASP by recruiting new members every other year, with a particular focus on adding spouses of newly enlisted soldiers and junior officers.
- We plan to reweight the panel against an annually drawn population to ensure that the sample of participating spouses continues to represent the population of active-component Army spouses.

Overview

To effectively monitor the needs of Army families, evaluate whether Army programs and services are reaching those most in need, and inform policy decisions affecting families, the Army needs feedback from family members, particularly Army spouses. One way to obtain this type of information is through a panel of Army spouses who are selected to be representative of the Army spouse population and have agreed to participate in short, on-demand surveys examining topics relevant to Army decisionmaking.

In 2020 and 2021, the RAND Corporation conducted a proof-of-concept study to establish such a panel of Army spouses (Trail et al., 2023). The panel members were drawn from participants in a 2018 survey who had agreed to participate in future research. By all methodological indications, the proof of concept was successful, providing the Army community with a valuable source of quick-turnaround data and analysis.

However, the recruitment methodology for the proof-of-concept panel resulted in a panel that was representative of Army spouses from the 2018 population but was no longer representative of the active-component Army spouse population in 2022. Consequently, it was necessary to broaden the panel to be representative of *all* Army spouses in the current active-component population. This report describes the methodology used to establish the resulting panel, called the Today's Army Spouse Panel (TASP), and its full execution.

Abbreviations

CONUS	continental United States
DEERS	Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
OCONUS	outside the continental United States
PCS	permanent change of station
TASP	Today's Army Spouse Panel

Researchers can statistically adjust the data to make population-level inferences and provide a timely report of survey results to inform decisionmaking.

In 2020 and 2021, RAND Corporation researchers conducted a proof-of-concept study to establish a panel of Army spouses for short on-demand surveys comprising topics of interest to the Army (Trail et al., 2023). The proof-of-concept panel was recruited from a randomly selected representative sample of Army spouses whose soldier was stationed in the continental United States (CONUS) and who participated in the 2018 Today's Army Spouse Survey (Trail, Sims, and Tankard, 2019). Over 7,100 spouses who participated in this survey agreed to participate in follow-up research and provided an email address; over 5,000 were still married to an active-component Army soldier two years later and hence were eligible for the proof of concept. Survey data from the resulting proof-of-concept panel were

used as a mechanism for the Army to get answers to questions regarding time-sensitive issues such as the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic on Army spouse employment and child care and the efficacy of programs and services in helping spouses with pressing needs.

The success of the proof of concept and feedback from the Army suggested that the information provided by the panel was useful to inform Army decisionmaking. However, although the recruitment methodology for the proof-of-concept panel resulted in a panel that was representative of Army spouses at the time the Today's Army Spouse Survey was fielded (2018), it was no longer representative of the whole Army spouse population at the time the proof of concept was initiated. For example, because of promotions and attrition, fewer spouses were married to junior enlisted soldiers (see Trail et al., 2023, for a full description of the proof-of-concept panel characteristics and methodology).

Consequently, the next step that needed to be taken before conducting further surveys was to broaden the panel to be representative of *all* Army spouses in the current (2022) population. This report provides an overview of the methodology used in development of the Today's Army Spouse Panel (TASP). We begin with background on panel surveys more broadly before turning to the TASP concept of operations and specifics on the content

of the surveys, the sampling strategy, recruitment, and response rates and weighting for the spring 2022 survey.¹

Background on Panel Surveys

The TASP is an *access panel*, which refers to a group of individuals who are readily available to answer surveys. Access panel surveys do not necessarily include the same measures over time and instead are often used to take a snapshot of the population to glean information about a wider variety of topics. In the case of an access panel, the focus is typically on “point-in-time” outcomes rather than changes in outcomes; the same individuals generally do not answer multiple surveys fielded to them over time (Callegaro et al., 2014). However, the term *panel* is also sometimes used to refer to a longitudinal study in which a set of measures are repeatedly collected from the same group of individuals at regular intervals, such as every month, over long periods of time (Scherpenzeel and Das, 2010).

The TASP was conceived as an access panel so that the Army could acquire on-demand responses to time-sensitive questions from a cohort of Army spouses who are representative of the population of spouses of active-component soldiers; however, as we will discuss later in the report, because of our particular methodology, the TASP may serve as a longitudinal study as well.

One challenge to the overall objective of assessing the scope of an issue in the Army spouse population is the constant change among the military population. That is, military service members join and leave military service on a regular basis (Barry and Ely, 2019), which affects eligibility for the panel. This means that for the TASP to achieve its objective of being able to represent Army spouses, the panel sample will need to be regularly refreshed and maintained to ensure representativeness compared with a panel of nonmilitary-affiliated respondents.

A key practical benefit of panels is the ability to efficiently and quickly collect data from an existing readily accessible group of people who have already been recruited through rigorous methods. Additional benefits include data quality improvements, such as reliability of measurement over time and being able

to cross-check apparent discrepancies with previously collected information, and higher response rates than cross-sectional surveys (Schoeni et al., 2013; Sikkel and Hoogendoorn, 2008).

Although the focus of the TASP is on providing quick-turnaround answers to address the needs of the Army, the panel methodology is also capable of assessing change over time, as in a longitudinal panel. Panel surveys that assess the same information over time from the same respondents provide unique benefits, including reliability, being able to examine phenomena over time, and being able to differentiate between maturation (i.e., change resulting from growth or development as individuals age) and generational or cohort differences (i.e., changes or traits associated with a particular group of people who experienced the same event) (see, e.g., Sikkel and Hoogendoorn, 2008).

Panel surveys that field the same questions to the same individuals over time provide reliability in the ways people interpret and respond to questions. The ability to track changes over time is greatly enhanced through repeated surveys of the same group of participants rather than a series of different samples; any observed changes in the latter may reflect differences in the sample rather than true changes over time. Furthermore, the temporal order of cause and effect can be identified when using panel data. Thus, a panel offers advantages to Army officials interested in representative spouse data to support data-driven decisionmaking.

TASP Concept of Operations

The future vision for the TASP considers how the panel will operate to maintain rigorous methodology while meeting the Army’s decisionmaking needs. Thus, we have developed a concept of operations, described in the following sections, that covers the representative sample, data collection, recruitment, and weighting.

Representative of Active-Component Spouses

Spouses of active-component soldiers will be eligible for the TASP, and our intent is to have a sample

representative of the population of Army spouses in terms of pay grade, whether or not they have dependent children, and whether they have an address within CONUS or outside the continental United States (OCONUS).² We want to include spouses who had participated in the proof-of-concept study (Trail et al., 2023) but also supplement that population with spouses who are newer to the Army (i.e., spouses of junior enlisted or junior officers) and who are more senior but did not participate in prior panels. Thus, in the current execution we have two cohorts, some with data from multiple survey administrations (2018 survey and the proof of concept) and some new participants whose first data were collected in the spring 2022 intake survey. As the TASP moves into the future, new cohorts will be added. Tracking survey participants in separate cohorts allows us to conduct analyses of how respondent views change over time (that is, to conduct longitudinal analysis for a specific cohort).

Core Survey Data Collection Three Times a Year: Spring, Summer/Fall, and Winter

The intent for the TASP is to provide a regular touch-point with Army spouses. We designed the panel to field a core survey to all members a minimum of three times a year: spring, summer/early fall, and winter. This tempo ensures that participating spouses are contacted multiple times a year and avoids the peak summer season, when many Army families experience permanent change of station (PCS) moves. At the same time, data collections in the spring, just prior to summer moves, and in the late summer/early fall, just after potential moves, provide the opportunity for the Army to gather information about this important dynamic in the lives of Army families. However, data collection could occur as often as once a month or more if the Army needs additional information at time points outside the regular core surveys. Recruitment of new panel members will take place every other spring.

Recruitment of New Panel Members Every Other Year

Contacting spouses can be challenging. Spouses are not issued their own email address for Army pur-

poses, and the Army does not mass-collect spouse email addresses, which makes it expensive to recruit spouses for surveys. To contact a representative sample of spouses, hard-copy mailing is required using home addresses kept on file by DoD. Although frequent recruitment of new panel members might be ideal, it is not cost-effective because of the need to send physical mailings to potential new panel members. As demonstrated by our proof-of-concept study, the population of spouses does not change dramatically in a single year. Thus, we plan to refresh the ongoing TASP by recruiting new members every other year, with a particular focus on adding spouses of newly enlisted soldiers and junior officers.

Annual Sampling of the Population

As demonstrated by the proof-of-concept study, reweighting against an annually drawn population was sufficient to ensure that the sample of participating spouses represented the population of active-component Army spouses. We plan to continue this schedule of annual redrawing of the population for the ongoing TASP. Referring back to the actual population data annually can help us track changes in the underlying population, and characteristics of the weights estimated against that population for a given wave (e.g., large strata weights) would show whether our population has changed more rapidly than expected. Unexpected changes in the population would indicate that we should consider refreshing the sample more frequently.

Content of the TASP Surveys

The TASP surveys are meant to provide quick-turnaround answers to pressing questions. However, although we plan to field multiple surveys a year, we will not know what those pressing questions would be and what survey items will be needed to address those questions. Furthermore, survey items need to receive approval from RAND's Human Subjects Protections Committee (the institutional review board for RAND) and the Army's Human Subjects Protections Office and to receive Army Survey Control Numbers from the Army Records Management and

Declassification Agency. These processes can take several months.

Thus, to gain approval for a broad range of survey items that will allow us to quickly construct and field surveys relevant to the Army’s needs, we developed a “survey item bank” that included a variety of relevant items from which we could select questions to construct individual panel surveys.

The actual content of the spring 2022 TASP survey, which we refer to as the *intake survey*, was selected from the available survey item bank by RAND Arroyo Center in consultation with Army G-9 staff and was centered on needed demographic information for the ongoing panel, topics of concern

at the time of fielding, and information that program managers thought would be useful for program decisions. An overview of content, scales, and sample items is shown in Table 1.

Sampling Strategy

The TASP incorporates two components, which we refer to as the *2018 cohort* and the *2022 cohort*. We targeted 5,000 respondents (and enrollees into the panel). Although the target number of respondents was not based on a power analysis, given the potentially wide range of variables and topics (and hence effect sizes) of interest, we wanted to ensure that we

TABLE 1
Survey Content and Sample Items for Spring 2022 Intake Survey

Survey Content Areas	Sample Content or Scales
Background information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current housing situation (e.g., military housing on post, civilian housing off post) • PCS moves and resources • Dependents and child care • Employment status, recent changes • Educational attainment and field of study • Citizenship, language • Race and ethnicity
Experience of PCS moves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges experienced during most recent PCS move, what would have been helpful in preparing for the move
Awareness of and experiences with the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of or enrollment in EFMP • Satisfaction with family support • Process of learning about EFMP services during PCS move
Financial circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food insecurity^a
Employment impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on employment of soldier’s service career
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and use of Army and public resources
Perceptions of Soldier and Family Readiness Groups (SFRGs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences attending SFRG meetings • Perceptions of SFRGs (e.g., that information provided at SFRG meetings is accurate or useful)
Deployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployment history (soldier) and deployment information briefings (spouse)
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived Stress Scale^b • Household financial strain^c • General attitudes toward the Army^d • Spouse support to remain in the Army^e

SOURCE: Features information drawn from the spring 2022 TASP survey. Where relevant, we highlight the source of specific survey items.

NOTE: Complete survey content is available from the authors.

^a U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2022.

^b Cohen and Williamson, 1988.

^c Tanielian et al., 2014.

^d See Trail, Sims, and Tankard, 2019.

^e Office of People Analytics, 2018.

would be able to provide analyses at the minimum level of detail we were able to provide during the proof-of-concept study (i.e., representative of the population of active-component Army spouses as a whole) and ideally at a finer-grained level of detail. In particular, as noted earlier, we were interested in providing results based on a sample representative of active-component Army spouses in terms of pay grade, presence or absence of children, and location status (CONUS versus OCONUS).

2018 Cohort

The first component, the 2018 cohort, comprised spouses who participated in the proof-of-concept study. Given the longitudinal responses these spouses had already provided and their evident willingness to participate in the panel, we wanted to retain these spouses in our pool of participants. Participants in the proof-of-concept study were originally recruited in 2018 to participate in the Today's Army Spouse Survey using probability-based selection. That is, they were randomly sampled from a known population—Army spouses of active-component members stationed in CONUS in December 2017—based on personnel records (Trail, Sims, and Tankard, 2019).

Respondents to that survey were asked to provide their email address if they were interested in participating in additional research studies. The subsequent proof-of-concept study recruited from spouses who provided their email address and were still married to an Army soldier at the time the proof-of-concept study began in 2020 (see Trail et al., 2023, for additional details). The proof-of-concept study comprised three surveys administered between August 2020 and May 2021, and spouses who responded to one or more of these studies and were still married to an active-component soldier in spring 2022 were invited to participate in the TASP ($N = 1,889$).

2022 Cohort

The 2018 cohort of spouses provides important longitudinal information but was not representative of the Army spouse population in spring 2022 when we executed the intake survey for the TASP. In addition,

service members whose spouses are in the 2018 cohort may now be in a different grade or have experienced changes regarding their dependent children. To address this issue and make the TASP representative of all current Army spouses, a 2022 cohort was sampled from spouses of service members *as of spring 2022*.

The 2022 cohort includes a greater number of junior spouses to ensure that the TASP represents spouses who became members of the Army community after 2018, as well as a replenishment sample of more-senior spouses (particularly those without dependent children) so that survey results reflect the perspectives of the entire community of spouses of active-component soldiers as of 2022. Although it seemed reasonable to assume that our retained 2018 spouses were likely to represent that population, we included recruitment of these senior groups to ensure that this was the case. These spouses had also been surveyed multiple times, and including some entirely new senior spouses was a way to help protect against the possibility that some drift in responses was caused by survey participation itself.

The 2022 cohort was selected using a stratified sampling design, with eight subgroups of spouses, called *strata*, based on pay grade (junior enlisted [E1–E4], senior enlisted [E5–E9], junior officer [O1–O3], senior officer [O4–O6]) and whether the service member had dependent children (yes/no).³ Because the goal was to build a sample that reflects the Army spouse population, the sample was heavily weighted toward inclusion of spouses whose soldiers enlisted after 2018, and strata previously observed to have low response rates were oversampled. The stratified design was used to ensure representation across all pay grades. Using our tentative number of panel enrollees of 5,000, we extrapolated the number of population members we would need to contact to generate somewhat stable estimates for these strata, taking into account each strata's response rate to the Today's Army Spouse Survey. All told, we sampled and contacted a total of 34,053 Army spouses for this cohort.

The final respondents were then weighted to represent the overall population in 2022, as described later in this report, to be representative of the sampled population.

Procedure for Recruitment

Our survey recruitment procedure was slightly different for panel members based on whether they had participated in one or more of the proof-of-concept surveys (i.e., 2018 cohort). Because we had email contact information for those in the 2018 cohort, these spouses received an email with an individualized link to the first TASP survey (i.e., the spring 2022 intake survey) at the beginning of fielding. Those who did not respond received up to three additional emails reminding them to take the survey over the fielding period, consistent with best practices for maximizing survey participation (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian, 2014). After the first two weeks of recruitment, we followed up with a postcard invitation and, toward the end of the survey period, with a letter invitation and information sheet about the survey.

The new members of the 2022 cohort were sent a postcard invitation at the beginning of the fielding period. If they did not respond to the survey, we followed up with another postcard and, ultimately, a letter invitation and information sheet about the survey. The postcards and letters included the URL for the intake survey, a QR code that linked to the intake survey page, and an individualized code to access the survey.

Recruitment materials emphasized the Army need for information from spouses about their experiences and needs and resources the Army could provide to help them with the challenges of Army life. Materials were branded with an image that had been used for the publication cover of *The Today's Army Spouse Survey* (Trail, Sims, and Tankard, 2019): interlocking wedding rings, one of which had a camouflage interior (see Figure 1).

Invitations for all participants also noted that respondents would receive a \$10 Amazon gift card for completing the survey. The use of this type of incentive is in keeping with best practices based on evidence that incentives (especially monetary incentives) are among the most important ways researchers can maximize survey participation (e.g., Brosnan, Kemperman, and Dolnicar, 2019; Callegaro et al., 2014; Creighton, King, and Martin, 2007). For those spouses interested in more information, the invitations pointed back to a RAND webpage devoted to

FIGURE 1

Branding Logo With Interlocking Wedding Rings Used on Recruitment Materials



the study, which provides links to related publications and answers to frequently asked questions (RAND Corporation, undated).

The spring 2022 intake panel survey was administered online. Respondents in the panel could use computers, smartphones, or tablets to log on to the internet and complete the surveys. The intake survey, in keeping with the general length of surveys used in the proof of concept, took about 20 minutes to complete.

Response Rates and Number of Participants

A total of 6,675 Army spouses entered and were eligible to participate in the spring 2022 TASP (6,788 entered the survey, but 113 were not eligible). Not all provided an email, and, because future participation will require an email address, we excluded 400 spouses from our analysis file who did not provide an email address. We further excluded 86 spouses for whom we did not have sufficient data to provide a weight, reducing the number of participating spouses to 6,189.

The spring intake survey was fielded from April 20 to June 3, 2022. Table 2 shows the number of respondents from each cohort and the overall response rate. Of the 1,889 Army spouses from the 2018 cohort, 1,119 participated in the intake survey, for a response rate of 59.2 percent. As expected, our response rate for the 2022 cohort of newly contacted spouses was considerably lower, at 15 percent, or 5,070 new respondents. However, the number of responses was robust, and we surpassed our target of

TABLE 2
Number of Respondents, by Cohort, and Overall

Panel Survey	Respondents	New Respondents (2022 Cohort)	Eligible Spouses from Proof of Concept (2018 Cohort)	Overall Response Rate
Intake	6,189	5,070	1,119	18.3%

NOTE: Response rates were calculated by dividing the number of respondents by the number of eligible spouses and do not exclude spouses with undeliverable email addresses

5,000 respondents. The overall response rate for the spring 2022 intake survey was 18.3 percent.

Table 3 displays the number of respondents to the intake survey by soldier, spouse, and household characteristics. This response totals demonstrate that even relatively small respondent groups number in the hundreds. Although too small to support further subcategorization, groups such as male Army spouses could still yield stable estimates of the population on relevant questions.

Weighting Procedure

The TASP was designed to inform Army decision-making by providing results that are representative of the population of active-component Army spouses. Stratified sampling was used to ensure representation across four pay grade groupings and presence of dependent children, and poststratification weights were used to align the combined sample of respondents from 2018 and 2022 cohorts with the target population,⁴ in this case spouses of active-component soldiers who were married as of spring 2022.

Poststratification weights account for both unequal sampling probabilities across the strata and differences in response rate across the strata. These weights were based on the eight survey sampling strata \times 2 (CONUS/OCONUS status), for a total of 16 strata.⁵

This simple weighting approach assumes that the 2018 cohort is representative of the 2022 cohort who have continued service since 2018 and so does not weight 2018 cohort respondents differently from 2022 cohort respondents. Table 4 provides descriptive statistics for the weights.

As shown in Table 5, the characteristics of TASP respondents, when weighted, were very similar to

the target population of spouses: The majority of respondents were married to soldiers at the grade of E5–E9, had dependent children, and were stationed in CONUS.

Conclusion

Overall, the intake survey recruited a large number of Army active-component spouses to participate in an access panel; these respondents were then weighted to be representative of the Army active-component spouses overall in terms of pay grade, presence or absence of dependent children, and whether they were CONUS or OCONUS. The intent is to conduct three core surveys per year, with the potential to field additional ad-hoc surveys if needed. The spouses in the 2018 cohort have participated in at least two prior data collections—some as many as four—before responding to the intake for the fully executed TASP described in this report. Although first-time participants, 2022 cohort spouses consented to be contacted for ongoing future research. Thus, in addition to serving as an on-demand access panel, the TASP has many of the advantages of longitudinal surveys.

Given the many spouses who responded to the call for participation, this mechanism offers the Army an opportunity to ask even relatively focused questions that are applicable to smaller subgroups of spouses to a group large enough to support decisionmaking. Part of the utility of this effort lies in the possibility of providing answers to time-sensitive Army leadership questions within one month of the questions being asked. The TASP offers the opportunity for these spouses to provide valuable feedback and for the Army to take advantage of that feedback in data-driven decisionmaking.

TABLE 3

Number of Respondents and Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics of the Soldier	Number Completing Intake Survey
Pay grade	
E1–E4	1,795
E5–E9	3,305
O1–O3	549
O4–O6	540
Characteristics of the spouse	
Current employment status	
Working full time	1,967
Working part time	962
Unemployed and looking for work	931
Not employed and not looking for work	2,328
Respondent did not answer	1
Gender	
Female	5,921
Male	268
Characteristics of the household	
Presence of dependents in the household	
No dependent children	3,941
Has dependent children	2,248
Location	
CONUS	5,481
OCONUS	708
Total	6,189

SOURCES: Features information on pay grade from the Total Army Personnel Data Base, on current employment status from the spring 2022 TASP survey, and on gender, presence of dependents in the household, and location from the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).

TABLE 4

Descriptive Statistics for TASP Weights

Weights	Respondent Sample Size (N)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Intake survey final weights scaled to population	6,189	30.19	6.41	21.80	33.77	70.46
Intake survey weights scaled to the number of respondents	6,189	1.00	0.21	0.72	1.12	2.33

SOURCE: TASP spring 2022 survey data.

TABLE 5

Weighted Panel Respondent Representativeness of Population

	Respondents (Unweighted) (%)	Respondents (Weighted) (%)	Population (%)
Pay Grade			
E1–E4	29	21.6	21.6
E5–E9	53.4	57.7	57.7
O1–O3	8.9	9.4	9.4
O4–O6	8.7	11.2	11.2
Children			
Has dependent children	65.9	70.7	70.7
No dependent children	34.1	29.3	29.3
Location			
CONUS	88.6	86.9	86.9
OCONUS	11.4	13.1	13.1

SOURCES: Features information from DEERS and the Total Army Personnel Data Base.

NOTE: The number of respondents was 6,189. The number in the active-component Army spouse population was 186,831. Totals may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Notes

¹ This report, as a description of the ongoing Army Spouse Panel, is similar to the previous report, *The Today's Army Spouse Panel Proof-of-Concept Study* (Trail et al., 2023). Where relevant to explaining the current study, the original report's content is retained; we have extended the discussion as needed to account for differences in the current effort.

² This includes only spouses who are married to service members and listed in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) rather than partners who are cohabitating but not married. A key focus of the TASP is benefits provided to Army spouses and the way spouses navigate those resources. Eligibility for benefits is often restricted to married spouses listed as dependents in DEERS, so this is a reasonable approach for the TASP, but it may not be reflective of the experiences of a broader conceptualization of Army spouses that includes cohabitants.

³ When we pulled our sample, we did not yet have current location regarding spouses stationed in CONUS or OCONUS, but we were able to obtain this in the process of actively drawing our sample and contact information.

⁴ See Lumley, 2011, Ch. 7.

⁵ To calculate poststratification weights, let N_k be the number of spouses in the 2022 population who are in the k th strata and let n_k be the number of respondents to the 2022 survey, where $k = 1, \dots, 16$. Here, respondents include spouses from both the 2018 and 2022 cohorts. Poststratification weights for members of the k th strata are given by N_k/n_k . These weights sum to the total population size and can be rescaled to sum to the number of respondents to suit the analysis. Respondents from strata that are underrepresented, with small values for n_k/N_k relative to other strata, are more heavily weighted in analyses.

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About This Report

This report documents research and analysis conducted as part of two projects, entitled *Army Spouse Panel 2.0* and *Army Spouse Panel 3.0*, both sponsored by the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-9, U.S. Army. The purpose of these projects was to provide an operational panel of Army spouses for short, on-demand survey requests, as a mechanism for G-9 and the Army to get focused, timely answers to questions regarding the efficacy of programs and services.

This research was conducted within RAND Arroyo Center's Personnel, Training, and Health Program. RAND Arroyo Center, part of the RAND Corporation, is a federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) sponsored by the United States Army.

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Acknowledgments

We thank our sponsor, Daniel Klippstein, Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, G-9, U.S. Army (DCS, G-9). We also thank our action officer, Kelly (Dorie) Hickson of the Soldier and Family Readiness Division, DCS, G-9, who provided invaluable guidance throughout this series of related projects, starting with the Today's Army Spouse Survey and continuing through this project. Elizabeth Coppola and Emily Warren, detailed to DCS, G-9 from the Army Public Health Center, provided thoughtful feedback on the surveys and data analysis. Richard Fafara and Joseph Trebing, formerly with DCS, G-9, greatly contributed to the initiation of the Army spouse panel.

At the RAND Corporation, Jenna Kramer helped organize the surveys, provide content feedback, and administer the project, and Linda Cottrell lent us her programming expertise and familiarity with administrative data sets. Owen Hall and Elie Ohana provided programming support and weighting analyses. We also thank Heather Krull, the director of RAND Arroyo Center's Personnel, Training, and Health Program, and Katharina Best, the associate director, for their guidance and advice, as well as for their thoughtful comments on the work. We thank Barbara Bicksler for her editorial help. We also thank our RAND reviewers, Robert Bozick and Sarah Meadows. Last, but definitely not least, we would like to thank especially the Army spouses who participated in the panel surveys.