

WORKING WITH YOUR LOCAL MILITARY INSTALLATION

The Blue Star Museums program is a great opportunity to introduce your organization to local military installations and make them aware of your cultural resources. Consider contacting the following groups for help in sharing information on Blue Star Museums—often by reaching out directly you can find that key contact on base who will help you share information. Visit your local base’s website for contact information for these offices and other outreach ideas.

The Public Affairs Office (PAO) coordinates all media efforts on a military base or installation. They manage internal and external media that cover installation news. Each PAO has its own approach, so contact the PAO before your Blue Star Museums launch to discuss how they can help share the news.

- Contact and exchange information with the Public Affairs Office's chief officer.
- Give the PAO your local Blue Star Museums press release, and a calendar of any related events.
- Ask the PAO to share your press release with local military media (such as the base newspaper or website), or ask them to share their military media list with your PR team to distribute the news.
- Ask the PAO if the base commander or other senior officer might contribute a quote to your press release.
- Ask the PAO if they have a Facebook page or a Twitter feed then tag them in your posts about Blue Star Museums.

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR)/Special services manages recreational activities such as social clubs, fitness centers, child, youth, and school services, arts & crafts groups, movie theaters, and more. Here are some ways you can connect with the MWR department at your local installation:

- Email marketing flyers for them post at the fitness center, child services center, library, bowling alley, or movie theater.
- Provide information for MWR to include in the orientation packet for new families.
- Ask MWR to announce Blue Star Museums at live events.
- Ask MWR to post the electronic marketing materials on their web pages.
- Request to make a live presentation for the arts & crafts social group.

Community Services/Family Readiness Groups/Family Support Centers. While each branch has a slightly different name for this department, they all provide first-stop information for families that are new to the base, such as employment and volunteer opportunities, personal financial education, and information about local resources and services.

- Contact the Community Services/Family Support Center director at your nearby installation and share Blue Star Museums resources and promotional materials with them.
- You may also wish to contact the base’s Chaplain’s office, who may also be a good resource for sharing information.

Resources

- Find military installations in your community with this [directory of military installations nationwide](#).

- [Military OneSource](#) is provided by the Department of Defense to active duty, Guard, and Reserve and their families. It is a virtual extension of installation services.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR REACHING MILITARY FAMILIES

Host a Family Day

Consider hosting a free “Blue Star Museums Family Day” to help increase military community engagement at your museum. Does your museum already host a “family day?” Add a “Blue Star Museums” element to that event to target military families alongside the public. Or, designate a separate, free “Blue Star Museums Family Day” specifically for military families. Use this event to reach out to local military families, let them know they are welcome at the museum, and promote the family programs available at your museum. Some activities that other museums have used as part of their family days:

- Scavenger hunts - one Blue Star Museum hosted a family history scavenger hunt, which gave families an opportunity to interact. Another museum hid toy soldiers in each gallery for military kids to discover.
- Hands-on drawing or other artmaking sessions for families.
- Distribute kids’ gallery guides as a takeaway.
- Storytelling, performances, or other entertainment for families.

Other ideas to reach military audiences

- Armed Forces Day is May 19, 2018. Call the Public Affairs Office at your local installation and ask if you can offer Blue Star Museum flyers as handouts. Are there events at your nearby installation that can help you connect with the PAO or MWR offices?
- Remember not all military families live on base. Think about local restaurants, libraries, and coffee shops that might have community bulletin boards where you can share information about Blue Star Museums.
- You can also share your story on the social media channels for [Military One Source](#) and [Blue Star Families](#).

BACKGROUND ON MILITARY LIFE

Military Structure:

Department of Defense (DoD) encompasses all of the following:

- Army
- Navy
- Air Force
- Marine Corps
- Coast Guard (reports to Dept. of Homeland Defense in peacetime)
- Reserves and National Guard

Military Culture

- They are generally young workforce with close to half of its members having children.
- The majority of military personnel are men, though women and dual career families continue to increase in numbers.
- Military life is marked by frequent relocations and often living far away from extended family. The average military child moves six to nine times between kindergarten and high school.
- While base housing is offered on many installations, many military families live within the community. In fact, over 70% of military kids attend public schools in their local communities.
- In addition to moving due to a permanent change of station (PCS) every few years, some families also voluntarily move to be closer to family support systems during deployments.
- Military spouse employment is also an issue for many families, as frequent and unpredictable moves interrupt a spouses' civilian career advancement.