

## Lane County Community Resilience Toolkit: Veterans and Military Families Executive Summary



### Introduction:

The Veterans and Military Families Team consists of representatives from community-based and governmental organizations, including primary care and behavioral health providers, the Lane County Veteran Services Office, the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs, The Eugene Vet Center, the OR National Guard Family Assistance Program, and Lane County Health & Human Services. The Team identified both strengths and needs for veterans and their families associated with recovery from COVID-19 and the resulting economic downturn, as well as resources and recommended practices. The Team also identified the stresses and loss points that most affect this population. The work of the Team will continue with periodic updates and additional material added to the Toolkit as the pandemic continues.

### Major Conclusions:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic and 2020 economic downturn has created increased stress for many veterans and their families due to employment loss and decreased social connections.
2. Veterans and military families with the fewest resources have the greatest need for services and assistance, including basic needs for food, shelter and utility assistance.
3. Technology resource disparities (lack of hardware, adequate broadband, educational software) may be limiting employment opportunities and magnifying school frustrations and youth learning opportunities.
4. The pressures of quarantine, social distancing, limited travel, and disrupted work/school schedules may result in increased traumatic stress, which can exacerbate post-traumatic stress from military service.

### Identified Stress/Loss Points for Veterans and Military Families:

- Family Isolation due to quarantines and Governor Brown's Stay at Home order may increase stress due to deployments and training absences
- School closures at every level from childcare to college impact veterans and family members
- Loss of daily structure with loss of work and school schedules
- Limited in-person contact for peer relationships that support deployments and reintegration
- Telehealth for primary care and behavioral health counseling may not be adequate to needs.

- Racism and oppression affect Black, Native American and other veterans of color, and their families, in myriad ways
- Trauma may be experienced in many different ways, including numbness to emotional stress
- Layoffs; job insecurity; income reduction; limited workforce training opportunities
- For residents of Veterans Homes the fear of virus infection is high, and if a family member passes away there are few ways to commemorate their deaths
- Loss of faith services as faith institutions limit programming