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**United Way Awarded \$2.5 million to Help San Antonio
Service Members, Veterans and Family Members**

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS (August 20, 2020) – United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County has received a five-year \$2.5 million Services to Military and Veteran Families (SMVF) grant from the State of Texas to benefit local active duty, National Guard, reserve, and Veteran parents and their children.

Texas has the third largest population of active duty service members in the United States and San Antonio is proud to be home to roughly a quarter of those service members. Many military and Veteran families face unique needs that can stem from the challenging life circumstances faced by these families, such as frequent relocations and separations, physical and/or emotional trauma, and high levels of social isolation and stress. These circumstances, combined with a culture in which military members perceive negative consequences for seeking help, make military and Veteran families reluctant to seek support and important to assist.

For over eight years, United Way of San Antonio has offered MISSION UNITED (MU), a Veteran-to-Veteran-based initiative that helps them navigate the myriad of community resources available. By understanding the maze of resources that is often dependent on the Veteran’s branch of service, length of service, and even combat zone service; the MU “navigator” is equipped to find unique resources for the Veteran in what can often be a challenging system. Additionally, United Way of San Antonio participated in a five-year pilot with the State of Texas to identify an array of supports that could best support military families in overcoming the many obstacles they face as parents. Both these efforts informed United Way’s proposal for the SMVF grant.

The SMVF program will coordinate resources and efforts to promote positive outcomes for Texas military service members, Veterans, and families with children between zero and 17 years of age. By building on the strengths of both caregivers and children the SMVF program will promote strong families, support positive parental involvement in their children’s lives and maximize the member’s ability to give their children emotional, physical and financial support.

SVMF will also increase collaboration in high-risk Texas counties, with United Way focusing on Bexar County. The program and funding will commence on Sept. 1, 2020, through Aug. 31, 2025.

“Our work includes leading cross-sector collaborations and investing in programs and initiatives that help those in need to prevent problems from happening in the first place,” said Chris Martin, United Way President and CEO. “Our children are our most precious resource. Their safety, health, well-being and education are important factors for achieving their full potential and moving our military families and the community forward.”

The SMVF award helps promote positive parenting and youth development by helping remove emotional, physical, and financial barriers. Outreach work will include parenting education, home visiting, support groups, youth skills, mentoring, evidence-based interventions for family and military service-related trauma, and service planning and coordination.

The SMFV grant makes it possible for United Way to continue working with Bexar County school districts, Joint Base San Antonio, [MISSION UNITED](#) military navigators, and United Way partners to increase availability and accessibility of resources and services for current and former members of the Armed Forces and their families, regardless of their discharge status.

About United Way

[United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County](#) focuses on preparing children for school and life, helping students graduate and succeed, strengthening the well-being of individuals and families, and providing safety net services (food, clothing, shelter, and emergency care.) United Way also operates the [2-1-1 Help Line](#) and fosters volunteerism through the [Volunteer Center at United Way](#).