



## **ORANGE COUNTY VETERAN & MILITARY FAMILIES COLLABORATIVE LAUNCHES “ASK THE QUESTIONS” CAMPAIGN IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD CELEBRATION**

**Orange County, Calif. – April 5, 2021** – Two questions can make all the difference. That’s the tagline for the “Ask The Questions” Campaign initiated by the Orange County Veteran & Military Families Collaborative (OCVMFC), the Orange County Community Foundation and 211OC.

The initiative kicks off today to coincide with the Month of the Military Child to highlight the importance of identifying children of veterans, family members of veterans and service members so they can be counted and immediately connected to appropriate resources in the community.

Instead of an in-person event this year, the celebration for Month of the Military Child here in Orange County will focus on the Ask The Questions (ATQ) campaign to improve identification and create system-wide change.

The ATQ initiative is guided by one simple notion: *to provide the highest quality of care to our service members, veterans, and their families, we must first identify them.*

**The goal of the “Ask The Questions” campaign is to ensure that all service providers in Orange County, including healthcare, senior services, employment agencies, social services, courts, education, the faith community and others, add these two simple questions to their intake forms.**

1. **“Have you or a family member ever served in the military?”**
2. **“Do you have any children?”**

The Collaborative and its host of members and partners aim to get 100 service providers to add these questions to their intake forms by the end of the month. By the end of the year, the goal is to have 100% of intake forms include these questions.

### **Why is the Ask The Questions Campaign Important?**

Military service comes with many unique experiences and exposures, most of which civilians will never have. Understanding the culture from which the individual may be operating, knowing about possible variables in their health, and in their family situation, including their children, will allow Orange County service providers to deliver more effective, comprehensive, and culturally competent care or services.

Today, these questions are not included on the vast majority of intake and history forms in our County, nor is it routinely included when people access community programs and services.

“Ask The Questions” strives to improve both verification of and access to care for veterans and their families. Asking the questions is a simple step that can open the door to greater care, treatment, and understanding.

The ATQ campaign urges Orange County providers to ask these two simple questions to everyone during their intake process – men, women, children, seniors -- everyone. It is never too late to ask the questions, even with individuals who have been long-time clients. Providers may be surprised by how many military-connected individuals they serve have not disclosed their military service.

The campaign will also educate providers about referral pathways and identify resources when an individual answers "yes" to the questions. By taking the initiative, this can help providers make more accurate diagnoses and identify whether a veteran is eligible for VA healthcare services and benefits.

### **What is the “Month of the Military Child”?**

Military connected children make up a very special part of our nation's population. Although young, these brave sons and daughters stand in steadfast support of their military connected parents. As they face circumstances unique to their lives—such as navigating multiple moves and schools to shouldering repeated deployments of a parent—these children are examples of resilience in the military community. To honor their unique contributions and sacrifices on behalf of our country, each April is designated the Month of the Military Child.

### **Additional information on the ATQ Campaign:**

<https://www.ocvmfc.info/ask-the-questions-campaign>.

**Additional information on the Month of the Military Child:**

[https://www.militarychild.org/MOMC Toolkit](https://www.militarychild.org/MOMC_Toolkit).

MEDIA INQUIRIES: Denton Knapp [dentonk@ocgoodwill.org](mailto:dentonk@ocgoodwill.org)  
OCVMFC Chair  
Director, Goodwill Tierney Center for Veteran Services

Larisa Owen, PhD, MBA [lowen@cffutures.org](mailto:lowen@cffutures.org)  
Director, Children and Family Futures

**About the Orange County Veterans & Military Families Collaborative (OCVMFC)**

The mission of the Orange County Veterans & Military Families Collaborative is to serve as a bridge connecting veterans, active duty and reserve service members, and military family members to quality benefits, services, and opportunities within the community of Orange County, California.

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