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The Bob Woodruff Foundation's Got Your 6 Network: Quantifying and Addressing Veterans' Needs





BOB WOODRUFF FOUNDATION

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About the Bob Woodruff Foundation

The Bob Woodruff Foundation was founded in 2006 after reporter Bob Woodruff was wounded by a roadside bomb while covering the war in Iraq. Since then, the Bob Woodruff Foundation has raised awareness about the challenges that veterans and military families face and has invested in solutions to help support them in the next chapter of their lives. To date, BWF has invested more than \$189 million to ensure that our nation's veterans, service members, and their families—those who stood for us—have stable and successful futures. Visit <https://bobwoodrufffoundation.org> for more information.



Introduction

The Bob Woodruff Foundation operates America's most comprehensive network of organizations that provide services to, and intelligence about, the needs of veterans, service members, and their families. Through the Got Your 6 Network, BWF maintains a situational awareness of veterans' needs that no other organization can match, with more than 400 best-in-class partner organizations strategically embedded across all 50 states. Those boots-on-the-ground partners deliver critical services, including physical and mental health care, housing and legal assistance, disaster relief, and job placement services. At the same time, they function as an early-warning system for emerging challenges facing the military and veteran population.

The Got Your 6 Network spans the full spectrum of veteran support infrastructure—from locally based, volunteer-led groups to regional service providers and nationally established aid organizations. Together, they form the largest nongovernmental military and veteran service network in America. With a reach extending to 98 percent of U.S. communities where veterans, service members, and their families live, the Got Your 6 Network gives BWF an unparalleled capability to identify trends in needs, direct funding to the most pressing of those needs, and coordinate broad-based responses.

BWF's Latest Got Your 6 Community Survey

Besides interacting with its Got Your 6 partners continually, BWF implements the Got Your 6 Community Survey every two years to collect rigorous, empirical data about local communities.

The survey produces comprehensive, community-level intelligence by leveraging partner organizations' dual role as providers of services and identifiers of needs.

Partners report on the full spectrum of challenges that veterans and military personnel face in their community: from needs that their programs address directly to gaps they encounter through client referrals and service coordination. Their information provides BWF with unique insights into both current service capacity and emerging gaps across the military and veteran support sector.

As the Got Your 6 Network grows, so does BWF's knowledge of needs and the strength of its information. In 2025, 210 organizations completed the survey (a 95 percent response rate), up from 130 organizations in 2023 and 102 in 2021.ⁱ Of the 210 respondents to this year's survey, 97 also participated in the 2023 survey, and 73 of those 97 participated in 2021 as well.

The survey asks BWF's partner organizations about their services, structure, processes, collaboration, and experiences, as well as about needs and circumstances in the geographic areas they serve. This report focuses on the services and demand in local communities to address 26 types of needs – grouped into the categories of basic needs, health-related needs, employment and education, social needs, and family-related needs. For each need, the survey asks whether an organization's programs serve that need, screen for it, refer people to other organizations to address the need, or receive referrals to help people with that need. The analysis in this report is based on the 200 survey respondents that serve, screen, refer, or receive clients for at least half of the 26 needs.

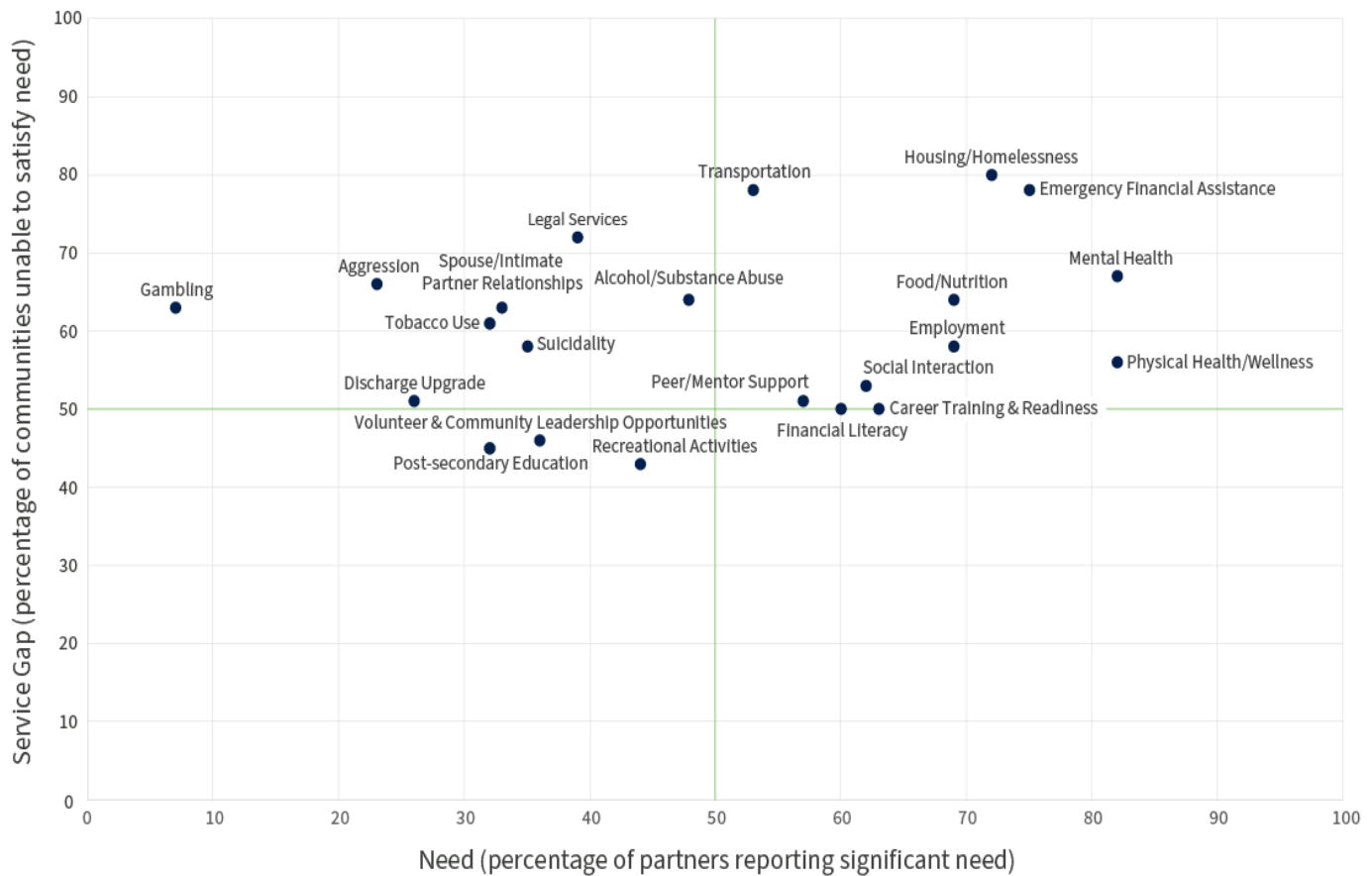
Key Findings

The latest information from the Got Your 6 Network reveals a dangerous combination of high needs and limited community capacity. The most significant unmet needs in the military and veteran population include mental and physical health care; basic needs such as housing, food, emergency financial assistance, and transportation; and employment. Local communities are especially challenged in addressing the needs for housing, emergency financial aid, transportation, legal services, mental health services, and food assistance.

where the horizontal (x) axis shows the percentage of responding Got Your 6 partners that said “many” or “almost all” of their clients express a particular need, and the vertical (y) axis shows the percentage of respondents that said their organization and the local organizations with which they partner “do not address” or “address but do not satisfy” that particular need. The biggest unmet needs appear in the upper right quadrant of the figure, which shows the issues for which a majority of Got Your 6 partners indicated both a high degree of need and a local inability to satisfy that need.

The overarching findings of BWF’s 2025 assessment of needs and gaps are summarized in Figure 1,

Figure 1. Overview of Clients’ Unmet Needs



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

Notes: Number of respondents = 200. The x-axis shows the percentage of respondents that said “many” or “almost all” of their military and veteran clients indicate a particular need. The y-axis shows the percentage of responding organizations that said they and the partner organizations in their community “do not address” or “address but do not satisfy” a particular need.

This figure shows 22 of the 26 needs discussed in the survey. Family-related needs (childcare, childrens’ mental health, parenting skills, and K-12 education resources) are not included here because the data for those needs are based on a smaller number of respondents.

More than 80 percent of Got Your 6 partners reported significant physical and mental health needs among their clients in 2025, similar to the previous survey in 2023. Roughly 30 percent of partners indicated that almost all of their clients have physical health needs (up from 24 percent in 2023), and 29 percent indicated that almost all of their clients have mental health needs (up from 18 percent in 2023). Much of that need goes unmet: 56 percent of partners said their community cannot fully address the physical health needs of the military and veteran population, and 67 percent said their community lacks sufficient mental health services for that population.

The overall percentage of partners reporting high levels of basic needs among their clients was similar to the 2023 findings. But the share of respondents indicating that almost all (rather than many) clients presented with a particular need grew significantly between 2023 and 2025 for some basic needs:

- Emergency financial assistance, from 18 to 27 percent
- Food and nutrition services, from 6 to 18 percent
- Housing assistance, from 4 to 25 percent
- Legal services, from 2 to 9 percent
- Financial literacy services, from 7 to 16 percent

A large majority of partners indicated that their communities cannot fully meet clients' basic needs. But the percentage of communities that reported being able to fully satisfy some of those needs (such as food and financial literacy services) has increased slightly, and the percentage of communities that said they do not address a particular basic need has declined.

Of the 156 partners that serve active-duty military families, 57 percent reported high need among their military clients for emergency financial assistance, including 17 percent that said almost all of their active-duty military clients require emergency financial aid. Similarly, 53 percent of those partners reported a high level of need for help with financial literacy among active-duty military clients, including 11 percent that said almost all of their active-duty military clients need financial literacy services.

The rest of this report explores in more detail what intelligence from Got Your 6 partners indicates about the specific needs of the military and veteran population and about the capacity of local communities to meet those needs. The report also explores how needs and gaps in services have changed over the past two to four years.

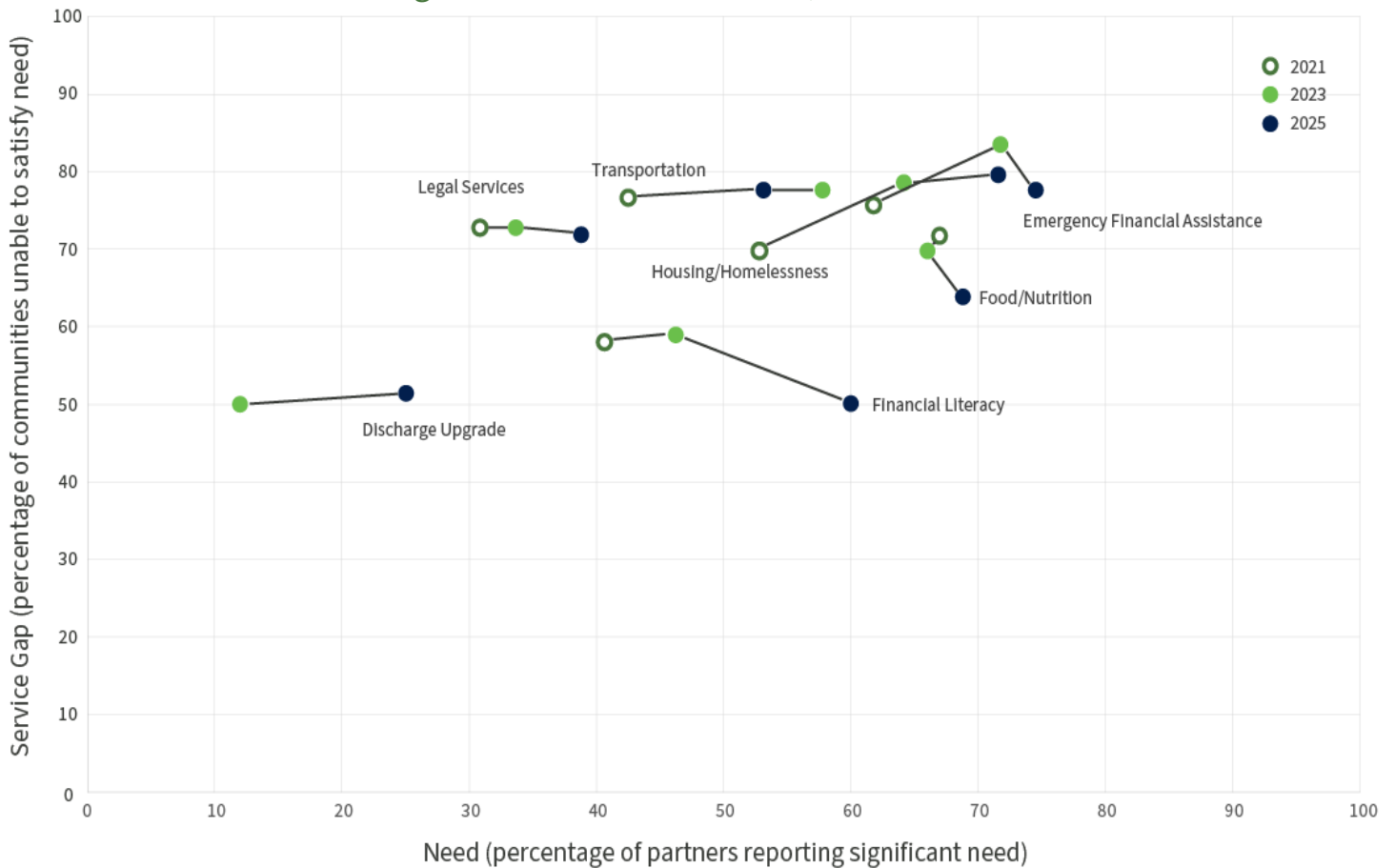
Basic Needs

The majority of communities included in BWF’s survey struggle to satisfy the needs of their veterans and service members for basics such as food, housing, transportation, and emergency assistance.

More than 50 percent of responding organizations reported significant amounts of need (many or almost all of their clients indicating that need) for housing, emergency financial assistance, food, transportation, and financial literacy services (see Figure 2).

With the exception of transportation, all of the basic needs covered in the survey, including needs related to legal issues, have become more prevalent since 2023 among people who seek help from Got Your 6 partners.

Figure 2. Unmet Basic Needs, 2021 to 2025



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

Note: Number of respondents = 200. The x-axis shows the percentage of respondents that said “many” or “almost all” of their military and veteran clients indicate a particular need. The y-axis shows the percentage of responding organizations that said they and the partner organizations in their community “do not address” or “address but do not satisfy” a particular need.

Housing and homelessness prevention services were among the highest reported needs in the 2025 survey, with 73 percent of responding organizations indicating that many or almost all of their clients struggle with that need (see Figure 3). Only 20 percent of respondents indicated that they and their local partners are able to meet that need fully. Over time, both the need for and the gap in housing services have increased, and the share of respondents reporting that almost all of their clients require housing assistance soared from 4 percent in 2023 to 25 percent in 2025.

The need for **emergency financial assistance** also remains high, with 75 percent of Got Your 6 partners indicating that many or almost all of their clients have that need. In 2023, 18 percent of survey respondents indicated that almost all of their clients needed emergency financial assistance; in 2025, that share rose to 27 percent. The percentage of communities that said they cannot fully satisfy veterans' and service members' need for emergency financial aid decreased slightly from 2023 but remains high at 78 percent.

This year's survey also asked the 156 respondents that serve active-duty military families to report that population's need for emergency financial assistance. They indicated slightly lower levels of need than among the military and veteran population in general, but 57 percent of those organizations said that many or almost all of the military families seeking their support need emergency financial assistance (see Figure 4).

The need for **food and nutrition** services has remained high among service members, veterans, and their families. Sixty-nine percent of survey respondents reported significant need for those services in 2025, and 18 percent (up from 6 percent in 2023) indicated that almost all of their military and veteran clients need food-related help. Although it might seem counterintuitive that more clients would require emergency financial assistance or housing support than food, many individuals are hesitant or ashamed to admit they need food.

Communities' reported capacity to address food-related needs has improved slightly in recent years (as indicated by the descending line for that category in Figure 2). Such improvement may reflect the growing number of food support programs in U.S. communities, including programs that serve a broader population. Even so, nearly two-thirds of communities said they cannot fully meet the food needs of their military and veteran population (see Figure 5).

Community partners' capacity to satisfy their clients' need for **transportation** has remained steady in recent years (as shown by the flat line in Figure 2), although the need for transportation has decreased slightly. Some urban areas, such as New York City, satisfy transportation needs through subsidized public transit. Other communities report that needs have declined in part because more telehealth opportunities mean that fewer clients need transportation to medical appointments:

COVID made telehealth an easy thing.... In the last two years, a whole lot less veterans are saying "I can't get to my appointments" because the VA, community care, the [state] Department of Veterans Affairs, and a lot of the helping-hand organizations have shifted their models to serve needs through telehealth or telecommunications.

Even so, some Got Your 6 partners report a continued and significant need for transportation:

This is the type of state that assumes everyone has a car. We often try to work with the VA so that if a client already has an appointment with the VA, they can get transportation through the VA, and then they come to us because we're right there. We try to piggyback on that as much as possible. It was a little better during the pandemic when agencies were a little freer with Uber rides. It's still a bit of a challenge, but we do have our attorneys go out and meet people in the more far-flung areas of the state, including rural areas where people need help, so we're flexible.

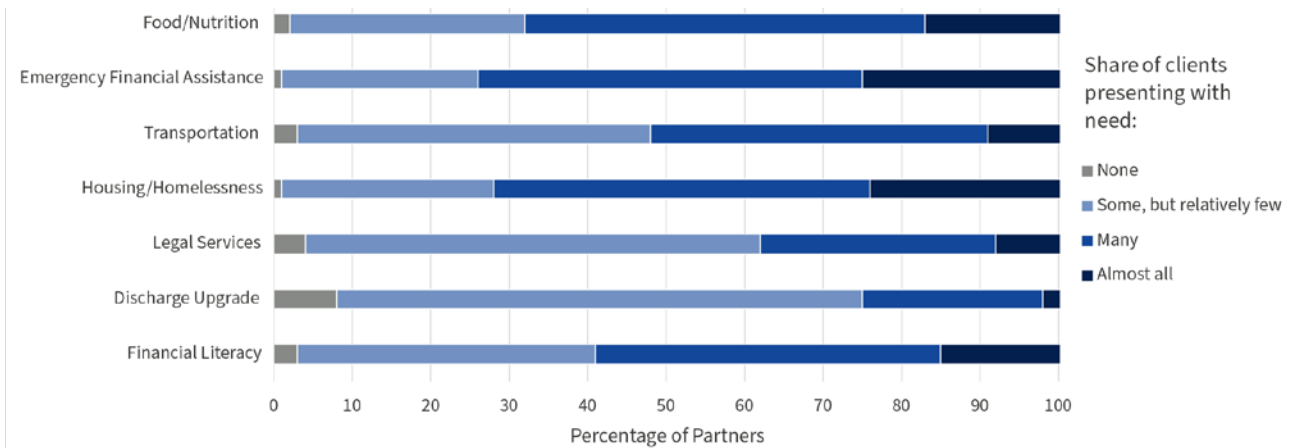
The need for **legal services** has increased in recent years but is still relatively low. Less than 40 percent of Got Your 6 partners reported in 2025 that many or almost all of their clients need help with legal issues. That low level of demand may reflect a missed opportunity on the part of organizations to help veterans struggling with housing problems or homelessness, because the VA's annual assessments of homeless veterans consistently report that the majority of their unmet needs involve legal issues.ⁱⁱ

Most veterans do not need to have their **discharge status** upgraded. But for those who do, an upgrade can be life-altering by giving them access to medical care and financial benefits. Relatively few Got Your 6 partners reported significant need for discharge upgrade services, and only about half of communities reported being able to fully satisfy that need.

Sixty percent of respondents indicated that many or almost all of their military and veteran clients need help with **financial literacy**. That percentage has increased significantly in recent years (up from 41 percent in 2021 and 47 percent in 2023). And although more communities appear able to provide financial literacy resources, half of communities still struggle to meet that need.

Among Got Your 6 partners who serve active-duty military families, 53 percent said many or almost all of their military clients had a need for financial literacy resources (see Figure 4).

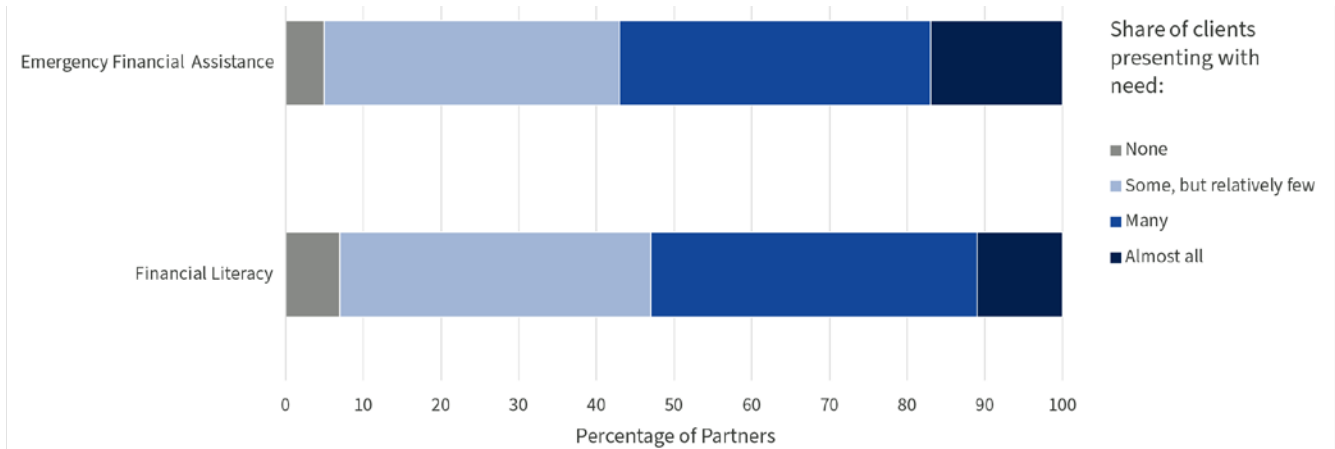
Figure 3. Clients' Basic Needs



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

Note: Number of respondents = 200

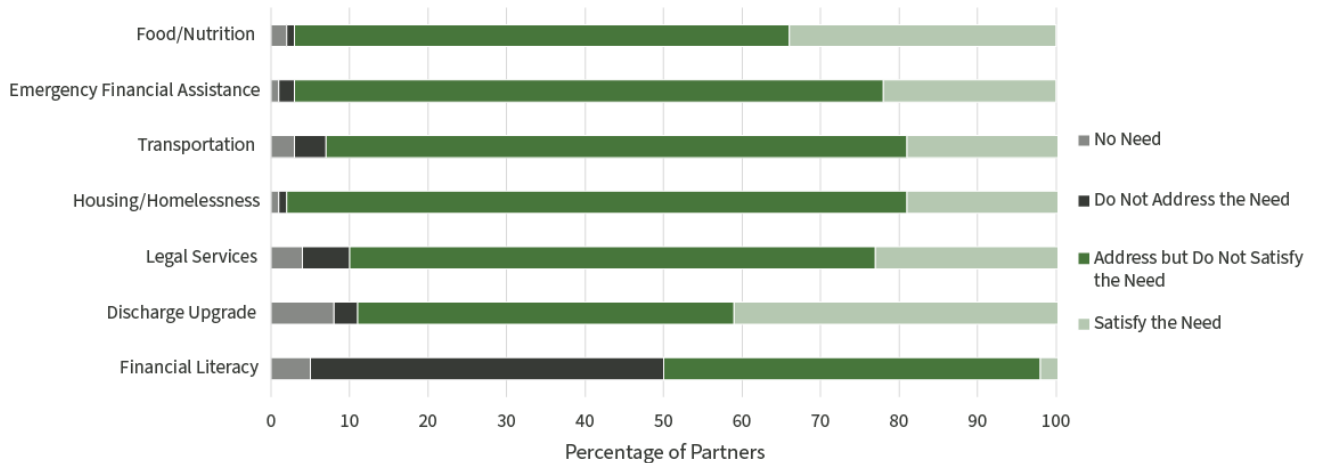
Figure 4. Active-Duty Military Clients' Financial Needs



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

Note: Number of respondents = 156

Figure 5. Communities' Capacity to Meet Basic Needs



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

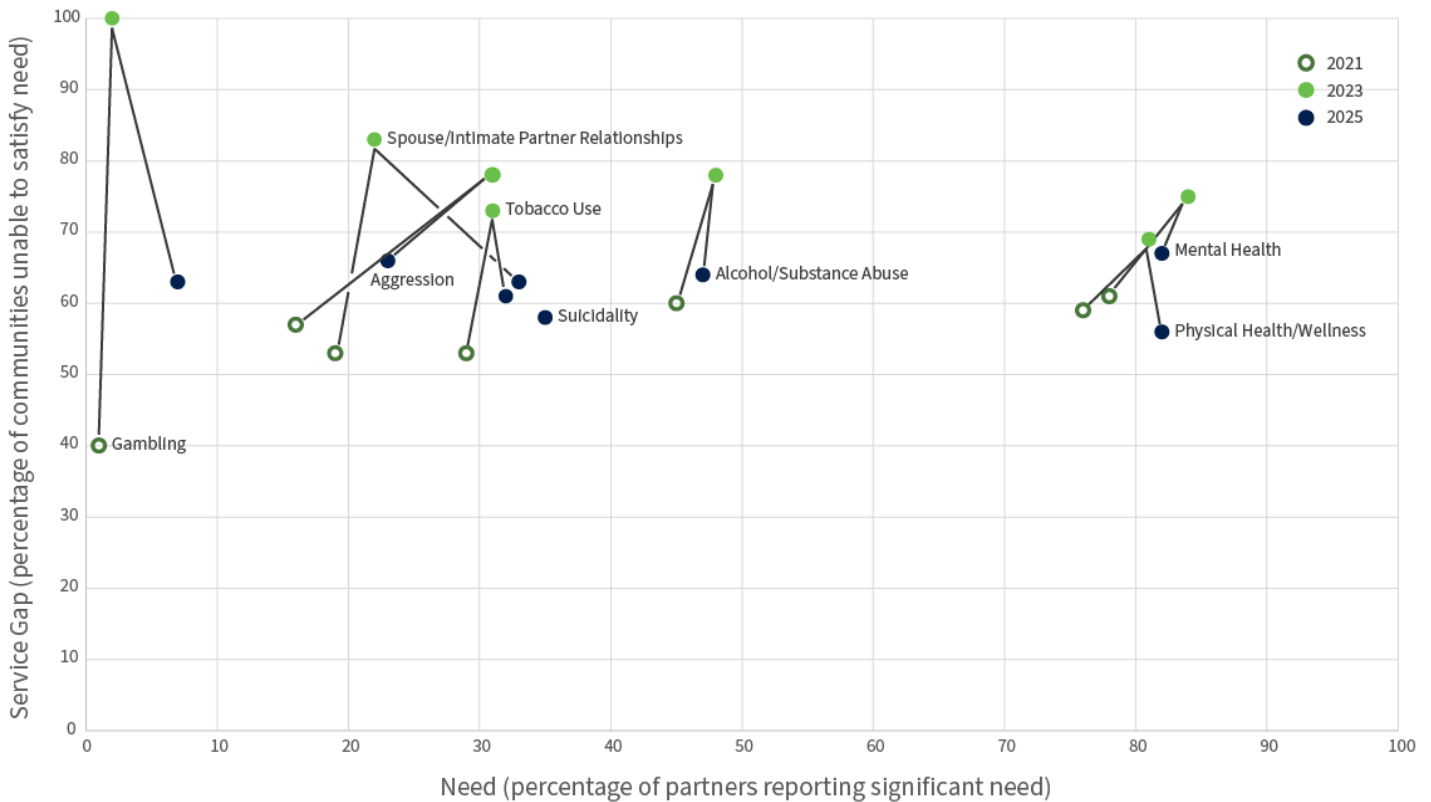
Note: Number of respondents = 200. The figure shows the percentage of responding organizations that said they and the partner organizations in their community address a need of their military and veteran clients to a particular degree.

Health-Related Needs

Health-related needs remain high among the military and veteran population. From 2021 to 2023, the need for help with mental health, physical health, alcohol or substance abuse, tobacco use, and aggression became more prevalent, and the percentage of communities unable to fully meet such needs increased (see Figure 6).

Since 2023, the share of Got Your 6 partners reporting significant health-related needs among their clients has mostly remained steady, but the share saying their community can satisfy those needs has returned closer to the levels reported in 2021. Even so, more than 50 percent of Got Your 6 partners indicated a capacity shortage in their community.

Figure 6. Unmet Health-Related Needs, 2021 to 2025



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

Note: Number of respondents = 200. The x-axis shows the percentage of respondents that said “many” or “almost all” of their military and veteran clients indicate a particular need. The y-axis shows the percentage of responding organizations that said they and the partner organizations in their community “do not address” or “address but do not satisfy” a particular need.

The high demand for **mental and physical health care** is especially notable. Twenty-nine percent of survey respondents in 2025 said almost all of their clients have mental health needs (see Figure 7), up from 18 percent in 2023. That trend is confirmed by one of BWF's partners, Headstrong, which provides confidential mental health treatment to service members, veterans, and their families nationwide. Headstrong said the number of people seeking clinical mental health care from them increased by 21 percent from 2024 to 2025. The share of Got Your 6 survey respondents reporting that almost all of their clients have physical health needs has also risen, from 24 percent in 2023 to 30 percent in 2025.

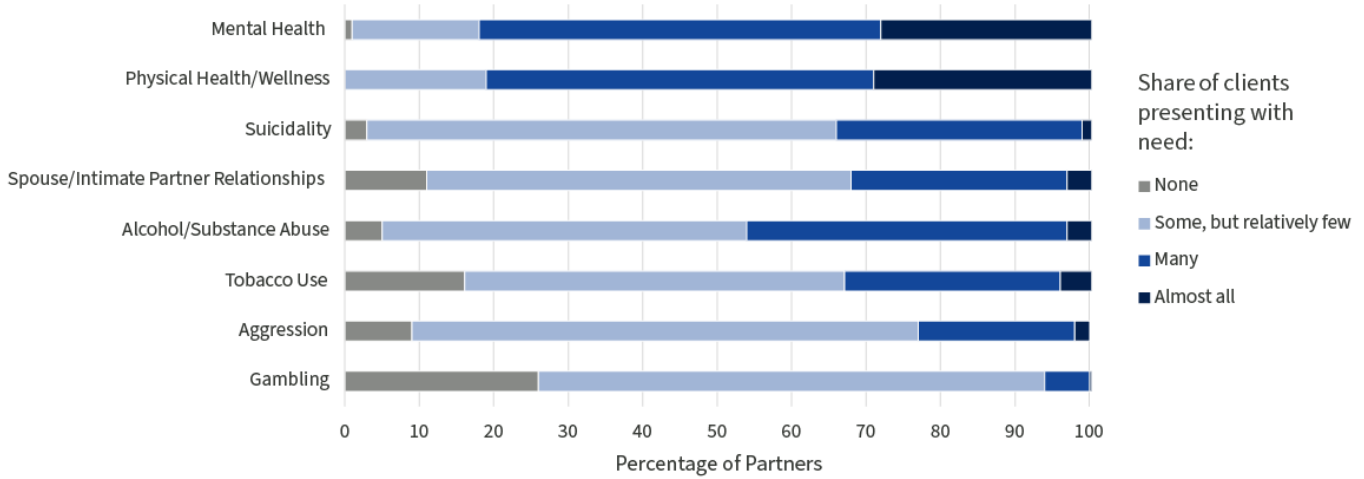
When asked about physical and mental health needs, Got Your 6 partners often noted that they see the two as interconnected and aim to address both. Behavioral health concerns frequently overlap with physical health issues, which can delay or complicate medical treatment. Physical and mental health needs also become apparent when veterans seek help for related challenges, such as an inability to work, transportation barriers, or housing instability.

More than one-third of survey respondents reported significant need for **suicide prevention** services—a stark indicator of suicide risk among veterans that BWF is now tracking as a distinct category. Previously included within general mental health needs, the need for suicide prevention resources has emerged as a separate, urgent concern.

Large gaps remain in communities' ability to fully satisfy the physical and mental health needs of the military and veteran population. Sixty-seven percent of communities reported being unable to address all of the need for mental health services, and 56 percent said they were unable to meet the full need for physical health services (see Figure 8).

Fewer Got Your 6 partners reported seeing significant need for services to address the **other health problems** included in the survey: 47 percent for alcohol and substance abuse, 33 percent for tobacco use, 32 percent for spouse and intimate partner relationship problems, and 23 percent for aggression. However, the majority of communities also said they were unable to satisfy those needs. Very few respondents reported significant need for resources to deal with gambling problems, and only 37 percent indicated that the need exceeded their community's ability to meet it.

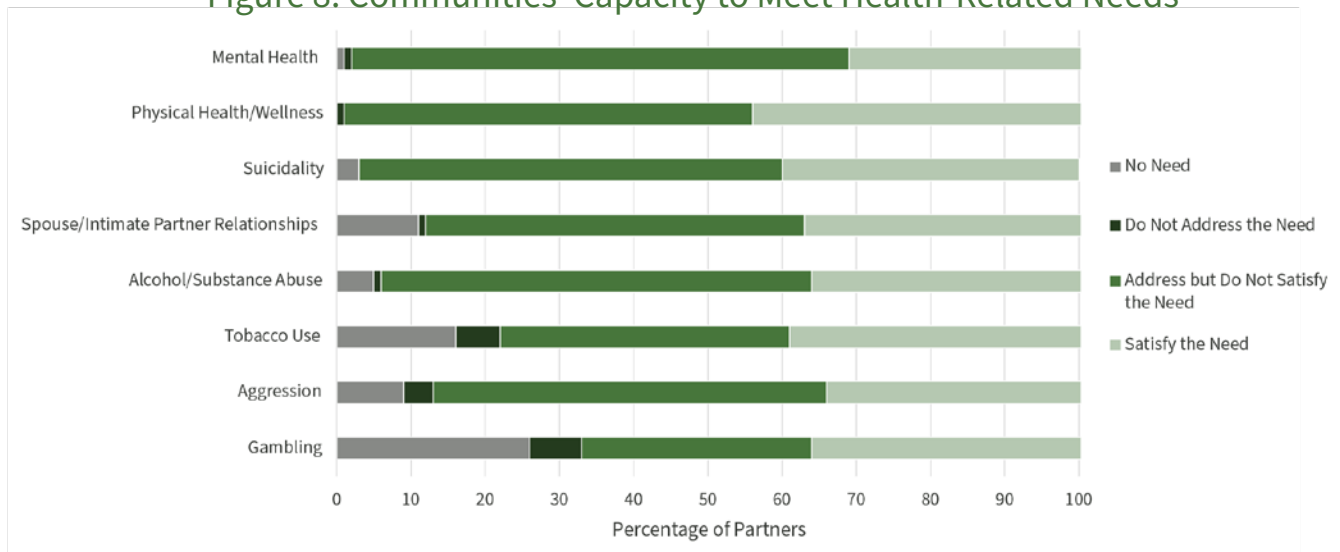
Figure 7. Clients' Health-Related Needs



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

Note: Number of respondents = 200

Figure 8. Communities' Capacity to Meet Health-Related Needs



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

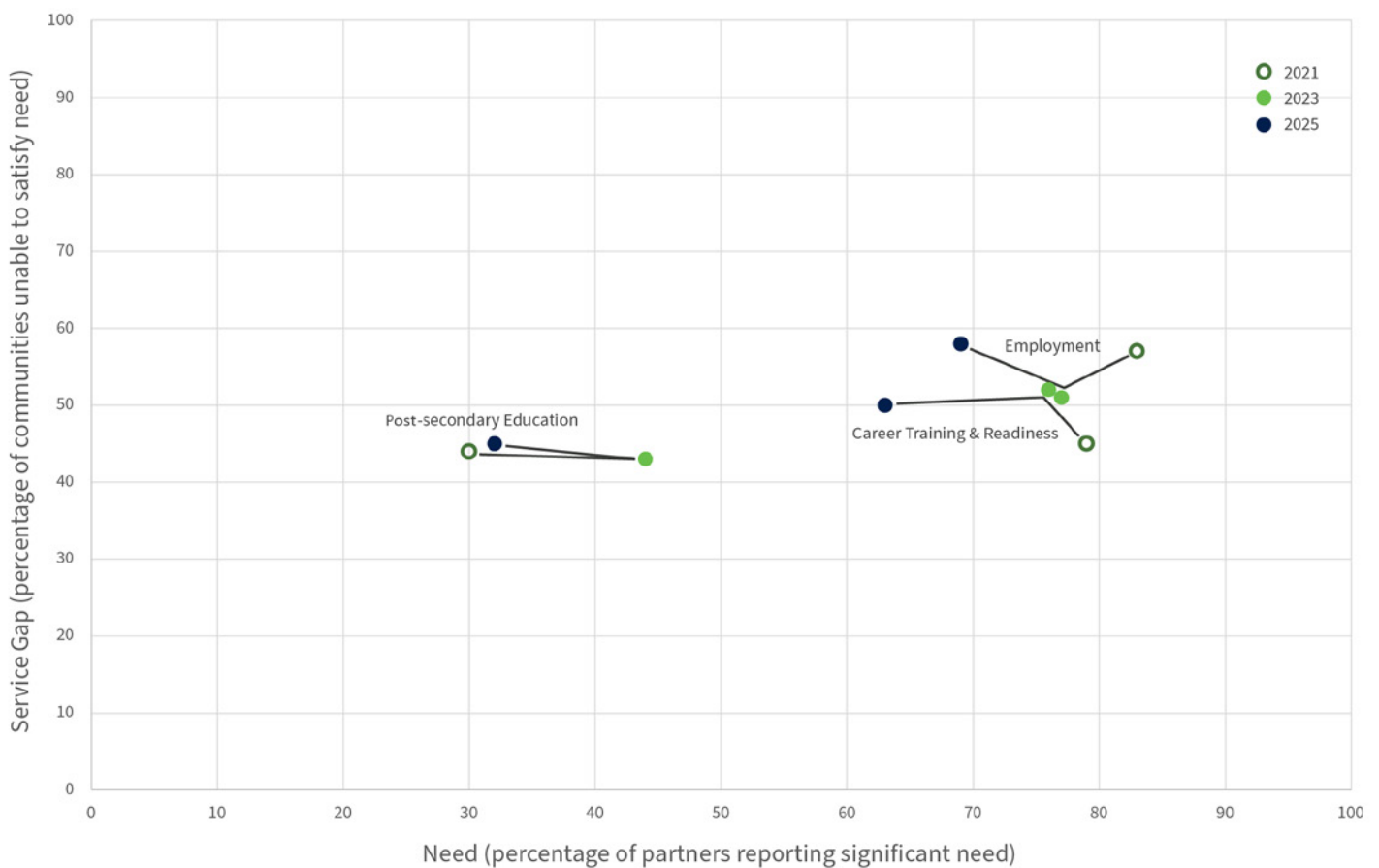
Note: Number of respondents = 200. The figure shows the percentage of responding organizations that said they and the partner organizations in their community address a need of their military and veteran clients to a particular degree.

Civilian Employment and Education Needs

About two-thirds of Got Your 6 partners reported that most or almost all of their clients need help with **employment** or with **career training and readiness**: 69 percent and 63 percent, respectively, much smaller percentages than in 2021 or 2023 (see Figure 9).

Only about one-third reported significant need related to **post-secondary education** (see Figure 10). That share returned almost to its 2021 level, after a large increase in 2023.

Figure 9. Unmet Employment and Education Needs, 2021 to 2025



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

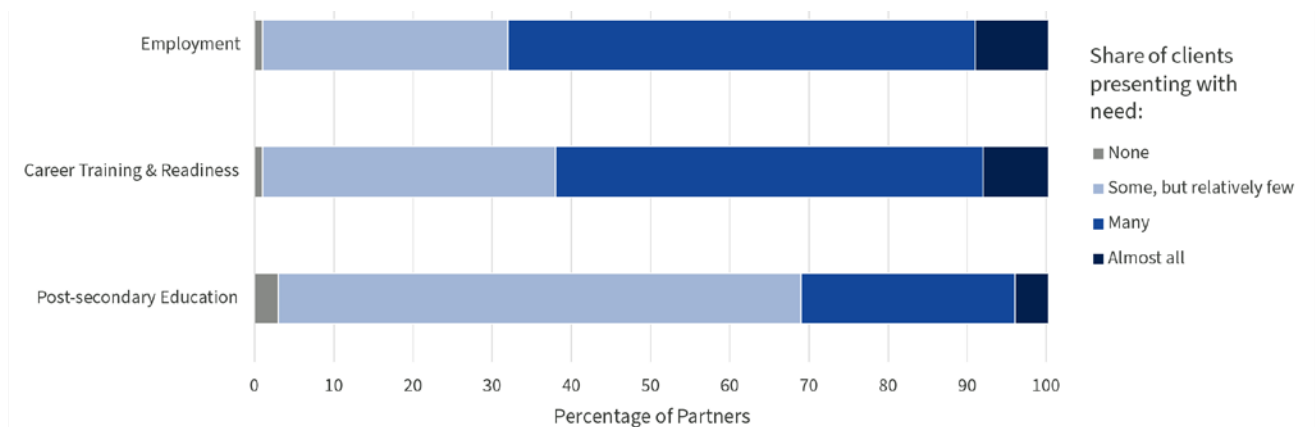
Note: Number of respondents = 200. The x-axis shows the percentage of respondents that said “many” or “almost all” of their military and veteran clients indicate a particular need. The y-axis shows the percentage of responding organizations that said they and the partner organizations in their community “do not address” or “address but do not satisfy” a particular need.

The capacity of Got Your 6 community partners to address those needs has remained relatively steady in recent years. Some 50 percent to 60 percent reported being unable to satisfy all of their clients' employment and career training needs, and 45 percent said they were unable to meet all of the need for post-secondary education support (see Figure 11).

Some Got Your 6 partners shared about the employment challenges they see veterans facing in civilian life:

Many veterans struggle to redefine their career identity and translate military experience into civilian opportunities. Many leave service without securing employment, increasing the risk of financial instability and underemployment, and often experience gaps or fragmentation in their work histories.

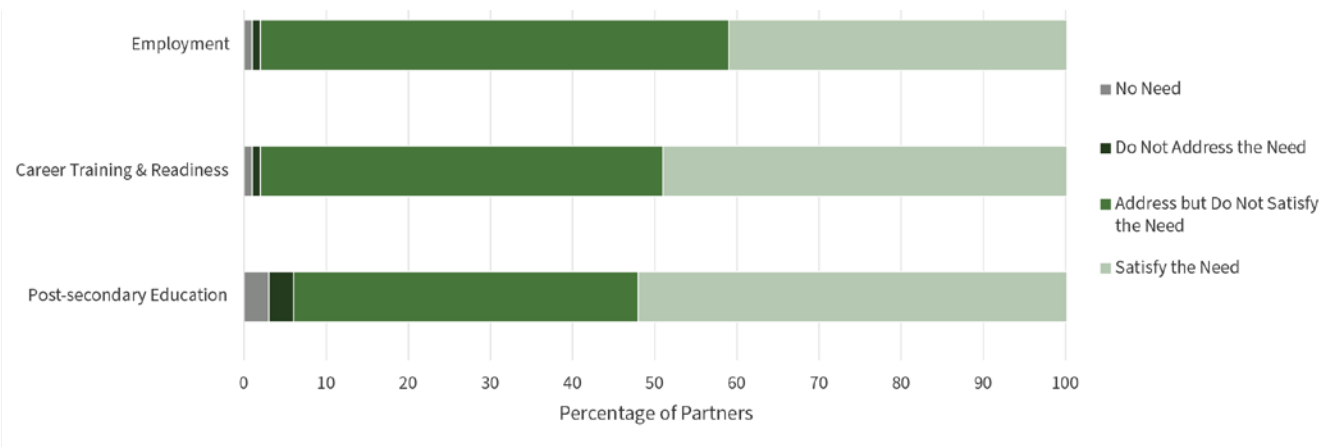
Figure 10. Clients' Employment and Education Needs



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

Note: Number of respondents = 200

Figure 11. Communities' Capacity to Meet Employment and Education Needs



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

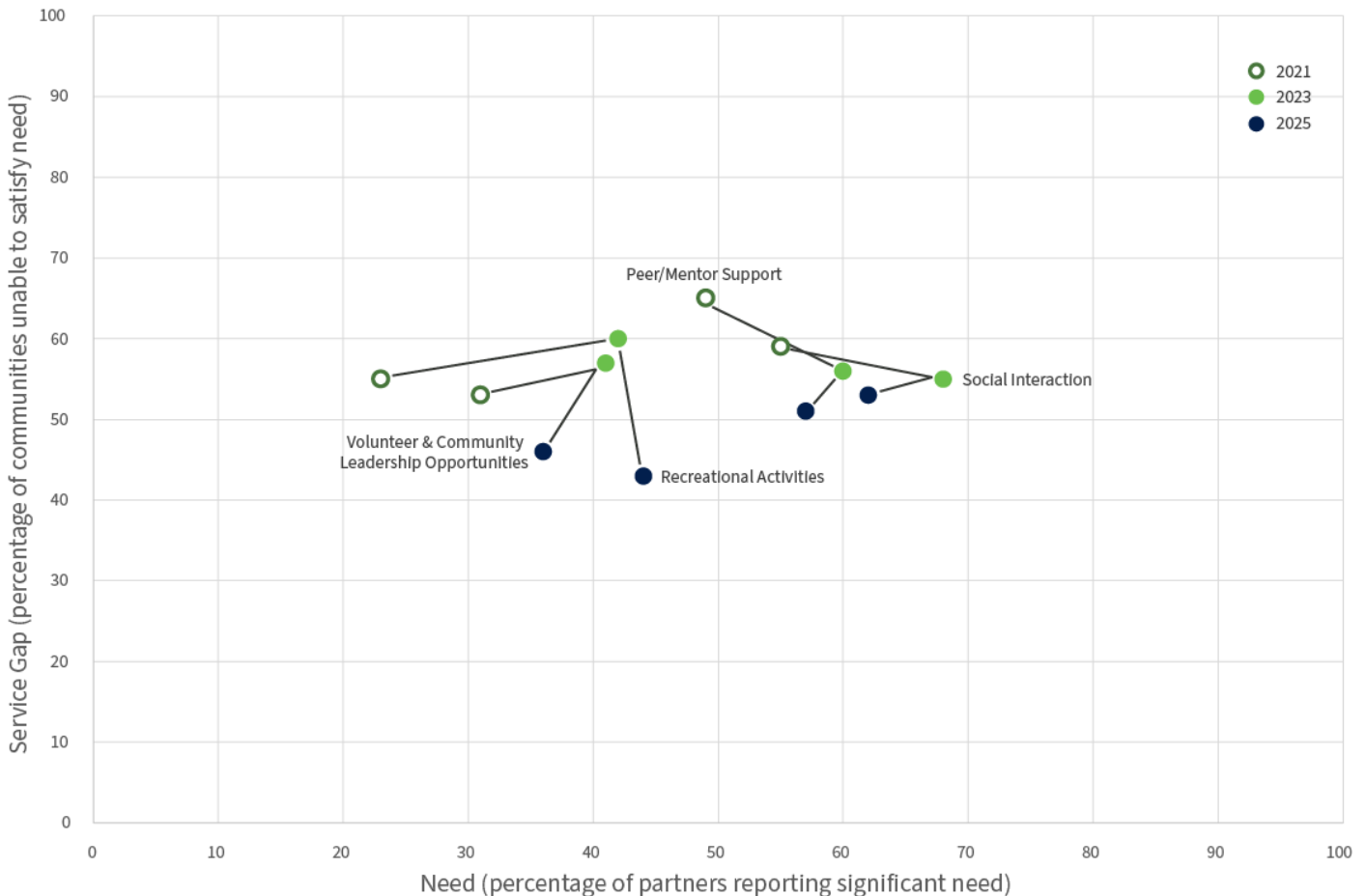
Note: Number of respondents = 200. The figure shows the percentage of responding organizations that said they and the partner organizations in their community address a need of their military and veteran clients to a particular degree.

Social Needs

Got Your 6 partners continue to report that the veterans they serve need **social interaction**, **support from peers or mentors**, **recreational activities**, and **opportunities for volunteering** and **community leadership**. Although the prevalence of most of those social needs did not change considerably from 2023, more communities reported that they can satisfy those needs.

The exception is peer/mentor support. The percentage of respondents reporting significant need and the percentage of communities unable to satisfy that need both increased since 2023 (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Unmet Social Needs, 2021 to 2025



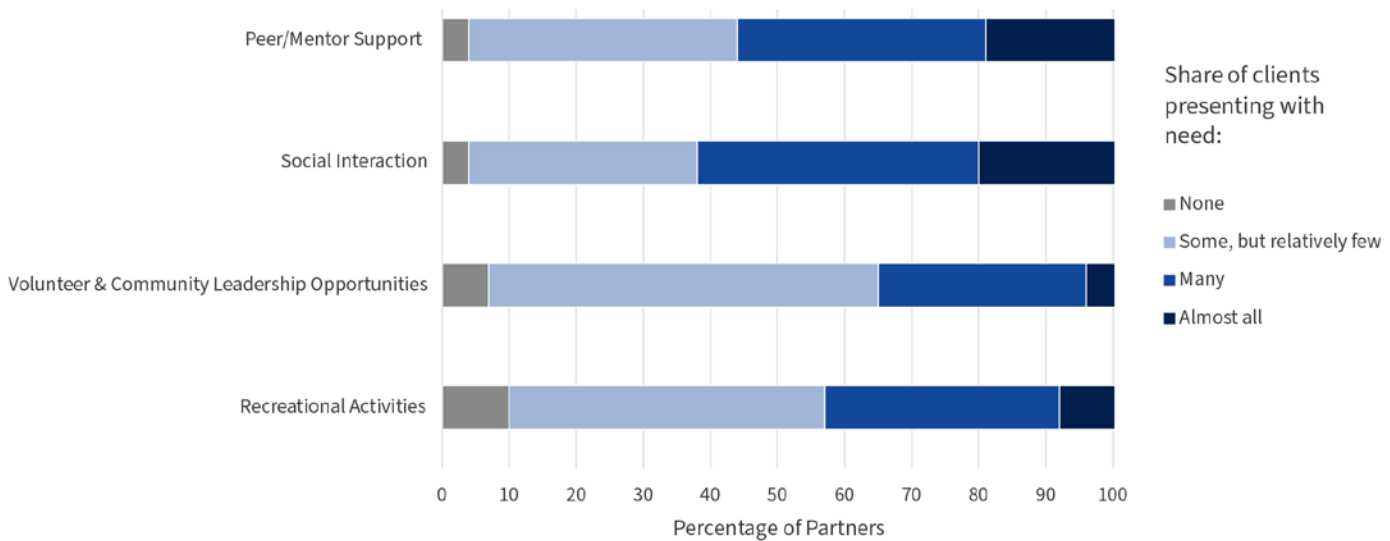
Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

Note: Number of respondents = 200. The x-axis shows the percentage of respondents that said “many” or “almost all” of their military and veteran clients indicate a particular need. The y-axis shows the percentage of responding organizations that said they and the partner organizations in their community “do not address” or “address but do not satisfy” a particular need.

A majority of survey respondents indicated significant need among their clients for peer/mentor support and social interaction: 57 percent and 62 percent, respectively (see Figure 13). Those services are especially valuable for helping veterans form social connections and preventing isolation. One partner described how peer support is also important in addressing more basic needs when case workers are involved:

Peer support is such a vital part of the process when somebody is ... trying to get their life together. Peer support allows us to break barriers down because you are putting a veteran that has gone through this with another veteran, who is maybe leery, not confident, maybe just a little skittish to jump right in. Case managers have a social work code of ethics, protocols and guidelines and compliance, but the peer support gives the veteran a person who has lived that experience.

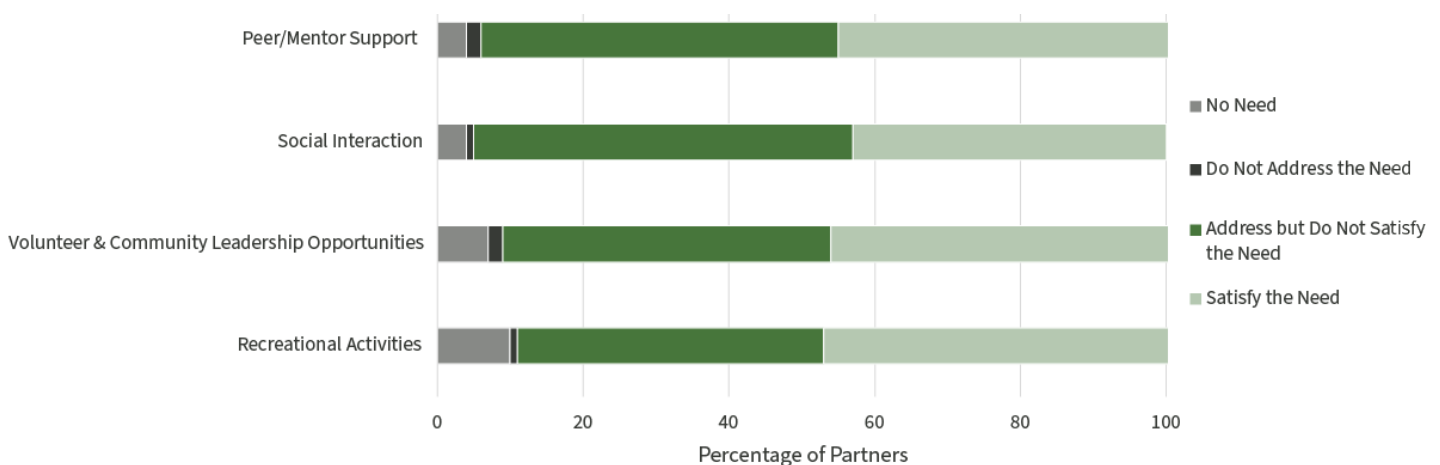
Figure 13. Clients' Social Needs



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

Note: Number of respondents = 200

Figure 14. Communities' Capacity to Meet Social Needs



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

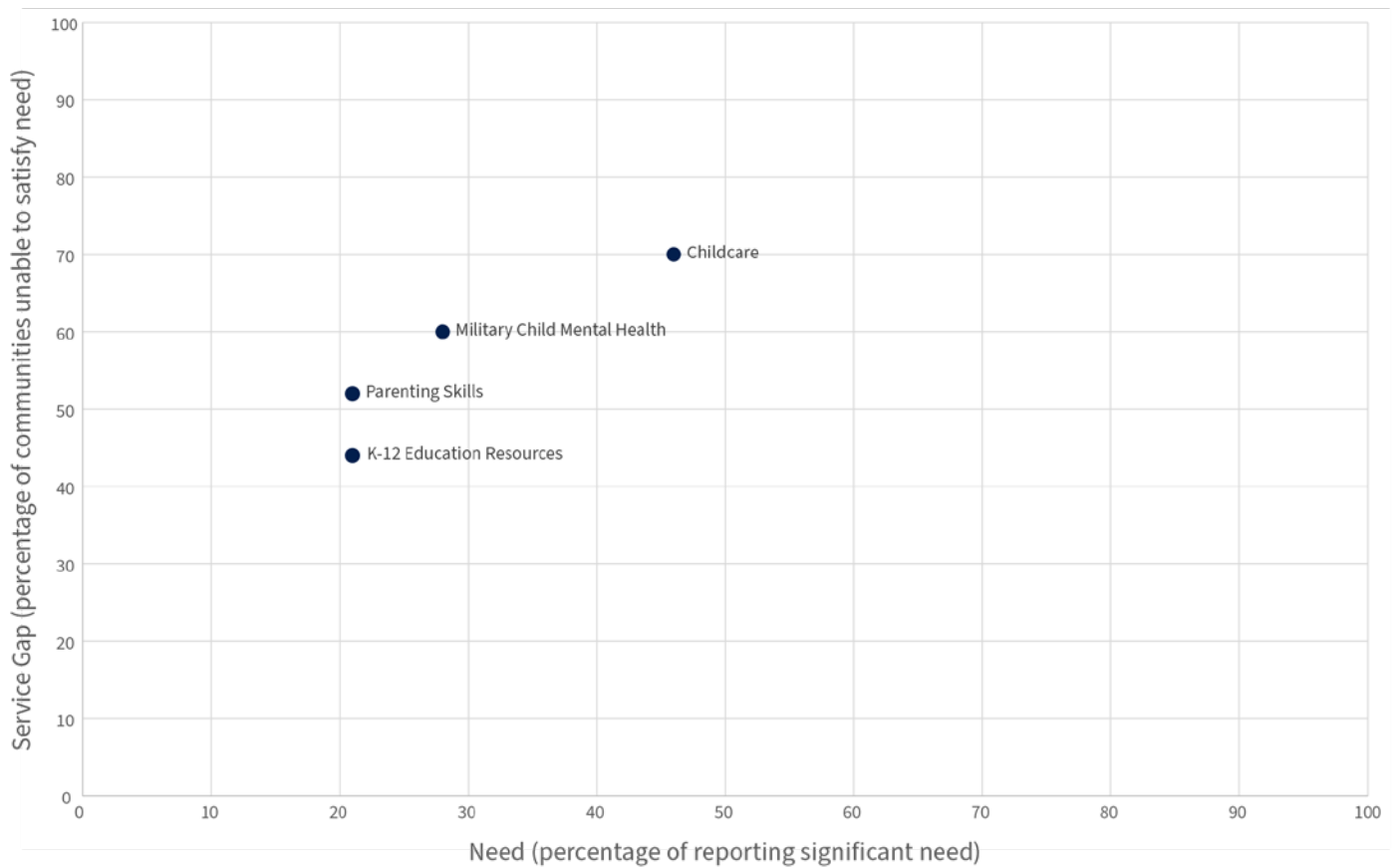
Note: Number of respondents = 200. The figure shows the percentage of responding organizations that said they and the partner organizations in their community address a need of their military and veteran clients to a particular degree.

Family-Related Needs

Relatively few Got Your 6 partners reported that their clients seek their assistance to address family needs, such as **childcare, parenting skills, children’s mental health, and help with K-12 education**. Unlike in previous sections of this report, the data for family-related needs come from the 155 responding organizations that know the family status of their clients (see Figure 15).

The most prevalent family-related need is for childcare. Nearly half of those 155 respondents indicated that many or almost all of their clients with children express a need for childcare (see Figure 16). For other family-related needs—children’s mental health care and help with parenting skills and K-12 education—about one-quarter or fewer respondents reported significant need among their clients with children.

Figure 15. Unmet Family-Related Needs, 2025



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

Notes: Number of respondents = 155. The x-axis shows the percentage of respondents that said “many” or “almost all” of their military and veteran clients indicate a particular need. The y-axis shows the percentage of responding organizations that said they and the partner organizations in their community “do not address” or “address but do not satisfy” a particular need.

The 2021 and 2023 surveys did not limit questions about family-related needs to clients with children. As a result, those surveys’ data about such needs are not comparable with the data from the 2025 survey and are not shown here.

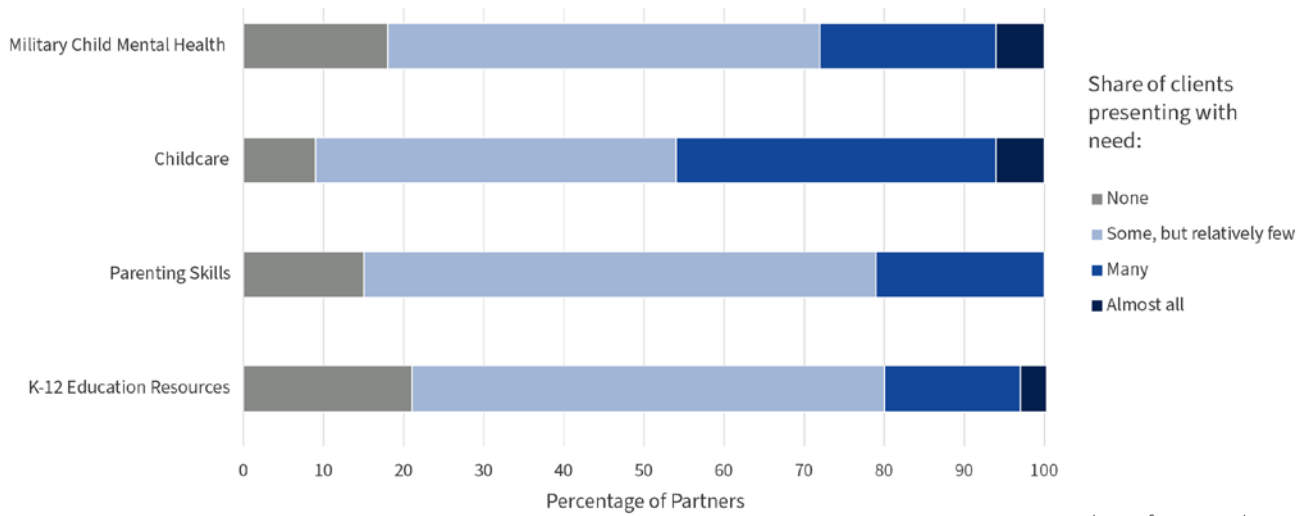
There are several reasons that organizations in the Got Your 6 Network do not see high levels of family-related needs. First, some of those needs (such as childcare and help with K-12 education) are age-specific and thus are not relevant to all clients who have children.

Second, and more important, vulnerable families often must focus on basic needs and health needs before they can address family-related needs. For example, parents who are experiencing homelessness may prioritize housing and employment before they can focus on their children's mental health. They may also choose to have one parent stay with the children while the other parent works, rather than prioritize childcare.

Third, organizations may see low levels of need because clients may not think to mention family-related needs if not prompted to do so. In the case of children's mental health issues, 29 percent of survey respondents said they do not screen or ask their military and veteran clients about that need.

Communities struggle to satisfy even those relatively low levels of family-related needs. But compared with 2023, more communities have resources to address family needs, and the proportion of communities that report being able to meet those needs has also increased: 22 percent satisfy clients' need for military child mental health (up from 13 percent in 2023), 21 percent satisfy the need for childcare (up from 4 percent), 35 percent have sufficient K-12 education resources (up from 11 percent), and 33 percent satisfy the need for resources to improve parenting skills (up from 11 percent). Even so, large numbers of communities cannot fully satisfy family-related needs (see Figure 17), and those resource gaps have implications beyond the military and veteran population.

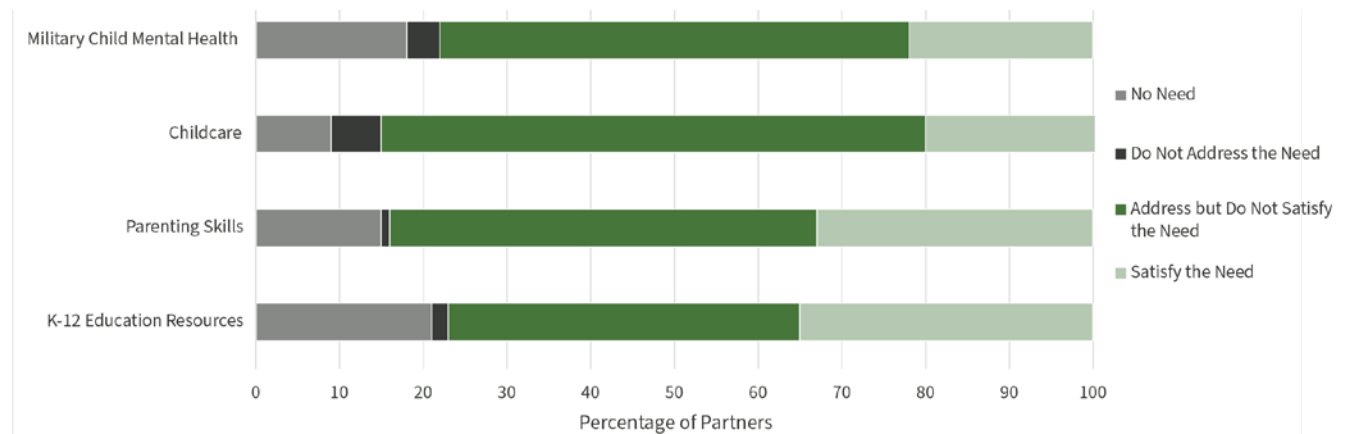
Figure 16. Clients' Family-Related Needs



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

Note: Number of respondents = 155

Figure 17. Communities' Capacity to Meet Family-Related Needs



Source: 2025 Got Your 6 Community Survey

Note: Number of respondents = 155. The figure shows the percentage of responding organizations that said they and the partner organizations in their community address a need of their military and veteran clients with children to a particular degree.

Conclusion

BWF's Got Your 6 Network partners serve the military and veteran population across the country and address a broad range of basic needs, as well as needs related to health, education, employment, social interactions, and family life. Often those partners serve the most vulnerable military and veteran families, and the profiles of need they report in the Got Your 6 Community Survey reflect that population. The survey's nationwide, community-based information is a leading indicator of needs within the military and veteran population and of local communities' ability to meet those needs. This intelligence reveals a veteran and military support sector under severe strain.

From the Got Your 6 Network, we know that vulnerable service members, veterans, and their families continue to have significant need for mental health care, physical health care, emergency financial assistance, food, housing, legal support, and financial literacy services. We also know that an increasing number of Got Your 6 partners report that almost all of the clients they serve express those needs. Further, we understand that communities across the United States are challenged to address and satisfy those needs.

BWF will continue to learn from its expert partner organizations; monitor, address, and resolve the needs of people who have served our nation; and share valuable intelligence from the Got Your 6 Network with the many stakeholders committed to the well-being of the military and veteran population.

For corporations and philanthropic partners: This intelligence provides the roadmap for investment in veteran support infrastructure. When 80 percent of communities cannot meet veterans' housing needs and 67 percent lack sufficient capacity for mental health care, strategic funding becomes critical. BWF does not just identify where funding is needed most—it also provides the delivery system that ensures resources reach veterans efficiently and effectively.

This intelligence also underscores the importance of the extraordinary efforts of the Got Your 6 Network to address the needs of the military and veteran population. The network includes best-in-class organizations. But no single organization can address the full range of needs; that requires a coordinated network response. We call on our Got Your 6 partners to maintain their individual excellence while also redoubling collaborative efforts to serve the broad range of needs. Together, we can ensure that our nation's veterans, service members, and their families—those who stood for us—will have stable and successful futures.

ⁱ For results of the 2021 and 2023 surveys, see Bob Woodruff Foundation, *The Got Your 6 Network: Quantifying and Addressing Veterans' Needs (2022)*, <https://tinyurl.com/2s397rpa>, and *The Got Your 6 Network: Quantifying and Addressing Veterans' Needs in 2023 (2024)*, <https://tinyurl.com/2b7pbrej>.

ⁱⁱ See Department of Veterans Affairs, *Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups (fact sheet, April 2025)*, <https://tinyurl.com/d4vdhkrh>.