



## The Military Resale System

Since 1867 the military resale system has been a staple of the American military, serving over 13 million servicemen and women and their families each year. Commissaries and exchanges operate in all 50 states, five U.S. territories and more than 30 countries. The military resale system is a vital economic engine both on-base and off-base employing nearly 100,000.

Active and vibrant commissaries and exchanges help build thriving economies on and off base and a stronger nation. Most importantly they take care of the other one percent who have sacrificed more than any other for our country– military personnel, their families and veterans.

### Military families rely on these benefits

- A source of savings, employment, and military community funding, commissary and exchange programs generate nearly \$9 billion in benefits for military families.
- The most important benefit to military families – behind only healthcare – and helps retain highly qualified service members.
- Military families save 20 to 50 percent by using their benefit.
- An important source of savings for National Guard and Reserve troops’ families who must make do with one less paycheck while these troops are called to active duty to serve our nation.
- Deployed servicemen and women are able to feel secure in knowing their families are being taken care of.
- Affordable and nutritious meals are provided to military members and their families.
- Exchanges manage the military’s school lunch program.
- Provide “Welcome Home” programs for returning combat veterans.
- Vital support for Fisher House, Wounded Warriors, military family programs and families of deployed combat forces.
- Vital underpinning of the military’s transportation system and base and combat support infrastructure.

#### By the Numbers

The military resale system is a vibrant economic engine. Commissaries, Exchanges and member companies contribute:

- **\$4.5 billion** in savings for military families
- **\$4 billion** in made-in-America products that are sold overseas to military patrons – funds that would otherwise flow to foreign economies
- **\$20 billion in 20 years to support military community programs and facilities.**
- **100,000** jobs for working Americans and military families
- **\$7,000** in savings for a family of four each year
- **\$16 billion** in sales from household goods and products.



## And the need is great

- Commissaries and exchanges help make ends meet for military families. There have been major increases in food stamp redemption in commissaries with a 70 percent increase in the past year. Families realize billions in savings at the cash register.
- In these tough economic times, military spouse unemployment is 26 percent – almost triple the national average. Commissaries and exchanges provide vital employment opportunities. For example, more than 62 percent of commissary employees are veterans or military family members.
- Exchanges provide tactical support in forward combat areas and commissaries and exchanges provide emergency support to communities devastated by natural disasters such as those that made headlines in Japan and the Gulf of Mexico in recent years.

## Commissaries and exchanges save money

The military resale system is our nation's most efficient federal program.

- Commissaries and exchanges save money by lowering cost of living allowances in high cost areas, including overseas. Without commissaries and exchanges, military families would have to pay over \$4.5 billion more for goods and household items.
- American taxpayers receive a 9 to 1 return on investment from public support funding provided to these programs.
- No growth in public support funding for these programs while Defense spending has doubled. The cost of commissary programs has remained constant, even as the cost of other quality of life programs such as medical care, housing, and family support services has doubled or tripled over the past five years.
- This effective system has been made even more efficient through several cost-saving initiatives, including nearly \$1 billion in annual cost reductions.