

Making a Difference

An Enduring Commitment to Service

An Interview with Harriet Dominique,
Senior Vice President, Corporate Responsibility and Community Affairs, USAA

EDITORS' NOTE Harriet Dominique has held her current post since April 2013. Under her leadership, USAA formally transformed its corporate responsibility strategy to focus on specific areas serving the military community and local communities where USAA has a major, physical-branded presence. Dominique has been with USAA for 28 years and holds a B.B.A. from Liberty University.



Harriet Dominique

COMPANY BRIEF USAA provides insurance, banking, investments, retirement products, and advice to 12 million current and former members of the U.S. military and their families. Founded in 1922, USAA is proud to carry on the legacy of its founders by addressing needs in the military and local communities through its corporate responsibility program.

How critical is community engagement to the USAA culture?

To a large degree, it is what drives us as a company. All of our employees know our unique story intimately, and it is where that drive begins.

In 1922, there were 25 army officers who could not get automobile insurance because they were deemed too high risk as a result of their chosen profession. They met at the Gunter Hotel in San Antonio and pooled their resources to serve each other and, in doing so, formed USAA.

We now have over 12 million members and nearly 30,000 employees, and we are still laser focused on that mission. We exist to help facilitate the financial security of the military and their families. Whether one is a frontline representative taking phone calls or the most senior executive, that is what inspires us and makes us so special.

We want the military community to be better because of USAA's existence. That focus on our membership and mission transcends the focus on the bottom line. Corporate responsibility has been baked into our mission since 1922. Whether it is service or community engagement through our products and services or through our corporate responsibility program, our culture is built on our core values of honesty, integrity, loyalty, and service.

Must the type of people USAA hires already have that giving mentality?

We want individuals who are pre-disposed to those core values and that mentality, which are aligned with the military culture. Our enterprise goal is that 30 percent of new hires are prior military or military spouses.

The remaining employees may have never served, but once they join USAA, there is a great focus in our training on support and connection with the military community. Those values lead us all to march to the same drumbeat with a service mentality.

What specific areas do you focus on to have the most impact?

Our intention is to have greater impact on our communities in alignment with our mission. We diligently studied what corporate responsibility could be, benchmarking against 55 best-in-class

corporate responsibility brands in the nation. We conducted a full year of research with our members, prospects, and employees – we are member owned, and our employees drive the engagement.

Nationally, our signature cause is military family resiliency; locally, we focus on the greatest needs in the communities where we have a large physical branded presence.

Our national focus includes three primary areas: The first is military caregivers and families of the fallen and those who are wounded, injured, or ill as a result of their service to our country.

Based on a recent Rand study, there are 5.5 million military caregivers in our nation today. They work behind the scenes and need as much support as the service members. We are teaming up with organizations across the U.S. to take care of these hidden heroes.

Second, we focus on financial readiness for the military community because we've learned that nearly half of enlisted service members live paycheck to paycheck.

Finally, we focus on careers for veterans and military spouses.

In local communities, our focus areas are hunger and homelessness, education in the areas of STEM and financial literacy, and safety and response to natural disasters.

How critical are metrics to track impact?

We are on a journey to mature our impact and effectiveness, though our current focus is on output metrics, like total dollars invested annually or total volunteer hours invested by our employees and retirees. As we continue to transform, we are going to shift to impact analysis and reporting, which is just as important as the output.

For example, we support military caregivers through investments made to the Elizabeth Dole Foundation and the PsychArmor Institute to create an online school for military caregivers

and their families. This school provides online classes and clinical follow-up care to educate caregivers on key areas. With this investment, we are measuring how many caregivers are leveraging services and how their lives have been positively impacted by this online school. The goal with PsychArmor for 2017 is to touch 15,000 caregivers. We are in year two of implementation of our corporate responsibility strategy so we are now developing scorecards that move us from output to impact analysis and reporting, and this will affirm the impact we're having.

Since 2010 through the end of 2016, contributions from USAA, the USAA Federal Savings Bank, and The USAA Foundation, Inc. totaled \$110 million, and hours of volunteerism reported by USAA employees, retirees, and family members (when volunteering with an employee or retiree) total 2.9 million hours.

USAA employees/retirees' contributions also impact three annual USAA giving campaigns:

Previous to 2016, the "USAA Serves" Giving Campaign benefited United Way and expanded in 2016 to provide more giving choices. Since 2010, employees and retirees have pledged \$61.5 million.

The "USAA Bowlathon" occurs in San Antonio and at regional campus locations benefiting a different organization each year. Employees raised \$2.4 million between 2010 and 2016.

The "USAA Season of Sharing" is a holiday giving program in which employees contribute gifts and gift cards to fulfill wish lists for clients of various nonprofit agencies. Since 2010, USAA employees' contributions have assisted 145,000 individuals in need.

How critical is having buy-in from the top for these efforts?

It's crucial to success. Our corporate responsibility efforts require investment from our corporate budget and the resources of our employees. With the development and implementation of USAA's philanthropic strategy came a commitment from our board of directors, our CEO, and our executive council to increase our annual giving to 1 percent of pre-tax income (PTI) by 2018 – more than double what we invested in 2014. Historically, we did not have paid volunteerism days for our workforce; now our employees have two days to devote to giving back to their communities. Our CEO has also championed some targeted community efforts for our company. For instance, in San Antonio, we invested over \$3 million to drive the effective end of veteran homelessness. Through public/private partnerships, San Antonio has achieved that goal. ●