

# MENNONITES AGAINST MILITARISM

## NEWS RELEASE

April 25, 2022

For Immediate Release

### Editorial Contacts:

Jessica Buller, Jessica Buller, Peace Education Coordinator, Mennonite Central Committee, US, [jessicabuller@mcc.org](mailto:jessicabuller@mcc.org), 574.523.3068

Camille Dager, Director of Marketing and Communications, Mennonite Church USA, [CamilleD@MennoniteUSA.org](mailto:CamilleD@MennoniteUSA.org), 574-523-3077

### **Mennonites Against Militarism seeks volunteers interested in counter-recruitment efforts**

Mennonites Against Militarism – a collaboration of [Mennonite Central Committee, U.S.](#) (MCC) and [Mennonite Church USA](#) (MC USA) – is seeking to launch an initiative to counter military recruitment of U.S. youth. The vision for the project, Alternatives to Military Enlistment Network (AMEN), is to connect young people with volunteer advisors who can help them find non-military career, service and training opportunities.

Mennonites Against Militarism invites interested volunteers to complete a [brief survey](#) that identifies areas in which they may engage with AMEN, including administration, web and graphic design, publicity, budgeting, fundraising and guidance/career counseling. Veterans and others who understand the realities of war and military recruitment are also encouraged to complete the form.

“This project goes beyond traditional counter-recruitment efforts by working with individual youths to find meaningful opportunities,” said Titus Peachey, a legacy peacemaker and retired coordinator of peace education for MCC. “In a highly militarized society, it is a practical way to embody our faith commitment to peace.”

In a 2021 blog for Mennonite Women USA, Executive Director Cyneatha Millsaps, co-pastor of Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Indiana, asked, “How do we Mennonites — traditionally anti-military — address the fact that, for many recruits, the military is their only option for peace? If we seek to direct young people away from enlisting, we need to provide them with viable options for achieving economic and physical security at home.”

“Through AMEN, we envision a dedicated group of trained counselors around the country ready to help youth resist the militarization of their futures by finding viable alternatives to military enlistment,” said Peachey.

The AMEN initiative will be comprised of various components, including:

- **A website** that will serve as the primary entryway for youth, parents and pastors to connect with a volunteer career counselor.
- **A network of trained and vetted counselors** around the country who provide young people with the resources and step-by-step guidance they need to find viable post-high school options.
- **A shared database of resources** related to educational scholarships, service-learning opportunities, internships, job training, work camps, gap-year experiences and employment by region and nationally.
- **An outreach program** to help make families, congregations and church agencies aware of these alternative opportunities.

The United States Armed Forces needs [150,000 new recruits](#) each year to meet its goals. Graduating high school seniors are the military’s target recruiting demographic, according to [Military Times](#). Since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), military recruiters have the same on-campus access to high school students as college recruiters. In addition, the military reaches young people through a variety of other means, including onsite programming (i.e., Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps) social media, mobile apps and even [video games](#).

The [best predictor of whether a young person will join the armed forces](#) is their familiarity with the military, often through an enlisted family member or proximity to a military base. However, sign-on bonuses and offers of training, education, health benefits and travel provide strong incentives for recruits, especially for those lacking resources. In fact, a down economy and high unemployment provide [fertile ground for military recruiting](#).

“At this point, we are testing the viability of this concept and seeking volunteers to get it started,” said Peachey. “Our hope is that AMEN will grow and thrive as a constituent-run initiative to counter these powerful recruitment efforts.”

MCC is a relief service and peace agency representing 15 Mennonite, Brethren in Christ and Amish bodies in North America, including MC USA. The U.S. headquarters are in Akron, Pennsylvania.

[Mennonite Church USA](#) (MC USA), is the largest Mennonite denomination in the United States with 16 conferences, approximately 530 congregations and 62,000 members. It has offices in Elkhart, Indiana, and Newton, Kansas. [mennoniteUSA.org](http://mennoniteUSA.org)

# # #