

## **Section C-1 Family Member Readiness**

The contents of this Toolkit have been developed to assist you in your efforts to support family readiness. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided is current and accurate. However, because statutory and regulatory changes may have occurred since the publication of this Toolkit, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs cannot assume responsibility for its continued accuracy. Before taking any significant action based on the contents of this Toolkit, you should contact your Family Readiness Program representative or legal officer, as appropriate, to secure the most current information.

## **Family Member Readiness**

### **Family Readiness Group (FRG) Advisory Councils and Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee (ISFAC)**

Volunteers provide strong leadership in state or regional family readiness councils. Their experience and expertise is invaluable. Some of their responsibilities include:

- Visiting units within the state or region and providing FRG briefings which include how to organize an FRG, how to maintain it, how to recruit volunteers, FRG fund raising activities, and how to establish guidelines for an FRG
- Conducting training classes on various topics for FRG members, commanders, and service members
- Providing invaluable input to the command by ensuring that family readiness receives appropriate command emphasis and resources (including monetary)

In essence, FRG volunteers are team members with valued ideas, skills, and commitment. Volunteers are typically family members or retirees – someone who has a stake in seeking to enhance quality of life for military families. Volunteers are recruited from the unit level to serve on state or regional FRG Advisory Councils. Their travel and expenses are covered with funds appropriated for family readiness. Most volunteer positions are treated the same as paid positions. The volunteer applies for the position by completing an application and/or resume and is selected after being interviewed. Many volunteer positions require a time commitment of one to two years. As a family member, you may have an opportunity to share your experience and skills with a major command, state, or regional FRG Advisory Council. Your input is important whether it is at the unit, community, state, or regional level.

#### **Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee (ISFAC)**

An Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee (ISFAC) combines the best of all worlds and epitomizes the Total Force concept. It is a committee that facilitates ongoing communication, involvement, support, and family readiness between all branches of service, both Active and Reserve. Members come from surrounding military installations and communities within each state or region to form a committee, which provides guidance and assistance in family readiness during mobilization, deployment and disaster relief. Active and Reserve component family program coordinators network to identify service providers in all areas. By working together between the components and services, efforts are enhanced rather than duplicated.

It is sharing the best of the best – which is also the goal of the Toolkit and “HELP Guide to Guard and Reserve Family Readiness.” A goal of ISFAC is to strengthen existing family assistance delivery systems in the event of mobilization, contingency deployment or natural disaster through the interaction of committee members. This includes meeting the identified

needs of military personnel, family members, and commands by providing information, referral, education and preventive services to enhance family readiness. These mutually supportive efforts allow for rapid, coordinated services between installations and units.

ISFACs are committed work groups who meet quarterly or as determined by the needs of the participating organizations. They share ideas. They write Memorandum's of Understanding (MOUs) to share resources, document the shared responsibilities and vision of family readiness, and describe procedures and policies so that everyone has a common framework and set of expectations. During peace or wartime, ISFACs increase communication between units to services and strengthen family well-being.

ISFACs help provide quick response during times of disaster such as hurricanes and forest fires. Systems to share information, personnel, and resources have already been put in place. States, services, and units are able to respond rapidly to the disaster because everyone knows their role and responsibility. Family Resource Centers have been established through the influence of ISFACs. Commanders are briefed on IFSFAC activities, history, and capabilities. ISFACs are another command tool to protect our nation and respond in times of emergency.

ISFACs encourage and provide ongoing training for their members on topics such as critical incident stress, ombudsmanship, personal financial management, and family advocacy. ISFACs offer another key volunteer leadership opportunity.