

## **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)**

You might be asking yourself, “What is a FRG? Why should I be involved?” An FRG is an organization made up of family members, volunteers, service members, and civilian employees. The FRG belongs to a unit and provides an avenue of mutual support and serves as a network of communication among the family members, the chain of command, and community resources. FRGs are a grass roots concept, and the basic goal is to provide opportunities for members to meet and communicate in order to alleviate problems and better cope with common issues.

Your level of involvement is strictly up to you depending upon your personal interests, time, and commitment. As with any organization you may belong to, it takes time to transition into a new group and the FRG is no different. Give it a chance. Attend a FRG meeting or family sponsored activity. You will meet other spouses and families in the same situation you find yourself – balancing their lives between a military and civilian world. FRGs provide an effective way of gaining and providing information during a deployment or separation. They are the essential conduits of news, and you will want to hear the updates.

Unlike some organizations, the FRG does not have dues. All family members are equal and there is no military rank. The FRG leaders are volunteers – family members just like you. FRGs provide extensive training (which is usually free or paid for by the military unit) and a chance to volunteer. The FRG offers the opportunity to be involved in your spouse’s unit and to make a difference. They foster increased levels of cohesion, confidence, and commitment between the chain of command, the service members, and family members. The FRG offers an effective means of supporting families and reducing trauma and stress.

The FRG is not a coffee group or club. Each family member, retiree, service member, or civilian employee has a connection to that specific military unit. The FRG is not a surrogate parent, guardian, or social worker. Instead, the FRG can provide support, assistance, and information and referral to resources as needed. The FRG is not a babysitting service, but it will often provide a location and child care for unit activities. FRGs enhance every Guard or Reserve unit family readiness by fostering a spirit of cooperation and unity. They can assist in preventing the problems that may affect families as a result of their spouse’s separation due to mobilization, deployment, or training.

Because of their contribution to the Guard and Reserve family readiness initiative, FRGs receive some financial and logistical support from a variety of sources. This monetary support funds training and travel for FRG members, reimbursement of incidental expenses such as child care (needed while volunteering for the unit FRG), volunteer recognition programs, and unit newsletters. Volunteers are rewarded with professional development training and leadership opportunities, and the unit is rewarded with an enhanced state of family readiness.