

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.

Volunteering

Family Member Readiness

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Volunteers are the backbone of many Guard and Reserve family readiness programs and they can provide a vital link in the military unit's communication between the command, the service member, and the family members. As a volunteer, there are many ways to contribute within your community and within your spouse's military unit. It is a matter of matching your interests and available time to the wealth of volunteer opportunities available.

Family readiness group (FRG) volunteers play an important role in providing assistance to military and family members before, during, and after family separation. When military members are mobilized or away for training, families are placed in a stressful situation. FRG volunteers can relate to other family members because they understand what they are going through and together they share coping strategies. Volunteering is a way to be involved, to better understand the mission of the unit, and to assist others. You can build new skills by volunteering, and you can receive valuable professional development training in leadership and other areas. The services offer programs such as Family Team Building, which is facilitated and organized solely by volunteer efforts. Volunteers are teaching other family members about military life, and strategies for success.

Take advantage of the camaraderie, the training, and the friendships fostered by volunteering. It is an individual decision. You can bake for a fundraiser or you can take a leadership role. It is all up to what works best in your personal life. Why volunteer? There are a number of good reasons for volunteering, including:

- Contributing to the unit
- Contributing to the community
- Supporting your spouse's military commitment
- Gaining a sense of achievement
- Gaining job experience and enhancing your resume

Be assertive. Contribute your ideas to improving and enhancing family readiness. Did you feel welcomed when your spouse joined the unit? If so, great – consider volunteering to welcome other new families. If not, how would you improve the welcome and sponsorship program in the unit? Turn the negative into positive. Share your ideas and suggestions.

Volunteering can provide new experiences and enhance your talents. Many organizations and units provide limited free child care when you are volunteering. Ask your FRG or organization if they can help pay for child care. Be assertive, find out about all the benefits available to volunteers.

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Once you decide to contribute as a volunteer, be sure to keep track of your volunteer hours. They add up quickly and can be used on future resumes and job applications. The volunteer work that you provide also helps to keep military programs running. Your spouse's unit records volunteer hours and services to justify the need for programs and additional monies for family readiness. The leadership training you receive as a volunteer for a Guard or Reserve unit is immeasurable. Consider volunteering in your unit FRG. You truly can make a difference.