

# The Family Readiness Group (FRG)

Several significant changes are occurring that impact how FRGs need to operate today and in the upcoming years. It is no longer sufficient for FRGs to operate only during and/or for the purposes of deployment. FRGs are being called upon to play a more expansive role in Family readiness and in assisting units and Families of an Expeditionary National Guard.

## **FRG Program Mission**

The FRG is an official Army program established pursuant to AR 600-20, Army Command Policy. Unit commanders at all levels are expected to establish and/or support FRG operations. FRGs are typically established at the company level with guidance and support from the battalion commander and his/her staff. Specific guidance on the definition and mission of FRGs has been established and is described below.

## **Definition and Mission of FRG**

As a company level operation, the FRG is a command sponsored organization of all assigned Soldiers (married and single), DA Civilians, volunteers and their Families (immediate and extended) that together provide mutual support and assistance and a network of communications among the Family members, the chain of command, and community resources. While all of these individuals are automatically considered to be members of the FRG, participation is voluntary.

The FRG plays a vital role in assisting unit commanders with military and personal deployment preparedness and enhancing Family readiness of Soldiers and Families. The FRG assists unit commanders in three ways. First, the FRG conducts activities that enhance the flow of information between command and Families. The FRG provides feedback on the state of the unit's Families to the command and disseminates information to Families received from the command.

Secondly, the FRG encourages resiliency among the members by providing information, referral assistance and mutual concern. Thirdly, the FRG provides activities and support that enhance the well-being and esprit de corps within the unit.

### ***The FRG mission is to:***

- act as an extension of the unit in providing official, accurate command information
- provide mutual support between the command and the FRG membership
- advocate more efficient use of community resources
- help Families solve problems at the lowest level

## **Benefits of the FRG**

**For Family members, mutual support and care**—The FRG provides a connection to the unit through which Families get important information, develop friendships, and receive moral support. In feeling connected and supported, Families are more likely to have positive attitudes about military life, the unit, and its mission. The FRG's efforts to educate and support Families also help Families become more resilient and able to cope with deployments.

**For Soldiers, peace of mind**—Soldiers can be assured that while they are deployed, the unit has provided an avenue for their Family members to get reliable information and help when needed. This support can help reduce Soldiers' stress and enable Soldiers to focus on the mission.

**For commanders, force multiplier**—The FRG leader's feedback, based on the FRG's connections and contact with Families, enables the command to keep a pulse on Family needs and issues so that command can respond in a timely manner. By being able to communicate with and support Families more effectively, the command can increase Family readiness and deployment preparedness.

**For the military and civilian communities**, an FRG that is able to refer Families to appropriate community service agencies in a timely manner can reduce the occurrence of crisis situations. Further, to the extent FRGs can learn about resources available in different communities, military and civilian communities can support Soldiers and Families wherever they live.

### **Family Readiness Staff**

The Senior Family Readiness Support Assistant and Family Readiness Support Assistants (2BCT, 67 TC, 734 RSG) provide training and resources for Family Readiness Group (FRG) Leadership Teams, including Commanders, Military Points of Contact (MPOCs), Leaders, Co-Leaders, Secretaries, Treasurers, Phone Tree Volunteers and others. Training for Families and other FRG members is also available for FRG meetings and other events on topics such as Mission, Purpose and Benefits of the FRG, using the Joint Services Support portal, and more. The Senior Family Readiness Support Assistant is also the point of contact for the Joint Services Support Portal, the National Guard Bureau's web resource for Family Programs and five other programs.

### **Family Readiness Group Leadership Training & Resources**

**Basic FRG Leadership Training:** This course covers the foundation of the FRG structure and mission for FRG Leadership Teams, as well as anyone interested in being more involved with the FRG. Topics include: Mission and Purpose of the FRG, Phone Tree and Chain of Concern, Newsletters, Funds and Fundraising, Chain of Command, Services Branch resources, Effective FRG Meetings, the Joint Services Support Portal, Virtual FRG and more.

**Advanced FRG Leadership Training:** For the more seasoned FRG Leadership Team, this course covers military, community and veterans resources, volunteer management, using technology in the FRG, sponsorship, time management, financial readiness, personal development and more.

**Annual Family Readiness Briefing:** This briefing covers the annual family readiness briefing requirement and includes topics such as the FRG, Family Assistance, and Family Care Plans.

**State Family Readiness Conference:** This conference provides Service members, Family members, and Volunteers with comprehensive training in Family Readiness. The Adjutant General and Panel will speak on behalf of the Iowa National Guard and will allow time for Question & Answer. Training topics include: financial success, stress management, resiliency: for adults and children, signs and symptoms of PTSD/TBI, suicide prevention, OPSEC: How to deal with the media, FRG best practices, time management for busy people, and Laugh your way to a better Marriage, History of the National Guard, ISLAM, and much more.

### **Program Contacts**

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**Joint Services Support Portal:** [www.jointservicesupport.org](http://www.jointservicesupport.org)

Please register on JSS to receive the most current information from the Iowa National Guard Warrior and Family Services Branch. Once you register, your role(s) will be approved by a local state staff member, and then you'll be able to begin accessing the full range of services and information the JSS Portal has to offer. You may select more than one role and should choose all that apply to you. You will also begin receiving the

Services Branch Weekly Bulletins and Newsletters, which contain information on events, trainings, and other resources of interest to Iowa National Guard Service members, Families and Friends. Once registered, you will also have access to a broad range of resources, contacts and training events. Volunteers should also use this site to log and track volunteer hours. If you have any other questions or problems registering on the site, please contact the Senior Family Readiness Assistant at 515-252-4781.