

Section A-2 Family Readiness Groups (FRG)

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 a subject matter expert in your chain of command to secure the most current information.

Family Readiness Groups (FRG)

Volunteer Management - Recruitment and Retention

Volunteer recruitment requires a positive approach. It is not easy asking someone to volunteer to assist the FRG. It is much easier and far less common when they approach your FRG offering to help. Take some time to think through and articulate why you need volunteers in the family readiness group. This provides a foundation on which to define the work volunteers will do and to create teamwork between service members, civilian employees, and volunteers.

Determine what volunteers are expected to accomplish. Volunteers are a resource for fulfilling the unit's family readiness mission. Actively spread the word about the family readiness program. Show your interest in family readiness as a commander. Ask people to volunteer. Have meaningful work for people who do volunteer. Create a climate where individuals feel free to share ideas.

Ask individuals to volunteer for specific jobs. Talk to them about their interests and needs. Help them to make a match between how they would like to help the FRG and where you need assistance. There are numerous types of volunteer positions in a FRG varying from continuous requirements such as Coordinator or Treasurer to short term and one-time positions such as being responsible for a fund-raiser. Some family members are happy to make telephone calls or be a key caller. They can do that from home at a time that is convenient for them and their family. Offer some choices, but let them make the match. The more ways you develop for individuals to become FRG volunteers, the easier your recruitment task.

Your experienced volunteers, regardless of their position, are your best recruiters. If they enjoy the FRG and what they are doing, they tell other friends and family members. Involving your current volunteers in recruiting new volunteers lets them know their judgement and contributions are valuable. It's a win-win situation.

Quality volunteers are precious resources. As with any human resource, retention of volunteers is an important complement to your recruiting efforts. Every volunteer you retain is one less volunteer you must recruit. A proactive retention program keeps volunteers motivated with training, ongoing communication, evaluation, and recognition. Retaining volunteers and developing their skills must be a continuous process. Provide new opportunities, listen to their suggestions, and return telephone calls. Call to follow up on new volunteers to see how they like their volunteer duties and to thank them. Make special dining arrangements if their volunteer time or training goes over a normal meal. Value their contributions – show them that you appreciate their willingness to give the FRG their time and talents by the way you treat them from the very beginning.

No job is self-explanatory – regardless of how easy it seems. Training contributes to retention and recruitment. If possible, show rather than tell, new volunteers how to get the job done. A hands-on approach builds confidence and a sense of teamwork. Volunteers are human – they

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want to do a good job and they thrive on support and praise. Don't wait to put it in the newsletter or for an award. Don't forget your long- time volunteers. Ask them for suggestions about improving the program.

Ideally, your goal can be to have a self-perpetuating cycle in which satisfied volunteers bring in more volunteers. Enthusiasm can be contagious.