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TAG POLICY LETTER 14-3

6 June 2014

**NEW JERSEY NATIONAL GUARD SERVICE MEMBER AND
FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM SUPPORT PLAN**

1. PURPOSE. This plan implements my guidance and procedures for the conduct of the Service Member and Family Readiness Program. This instruction directs the collection of information subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, authorized IAW 5 USC § 552, AR 340-21, and AFI 33-332.

2. APPLICABILITY. This plan applies to all Army National Guard (ARNG) and Air National Guard (ANG) units assigned to the State of New Jersey in conjunction with respective Major Army Command or Major Air Command directives, as applicable. Conflicts between this plan and Higher Headquarters directives will be resolved through the State Family Programs Director acting on my behalf.

3. REFERENCES.

- a. 5 USC § 552b
- b. DoD Instruction 1100.21, "Voluntary Services in the Department of Defense"
- c. DoD Directive 1342.23, "Family Readiness in the National Guard and Reserve Components"
- d. DoD Instruction 1342.28, "DoD Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP)"
- e. DoD 5400.11-R, "Department of Defense Privacy Program"
- f. AR 340-21, "The Army Privacy Program"
- g. AF Instruction 33-332, "Air Force Privacy Program"
- h. AR 608-1, "Army Community Service"
- i. AR 600-20, "Army Command Policy"
- j. AF Instruction 36-3009, "Airman and Family Readiness Centers"
- k. CNGBI 1800.02, "National Guard Family Program"

4. MISSION, VISION, INTENT:

a. **Mission:** The New Jersey National Guard Family Program promotes self-reliance and resiliency in service members, their families and volunteers by preparing, assisting and supporting their service members for the obligations of local, state and federal military service.

b. **Vision:** Quality services are a force-multiplier that support a unit's mission, readiness, and enhance service member and family lives and well-being.

c. **Intent:** To provide the facilities, programs and services required to support unit and service member readiness and sustain the All-Volunteer Force.

5. POLICY. It is my policy that the New Jersey State Family Program Office promote self-reliance and resiliency in service members, their families and volunteers by preparing, assisting and supporting their service member for the obligations of local, state and federal military service. Specifically, the State Family Programs Office will:

a. Provide efficient and effective services and resources to service members and their families that support readiness and retention. For the purposes of this plan, family is defined as any "significant other" in a service member's life who affects the morale, well-being and decision making, and affects the quality of life of the service member (e.g. spouse, parents, siblings, children, girl/boyfriend, friends, co-workers, etc.). This definition will not be used to determine eligibility of benefits as outlined in applicable regulatory documents.

b. Be free of discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religious or political preference or affiliation, gender, age, handicap, or service affiliation. All active, reserve, and retired uniformed service members; their family members; civilian employees; and surviving family members of military personnel are eligible for assistance as outlined in applicable directives.

c. Appropriately safeguard all information obtained from individuals to protect the individual's privacy in accordance with the Privacy Act and service directives. All requests for the release of personal information outside the realm of the State Family Programs Office must be coordinated and approved through the State Family Program Director.

d. State Family Program Office staff are authorized access to unit personnel rosters insofar as it facilitates the mission of providing services to service members and their families. The staff is composed of service members and contractors working directly for the State Family Program Office and overseen by the State Family Program Director. The State Family Program Director is responsible for ensuring all staff members are trained and follow Privacy Act requirements.

e. Volunteers are a key component of the State Family Programs Office structure. Volunteers, who have been appointed to act in a Family Readiness Group or Key Volunteer Networks statutory position, are authorized access to Privacy Act information in accordance with DoD 5400.11-R. Access is authorized only after State Family Program Office authorized training has occurred and only in the performance of duties as directed by the unit leadership or the State Family Program Director.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES.

a. **State Family Programs Office (SFPO).** The SFPO is the single point of contact for managing and providing services under the Service Member and Family Readiness Program. The SFPO works in conjunction with other federal, state, local, and non-governmental organizations to provide services outlined in applicable guidance and as contracted by the National Guard Bureau (NGB) for contractor support. The SFPO will:

1) Be managed by a State Family Program Director for the delivery of services to units, service members, and family members as authorized by statutes and approved guidance.

2) Provide support to commands at all levels within New Jersey concerning delivery of services in support of all phases of the deployment cycle and declared state emergencies.

3) Be manned by military members and contractors authorized to deliver key aspects of the program and services.

b. **State Family Program Director (SFPD).** The SFPD is my Subject Matter Expert on all aspects of the Service Member and Family Readiness Program and is authorized to manage the SFPO staff as needed to ensure standardized and efficient delivery of all aspects of Family Program elements. The SFPD will:

1) Advise me and unit Commanders on family readiness, quality of life, and other Family Program matters as necessary or as requested.

2) Manage and direct the military and contractor staff assigned to the SFPO to ensure policy guidance and contract deliverables are met.

3) Develop, direct, manage, implement, coordinate, and evaluate the human service delivery system to ensure Family Program elements and support services are provided to service members and family members, including any family of deployed military personnel.

4) Interpret and adapt guidance, regulations, instructions, and policies, tailoring them to the needs of New Jersey. The SFPD will have final approval authority, to ensure a statewide standard, for all official policies and directives dealing with Family Programs services for ARNG components and will act as an advisor for the ANG components.

5) Direct, coordinate, communicate, and collaborate with all Family Support personnel within the SFPO, other service components, and state and national-level support organizations. The goal is to promote an efficient delivery system and provide for community outreach to augment the services provided by SFPO staff.

6) Ensure that the SFPO staff provides consultation, briefings, and training to commanders, service members, family members, and statutory volunteers in supporting the Service Member and Family Readiness Support Plan for each unit.

7) Assist unit leadership in developing and executing policies, programs, and processes that enhance individual, family and community readiness for newcomer orientation, mobilization, pre-deployment, reunion and reintegration, and de-mobilization, as required.

8) Develop, test, and implement plans for state, regional, and national catastrophic events, in coordination with local, military, and community agencies.

9) Work with the general staff to ensure SFPO staff members are kept informed and included in the activation, mobilization, or deployment of units, individuals, or personnel in the state.

10) Ensure Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) briefings and programs are open and actively promoted to authorized family members.

c. **Commanders.** Commander support of the Service Member and Family Readiness Programs is key to mission readiness. Service member readiness is contingent on family readiness. Commanders at all levels will work with the SFPD and SFPO staff to ensure a robust and successful Service Member Soldier and Family Readiness Program. Commanders will:

1) Support Family Readiness Program missions, goals, and objectives which support quality of life, readiness, and retention. Provide time as needed for SFPO staff to accomplish required/requested briefings and training sessions.

2) Work with the assigned Family Readiness Support Assistant (FRSA) or Airmen & Family Readiness Program Managers (AFRPM) to provide briefings and training sessions on the benefits offered by the Soldier and Family Readiness Program provided through the SFPO.

3) Provide program vision and guidance to respective Family Readiness Groups (FRG) or Key Volunteer Networks (KVN). FRG/KVN statutory volunteers support your Family Readiness goals and accomplish the readiness mission through your guidance. FRG/KVN statutory volunteers will receive training on their duties provided through the FRSA/AFRPM as appropriate.

4) Appoint, in writing, a statutory volunteer or group of statutory volunteers to implement an active FRG/KVN program. Provide the appropriate logistical, command, and access for SFPO staff to support your Soldiers and Airmen. Your assigned FRSA/AFRPM can also assist in the recruitment, briefing, and training of volunteers to enhance your Readiness Program.

5) Periodically acknowledge and recognize the hard work provided to your Family Readiness Program. A motivated volunteer team is essential to a well-run program.

6) Provide access to service member and family personal information as needed by SFPO staff members in the performance of their authorized duties. Collection of personal information is limited to SFPD determined authorized items as needed for the support and accomplishment of the Service Member and Family Readiness Program. FRG/KVN volunteers are authorized access to contact information (i.e. home of records, email, and phone) only as required and directed by unit leadership or the SFPD after receiving training through the FRSA/AFRPM on protection of personal information.

7) Ensure statutory volunteers are familiar with and complying with applicable regulations and directives. Certain Government protections and benefits are afforded to statutory volunteers but only as far as they are in regulatory compliance. Your FRSA/AFRPM will assist in ensuring statutory volunteers are properly trained and briefed.

8) Ensure FRG/KVN activity funds are properly raised and expensed according to regulatory guidance. Your assigned FRSA/AFRPM will assist in ensuring compliance and will help ensure FRG/KVNs follow applicable directives.

9) Designate a Family Readiness Liaison (FRL) to act as the day-to-day contact between the unit and the FRG/KVN volunteers and ensure SFPD-directed training is accomplished. The FRL will be responsible for keeping the FRG/KVN informed of events and issues within the unit that affect family members.

10) Ensure that applicable service members comply with family care plans. Commanders will stress the need and importance in educating and preparing family members for the military life style and the possibility of deployments.

11) Encourage participation by service members and family members in activities sponsored by the unit and SFPO-sponsored activities and briefings. Active participation in these types of activities promotes self-education and self-reliance which directly affects unit readiness.

12) Work with the YRRP Coordinators to ensure that mobilization, pre-deployment, deployment, reunion and reintegration, and post-mobilization briefings are conducted. Proactively inform and invite family members to all YRRP events which they are authorized to attend.

13) Support all service members deploying as Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMA). Commanders must ensure that IMAs deploying individually or as part of a non-New Jersey National Guard unit receive the proper briefings. In addition, commanders notify the SFPD of IMAs prior to deployment so the proper Family Programs briefing and tracking of service member can occur to provide the proper Family Programs support during the deployment.

d. **Service Members.** Service members are the cornerstone to accomplishing a unit's mission. Service members must always be ready to deploy on short notice which requires your family be able to manage and function during your absence. Single service members also have a need to prepare those close to them for eventual deployments and should not ignore the services and briefings available by the SFPO. Using and supporting the services found within the SFPO goes a long way and ensures you and your family members are ready for deployments of any duration. Service members will:

1) Ensure that command is informed of any changes in family status, including current family contact information (e.g. marriage, divorce, births, email, phone and address information). Information required assists in allowing SFPO staff in providing Family Program services while deployed.

2) Ensure that the appropriate mobilization or deployment documents and required emergency data are updated in personnel files. DEERS (Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System) information must correctly reflect your family's information for authorized services to be provided.

3) Discuss, as needed, with family members the personal and household documents (e.g. wills, powers of attorney, financial and bill information, key important documents, etc.) needed to ensure households and family affairs are competently handled during deployments.

4) Encourage family member attendance at information briefings provided by the unit, the unit FRG/KVN, and/or SFPO. As a minimum, provide families with SFPO and FRG/KVN contact information, unit leadership contact information. The ability of family members to tie into a support network is essential, in many cases, to resolving problems and issues before they become insurmountable.

e. **Family Readiness Group/Key Volunteer Network (FRG/KVN).** The FRG/KVN is a valuable support mechanism for family members facing deployments or dealing with the military lifestyle. FRGs/KVNs will:

1) Be a support mechanism for people who are important to our service members and impact their lives in a positive manner. The support provided consists of official and unofficial information designed to keep families informed of unit and morale-building activities, deployment information, and readiness information designed to ease the stress surrounding deployments.

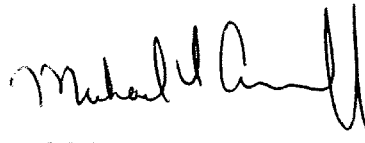
2) Follow guidance as provided within regulations, unit commander, and the SFPO. Unit commanders will provide the broad guidance on the function of the FRGs/KVNs.

3) Be advocates for family members to the unit leadership. Address and bring common issues affecting families to the attention of the unit commander or the SFPD through the SFPO staff.

4) Refer requests for individual assistance to the appropriate SFPO Family Assistance Center (FAC). The FAC will determine what actions are necessary to meet the needs of those requesting assistance. FRG/KVN statutory volunteers are not authorized to provide assistance to service members and family members.

5) Be authorized to create and utilize social media to provide a convenient mechanism for distributing official and unofficial information on events taking place. Operational and Communication Security and the protection of personal information will be a top priority for unit FRG/KVN social media pages. The unit commander will authorize unit social media pages and volunteers must follow applicable regulations and guidance as briefed by the SFPO Staff.

7. **CONTACT INFORMATION.** The point of contact for this support plan is the State Family Programs Director, MAJ Edward Dowgin. He can be reached via email at edward.j.dowgin2.mil@mail.mil.



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