

BULLET BACKGROUND PAPER

ON

AIR FORCE RESERVE DEPLOYMENT REINTEGRATION SERVICES

(AIR FORCE RESERVE YELLOW RIBBON PROGRAM)

PURPOSE

To provide a response to the Defense Advisory Committee On Women In The Services Request for Information #10 (March 2019) regarding Air Force Reserve (AFR) deployment reintegration services, as they relate to Service women and mothers returning from deployment. (*Note: Total Air Force response provided separately.*)

DISCUSSION

(10.a. - b.) Reintegration program for deployed Service members, including those in place to support Service women:

AFR Airman and Family Readiness staff provide deployment assistance that meet the challenges of the four phases of deployment (pre-deployment, deployment/sustainment, re-deployment/re-integration and post-deployment). Airman and Family Readiness personnel assess the needs of all members, provide services and/or make referrals to appropriate agencies.

The Yellow Ribbon Program provides comprehensive support through a cooperative network of military, veteran, state, and non-government organizations providing information, resources, referrals, and proactive outreach to minimize stress on Airmen and their families during all phases of deployment, or accumulated deployment of 75 days or more. The program also provides education and opportunities for building a support network for mothers and their children who have experienced separation.

- Resiliency training provided includes relationship instruction through Couples Enrichment Program for Post 2, communication and job skills, financial management and symptoms of stress education throughout the deployment cycle
- Licensed child care provided by event planning contractor plus curriculum by Project YES! (Youth Extension Service) consisting of college students instructing 6-18 year olds
- Trained 5,700 Airmen and family members FY17; 5,300 Airmen and family members as of 3rd Quarter, FY18
 - Feedback surveys reflect 97% adult attendees find event helpful
- Attendance is voluntary
- Program addresses known stressors related to deployment

- 93% adult attendees report satisfaction with ability to communicate with loved ones
- 91% adult attendees report they feel better prepared to manage stress
- 94% adult attendees report more willingness to continue in military service/support my loved one
- AFR program currently funded through Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funds
 - Participating in FY21 POM for baseline funding
- Event planning contract provides all venue locations, A/V and Child Care Services, break-out space, meals and snacks.

(10.c) Assessment of program effectiveness and impact:

The Air Force Reserve Yellow Ribbon Program is assessed using the OSD-created evaluations given out at every event, as well as technology driven text messages to inform individuals regarding pre- and post-event benefits and support programs.

(10.d) Additional support provided to mothers as they return to their families from deployment:

The Yellow Ribbon Program sponsors a Psychological Health Advocacy Program offers referrals to anyone experiencing issues pre-, during, and following a deployment. There is a toll free number available 24/7. These services include, but are not limited to, case facilitation (non-clinical); command consultation; planning and coordinating regional psychological health referral services; providing psychological health information; and administrative support. Customer feedback forms are used during events and after any consultation. Psychological Health Advocacy Program (PHAP) personnel are not authorized to counsel, diagnose or treat individuals. However, they are Registered Nurses offering referral services to Air Force Reservists and their families.

SUMMARY

The Air Force Reserve administers reintegration/post-deployment support for all Airmen and families via its Yellow Ribbon Program, equipping its organizations to provide comprehensive services to women and mothers.