



NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU DACOWITS QBM SEPTEMBER 2023 RFI #2

In June 2022, the Committee received a briefing from the Department of the Air Force (DAF) Women's Initiatives Team (WIT). In September 2022, via RFI 5, the Committee asked the Military Services to provide a status update on their potential Women's Initiatives Team or working group like the DAF WIT. At the time, the Army was in the process of establishing a WIT and the Navy was in the process of developing one.

RFI #2. The Committee requests a written response update from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and National Guard on whether your Service has implemented a WIT focused on identifying and resolving barriers that impact the retention of servicewomen? If so, provide additional details about your Service's WIT (e.g., policies, directives, charter, oversight authority, streamlined access to senior level decision-makers, etc.). If not, explain why a WIT has not or will not be founded.

Response: The Air National Guard, along with the Air Force Reserve Command, has recently put a committee in place called ARC ATHENA. ARC ATHENA is a Director Air National Guard (DANG) and Commander Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC/CC) sponsored program to source and address female and family-centric barriers to readiness and find staff solutions, ensuring all ARC Airmen can safely and effectively accomplish the mission. This effort is driven by the Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017 which directs the Department of Defense to adjust policies and programs to improve outcomes in gender equality and the empowerment of women. ARC ATHENA's grassroots approach leverages DAF Weapons and Tactics Conference model of highlighting readiness barriers directly from the field to MAJCOM-level leadership. It's purpose it to advance DANG and AFRC/CC priorities by gathering Total Force Airmen to identify female and family-centric barriers to readiness and propose solutions to ARC senior leaders for action. The Army National Guard participates in a Total Force Women's GO Quarterly Forum, which is in the process of developing and standing up a Women's Initiative Team. In addition, many states and individual Wings/units have stand-alone councils or teams committed to identifying and resolving barriers that impact the retention of servicewomen at the lowest level.