Readiness Essentials for Army Leaders

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Over the past year Installation Management Command (IMCOM) G9 Army Community Service (ACS) division has been working with the Army National Guard and Army Reserve Family Programs office to develop new standard Family Readiness training recognized by all three Army components. The new training, titled Readiness Essentials for Army Leaders (REAL), is designed for targeted positions within the Family Readiness Group (FRG) with six different modules:

Foundations is designed to be a foundational course on Family Readiness and Family Readiness Groups. The 1.5 hour course covers the Department of Defense definition of Family Readiness and how the Army FRG can assist commanders in meeting their mission of executing a unit Family Readiness program. The training provides basic information on the different roles within the FRG from the command team to the different volunteer positions. Foundations is a required module for all other FRG training, but it can act as a standalone module for troop training and desk side briefings for commanders needing an overview on Family Readiness and FRGs.

Command Team is targeted towards company commanders and 1st SGTs, but is also informative for brigade and battalion commanders. This 1.5 hour course delineates the roles and responsibilities of the command team regarding how the to leverage the FRG to execute the Family Readiness mission. Topics include: Family Readiness, Mission Essential Tasks for FRGs, FRG Elements and Operations, Communications, Volunteer Management, FRG Funding, and Resources.

The *Family Readiness Liaison (FRL)* course is designed to prepare Soldiers who are appointed as FRLs to assist with the operational, logistical, and administrative aspects of the FRG. As a liaison between the command and the FRG volunteer the FRL needs to know the ins and outs of the FRG and how their role can assist both the command and the volunteers. The 5.5 hour course covers: Leadership Management, Volunteer Management, Communication Network, Stability Support and the FRG, Non-Mission Essential Activities, and Resources. Upon completion of the course the FRL will have an understanding of their role in the FRG and how to assist with execution of the FRG mission.

There are three courses designed for FRG volunteers: *FRG Leader, Key Contact, and Informal Funds Custodian.* The *FRG Leader* course is a 5.5 hour course designed to provide the volunteer FRG leader with an understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the FRG. While the course topics mirror those in the FRL training the focus of the training is on the volunteer and how they can execute the commander's vision of the FRG. From tips on how to get started to how best to leverage different communication modalities FRG leaders will leave the course with the knowledge needed to begin implementing the mission essential tasks associated with the FRG. The *Key Contact and Informal Funds Custodian Training* are each 2 hour courses dedicated to those two specific volunteer roles within the FRG. Both are given tips and techniques for executing the role as well as practical exercises and role playing scenarios in order to help volunteers better understand their role in the FRG.

While the structure of the FRG remains intact the intent of the training is to emphasize the mission essential tasks associated with the FRG, help all involved understand that the FRG is a commander's program and it is only through the commander's vision and direction that the FRG mission is executed.

This training is designed with the adult learner in mind and is a series of facilitated discussions, small group activities, and practical exercises.

Also included in the new training package is the **REAL Smart Book.** This book is a compilation of resources, best practices and templates needed to actively run and manage the FRG. The Smart Book can act as the FRG Binder with editable templates for SOPs, position descriptions, checklists, and resources. Everything a commander or FRG leader needs to know about the FRG is at their fingertips. The training is designed to have participants roll up their sleeves and delve into the Smart Book, ensuring individuals are familiar with the resources available to assist them in their mission.

Starting in January 2017 ACS Mobilization, Deployment and Stability Support Operations (MD&SSO) program managers will begin a pilot program delivering each of the modules at least once at their installation over a six month period of time. During the pilot participants will be asked to provide feedback on the training delivery, materials, resources, and content. This feedback, along with feedback from instructors and others who will be reviewing the training materials, will be given to the rewrite team for consideration and incorporation into the new training.

If you are interested in having a voice in the new training for FRGs please contact your local ACS in January to find out when they will be offering the pilot on your installation.