

Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

For Those Who Serve and Those Who Support



Fiscal Year 2011 Annual Report to Congress *March 2012*





Preparation of this report cost the Department of Defense a total of approximately \$42,000 in FY2011-2012.

Generated on 0120

Reference ID: B-39FE2F3



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Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

For Those Who Serve and Those Who Support

Mission

Promote the well-being of National Guard and Reserve members, their families and communities, by connecting them with resources throughout the deployment cycle

Vision

A ready and resilient National Guard and Reserve Force successfully navigating the challenges of deployments

Objective

The objective of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) is to ensure the readiness and well-being of National Guard and Reserve Service members and their families. The YRRP will continue to meet these objectives in FY 2012 by:

- Advancing a culture of mutual support and understanding among the military and their communities
- Ensuring quality and relevant resources
- Providing engaging activities that effectively and efficiently connect participants to resources



“Through the Department’s Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, we are striving to ensure that Guardsmen, their families, and their employers are properly prepared for their deployments, and that they have access to services, referrals, and proactive outreach throughout the mobilization cycle.”

*Leon E. Panetta
Secretary of Defense*

Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta addresses National Guard leaders at the National Guard’s 2011 Joint Senior Leadership Conference at National Harbor, Md., Nov. 8. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill)

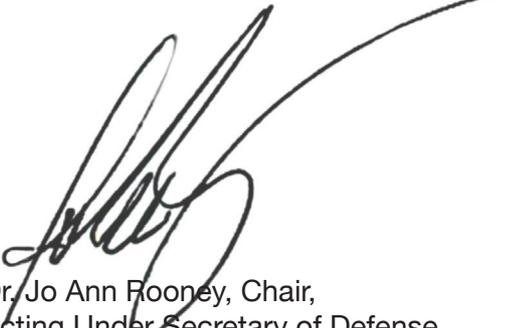
Message from the Chair

I have the honor to present the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) Fiscal Year 2011 Annual Report to Congress. Since its inception three years ago, the YRRP has been an essential readiness and resilience program for National Guard and Reserve units, Service members and those who support them.

This report highlights many of the YRRP's accomplishments, including the evaluation and integration of promising practices, an exchange of education and knowledge among the Services, and increased efficiency and effectiveness through inter-Service and interagency collaboration. These achievements were accomplished through the direct involvement and support of senior stakeholders – including the Reserve Component Chiefs – as well as the commitment of the the YRRP staff and their intergovernmental coworkers.

I am proud of what the the YRRP has achieved, but also recognize that we face fiscal challenges as we move forward with plans for the Program's future. This report outlines many of these accomplishments and future plans.

Our National Guard and Reserve Forces are ready, valued, experienced, and relevant. The the YRRP is committed to ensuring they stay that way by building a strong, resilient network of Service members, families, and those who support them. I thank Congress for recognizing the need for the YRRP, and for the continued support of and dedication to our National Guard and Reserve Service members and those who support them.



Dr. Jo Ann Rooney, Chair,
Acting Under Secretary of Defense
(Personnel and Readiness)



Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

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Executive Summary



In response to the requirements of Public Law 110-181, Section 582 and Public Law 111-84, Section 597, this Annual Report provides Congress, the Department of Defense, the Reserve Components and other supporting agencies with information on the Department of Defense's (DoD's) Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) activities during Fiscal Year (FY) 2011.

The YRRP is a statutorily created, joint-Service effort led by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. The YRRP was created by the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) (Public Law 110-181, Section 582) to support the Services in providing National

Guard and Reserve members and their families with critical support, information, services, and referrals throughout the entire deployment cycle (pre, during and post) to maximize successful transitions as Service members move between their military and civilian roles and to create strong, resilient military families.

The credit for the success of the YRRP belongs to individuals at the local level who work the program every day. Guard and Reserve, federal and state employees, volunteers and non-profits have worked tirelessly to ensure our Service members and those who support them have access to resources as they transition back into their communities. As we move forward during these fiscally challenging times, it is imperative we capture and share promising practices; look for opportunities for efficiencies; and work in a collaborative manner to ensure we meet the requirements of the program while also looking at the YRRP's future design and execution.



While much work has been accomplished by the Services and the the YRRP Center for Excellence (CfE), there is even more work to be done. The CfE provides the Services, Program Managers and Event Planners with policy and guidance, event measurement and analysis, promising practices, and event support. The CfE is committed to maintaining a rigorous process that ensures the YRRP resources are used as efficiently and effectively as possible and that the YRRP will continue to have a demonstrated, positive impact on Service members and those who support them.

FY 2011 was a productive and effective year for the the YRRP:

- The Services conducted a total of 2,151 YRRP events across the country, providing vital information and resources to 309,753 Service members and family or designated representatives (see Figure 1).
- Survey results from YRRP event participants were overwhelmingly favorable. More than 83% of respondents expressed high satisfaction with the events, and 77% said the information presented increased their confidence in their ability to find and utilize vital resources that would prepare them and their loved ones for continued military service.
- Collaborative interagency relationships – including the YRRP-led Employment Initiative Program with the Department of Labor, Department of Veterans Affairs, and many others – have generated positive outcomes for Yellow Ribbon Reintegration participants, while maximizing the efficiency and effective reach of the YRRP.





Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

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In just three years, the YRRP has evolved from a fledgling program to one that is growing, forward-leaning and has provided essential readiness and resilience training and resources to over 800,000 Service members and designees through in-person YRRP events. This evolution will continue, and the YRRP will rely upon Reserve Component leaders for their guidance and candor as plans are made for the sustainability and scalability of the YRRP to meet the future needs of our nation.

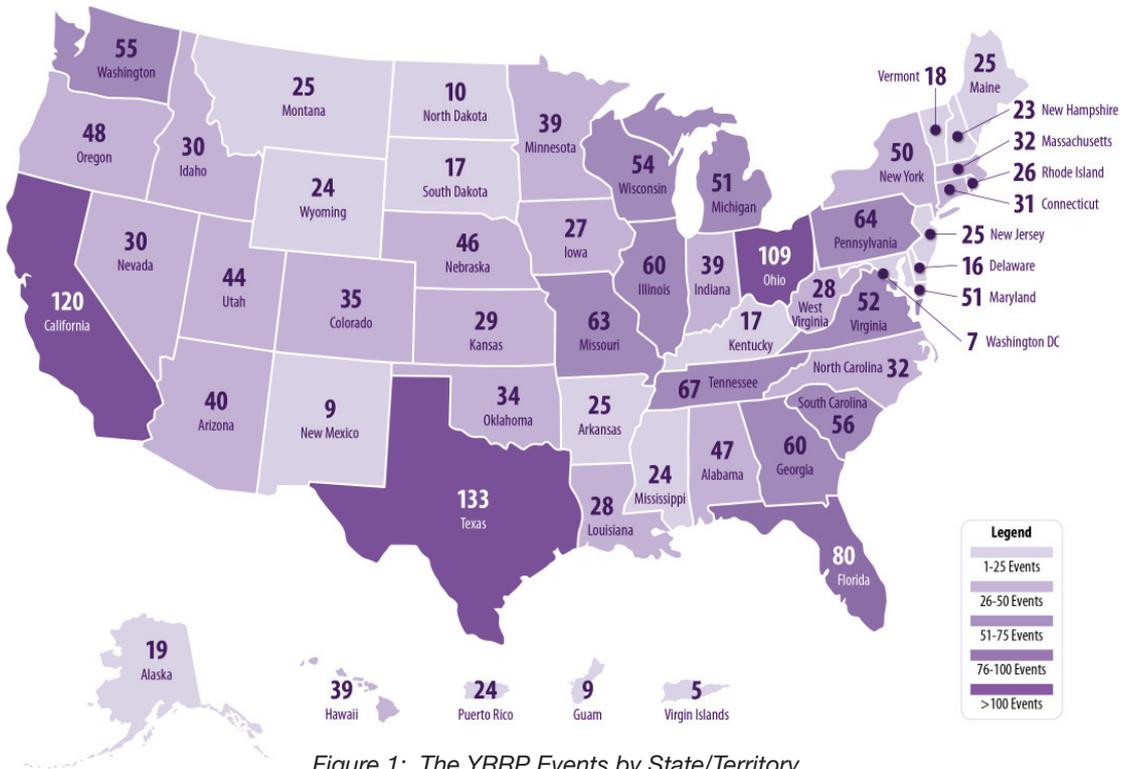


Figure 1: The YRRP Events by State/Territory



Overview: About the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

The YRRP is firmly committed to ensuring that the 1.1 million members of the National Guard and Reserve, and those who support them, are prepared, educated and equipped to manage all aspects of the deployment cycle. The YRRP evaluates and shares resources, tools and promising practices across the seven Reserve Components in support of Service member and family readiness and resilience. The YRRP initiatives are designed to enhance and support the seven Reserve Components as they plan, execute and evaluate Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events in communities nationwide.

History

The YRRP was established by the 2008 NDAA in direct response to our nation's recognition of the unique challenges facing the National Guard and Reserve community. Some of these challenges are:

- Geographic dispersion away from Active Component military support networks and other members of Guard and Reserve units
- Significantly fewer pre-, during and post-deployment resources than Active Component counterparts
- Disparate access to family support groups in local communities while the stress of deployments placed on the families continues to grow
- Increased combat deployments (more than 90,000 National Guard and Reserve members are currently activated, and more than 830,000 have activated since 9/11)
- Increased strain on maintaining civilian employment and education opportunities

As military operations draw down, the requirement for a ready and capable Reserve Force endures, as DoD efforts to operationalize the Reserve Components attest. The YRRP is a key factor to ensure individuals move efficiently between military and civilian status. As of the end of FY 2011, 92,470 National Guard and Reserve members remained activated or deployed in support of global operations.

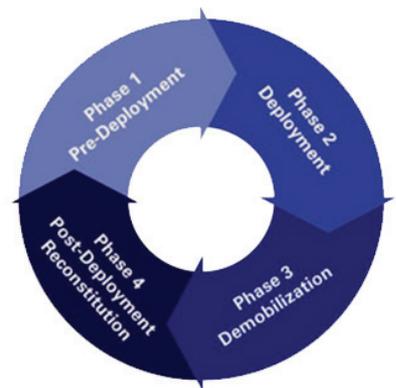


Figure 2: The YRRP events support Service members and their loved ones during four distinct phases.

“As of the end of FY 2011, 92,470 National Guard and Reserve members remained activated or deployed in support of global operations .”



Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

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Organizational Structure



The Acting Under Secretary of Defense (USD) for Personnel and Readiness (P&R), Dr. Jo Ann Rooney, is the Executive Agent of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program and Chair of the YRRP Advisory Board. USD (P&R) is the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense for Total Force Management on matters related to readiness; National Guard and Reserve Component affairs; health affairs; training; and personnel requirements and management, including equal opportunity, morale, welfare, recreation, and quality of life matters.



The YRRP operates within Reserve Affairs (RA) under the leadership of the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, Mr. David L. McGinnis. The YRRP activities are aligned within the Family and Employer Programs and Policy (FEPP) directorate led by Mr. Ronald Young. FEPP is the only family support directorate designed specifically to address the unique needs of the 1.1 million members of the National Guard and Reserve and their loved ones. The Executive Director of the YRRP is Mr. Glenn F. Welling, Jr.



Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program



In addition to the YRRP, the FEPP directorate also oversees Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and Individual and Family Support Policy (IFSP), enabling effective collaboration and synergy among all three entities. ESGR develops and promotes employer support for National Guard and Reserve Service members by advocating relevant initiatives, recognizing outstanding employer support to Service members, increasing awareness of applicable laws, and resolving conflict between employers and Service members. IFSP develops policies, advocates for programs that support a ready and resilient National Guard and Reserve Component Force and facilitates the linking of and access to community resources that support military members and families. Collaboration among the YRRP, ESGR, and IFSP remains a top priority, increasing the sharing of resources, and creating efficiencies at the national, state, and local levels.

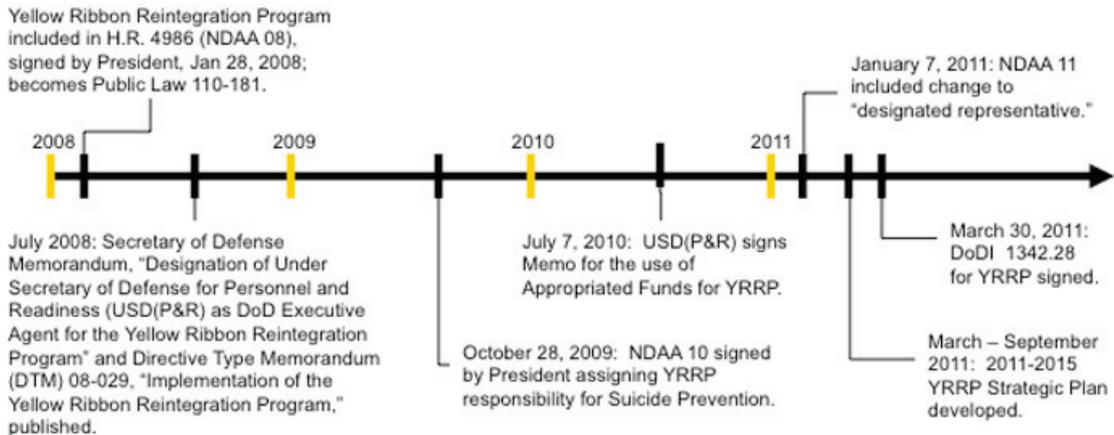


Figure 3: The YRRP Timeline

The YRRP Advisory Board

The YRRP Advisory Board ensures active involvement of top leadership across the National Guard and Reserve Components and provides additional strategic direction for the program. For example, the Advisory Board recommended the legislative changes that now enable designated representatives to attend YRRP events. This supports single Service members and those with non-traditional families (e.g., single-parent families, same-sex partners). Additionally, multi-Service events continue to be discussed by the Advisory Board, resulting in the first large-scale multi-Service YRRP event held in August 2011. This multi-Service event was planned by a Joint council, with logistics, planning, and funding support from the Office of the Secretary of Defense. The event included multiple deployment tracks, single-Service member curriculum, and Service-specific breakouts to maintain Service-unique requirements. This event realized additional efficiencies, enhanced networking, and maximized resources.

Service Programs

Each of the National Guard and Reserve Components is responsible for implementation of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program within its Service, based on the overarching guidance provided by Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1342.28. The DoDI establishes mandatory guidelines to maintain similarity and consistency, while supporting the Services' unique missions and challenges. The table on the following page provides highlights of each Service's implementation of the YRRP.



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Army National Guard:

- In an effort to address the high jobless rate of returning Soldiers, many Army National Guard (ARNG) events include job fairs. The goal is to match qualified Soldiers with interested employers.
- The ARNG, which hosts events at more locations than other Services, also welcomes attendees from other Reserve Components at many of its events. This helps ensure that Service members who are unable to attend their own Service's events receive the benefits of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.
- Collaboration with our Family Programs office, Employer Support, Transition/Warrior Support, Sexual Assault Prevention & Response, and Psychological Health are critical to the success of our events. All of these support programs within the Guard have full-time personnel at the national and state level, and resilience coordination and integration are critical to the success of our events.



Army Reserve:

- During FY 2011, the Army Reserve analyzed the process for conducting events and has enhanced its contracting procedures (using more Indefinite Delivery/ Indefinite Quantity contracts) and administrative requirements (using a standardized, comprehensive Service Contract Approval packet) which has provided efficiencies, particularly in the larger, combined events.
- The Army Reserve hosted life-changing YRRP events for the units, Soldiers and loved ones affected by the Fort Hood tragedy.



Marine Corps Reserve:

- The Marine Corps Reserve has taken proactive steps to maximize participation while minimizing cost by hosting its Yellow Ribbon Reintegration events at local Reserve facilities.



Navy Reserve:

- The Navy Reserve's 60-day post-deployment reintegration event is a Department of Defense "Best Practice" and serves as an example of the YRRP's success. Known as the Returning Warrior Workshop, it integrates proven elements from Services, academia and the private sector.
- In November 2011, the Navy Reserve also released an overhauled version of their Warrior and Family Support Program execution guidance instruction. The new instruction culls together years of lessons learned that make all programs and events more dynamic, more efficient, and more effective.



Air National Guard

- The Air National Guard (ANG) YRRP collaborates with other Service support programs within our organization to provide a continuum of care to Service members and their families/designated individuals. Collaboration with the National Guard Family Programs office, Employer Support, Transition/Warrior Support, Sexual Assault Prevention & Response, and Psychological Health are critical to the success of our events. All of these support programs within the Guard have full-time personnel at the national and state level.
- The ANG also hosts and promotes participation in joint events to ensure that every member is taken care of in a fiscally responsible manner.



Air Force Reserve:

- The Air Force Reserve's child and youth programs, conducted in conjunction with the YRRP events, has garnered accolades from all participants. Through collaboration with project Youth Extension Services to plan interactive agendas with age appropriate activities and the Teen Leadership Council to be mentors for the youth, participation by children and youth has increased 55% since 2009.
- By combining the pre-, post 30- and 60-day deployment cycles, the Air Force Reserve hosted regional events comprised of multiple units, which enhanced the effectiveness and efficiency of their Yellow Ribbon Reintegration events.



Coast Guard Reserve:

- The Coast Guard's YRRP was established in FY 2011 through funding transferred from the OSD YRRP Office. The organization's first event, a pre-deployment event for a port security unit deploying to the Middle East, took place on May 20, 2011, in Tampa, FL.
 - In FY 2011, the Coast Guard Reserve worked with other Services to plan and carry-out two joint events, maximizing the resources, efficiency and collaboration of ideas within the YRRP.
 - As a new member of the YRRP, the Coast Guard Reserve has sought to use best practices established by the other Services.
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Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

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Event Support

Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events support the readiness and well-being of National Guard and Reserve Service members and those who support them with dynamic and engaging delivery of information throughout the entire deployment cycle. In FY 2011, the Services conducted a total of 2,151 YRRP events across the country, providing vital information and resources to nearly 310,000 Service members, their families and others who support them (see Table 1). At these events, information was distributed to assist attendees as they prepare for and endure the hardships of deployment, then enable Service members to successfully reintegrate back into their families, communities and careers.



The YRRP events are designed to support four key phases:

- **Pre-Deployment:** Pre-mobilization is the period from first notification of mobilization until deployment. During this period, the YRRP events focus on educating and ensuring readiness for mobilization and deployment. These events are typically attended by Service members, family members, and designated representatives.
- **Deployment:** This phase is unique as the YRRP event is normally only attended by loved ones while the Service member is deployed. It provides training and information focused on the challenges faced by family members, friends and other designated representatives who are left behind. Various service providers (e.g., Department of Veterans Affairs, TRICARE, ESGR, American Red Cross, USO, Department of Labor) also take part to provide information and answer any questions or concerns.
- **De-Mobilization:** Service members returning from deployment visit de-mobilization sites across the country. These events are designed for Service members and are primarily comprised of administrative tasks and out-processing, and are not designed to be a thorough debrief as seen in later reintegration events.

- Post-Deployment/Reconstitution:** Reintegration into family, community, and the workforce continues far beyond the time the Service member returns home. The Post-Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA) is administered during this time and is useful in identifying Service members at risk for behavioral health problems. This is often used as the basis for referral and/or prompts appropriate help-seeking by the Service member. These YRRP events may include the Service members, families, and loved ones. This process is ongoing and often requires multiple steps over an extended period of time.

More than 750 Service members and their loved ones take part in the Fear Factor Challenge during a multi-Service YRRP event in Texas. The Fear Factor training engages attendees in a review of resources available to them through fun and interactive competitions.



(U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Martha Whipple)

The following table provides a breakout of attendance data from all Services:

	Army National Guard	Army Reserve	Marine Forces Reserve	Navy Reserve	Air National Guard	Air Force Reserve	Coast Guard Reserve	Total
Total Number of Events	929	344*	155	141	472	97	13	2,151
Total Number of Attendees	180,675	48,684	12,336	37,113	22,245	7,306	1,362	309,721
Service Members	89,524	22,948	6,264	22,421	13,587	2,850	904	158,498
Family Members	68,101	18,709	2,399	14,304	7,343	4,139	458	115,453
Non-Dependent Family	23,050	7,027	3,673	388	1,315	317	N/A	35,770
Total Number Mobilized/ Deployed (as of 27 Sep 11)	49,099	21,152	5,681	4,719	6,443	4,702	674	92,470
Projected Number of attendees for FY 2012	100,493	47,000	8,820	11,000	21,000	15,000	2,428	205,741

Table 1 - Event Statistics by Service

*Army Reserve during-deployment events are typically dual events comprised of an early deployment and late deployment event for family members and designated representatives of deployed Service members at various stages of their deployment. Post-deployment events are typically consolidated events comprised of three separate tracks for Service members that are 30-day, 60-day, and 90-day post-deployment. When counted individually, the total number of unique event activities for Army Reserve is 558.



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Program Specialists

The Program Specialist initiative began in 2009 with 10 Program Specialists and expanded to 27 full-time Program Specialists in FY 2011 (see Figure 4). Program Specialists facilitate and support the YRRP events nationwide in conjunction with government and non-government stakeholders, including the YRRP Event Planners and Program Managers, unit commanders, the Department of Veterans Affairs, ESGR, and Joint Family Assistance Programs. As a result, the Services have seen an increase in the YRRP's ability to provide information on relevant local, state, and national programs and the benefits available to Service members and those who support them.



Figure 4: Program Specialist Locations

Accomplishments

In FY 2011, Program Specialists attended 146 YRRP events and an additional 225 affiliated events (e.g., Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee events, Deployment Cycle Support Team events, etc.), reporting on promising practices to assist the Center for Excellence (CfE) in developing training aids and briefing materials. Moreover, Program Specialists monitored YRRP event schedules across their region to identify duplication of events and to promote efficiencies through multi-Service events. For instance, a Massachusetts Program Specialist assisted in planning and organizing a multi-Service event hosted by the Air National Guard that included participants from the Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, and Air National Guard. In Texas, 14 Program Specialists collaborated on a multi-Service event with over 750 participants.

Next Steps

During FY 2012, Program Specialists will continue building relationships throughout their assigned regions. They will continue identifying and collecting promising practices from the YRRP events to be used by the CfE, working closely with Event Planners to leverage new material received from the CfE, identifying potential opportunities for multi-Service events, and participating in their region's Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee and other appropriate committees related to the YRRP.

Cadre of Speakers

The OSD YRRP provides a talented pool of speakers and facilitators available at no cost to the Services. This group, known as the Cadre of Speakers, was introduced in 2010 to assist in the delivery of dynamic and interactive sessions at Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events. The Cadre of Speakers helps ensure that events positively impact all event attendees and maintain a consistent, up-to-date curriculum of instructional material. The YRRP Event Planners have the opportunity to request expert speakers on topics that relate directly to their event participants.

Accomplishments

In FY 2011 the Cadre of Speakers supported 260 YRRP events. They presented 571 sessions reaching 57,335 Service and family members. Ninety-four percent of survey respondents gave the speakers a positive rating, and 98 percent responded positively to the statement, "The knowledge and/or skills gained through this session are directly applicable to my life."

Next Steps

In FY 2012 the Cadre of Speakers will integrate several new presentations into their repertoire, and will expand their use of standardized curricula. The OSD YRRP will work with the Services to ensure their events are supported by the Cadre of Speakers to the maximum extent possible.

Program Impact

Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events take place during all phases of the deployment cycle, with post-deployment events conducted at the 30-, 60-, and 90-day intervals after the Service member returns home. Events are designed to inform and facilitate access to benefits and services supporting the well-being of Service members and those who support them throughout the deployment cycle.

The YRRP events include interactive and informative seminars on a variety of topics, including: communication; stress management; deployment and post-military career opportunities; financial management and employment; health and behavioral health education; domestic and parenting relationships; suicide prevention; resilience training; and other life-skills training.

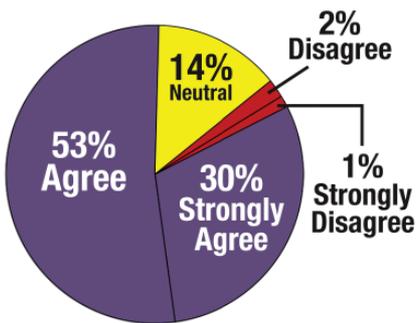


Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

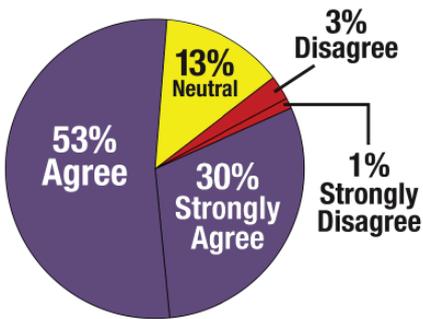
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Results

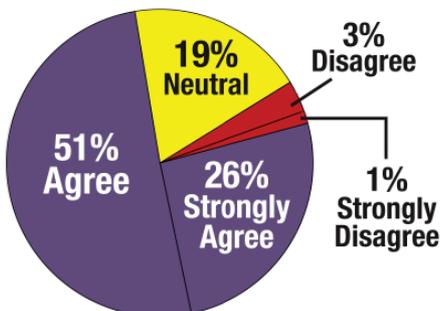
Based on an analysis of 10,693 surveys collected from YRRP event attendees between February and September 2011, a number of trends were identified. Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events provided substantial value to participants; respondents specifically acknowledged that the events provided more useful information, at one location and at one time, than they could have received elsewhere. Family members and others who support Service members also recognized the opportunity to connect with others undergoing similar experiences. Other findings show:



Satisfaction: Overall participant satisfaction with the events was high, with 83% expressing high satisfaction with the events, for both Service members and family members.

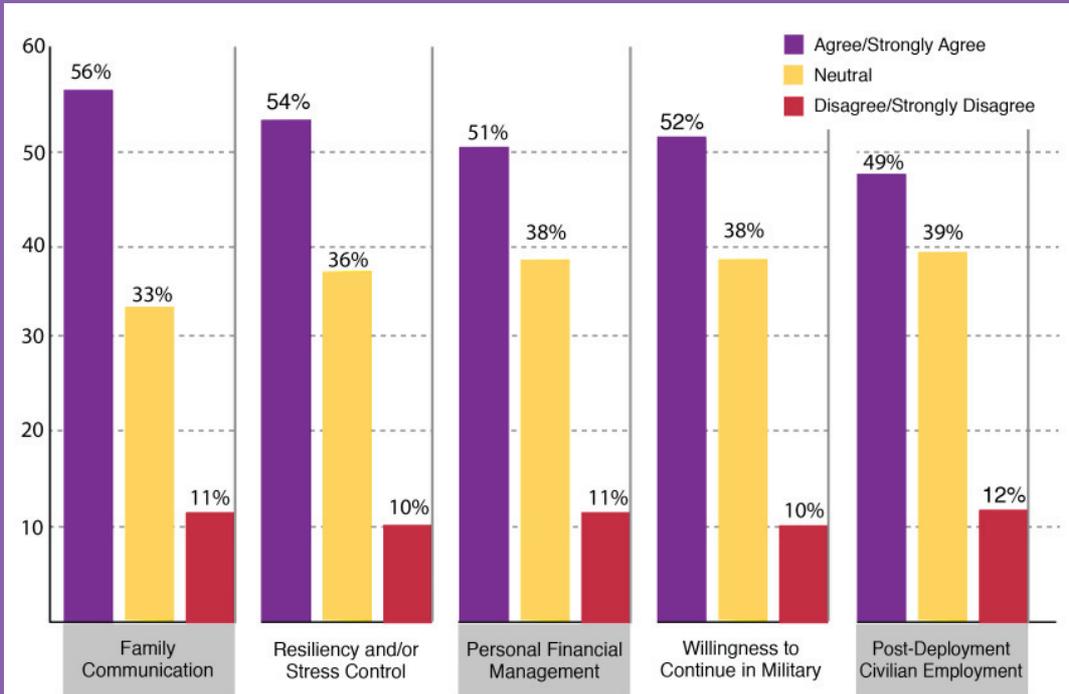


Transfer of Knowledge: Aggregated results for both third and fourth quarters of FY 2011 showed that 83% of respondents agreed that the YRRP events helped them better understand potential deployment and post-deployment issues and increased their awareness of available resources for additional information and/or assistance.



Utility of Information: Nearly 77% of respondents acknowledged increased confidence in their abilities to find mental health resources, to access deployment-related resources, identify warning signs of personal or family stress, better understand and manage their home life and interpersonal relationships, access available resources for financial and/or employment-related issues, and prepare themselves and their families for continued military service.

Impact: As a result of attendance at the 90-day post-deployment events, participants were asked to self-report beneficial changes for themselves or their families on their life and personal skills in five areas. Fifty-two percent noted a positive change in these areas as a result of attending a YRRP event.



Next Steps

The YRRP will continue refining attendee questionnaires and collection methods to enhance the value of the YRRP event data. This will empower the YRRP to maximize the relevance and impact of future events, as well as help to refine the curriculum in response to what has been learned.





Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

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Funding



Assessment of Resource Requirements

The Services have indicated that the YRRP currently remains adequately resourced to carry out the mission as mandated by law. The total FY 2011 budget allocated for the OSD-RA YRRP office was expended.

Table 2 (next page), details the FY 2011 expenditures and FY 2012 planned expenditures for the DoD Reserve Component programs using Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funds in the Reserve Component Military Personnel and Operations and Maintenance accounts. The YRRP Office at the headquarters level is resourced with baseline Operations and Maintenance, Defense-wide funding.

Department of Defense Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (\$ in Millions)	FY 2011 Expenditures	FY 2012 Planned Expenditures
<i>MILPERS, Army National Guard</i>	\$ 50.969	\$ 62.198
<i>MILPERS, Army Reserve</i>	\$ 27.547	\$ 20.749
<i>MILPERS, Air National Guard</i>	\$ 12.195	\$ 9.435
<i>MILPERS, Air Force Reserve</i>	\$ 11.077	\$ 16.786
<i>MILPERS, Navy Reserve</i>	\$ 1.224	\$ 4.318
<i>MILPERS, Marine Corps Reserve</i>	\$ 2.268	\$ 4.100
Total MILPERS Support - funding for pay costs, travel for military members to attend the pre- and post-deployment sessions	\$ 105.280	\$ 117.586
<i>O&M, Army National Guard</i>	\$ 23.915	\$ 22.988
<i>O&M, Army Reserve</i>	\$ 31.058	\$ 32.400
<i>O&M, Air National Guard</i>	\$ 36.655	\$ 22.000
<i>O&M, Air Force Reserve</i>	\$ 4.500	\$ 11.700
<i>O&M, Navy Reserve</i>	\$ 3.052	\$ 2.652
<i>O&M, Marine Corps Reserve</i>	\$ 1.898	\$ 4.800
Total O&M, Guard and Reserve Support - funding for conference space, facility rentals, advertising/communication, military spouse/dependent travel	\$ 101.078	\$ 96.540
Total O&M, Defense-wide support - funding to support state specialist coordination, outreach services through the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs regarding deployment cycle and reintegration events at 30-60-90 days, Center for Excellence assessment of Reserve and National Guard promising practices throughout regions and States. (1)	\$ 23.500	\$ 26.600
TOTAL SUPPORT	\$ 229.858	\$ 240.726

Table 2 – FY 2011 Expenditures and FY 2012 Planned Expenditures

MILPERS = Military Personnel Appropriation - used to fund military personnel expenses

O&M = Operation and Maintenance Appropriation - used to fund the YRRP administration and events

(1) Does not include Joint Family Assistance Support Program funding. Does not include the Coast Guard Reserve, who are part of the Department of Homeland Security.



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Center for Excellence

Public Law 110-181, Section 582, established the Center for Excellence (CfE) and Congress enhanced the role of the CfE in FY 2011. The mission of the CfE is to compile, assess and provide promising practices, policy and guidance and evaluation metrics across the Services (see Figure 5). Program Managers and Event Planners access the “best” resources as a means to share information and collaborate. The YRRP also works with the Services to gather and analyze data and themes from event attendee surveys. These data allow the Services to adapt and modify event schedules and content, and implement lessons-learned to maximize the effectiveness and positive outcomes of Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events and programs. This analysis will generate recommendations for new curriculum to keep pace with the changing knowledge base of our Service members and those who support them.

Event Measurement and Analysis

Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness

The CfE is working with the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness (Clearinghouse) at Penn State University to review and recommend changes to the YRRP event curriculum. The Clearinghouse was established through a collaboration between DoD’s Office of Military Community and Family Policy (MC&FP) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The DoD-NIFA collaboration leverages the research and programmatic expertise of land-grant universities across the country to enhance military family readiness and foster resilience through evidence-informed practices and programs.



Figure 5: Center for Excellence Structure

Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program and Clearinghouse subject matter experts are currently:

- Reviewing and consolidating YRRP information (e.g., curriculum, presentations, lesson plans, and group exercises) to identify and document promising practices, and identify gaps in content
- Developing uniform and standardized YRRP educational resources (e.g., curriculum, presentations, lesson plans, and group exercises)
- Providing training and technical assistance to encourage implementation of promising practices and newly created educational materials
- Analyzing and reporting the data from after action reports and the YRRP participant surveys to assess the effectiveness of the program

Accomplishments

In FY 2011, Clearinghouse staff members and experts attended and reviewed 103 presentations – identifying gaps and offering detailed and evidence-based summaries and assessments based on the YRRP’s mission, strategic plan, and established promising practices for adult education. These reviews provide recommendations for improvements and data analysis based on event after action reports and event participant surveys, discussed previously.

Next Steps

The Clearinghouse is developing presentations and materials to enhance the YRRP curriculum and to share proven practices for use by the Services at future events around the country. The Clearinghouse is revising the event participant survey to more accurately capture the immediate outcomes and to provide direction for program improvement and enhancement aligning with the YRRP strategic plan. Moreover, to assess the impact of events on Service members and other participants, the CfE and the Clearinghouse are undertaking a two-pronged evaluation approach to enable the YRRP to assess its effect on participants. First, a retrospective evaluation will be conducted regarding the impact of the YRRP attendance on Service members and their families across relevant outcomes, including resource awareness and utilization. Second, a prospective evaluation will be initiated the following year to evaluate the YRRP as it supports families through the deployment cycle and one year post deployment. These two evaluations will provide a rigorous assessment of the YRRP’s long-term impacts and the resulting behavior changes exhibited by Service members and families/designated representatives.

Policy and Guidance

Strategic Plan

During FY 2011, the YRRP formulated a strategic plan. This plan, created with input from all of the Reserve Components through their Service Liaison Officers assigned to the OSD YRRP Office, aligns the YRRP priorities and objectives with OSD RA and USD (P&R) key objectives. The resulting plan maintains the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program as a community-based, Service-driven program that addresses the needs of National Guard and Reserve Service members and those who support them.



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The YRRP strategic plan acknowledges the importance of its enduring drivers – a large population of National Guard and Reserve Service members on active duty in support of Overseas Contingency Operations; the challenges they and their loved ones often face during deployment and reintegration; the community impact of military draw down; employment; and a focus on efficiencies and cost savings across DoD. This plan (see Figure 6) is actionable, measurable and serves as the foundation for improving our outcomes, challenging our thinking, and measuring how well we support a ready and resilient Guard and Reserve Force.

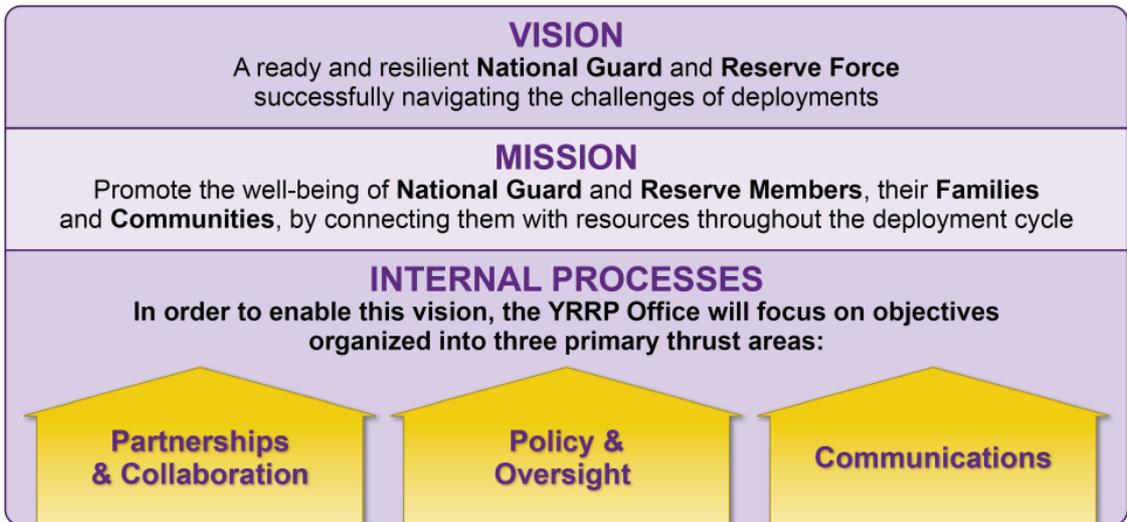


Figure 6: The YRRP's Strategic Plan Overview

Accomplishments

The final version of the YRRP Strategic Plan was completed in November 2011.

Next Steps

Completion of the YRRP Strategic Plan marks a significant step toward long-term success by aligning the YRRP's internal processes with the YRRP mission. Over the next several years, work will continue to implement the initiatives within the plan. In addition, the plan will be a living document with an annual review of the work plan and action plan, and a complete review of the strategic plan every few years.

Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1342.28

DoDI 1342.28 was implemented on March 30, 2011, to establish policy, assign responsibilities, and provide instructions and implementation guidance for the National Guard and Reserve Components as they conduct YRRP events throughout the country.

The DoDI requires the Services to conduct YRRP events throughout the four phases of the deployment cycle, and to inform Service members and those who support them about the assistance and services available to them. It also requires the utilization of local, state, and federal organizations to help ensure the readiness and resilience of Service members, those who support them, employers, and affected communities as they experience the rigors of deployment and separation, and subsequent reintegration.

Accomplishments

Since publication of the DoDI, the Reserve Components have increased standardization of their programs. For instance, the Army Reserve has decreased the number of phases in order to focus more effort on the core events described in the DoDI. This increased standardization has improved collaboration in planning and conducting multi-Service events.

Next Steps

In FY 2012, the YRRP Office will begin a comprehensive review and revision of the current DoDI. This review and revision will provide more specialized content for various groups of Service members, including multiple deployers, female Service members, and single Service members.

NDAAs 2011 - Joint Travel Regulations

On January 7, 2011, Public Law 111-383, Section 622, expanded the authority of the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) to provide travel and transportation allowances to National Guard and Reserve Service members and their designated representatives who attend Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events.





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Accomplishments

The expansion of the JTR was the culmination of nearly two years of coordination with the Reserve Components and other stakeholders with the goal of increasing access to YRRP events. The legislation enables Service members, as well as his or her spouse, parent, guardian, same sex partner or other non-dependent designated representative, to receive reimbursement for travel and per diem associated with attending an event. This legislation is integral to the the YRRP mission, as it ensures that financial considerations do not prevent a Service member from taking part in the YRRP, and allows Service members the discretion to choose the person(s) best suited to support their resilience and reintegration needs throughout the deployment cycle regardless of the nature of the relationship. This is an important step toward maximizing participation and effectiveness of YRRP events.

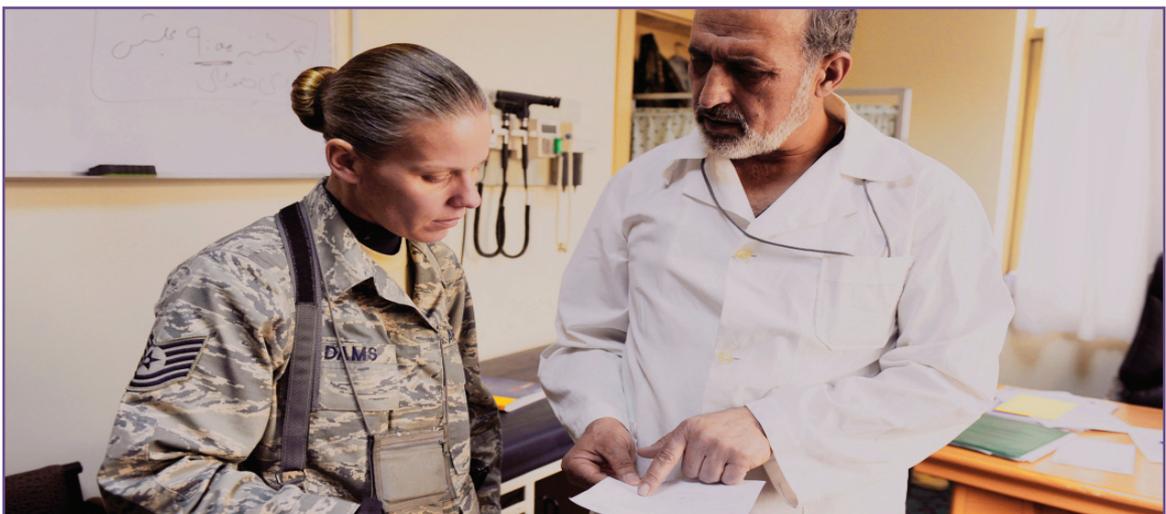
Next Steps

The YRRP outreach efforts will include information to educate Service members, leadership, and other key stakeholders regarding the changes to the JTR and the implications for attendance and support at YRRP events.

Suicide Prevention

The YRRP is also responsible for providing Reserve Component members and those who support them with training in suicide prevention and community healing. In FY 2011, the YRRP continued collaborating with suicide prevention experts to develop a strategic approach in identifying promising practices, strengths, challenges and gaps.

The Reserve Components Suicide Prevention Stakeholder Group was formed in January 2011 to implement the NDAA guidance that the DoD “expand suicide prevention and community healing and response training under Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.”



An initial meeting held on February 9, 2011, was comprised of suicide prevention leaders from the Reserve Components along with staff from OSD Personnel and Readiness and the Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury. The stakeholders met monthly throughout 2011, resulting in several major accomplishments, including:

- Development of the Suicide Prevention and Resilience Resource Inventory (SPRRI) to gather information on programs and services being delivered by federal, state, and local organizations, satisfaction with these resources, and the gaps that may exist
- Creation of the “Reserve Component Suicide Prevention Plan: A toolkit for Commanders,” with publication expected in 2012
- Issuance of a Strategic Plan for the Stakeholder Working Group
- Coordination with the Services to provide their suicide prevention briefing materials to the YRRP Office for inclusion in the YRRP CfE
- Assessment of the DCoE Suicide Assessment Tools Initiative that identified clinical and non-clinical tools that can be used with the Reserve Component
- Examination of suicide data from the Services to understand trends and drive toward responding to key risk factors
- Tracking the activities of the Action Alliance Task Force Veteran/Military Working Group, including college and university support for the military, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Policy Academies, and National Guard Partners in Care pilot to expand the use of organization support in the communities

Next Steps

The SPRRI survey will be implemented in FY 2012 as an easy-to-use, web-enabled form that respondents may complete at their locations of choice. The SPRRI is based on published research, case practice summaries, and input from leading resilience enhancement and suicide prevention experts from DoD and other federal agencies, academia, the private sector, and community-based organizations at the national, state and local levels. The SPRRI team will analyze data and report key findings to:

- Understand awareness and utilization of suicide prevention and resilience resources from civilian and military organizations with national, state, and local reach
- Assess satisfaction with suicide prevention and resilience resources



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- Identify common criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of resources and realize efficiencies
- Identify opportunities for OSD Reserve Affairs to develop Department-wide solutions to support National Guard and Reserve suicide prevention and resilience initiatives

Promising Practices

Impact of Additional FY 2011 Outreach Funding

Mid-way through FY 2011, the YRRP received additional resources from Congress to expand outreach and reintegration services across the country. In collaboration with the National Guard, funding was provided to a wide variety of programs, ranging from peer support to employment assistance, in 12 states and one territory. Remaining funds were used to:

- Expand New Jersey's Vet2Vet peer counseling program to a nationwide program called Vets4Warriors. This 24/7 helpline provides Service members and their families with access to a comprehensive support network of mental health professionals who specialize in issues specific to the military population's needs.
- Provide 24 hour, 7-day-a-week free tutoring services through Tutor.com for National Guard and Reserve Service members and their dependents regardless of duty status. This program provides both youth and adult students with access to a live tutor for assistance with homework, exam preparation and other academic assistance, empowering National Guard and Reserve families with resources similar to those of the Active Component to help meet the academic well-being and education needs of their family.
- Create a collaboration between DoD, SAMHSA, VA, and other organizations, to engage nine states and the District of Columbia in a Policy Academy. This Policy Academy helped to evaluate existing policies, resources and infrastructure, and assisted each state in developing a practical and sustainable strategic action plan that improves the delivery and accessibility of services and addresses the unique needs of Service members, veterans and their families in their state.

Outreach Initiatives

The YRRP outreach initiatives are designed to support National Guard and Reserve commanders, family support staff, Event Planners and Program Managers who plan and execute events. In June 2011, the YRRP leaders surveyed 200 stakeholders to determine how to best meet their needs and provide useful information to them. In response to the survey results, the YRRP Office has worked to address stakeholders' desire for greater access to policy and guidance, event curriculum and planning tools, and communications materials (e.g., fact sheets and briefings, etc). Several key efforts were undertaken in FY 2011, including a website and newsletter redesign, event planning support templates and increased collaboration with key organizations.

Website and Ribbon Newsletter Redesign

In September 2011, the YRRP launched a newly designed website at www.YellowRibbon.mil. The redesign was based on practices, usability testing and feedback gathered from the YRRP website users. The YRRP website also uses proven, commercial off-the-shelf technology to minimize cost while maximizing reach and usability. Among the content found on the YRRP's website is The Ribbon newsletter, blogs and videos for general audiences, videos and curriculum for Event Planners and presenters – including sessions on couples counseling, coping with deployment, and financial planning – and the YRRP CfE.



The YRRP readers can access news and updates on the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program website, digital newsletter or print newsletter.





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Event Planning Support

The YRRP CfE features a comprehensive library of resources and tools for Event Planners, family support staff and others involved with planning and implementing YRRP events. Users can access policy and guidance documents, event planning tools, event curriculum, and request a speaker for an upcoming event.

Collaboration

Since its inception, the YRRP has led an innovative and collaborative effort that includes the VA and other federal and civilian agencies, community leaders, advocacy groups, clinical experts and academic institutions. This network has continued to increase the awareness of deployment challenges faced by Service members and those who support them throughout the National Guard and Reserve. The YRRP's collaborators include:

- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): The YRRP Office, the National Guard, and Reserve Services coordinate closely with VA staff to ensure appropriate support at YRRP events. Most YRRP events include personnel from VA who may provide briefings, information, consultations, and referrals for Service members and their loved ones. VA staff provide information on health care services, including those available for women veterans; benefits for education, home loans, disability compensation, vocational rehabilitation and employment; insurance; and services provided at Vet Centers. Many of the events conducted during the year included VA's Mobile Vet Center and Service members were able to receive on-site counseling at the events. Also, the YRRP activities are occasionally held in VA medical facilities, allowing Service members and their families to develop familiarity with VA facilities. This also facilitates on-site scheduling for VA care and, in some cases, allows for same-day appointments. Additionally, VA has provided the YRRP Office with a full-time Liaison Officer (LNO) who provides expertise and guidance on VA benefits, services, and programs.
- Department of Labor (DOL): The YRRP Office and ESGR work closely with DOL to address the needs and concerns of the National Guard and Reserve on employment initiatives.
- Small Business Administration (SBA): The YRRP Office, in conjunction with SBA, is executing the American Corporate Partners Program. The program matches employees from some of the largest corporations and universities in the country with Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM veterans to mentor, network and provide career counseling and entrepreneurial training through the Entrepreneurship Boot Camp for Veterans with Disabilities (EBV) program.

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Defense Center of Excellence (DCoE) for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury: The YRRP Office works closely with SAMHSA and DCoE to create a comprehensive suicide prevention and resilience program that includes community healing and response.
- Department of Agriculture (USDA): The YRRP has a strong, active relationship with a consortium of land grant universities through a Memorandum of Understanding with USDA. This relationship leverages the research and practices from academia to strengthen the YRRP CfE curriculum and materials.
- Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR): The YRRP Office, aligned with ESGR, works with the National Guard and Reserve to promote the goals and messages of ESGR at Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events.
- Military Community and Family Policy (MC&FP): The YRRP collaborates with MC&FP to develop policy, coordinate resources and enhance services, including one-on-one non-medical counseling, financial and personal life counseling, specialized briefings and trainings and Military OneSource resources.





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Employment Initiative Program



HERO 2 HIRED

The Employment Initiative Program (EIP) is led by the YRRP with direct support from ESGR. It is a collaborative effort with multiple federal agencies designed to create efficiencies and enhance the employment process by serving as an effective resource for Service members and their spouses as well as employers seeking to hire them. The EIP website

www.H2H.jobs provides employers with the ability to post available jobs and allows Service members to post resumes and make a job connection. EIP also conducts employment-related events in conjunction with YRRP events, Employment Assistance Workshops and state-specific job events.

The YRRP and ESGR also support and participate in U.S. Chamber of Commerce Hiring Our Heroes (HoH) events throughout the year, and utilize 4,800 ESGR volunteers to connect personally with employers and Service members and communicate the many employment-related resources available to them.



"The bottom line is we're taking care of families and we're taking care of the [Service] member."

Col. Jay Flournoy, 349th Air Mobility Wing, Travis Air Force Base

Summary

The YRRP continues to work diligently to enhance the readiness and resilience of the Reserve Components. The Program continues to develop new and innovative ways to communicate and deliver information, and is working to increase multi-Service collaboration and enhance efficiencies to make the best use of funding. These efforts provide the foundation for the Program's continued growth and achieving its mission to help and support National Guard and Reserve Service members and those who support them throughout the deployment cycle.

The YRRP has made a difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of our Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, Coast Guardsmen, and those who support them. Continuing support from Congress, the Military Departments, the National Guard and Reserve, federal agencies, non-governmental agencies, state and local partners will ensure our National Guard and Reserve Service members and their loved ones will remain strong and ready for tomorrow's challenges.







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