



**YEAR  
IN REVIEW**

**FY 2021**





Sixty-eight Airmen from the 104th Fighter Wing attended an all day YRRP event in Springfield, Massachusetts. Janell Coker, a Cadre of Speakers member, taught classes on Understanding and Reducing Anger, and Finding Balance. The event included 23 local and regional resources and a choice of 15 classes. Classes offered to the Airmen and their families included financial readiness, civilian employer support, educational benefits, and many more. (U.S. Air National Guard Photos by Master Sgt. Lindsey S. Watson)

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# OVERVIEW

*The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) is a joint-Service effort, led by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, to promote the health and well-being of the Reserve Component (RC) community, which includes the seven seals of both the National Guard and Reserves.*

YRRP has supported approximately 2.2 million Service members and guests since the program's inception in 2008.

The Department of Defense (DoD) continues to coordinate with the RCs to develop and implement a variety of initiatives supporting Service members and their loved ones throughout and beyond the deployment cycle. Based on registration data collected, more than half of YRRP attendees experienced their first deployment in FY 2021, with approximately a quarter experiencing their second deployment (Figure 1). More than 60% of attendees were under the age of 35 (Figure 2) while over half (60%) reported being married or in a relationship. A majority (89%) of YRRP participants who responded to the Post-Event Survey (PES) reported satisfaction with their overall event experience (Figure 3).

The YRRP Center for Excellence

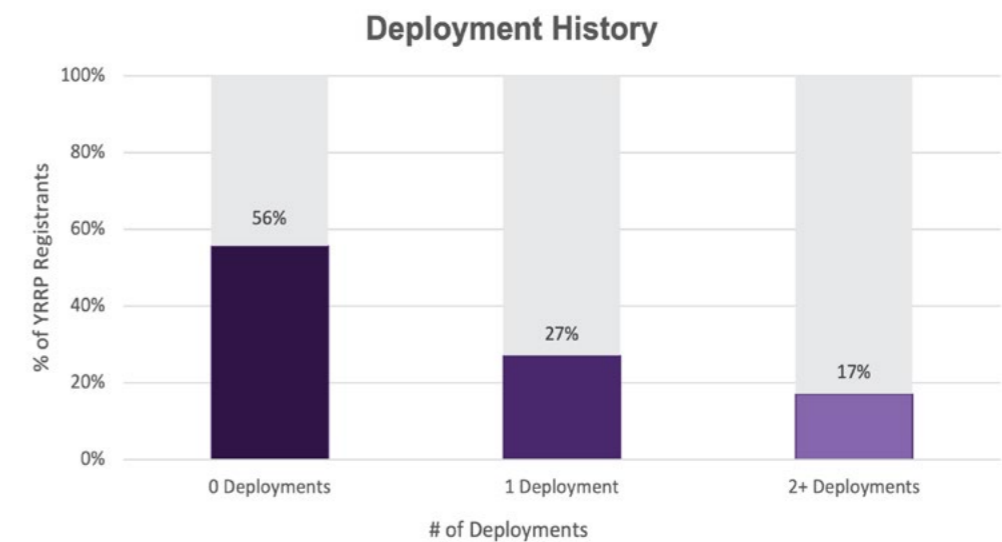


Figure 1: FY 2021 YRRP Registrant Deployment History

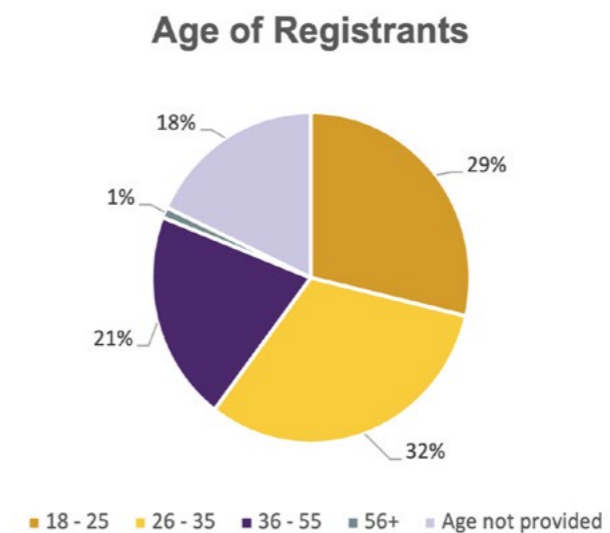


Figure 2: FY 2021 YRRP Registrant Ages

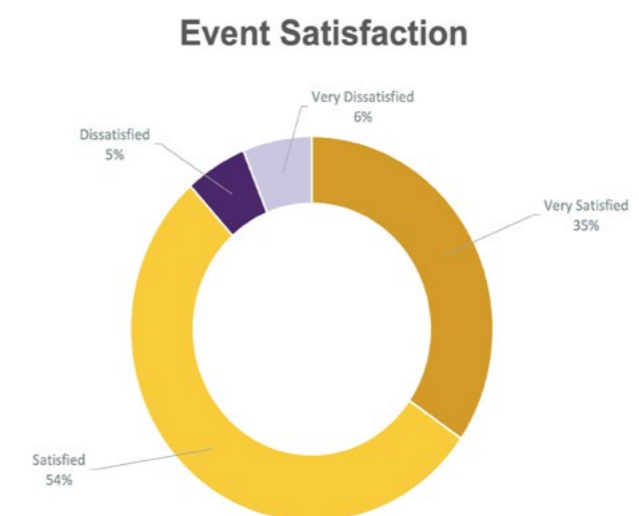


Figure 3: FY 2021 YRRP Event Satisfaction

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

*The ongoing challenges and concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic continued throughout FY 2021 and impacted YRRP's ability to host in-person events. RC members continued to activate in support of various missions within and outside the Continental United States, including the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. According to data released by the Defense Manpower Data Center on September 28, 2021, 84,622 members of the RC had been activated in support of a mission related to COVID-19.*

## Business Continuity Through COVID-19, Facilitated by EventPLUS

While the restrictions on in-person events posed notable challenges, YRRP continued to refine the online event tool ensuring the RC community was able to connect to resources and receive beneficial information to provide support throughout and beyond the deployment cycle. Online events include synchronous (i.e., live instructor led) and asynchronous online classes, and resource information sharing.

EventPLUS is YRRP's in-person and online event management, online training, tracking, automation, and reporting system utilized by the National Guard and Reserve across 54 states and territories. The EventPLUS system continued to provide the majority of mission essential services online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. EventPLUS facilitated management of online and in-

person events and supported over 618,000 requests (hits or sessions) in FY 2021. The EventPLUS online Learning Management System (LMS), provided alternatives for Service members and their loved ones to virtually participate in program events and access resources and tools.

Although the online events have been providing a much-needed option in order to meet pandemic guidelines, YRRP has been slowly returning to in-person events when able to do so based on local, state, and federal guidelines. As the pandemic restrictions gradually ease, YRRP is ready to support stakeholders as they resume in-person events and continue to offer flexible online options for leaders through EventPLUS capabilities for Service members and their loved ones.

## Beyond the Yellow Ribbon

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon (BYR) supports programs designed to provide critical outreach and reintegration services to the RC community. Funding for this effort is provided through a year-to-year appropriation approved by Congress. BYR is essential for assembling and maintaining a myriad of locally-based programs focused on building sustainable community support networks to provide resources and support to RC Service members and their families.

In FY 2021, BYR was appropriated

\$22M for programs supporting RC members returning from deployment through a variety of much-needed services, such as employment counseling, behavioral health counseling, and suicide prevention. These services were developed and implemented by 24 recipients across 21 states, including Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, and Washington.



Senior Master Sgt. Anthony Chavez, 919th Special Operations Wing YRRP representative, explains the benefits of the YRRP to an Airman at Duke Field, Florida, March 1, 2021. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Dylan Gentile)



Cadre speaker Matthew Davis speaks about reintegration and coping during a YRRP event in Orlando, Florida, Aug. 21, 2021. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Cesaron White)

## Project YES

Project Youth Extension Service (YES) is a national internship program designed to meet the unique needs of RC military youth impacted by deployment. Project YES is two-fold:

1. Provide military youth (ages 6-17) participating in YRRP events with fun, evidence-based activities that promote leadership development, resilience, life skills, and critical-thinking skills to help cope with military deployments; and
2. Equip college interns with competencies supporting enhanced career planning and college-to-work opportunities.

In FY 2021, Project YES interns facilitated 25 in-person and virtual YRRP events, serving 415 military youth (Figure 4). To date, 184 Project YES interns represent 40 states; Washington DC, and Puerto Rico have served over 29,400 youth at more than 965 events in 49 states, four U.S. territories, and Germany. Project YES participants reported extremely high (99%) satisfaction with the staff, while 93% of respondents were satisfied with their overall experience (Figure 5).

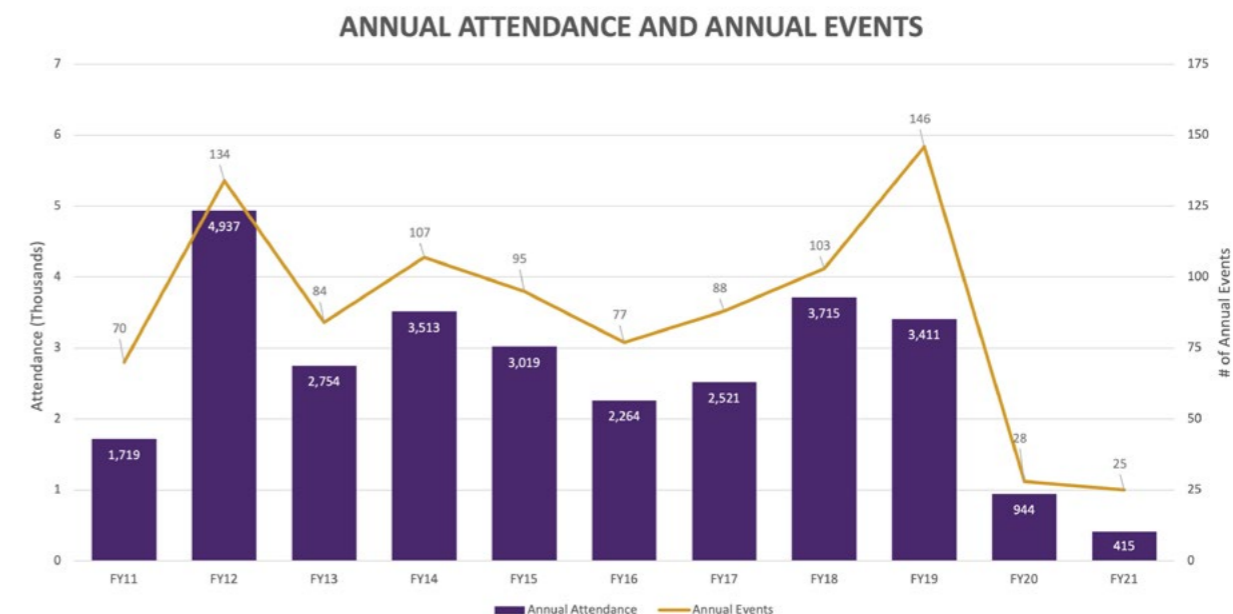


Figure 4: Annual Attendance and Annual Events, Project YES.

## YOUTH EVALUATION

- Overall Satisfaction**  
Enjoyed YES Activities
- Multi-Faceted Application**  
Can use info in other stages of life
- Satisfaction with YES Staff**  
Facilitation and Interaction

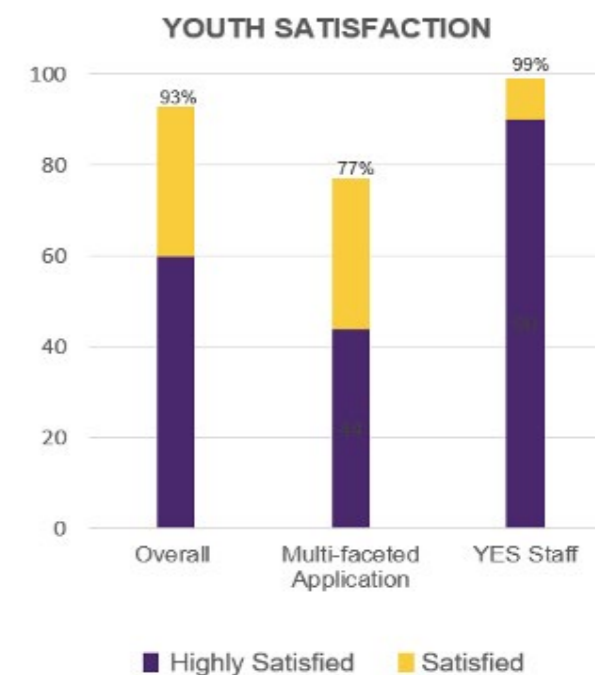


Figure 5: Youth Evaluation/Youth Satisfaction, Project YES.

## Cadre of Speakers

The Cadre of Speakers (Cadre) is comprised of 41 highly skilled and engaging speakers, facilitators, and trainers who deliver DoD YRRP standardized curriculum to RC members and their families throughout all phases of deployment. The Cadre began in FY 2010 to assist with RC training, event planning, and curriculum requirements and continues to provide subject matter expertise in areas such as communication methods, financial planning, employment, and mental and physical well-being. Cadre members are geographically dispersed to allow for coverage at any YRRP event location (Figure 6).

Despite persistence of the COVID-19

pandemic, all Cadre members ensured availability and flexibility to provide in-person and virtual support for a total of 205 YRRP events in FY 2021. Understanding the unique challenges that COVID-19 imposed on YRRP events, Cadre seamlessly adapted their skillset for the virtual environment by undergoing two Virtual Impact Training © events consisting of 15 modules designed to equip cadre with best practices, multi-media tools, and strategies to effectively facilitate DoD-approved curricula through any virtual platform. The Cadre successfully maximized audience engagement and interactive learning for 80 virtual YRRP events in FY 2021.

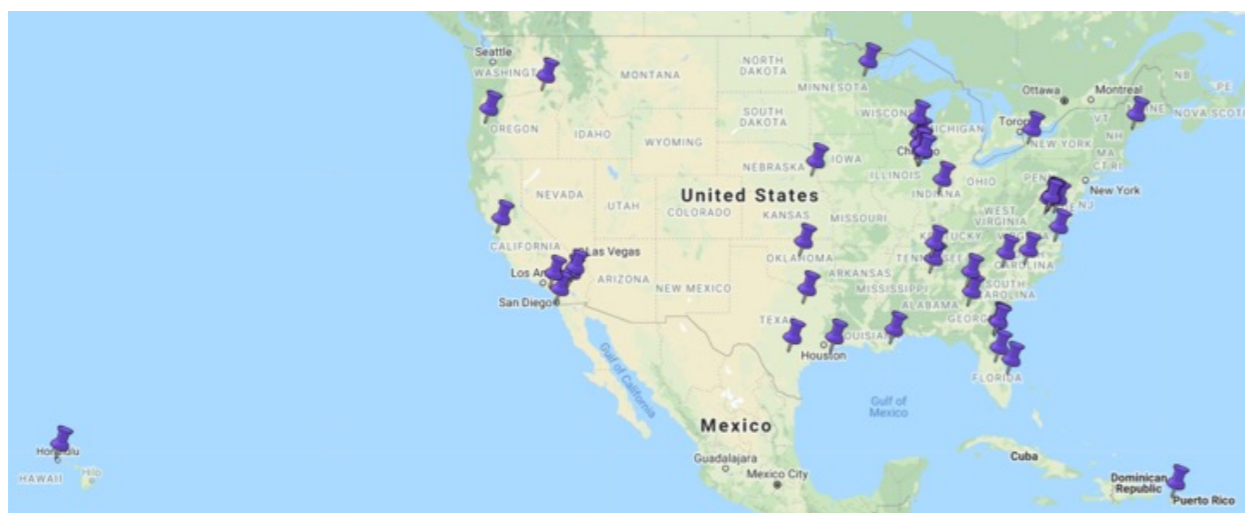


Figure 6: FY 2021 YRRP Cadre of Speakers Locations

## Event Planner Training

A virtual Event Planner Training was hosted by the Army Reserve in January 2021. The training was available to all RC YRRP event planners and coordinators. These annual training events are organized to share, educate, and promote available resources and capabilities of tools to ensure methods are standardized and each event

planner is equipped for a successful event. Topics discussed during day one of the training included: Cadre support, EventPLUS capabilities, evaluation and curriculum enhancements, and Project YES. Day two focused on best practices for conducting virtual YRRP events.

## Joint Working Group

The MCTO hosted a virtual Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting in March 2021 via Microsoft Teams. During the two-day meeting, YRRP RC Program Managers and RC Coordinators collaborated and shared Service-level updates and best practices. In addition, members of the EventPLUS team, the Cadre Program Manager, Project YES, and researchers from the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State presented updates and key data findings. The MCTO Director provided updates on

the merger of the Office of Reintegration Programs and the Transition to Veterans Program Office. Team members presented on the IT Roadmap and the warm handover process (i.e., person-to-person connections with partner agencies and providers) as opportunities to best support RC members who do not attend YRRP events. Representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) were also in attendance and shared updates regarding VA curriculum.

# IMPACTS

## Topic of Interest Survey Results

Following event registration, participants are provided the opportunity to complete a topic of interest survey. The results can be used by the YRRP team to schedule appropriate resource providers and sessions for upcoming events. In FY 2021, the most selected topics were related to General Benefits and Entitlements, followed by Finance (Figure 7).

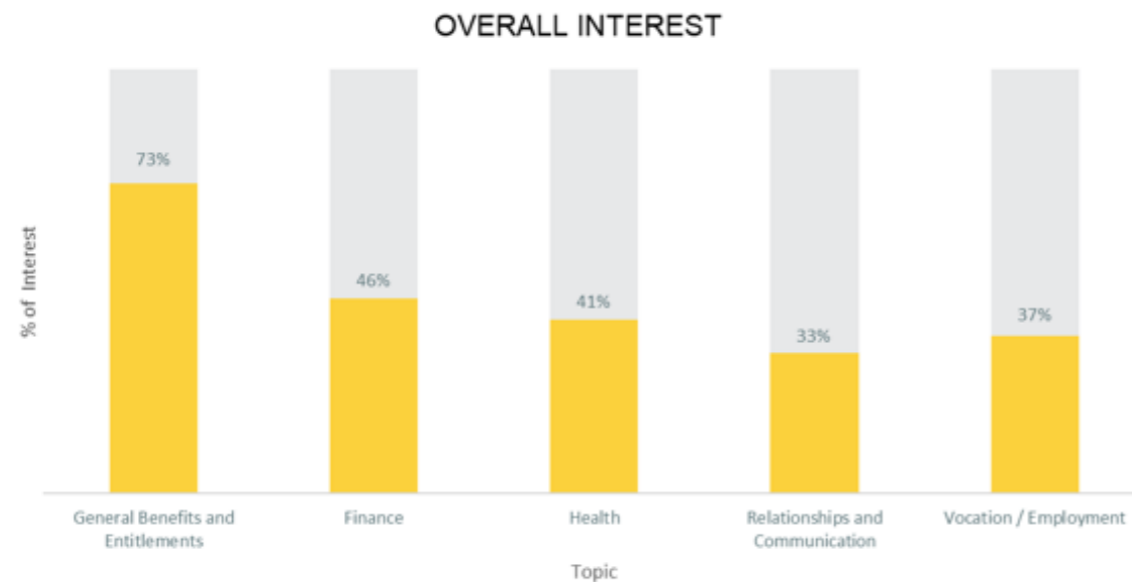


Figure 7: FY 2021 Topics of Interest.

## Post-Event Survey Results

To help analyze the impact of the YRRP on RC Service members and their families, the PES is distributed to event participants immediately following events. Data collected, such as overall satisfaction with events, provide an initial assessment of successful efforts and inform program changes to sustain YRRP's ongoing impact.

As a result of data integration efforts,

FY 2021 is the first time event satisfaction data has been collected solely from the online PES. Satisfaction rates across fiscal years, beginning in FY 2011, are provided in Figure 8. Although there were many challenges in FY 2021 the YRRP event satisfaction rates in this FY were the highest reported within the decade.

## EVENT SATISFACTION BY FISCAL YEAR

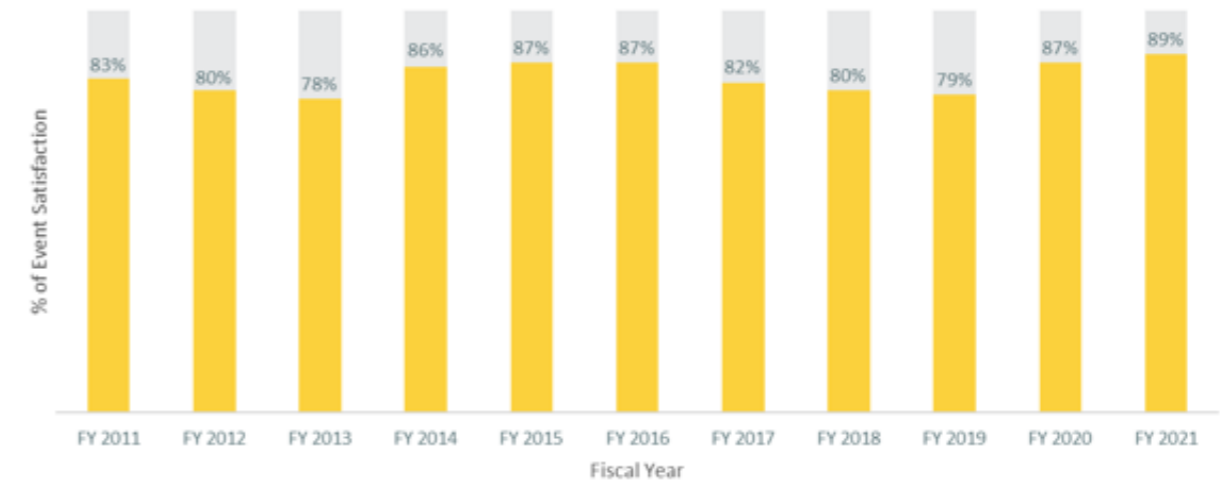


Figure 8: FY 2011 to FY 2021 YRRP Event Satisfaction



Vendors interact with Service members at a YRRP event July 24, 2021 in St. Louis, Missouri. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Michael Crane)

# SERVICE UPDATES

## Army National Guard

The Army National Guard (ARNG) has continued to focus on the development, implementation, and execution of YRRP events held to support our Service member's ever growing operational commitment and the families who are sustaining the household while their significant other is serving the country. FY 2021 provided some unique challenges for those within our country, especially to our National Guard Soldiers who have answered the call of duty during our nation's most critical moments.

The ever growing challenges that COVID-19 has presented required our program to adjust in order to prioritize the safety, health, and general well-being of the Soldier and families that we serve. A key focus has been online YRRP events, which have been implemented regularly into program functions. This tool has allowed Soldiers to stay in compliance with DoDI 1342.28, while

still maintaining access to dozens of resources that would regularly be available at traditional YRRP events. In FY 2021 ARNG YRRP held close to 600 events including virtual & in-person events, across the 54 states and territories which served over 25,000 ARNG Soldiers and their family members.

Compliance and process improvement is a continuous goal of the ARNG YRRP. With the interest of YRRP event attendees in mind, ARNG has consistently worked with the EventPLUS team to improve the registration process for Service members and their families. Additional collaboration occurred to place emphasis on refining the user interface to provide a more efficient experience when navigating the YRRP website. As always, the priority has been meeting the needs of our citizen-Soldiers and their families and this will continue to be the purpose driving our program.

## Army Reserve

In FY 2021, the Army Reserve (USAR) YRRP continued its pursuit to establish the most impactful and most accessible delivery of services to its Soldiers and family members. While still severely limited by the impact of

the COVID-19 Pandemic, the USAR YRRP coordinated and executed over 80 separate virtual event phases for more than 4,700 Service members and families. Additionally, through EventPLUS, USAR YRRP Event

Management Teams were able to track more than 27,500 individual courses completed online by Army Reserve Soldiers and families. The USAR YRRP also experienced its best year in PES participation rates in FY 2021. Out of approximately 4,700 YRRP virtual event attendees, 2,189 (46.5%) of them were willing to participate in a voluntary post event survey.

Receiving feedback from such a large sample of our attendees for the year has been a very helpful.

The second half of FY 2020 and all FY 2021 presented a great opportunity for USAR to reconsider the traditional event delivery model(s).



Service members paint during a YRRP event in Orlando, Florida, Aug. 21, 2021. A variety of nontraditional methods are used to calm and refocus Service members and spouses during different deployment phases addressed in the program. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Cesaron White)

## Marine Corps Reserve

The United States Marine Corps Reserve (USMCR) YRRP continued to provide outstanding support for Service members and families thought the deployment cycle in FY 2021. The USMCR started the first two quarters of the FY with online events using EventPLUS in conjunction with virtual briefs. During the third and fourth quarter, in addition to online events, in-person events

where planned but had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 surges and the impact of hurricane Ida to USMCR HQ and units. However, because of the USMCR online capabilities, the team was able to convert the in-person events into online events quickly and successfully.

EventPLUS has been an extremely important tool during this pandemic and has proven to be invaluable. Attendees are able to

register and receive all the information they need for their events through EventPLUS and we are able to track attendance. In addition, when converting in-person events to online events attendees do not have to re-register and staff are able to transfer them to a different event seamlessly.

USMCR continues to deliver a hybrid YRRP online concept by providing virtual briefs to include Pre-deployment, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), and when possible TRICARE in conjunction with online courses. The USMCR YRRP relies on its close and invaluable partnership with Marine Corps Family Team Building (MCFTB) to deliver the virtual briefs. MCFTB trainers are able to provide briefs on short notice and

can deliver a wide spectrum of material from deployment related topics to Life Skills briefs.

USMCR continues to be flexible and adapt to the changes and challenges brought upon due to COVID-19 and is focused on the development, implementation, and execution of the YRRP events to continue to support the Service member and families during this trial times.

The USMCR more than doubled the amount of attendees compared to FY 2020 to include more families attending the virtual briefs. The Marine Corps Reserve will continue to push for in-person events whenever possible and will continue to provide quality online events to support and meet the needs of Marines and their families.

## Navy Reserve

The United States Navy Reserve (USNR) YRRP is committed to providing support to its warriors and their families during the deployment cycle. In FY 2021, the USNR continued to improve its FY 2020 virtual training model.

In compliance with local, state, and federal guidelines the USNR conducted its Deployment Readiness Training (DRT) events and Returning Warrior Workshops (RWW) to ensure a safe learning environment. Attendees received training while social distancing and contactless interactions were implemented. To ensure maximum training flexibility, same day training events were extended to reduce the number of attendees during in-person class sessions. During in-person classes, a simultaneous livestream enabled additional attendees to also receive training without having to schedule a

separate virtual event.

In FY 2021, the USNR virtually hosted 34 DRT events and trained 1,790 Warriors and 202 guests. The Navy Reserve also held three local DRT events, in which 79 Warriors and 32 guests received training.

Utilizing an enhanced EventPLUS system, the USNR was successful with its advertisement and attendance tracking efforts. Sailors and their families received a wealth of information from resource providers and Cadre in the areas of family preparedness, financial planning, legal, and healthcare benefits. Attendees also received ESGR USERRA.

Upon the completion of deployment, Warriors are highly encouraged to attend the Returning Warrior Workshops. Attendees are provided with the opportunity to reconnect with each other, share deployment

experiences with fellow Warriors, and receive valuable information essential to reintegrating back into their communities. In FY 2021, the USNR conducted seven RWWs that hosted 177 Warriors and 140 guests.



Retired Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman and keynote speaker Byron Rowe recalls events from his mobilization to Iraq in 2004 where he witnessed first-hand the results of intense combat operations during the Battle of Fallujah. Rowe spoke with Service members and guests during an RWW in Austin, TX. (U.S. Navy photo by Cmdr. Kris Hooper)

## Air Force Reserve

The Air Force Reserve (AFR) YRRP focuses on building and maintaining resiliency skills in Airmen and their loved ones to retain combat-ready Airmen. FY 2021 began with offering pre-deployment virtual events then expanded to include post-deployers and their loved ones as well. In addition to offering online classes, AFR YRRP developed live virtual events with

speakers presenting live breakout sessions to Airmen and their loved ones in their homes. This enabled interaction between the members and the speakers so questions were immediately answered and contact information provided for future follow up.

Air Force Reserve continued to develop and perfect our AFR HomeFront magazine for our Airmen and their loved ones. This

magazine is a wealth of information for our deployers as well as those who are reintegrating after deployment. Each quarter, the HomeFront is sent to every wing for distribution providing updated articles and helpful resources for our families.

During FY 2021, the event planning contract that provides our regional events across the country was successfully awarded to a new company, which begins operations in FY 2022. As the AFR begins offering in-

person events, the AFR YRRP will continue to deliver streaming capability to Airmen and their loved ones who are unable to travel to events around the country.

AFR YRRP offered 21 virtual events and three in-person events as well as thousands of one-on-one events during the past year. These events provided critical information to our Airmen and their loved ones focused on building their resiliency skills to combat the stressors of deployments.



The McDill Air Force Base honor guard presents the colors during a YRRP opening ceremony in Orlando, Florida, Aug. 21, 2021. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Cesaron White)

## Air National Guard

The Air National Guard (ANG) YRRP focuses on developing resiliency to challenges that may arise from living a military lifestyle and the stressors presented through deployment and reintegration. The ANG programmed and planned for 21 regional in-person and 22 online, multi-phased events in FY 2021, of which all were successfully held during the implementation of COVID-19 restrictions. Ten events were cancelled. During FY 2021, 43 multi-phased events were held, including the following: thirteen in-person regional events, eight in-person local events, and 22 online events. A total of 4,812 Service members and 1,007 dependents (691 adults and 316 youth) attended in-person and online training events.

FY 2021 began with the ANG transitioning to a regional model, with the Chief of the National Guard Bureau Instruction 1801.01, designating mandatory attendance for first time deployers. The regional model for events provided more class choices, enhanced event locations, and the opportunity for increased Service member interaction and camaraderie away from the local unit. Regional events had larger family participation as child and youth programming offered at larger events provided activities that focused on the ANG

helping children and teens cope with a parent's departure or homecoming. The ANG YRRP will monitor the regional event feedback closely as this new model continues to evolve for Service members and dependents in the wake of COVID-19. As COVID-19 cases continues to grow, the ANG YRRP is using technology to host online events using the EventPLUS platform. The ANG YRRP plans to use live virtual events in conjunction with online courses and in-person events using COVID-19 protocols to keep staff and attendees safe. Pre- and post-deployment online training events were successfully offered with an overall satisfaction rate of 74%. The ANG will continue to hold in-person events regionally and at the wing level (locally) with all necessary COVID-19 safety procedures and contact tracing in place.

While YRRP events as we knew them before COVID-19 may be gone, the ANG is prepared to enter the coming "new normal" with safe and effective YRRP participation. ANG YRRP in-person events held in 2021 have provided for interactions and learning for Airmen and families who are mindful and appreciative of their ability to gather for the purpose of gaining resilience to continue this Military lifestyle.

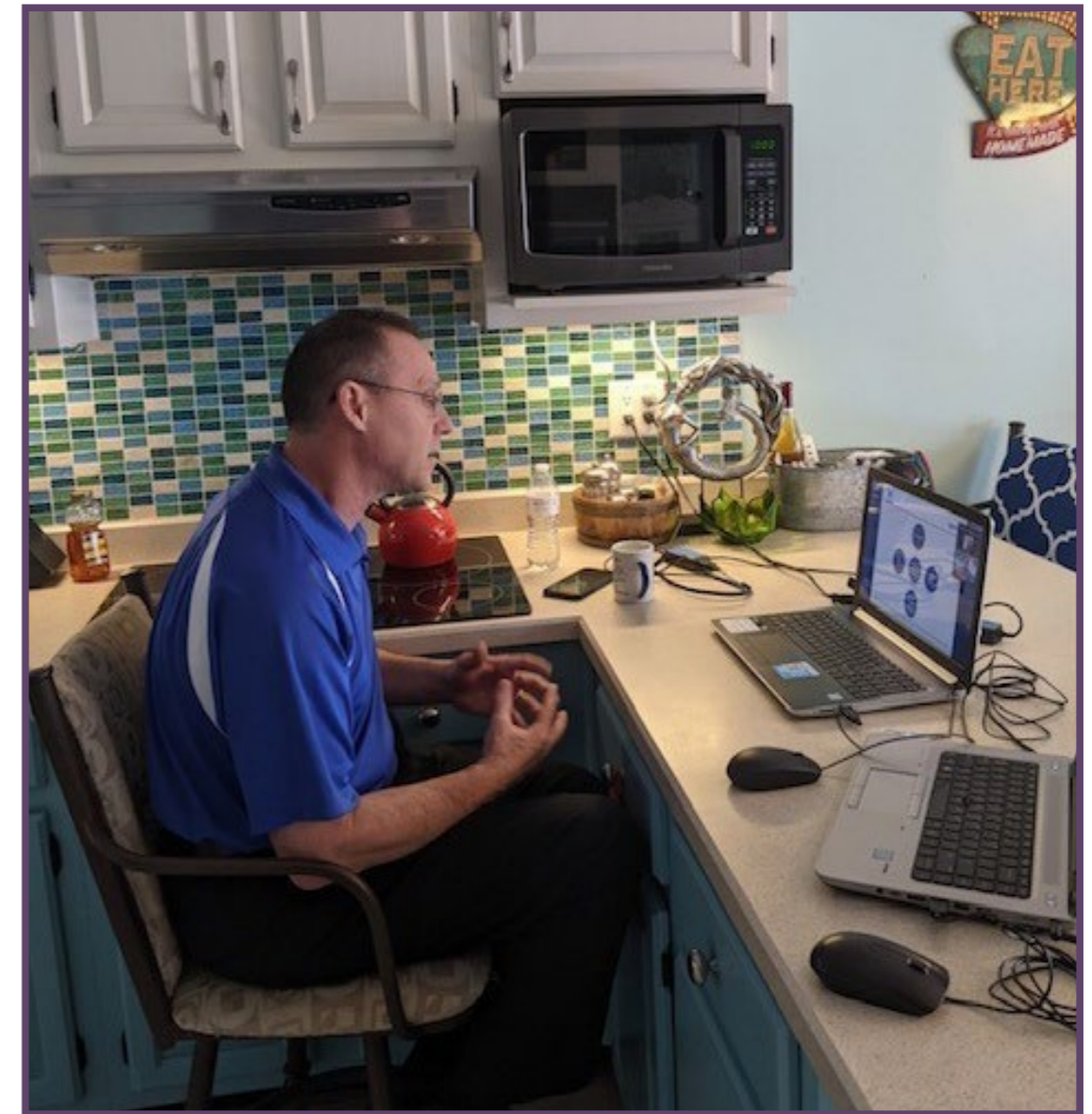
## Coast Guard Reserve

In FY 2021, the United States Coast Guard Reserve (USCGR) has certainly had its challenges as the other branches can surely relate to. At the beginning of FY2021, the only way to get YRRP events through were via the virtual format due to on-going COVID-19 and the variants that popped up and continue to pop up. Although the USCGR still provided a great product to the mobilized members of the CG Port Security Unit community and the post 90-day mobilized member, their plan was always to begin to plan for the move back into the realm of in-person events. This is without a doubt the best way to provide the program to the member and family alike.

The USCGR YRRP as mentioned in the "FY 2020 YRRP service update" was in the midst of dealing with issues regarding child care and not being allowed to use funds to support child care. After spending months working with CG Legal in FY 2021, an agreement was reached that allowed for child care at YRRP events using CG funds. Without child care, the YRRP family interaction at events certainly would have been a challenge and limited at best.

The USCGR continues to network with the other branches and appreciate the sage advice when questions have arisen about what each RC's plans are at various times due to the pandemic. This advice had without a doubt assisted the USCGR's delivery decisions and was certainly appreciated. The USCGR has now begun planning for a total back to in-person event schedule for FY 2022 and beyond. The USCGR will certainly have their ear to the pandemic and will adjust when necessary, based on the available information. The USCGR YRRP is solid and that is cemented by their 93% positive feedback by members and families from in person and virtual events performed.

The main focus for the USCGR is and will continue to be, to guide the member through the deployment cycle with important information that he/she truly understands. Then move the member into a smooth transition to the reintegration phase, post deployment. This along with importance of family resiliency training are the cornerstones to the program, and will continue to be.



Chief Master Sgt. Chris Williams, 910th Airlift Wing Command Chief, gives a briefing during a virtual YRRP event hosted by Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Dec. 19, 2020. This was the first virtual YRRP event hosted by an Air Force Reserve unit. (U.S. Air Force courtesy photo)

# WAY AHEAD

## Data Integration

Data integration capabilities will continue to be enhanced to best serve the needs of the RCs. In FY 2021 the Comprehensive Event Analysis Report (CEAR) was completed and is now available to all RCs. The CEAR enables leadership and YRRP staff to generate a one-stop report that encompasses data collected via computer or mobile device throughout the entire YRRP experience. Data integration tools will continue to be promoted to the RCs in FY 2022. Maximum use of the data collection efforts will yield more representative results within and across each RC.

## Return to In-person Events

The RCs have continued to provide invaluable services to the RC community through online YRRP events throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. YRRP is also excited for the time when it is safe to return to in-person events to deliver information, resources, and encourage social interaction for attendees to build support networks throughout and beyond the deployment cycle.

## Reserve Family Readiness Award

The Reserve Family Readiness Award (RFRA) was cancelled in FY 2020 and FY 2021. In FY 2022 the RFRA will undergo a full review to determine the future of the award program.

## Enterprise IT System

Throughout FY 2021-2025 MCTO will migrate to an enterprise single-source data collection information technology (IT) platform, establishing the Defense Transition & Reintegration Suite (DTARS). DTARS is an enterprise enhancement, which will evaluate the effectiveness of YRRP, while streamlining military-to-civilian transition and reintegration services. DTARS will optimize performance-based management, program evaluation and support for active and RC members. This shift is in alignment with MCTO's evaluation goals to measure and improve overall programmatic efficiencies with a bidirectional structure to improve data sharing, reporting transparency and accountability for program improvements.

## YRRP by the Numbers

	ARNG	USAR	USMCR	USNR	ANG	AFR	USCGR	TOTAL
Total Number of Attendees	25,944	4,756	1,048	2,420	5,819	704	300	40,991
Service Members	21,378	4,351	979	2,046	4,812	396	262	34,224
Additional Guests	4,566	405	69	374	1,007	308	38	6,767
Total number of YRRP Events	588	83	22	44	43	24	9	813
In-Person Events	395	0	0	10	21	3	0	429
Online Events	193	83	22	34	22	21	9	384
Projected FY22 Events	600	56	25	71	35	17	7	811
Projected FY22 Total Attendees	100,000	7,500	1,500	3,500	6,000	5,000	1,600	125,100

Resource guides lay available for YRRP attendees in Orlando, Florida, Aug. 21, 2021. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Cesaron White)



## **Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program**

[www.YellowRibbon.mil](http://www.YellowRibbon.mil)