



FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

Family Support Centers offer support and aid to all Department of Defense employees and their families. They exist at all active military installations (Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps) and at many of the active guard/reserve bases. Therefore, support and assistance are available to you through any of the centers, at any installation. Be aware that the centers can be referred to by different but similar names (Air Force = Family Support Center; Army = Community Service Center; Navy/Marine Corps = Fleet and Family Support Center), but the services they provide are pretty much the same.

Family Support Center primary programs include:

Air Force Aid Society (AFAS) The Air Force Aid Society promotes the Air Force mission by assisting Air Force members and their families during times of financial difficulty. Although assistance is decided on a *case-by-case basis*, Air Force Aid can frequently provide assistance in the form of no-interest loans and grants for things like emergency leave travel, funeral expenses of immediate family members, relocation expenses, emergency car repairs, and basic living expenses (food, utilities, rent). In addition, AFAS provides funding for many Family Support Center programs such as Bundles for Babies, Nursing Moms (loan of \$200 to help pay for breast pump rental or purchase), Respite Care Program, Give Parents A Break Program, Car Care Because We Care, disasters (AFAS will supplement if necessary after the Red Cross assists), Childcare for Volunteers, and Child Care for PCS. In addition, AFAS sponsors the General Henry Arnold Education Grant Program (a \$1500.00 education grant to eligible applicants), and Spouse Tuition Assistance (for those stationed overseas).

Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) The Relocation Assistance Program provides relocation services to all DoD personnel for the purpose of easing the stress of moving from one location to another, stateside or overseas. The program provides Smooth Move briefings for both stateside and overseas moves, which are informational workshops to help prepare individuals and families for moving. Attendees learn time, energy, money saving and cultural adaptation tips that will greatly reduce the stress associated with military relocation. The Relocation Assistance Program may also have a variety of classes to help you adjust to the area and local culture. Clients have access to an automated database called SITES, which contains current information on Worldwide Military Installations (information on schools, taxes, laws, employment outlook, housing, and much more!); plus, access to books, videos, and computer software that will help them plan their trip. The Relocation Program also provides vouchers for Child Care for PCS, a program funded by the AFAS, which pays for 20 hours of childcare per child on both ends of a PCS move (dependent upon childcare availability). Also available is Family Services (also called the Loan Locker/Closet), which has essential household items to loan when household goods are

packed and being shipped. Items available to be borrowed vary from base to base, so check to see what is available at your base. Volunteers often run family Services. The Airmen's Attic may also fall under the Relocation Assistance Program, and has household goods, clothing, and other items available free of charge for E1 through E5s (grade levels may vary from base to base). Donations of items in good condition are accepted and are provided free of charge to those that need them.

Transition Assistance Program (TAP) TAP is a congressionally mandated program designed to assist personnel/families who are separating or retiring from the military, as well as DoD civilians adversely impacted by downsizing or reduction in force (RIF). The emphasis of this program is on job search and transitional preparation, rather than job placement. This program is administered through mandatory pre-separation counseling, employment related workshops and seminars, and one-on-one appointments for individual assistance. Congress requires that all personnel be afforded "Pre-separation Counseling" 180 days prior to separation or retirement, but no later than 90 days prior, except in the case of short notice separation. However, personnel can receive this counseling up to 1-year prior to their date of separation or retirement. During this counseling, personnel are advised of any/all available benefits and entitlements, plus programs available to assist them in the retirement/separation process and to educate them on employment processes. To properly prepare departing personnel, the TAP personnel provide a recurring Transition Assistance Seminar, which is primarily employment based. Personnel are educated on employment related processes to include knowledge and insight on transferable skills; understanding want ads; networking for employment; electronic job search; resume and cover letter preparation; understanding interviews and interviewing; career planning; self-assessment; financial planning; dressing for success; doing company research; and negotiating serious job offers. In addition, the Department of Labor briefs on their employment programs, and the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) covers VA programs, to include both disability compensation and vocational rehabilitation. Anyone who will be looking for employment upon leaving the military should attend this seminar; this offer also includes spouses.

Career Focus Program (CFP) CFP is also known as the Employment Assistance Program. It assists spouses and other authorized personnel with obtaining local employment. The CFP manager works with area employers and various other organizations to gain job referrals for clients. Participation in this program enables you to increase your marketability and employability through assessments, development of job search skills, and career planning. The program offers workshops on local job search, resume preparation, interviewing techniques, and image enhancement. Some managers maintain job listings of the jobs being advertised in the local area, plus access to numerous websites containing job banks. This program can also assist clients wanting to target Federal civil service employment, or positions with the Base/Post Exchange and the Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF) activities. If you are looking for a job in the local area, this is the program for you.

Volunteer Resource Program (VRP) This program assists individuals in finding volunteer jobs that suit the clients' interests and career goals, as well as assisting local and base communities in staffing their volunteer needs. Program personnel may also sponsor fund raising efforts to gather funds to help support the program. Under this program, personnel volunteering on base receive free childcare with an on-base provider. If the volunteer is working in Family Services or the

Red Cross, the childcare can be with an on-base provider or the base Child Development Center. The childcare is funded by the Air Force Aid Society, and the number of weekly hours of childcare paid for will vary from base to base. Check with the Volunteer Resource Program manager or the Air Force Aid Society Officer for more information about childcare.

Personal Financial Management Program (PFMP) PFMP provides education, information and counseling in the area of personal financial management to any ID card holder. PFMP also has basic budgeting, check writing and credit card education provided through mandatory newcomer's financial training for enlisted personnel with less than 4 years of service. Customers are provided essential personal financial management techniques and information designed to enhance their ability to make informed consumer choices. This is done through educational workshops, consumer affairs literature, briefings at Commander's Calls and Special Emphasis Groups, individual and family one-on-one financial counseling sessions, computerized financial programs, and individualized Squadron Financial Management training programs.

Family Life Education (FLE) The Family Life Program provides assistance regarding individual and family concerns. It provides a range of prevention and enrichment services designed to strengthen your adaptability to the demands of military life. Programs offered enhance individuals by helping them to anticipate and meet challenges throughout the stages of the family life cycle. To meet your needs, program managers coordinate the need for various programs and then develop and initiate them. They provide individual assessment and referral to on/off-base agencies/professionals for personal, marital, or family issues and concerns. They also coordinate and present a variety of skills-based workshops relating to family life.

Family Readiness Program (FRP) This program provides assistance and support for individuals, families and leadership during deployments and separations (both TDY and remote tours). The program goal is to empower families and single military members to help themselves, not to make them dependent upon the helpers. Every possible means will be used to ensure that the well being, morale, and welfare of AF families is maintained due to deployment of forces away from their families. Families of both active duty and reserve will be assisted as they depart from, arrive at, or settle near the installation without their sponsors. It provides pre-deployment planning through individual assistance, group briefings, and information packets. In addition, individual assistance or discussion groups are offered, to look towards reunion with realistic expectations. This program may also coordinate arrangements for personnel evacuated from other Department of Defense locations.

Information & Referral (I & R) The Information & Referral Program provides clients with information about installation and community resources; it is a link between customer needs and available service providers. I & R provides appropriate and useful referrals to link people in need, with the agency or service that will alleviate their need, and then conducts follow-up to track progress of the individual to ensure they have been served and their needs have been met. The staff educates clients, thereby enabling people to build their own decision-making and problem-solving skills, and advocates on behalf of customers as necessary. The staff networks with the National Alliance of Information and Referral Services (AIRS) to ensure that the I & R program remains current with the latest technology and procedures. They also maintain

membership in local agencies so as to keep informed of newly created agencies/services and to stay abreast of the latest information/assistance being offered in the local community.

The **Resource Center** provides clients with access to resources in the area of transition, relocation, and job search, as well as email access for family members of those deployed or TDY. The Resource Centers are equipped with computers, laser-jet printers, numerous software programs, and Internet access to job banks and transitional sites. Hard-copy reference material and video programs for individually paced and self-directed learning may also be available for checkout and review in your home. Staff members are available to assist customers in the use of computer programs; insight and expertise are also available on a variety of subjects. If you don't have a computer, or if yours hasn't arrived yet (or has been packed for shipment), we have one you can use.

For a listing of Family Support Center web pages, go to:
<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/famops/FSCHOME.PAGES.htm>

