



ETHICS AND THE ARMY FRG



Family and MWR Command

PURPOSE

Provide an overview of Army Family Readiness Group (FRG) operations and highlight potential Ethics issues.





ETHICS AND THE ARMY FRG



AGENDA

- Authority
- FRG Purpose
- FRG Mission
- FRG Activities
- FRG Status
- FRG Structure
- FRG History
- Funding FRG Activities
- FRG Fundraising
- Gifts and Donations
- Ethics
- Summary
- Questions



Authority

“The FRG is a unit commander’s program...” (AR 608-1, J-1a)

“Commanders have an obligation to provide assistance to establish and maintain personal and Family affairs readiness.” (AR 600-20, paragraph 5-10)





FRG Purpose

- Assist unit commander in enhancing family readiness.
- Encourage self-sufficiency by providing information, referral assistance and mutual support.
- Provide a network of communications among family members, chain of command and community resources, which includes:
 - Providing feedback **to command** on state of unit families.
 - Disseminating official, accurate information **from command** to families.
 - Offering referral assistance to community resources.



FRG Mission

The FRG Mission is (AR 608-1, para J-2) :

1. Act as an extension of the unit in providing official, accurate command information.
2. Provide mutual support between the command and the FRG membership.
3. Advocate more efficient use of available community resources.
4. Help families solve problems at the lowest level.

FRG Activities

- Mission Activities essential and common to FRGs (AR 608-1, J-2d):
 - FRG member meetings;
 - FRG staff and committee meetings;
 - Publication and distribution of FRG newsletters;
 - Maintenance of updated family rosters and family readiness information;
 - Establishment of FRG member telephone trees and email distribution lists;
 - Scheduling educational briefings for FRG members.
- Other FRG mission activities:
 - Unit Soldier and Family welcoming activities;
 - Participation in deployment briefings;
 - Participation in classes and workshops provided through ACS;
 - Recruiting, training and recognizing FRG volunteers.



FRG Activities

Non-Mission Activities:

- FRG social activities
- FRG fundraising activities





FRG Status



“The FRG is a unit commander’s program formed in accordance with AR 600-20. Normally FRGs will be established at the company level, with battalion and brigade levels playing an important advisory role.” (AR 608-1, J-1)

“An FRG is a command-sponsored organization of Soldiers, civilian employees, family members (immediate and extended) and volunteers belonging to a unit.” (AR 608-1, J-1)

“FRGs are official DA programs established pursuant to AR 600-20...” (AR 608-1, J-2)

“FRGs are not a morale, welfare, and recreation program; a NAFI; a private organization; or a nonprofit organization.” (AR 608-1, J-1)



FRG Structure

Company: Typically establishes FRG.

- Unit Commander – Provides vision and supervision of FRG
- FRG Volunteer Leader
- FRG Members

Battalion: Advisory role to company level FRGs. May establish FRG for battalion or an FRG for battalion HQ unit.

- Battalion Commander
- Family Readiness Support Assistant (FRSA)
 - New in 2007/2008
 - Supervised by Commander
 - Assists FRG Leaders with administrative work so FRG Leader can focus on outreach to Families

Brigade/Division: Advise battalion leadership on readiness issues and policy issues.

FRG History



FRG History

Revolutionary War: Family members supported troops by cooking, nursing, mending and carrying equipment.



FRG History

Civil War and Frontier: Families and Soldiers worked side by side. Unit Coffee Group developed as a social network among wives and was led by the spouse of the commanding officer.



FRG History

Officer Wives and NCO Wives Club grew from informal coffee groups into volunteer POs operating on the installation. Raised their own funds to promote their activities and do their work.

“Waiting Wives” clubs operated privately on installations for mutual support while Soldiers were at war.

Post WWII: Army Community Service (ACS) became the first official Soldier and Family support organization funded with APFs and focused on Family issues.



FRG History

- 1980's: First documented Family Support Group (FSG). The FSG was the first official Army attempt to focus on the well-being of Families during deployments.

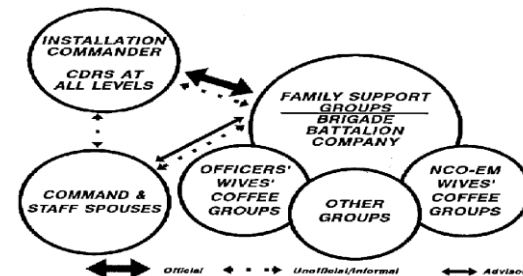


- 1991: Operation Desert Storm.



- 1993: DA Pam 608-47, "A Guide to Establishing Family Support Groups" is released. The FSG is to be command supported. DA 608-47 defined FSG roles and responsibilities, organization, official support, etc.

"Unit FSGs are a command sponsored vehicle for people within the unit to help each other. FSGs provide a communication network to pass information to families, and a conduit to identify problems or needs to the command..."



FRG History

2007: AR 608-1, Appendix J, clarifies FRG functions and roles. Clearly identifies FRGs as a command tool.

“The FRG is a unit commander’s program formed in accordance with AR 600–20. Normally FRGs will be established at the company level, with battalion and brigade levels playing an important advisory role. FRGs are not a morale, welfare, and recreation program; a NAFI; a private organization; or a nonprofit organization.” (AR 608-1)

2008: Family Readiness Support Assistant positions created and added to TDAs.

“The Mission of the FRSA is to maintain the continuity and stability of Family Readiness Groups as units undergo changes in volunteers and leadership. Operationally, the FRSA provides administrative and logistical support to Commanders, Rear Detachment Commanders and volunteer FRG leaders. Taking the administrative burden off volunteers allows FRG leaders to concentrate on performing outreach to Soldiers and their Families in the command, thus preserving stability on the home front, especially during periods of deployment.” (FRSA Guide, Edition 1)



Funding FRG Activities



Appropriated Funds

Used for FRG Mission-Essential Activities



- “FRG mission-essential activities are supported using the unit’s appropriated funds, excluding BA11/OPTEMPO. FRG mission-essential activities authorized appropriated fund support may not be supported with NAFs.” (AR 608-1, J-2)
- Mission-essential activities include: FRG member meetings; FRG staff and committee meetings; publication and distribution of FRG newsletters; maintenance of updated family rosters and family readiness information; establishment of FRG member telephone trees and email distribution lists; scheduling educational briefings for FRG members. (AR 608-1, J-2)
- “FRG mission-essential activities may not be augmented with private money. Such augmentation may be a violation of 31 USC 1345.” (AR 608-1, J-3)



Appropriated Funds

- Government resources may be authorized by the commander to support the FRG mission.
 - Office space;
 - Computer and office equipment, faxes, emails, scanners;
 - Paper and printing supplies to publish an FRG newsletter
 - Official mail as approved by the unit commander;
 - Government vehicles;
 - Child care;
 - Statutory volunteer labor.
 - (AR 608-1, J-3)



FRG Volunteers

- “The Soldier and Family Readiness System relies heavily on the support of a professional volunteer cadre.” (AR 608-1, J-4)



- Unit Commanders may staff their FRGs with volunteers.
 - AR 608-1, Chapter 5
 - 10 USC 1588



- Unit Commanders may fund volunteer “incidental expenses” with APFs:

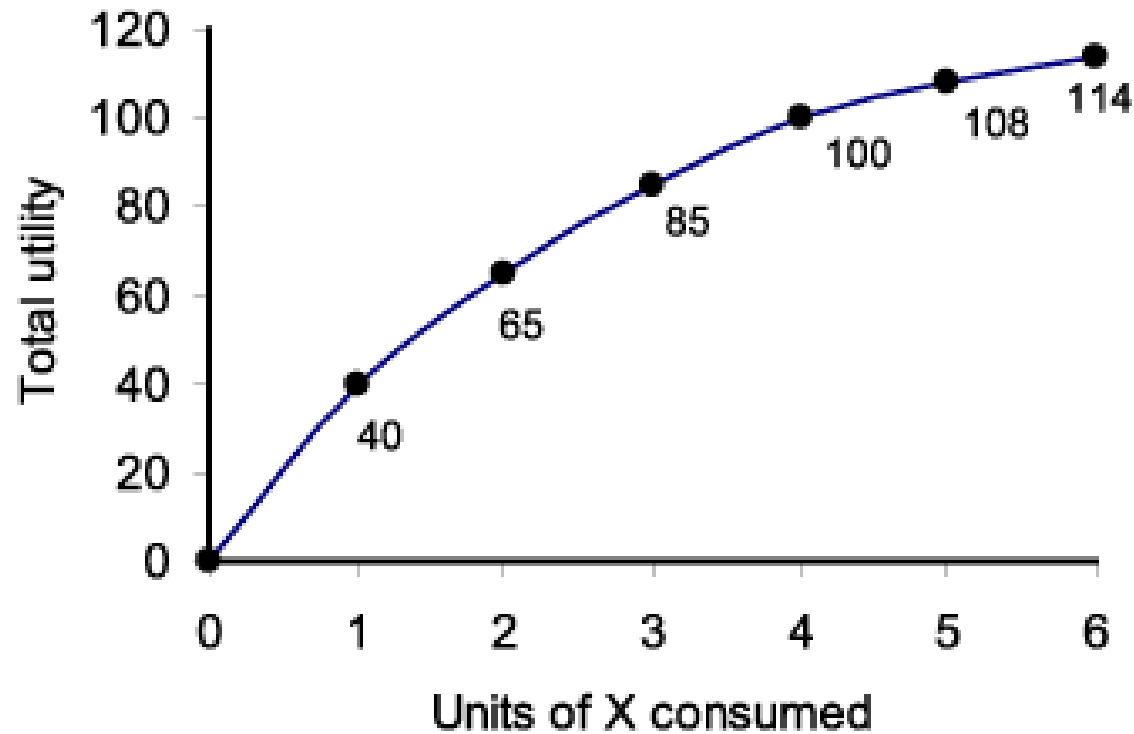


FRG Volunteers

- Volunteers' incidental (out of pocket) expenses may be reimbursable.
 - Must be “necessary” and “reasonable.”
 - Examples:
 - training
 - travel
 - mileage
 - parking
 - long distance telephone calls
 - child-care expenses
 - Not for social or fundraising activities.
 - 10 USC 1588; AR 608-1, J-4; Commander's FRG Budget SOP



Break



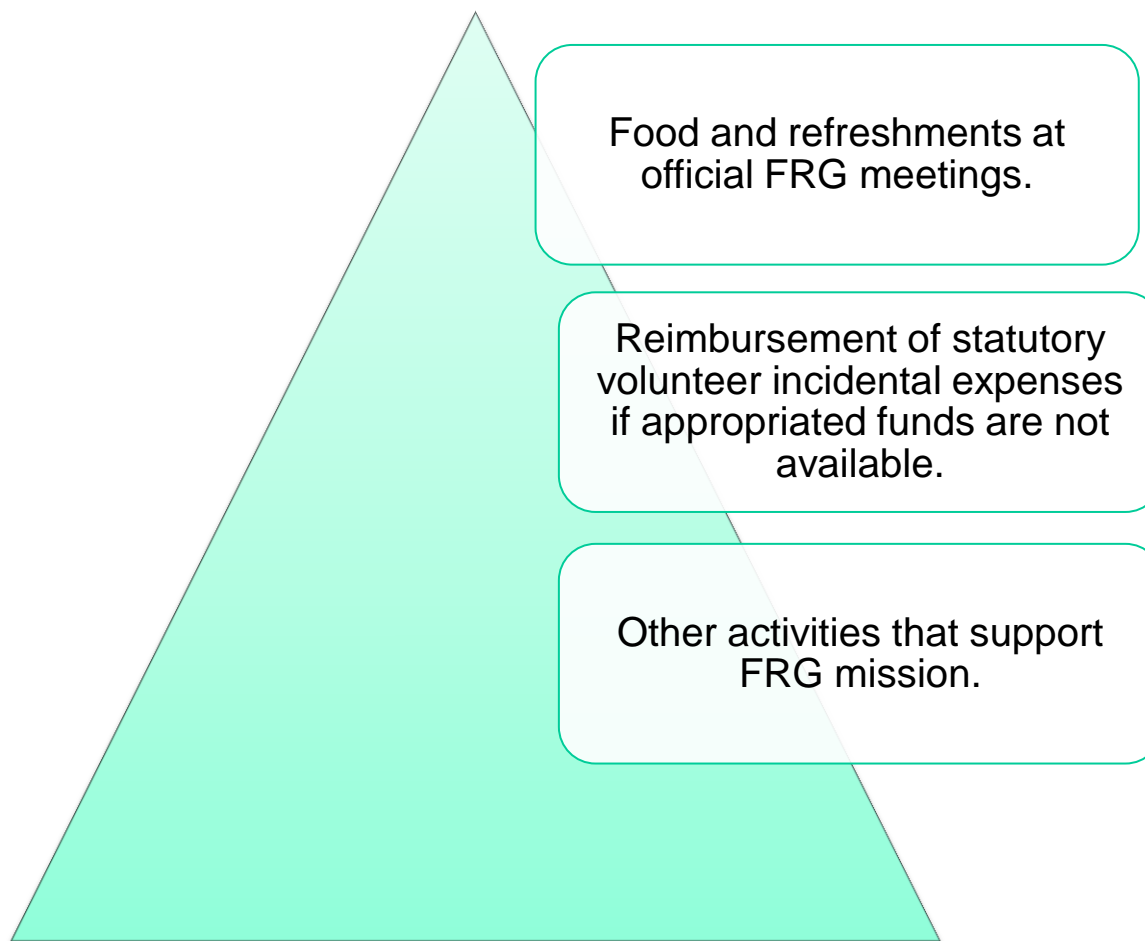


FRG Supplemental Mission Funds

- Used for FRG activities which support the FRG mission but are not mission-essential.
- Used for “any purpose that the commander determines clearly **supplements an established FRG mission - so long as APFs are not authorized.**” (AR 608-1, para J-9c)
Priority: Encouraging maximum attendance and participation at FRG meetings for example by providing food and beverages.
- Source of Supplemental Mission Funds: Unsolicited gifts/donations.



Proper Use of FRG Supplemental Mission Funds



FRG Supplemental Mission Funds – Special Issue

Garrison commanders may accept unsolicited gifts into the supplemental mission program when the donor intends the donation or gift to be used only in support of FRGs that are experiencing certain deployment cycle events, such as preparing for deployment, deployment, and redeployment.



The garrison commander may not accept unsolicited gifts into the supplemental mission program when the donor intends the donation or gift to be used only by a named FRG. For example, a donor intends a gift to be used “for Brigade X’s FRG.” Garrison commander must decline the gift because it creates disparity between FRGs experiencing the same deployment cycle events.



FRG Informal funds

Used for social activities.



- “FRG social activities can enhance family and Soldier camaraderie, provide stress relief, and reduce family loneliness during deployments. Social activities will not be funded using appropriated funds. FRG members may use money contained in an FRG informal fund to pay for social activities described in paragraph J-7.” (AR 608-1, J-2)
- Authorized use of informal funds includes: FRG newsletter containing mostly unofficial information, parties, social outings, volunteer recognition (not otherwise funded with APFs), and picnics. (AR 608-1, J-7a)

FRG Informal Funds

Un-Authorized Use of Informal Funds

- Augmenting the unit's other informal funds (the unit's cup and flower funds)
- Augmenting items or services that should be paid for with appropriated funds
- Purchasing traditional military gifts, such as Soldier farewell gifts that are not related to family readiness
- Funding the unit ball



FRG Informal Funds

- Sources:
 - Fundraising (AR 608-1, J-7d)
 - Gifts to the informal fund (AR 608-1, J-7f)
 - \$1,000 or less/gift.
 - After consultation with unit's ethics counselor.
- Income cap = \$10,000 from all sources, including fundraising, gifts, and donations.




Informal Fund Cap

The FRG informal fund cap currently listed as \$5,000 in AR 608-1, Army Community Service Center, Appendix J, Section 7, subparagraphs (e) and (f) is increased to \$10,000.

This increase provides more flexibility in raising funds for use in approved FRG activities and enhances the quality of support to Soldiers and their Families.

http://www.army.mil/USAPA/epubs/pdf/ad2008_01.pdf



SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON


07 MAR 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Army Directive 2008-01, Increase In Family Readiness Group Informal Fund Cap

1. This directive publishes an increase in the dollar amount pertaining to Family Readiness Group (FRG) informal fund caps. The FRG informal fund cap currently listed as \$5,000 in AR 608-1, Army Community Service Center, Appendix J, Section 7, subparagraphs (e) and (f) is increased to \$10,000. This change will be incorporated into the next revision of AR 608-1. The other provisions of AR 608-1 remain unchanged.

2. This increase provides more flexibility in raising funds for use in approved FRG activities and enhances the quality of support to Soldiers and their Families.


Pete Geren

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FRG Fundraising





FRG Fundraising

- Authorized for FRG Informal Funds only. No authority to raise funds to support mission-essential activities.
 - “FRGs are not established to raise funds, solicit donations, or manage large sums of money...”. (AR 608-1, J-7)
- Internal fundraising only.
 - FRG may fundraise from its own community members or dependents and from all persons benefitting from the FRG. (AR 608-1, J-7d)



FRG Fundraising



Army General Counsel 11
January 2006 Email
provides broad
interpretation of the
phrase,
“benefitting from the FRG.”



For example, “an
installation may derive
benefit from the Brigade or
Unit FRG.”



Conclusion. An FRG can
fundraise installation-wide
if that FRG can articulate a
benefit.

FRG Fundraising Philosophy



AR 608-1

- FRGs are not established to raise funds, solicit donations, or manage large sums of money. They are not equipped to handle the complex tax ramifications and stringent accounting requirements that can result from excessive informal funds.

Reality.

- FRG mission activities are vital. Soldiers, civilian employees, Family members (immediate and extended), and volunteers are depending on the FRG.
- FRGs should never be placed in the position of being unable to conduct mission activities because of FRG informal fund fundraising.

FRG Fundraising Procedures

Appropriate **infrastructure** established – SOP, Fund Custodian

Purpose of fundraising **consistent with** the approved SOP.

Manner of fundraising **consistent with** the JER and AR 600–29.

FRG Commander must **coordinate** with the commander with **jurisdiction over** the location of fundraising.

Commanders must **consult with SJA/Ethics counselor** and avoid all conflicts of interest.

Gifts and Donations to FRG



Gifts – General Rules

General Fundraising Prohibition.

- In addition to preserving Congress' power of the purse, the rules against augmentation are consistent with public policy.

Exception.

- 10 USC 2601(a) and (b). The secretaries of the military departments are delegated the authority to accept gifts for organizations under their jurisdiction.

No Solicitation

- AR 1-100, para 5e. DA personnel will not solicit gifts from potential donors. They may, however, in response to an appropriate inquiry, inform potential donors of needs of the service.

Gifts and Donations to FRG

- FRG may not solicit gifts and donations. (AR 608-1, J-8)
 - However - In response to an appropriate inquiry, may inform of the needs of the Army in relation to assisting Army families. (AR 608-1, J-8)
- Gifts to the Army intended for FRG support (AR 608-1, J-9):
 - Added to the FRG supplemental mission account as NAFs.
 - Used by commander for any purpose that clearly supplements an established mission of the FRG so long as appropriated funds are not authorized.
 - Example: Purchase food and beverages to encourage maximum attendance and participation at FRG meetings.
- Gifts to FRG informal funds (AR 608-1, J-7f):
 - Unit commanders may accept an unsolicited gift or donation of money or tangible personal property of a value of \$1,000 or less for its FRG informal fund after consultation with the unit ethics counselor.



Donations to FRGs ≤ \$1,000

Acceptance Authority.

- **AR 608-1, Appendix J-7f.**
- Unit commanders may accept an unsolicited gift or donation of money or tangible personal property of a value of \$1,000 or less for its FRG informal fund after consultation with the unit ethics counselor.

Legal Review.

- **AR 608-1, Appendix J-9j.**
- Commanders will seek guidance from their servicing Judge Advocate and ethics counselor when they receive offers of unsolicited donations for FRG support.

Use Limitation.

- **AR 608-1, Appendix J-7f.**
- Unsolicited gifts or donations to the FRG informal funds are considered income and impact the FRG informal fund annual income cap of \$10,000.
- Use as cited in informal funds portion cited above.

Donations to FRGs > \$1,000



Becomes Non-Appropriated Funds

- Unsolicited donations accepted by the garrison commander into the installation ACS center supplemental mission program become non-appropriated funds (NAFs).



Becomes Shared Funds.

- Supplemental mission NAFs should be shared equally by FRGs (both active component and Army tenant units to include Reserve and National Guard) which receive support from the ACS center which received the donation.



Becomes Responsibility of Garrison Director of FMWR

- Has fiduciary responsibility for these funds IAW AR 215-1, not the Commander of that FRG.
- Garrison Commander



ETHICS AND THE ARMY FRG



Acceptance Authority for Donation to FRGs > \$1,000

\$50,000.

- Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Directors/Fund Managers of separate NAFI within the IMCOM structure may accept gifts valued up to \$50,000, when delegated by the Garrison Commander.

\$100,000

- Garrison commanders may accept gifts valued up to \$100,000.

\$250,000

- IMCOM Region Directors or FMWRC Commanding General may accept gifts valued up to \$250,000.

Ethics

- Commanders may not authorize travel or reimbursement of volunteer incidental expenses for members of their household or other persons that could present a potential conflict of interest.
- Expenditures are subject to the Joint Ethics Regulation and all other applicable statutory and regulatory restraints on official activities, use of appropriated funds, and fundraising.
- FRG appropriated fund resources may not be used to support:
 - Private organization activities;
 - Internal fundraisers;
 - Commercial ventures.





Summary

- Authority
- FRG Mission
- FRG Activities
- FRG Status
- FRG History
- Funding FRG Activities
- FRG Fundraising
- Gifts and Donations
- Ethics

Summary

Supplemental Mission Funds

- Activity:
 - Activities which supplement FRG mission when APFs are not authorized.
- Funding Source:
 - Unsolicited gifts and donations.

Appropriated Funds

- Activity:
 - Mission-essential activities.
- Funding Source:
 - Appropriated by Congress.

Informal Funds

- Activity:
 - Social activities.
- Funding Source:
 - Unsolicited gifts and donations.
 - Internal fundraising

Questions

