



West Virginia National Guard Family Programs

Things to Remember!

- > Review TRICARE changes for 2019
- > Tax season is quickly approaching
- > Get with your FAC to find out about free tax filing
- > It's a New Year, start a new savings plan
- > Check on Blended Retirement
- > TRICARE open enroll is closed. Plans can only be changed due to life changing events

The Informer

New Look for the New Year

The Informer Newsletter is starting its eighth year of publication. To mark that milestone we thought it was high time for a little refresh. So we've broken it all down and are starting from the bottom up. In this issue we plan to introduce you to each of our programs and tell you a little about what they each have to offer you and/or your family. The goal of this newsletter has always been to keep you informed of resources available to you, but you may not be aware of what all those resources can do. So this month we're getting down to the basics and introducing (or reintroducing for those who are familiar) our programs and services. So first and foremost: What is Family Programs? Lets start there and work our way through all of the programs that come together to make up Family Programs.

The National Guard Family Program exists for the sole purpose of supporting and educating families along the path of their National Guard life. In addition to our national office in Washington, DC, we have an incredible team of staff members and volunteers in each of the 54 States & Territories.

In each state, there is a State Family Program Director and one to four Wing Family Program Coordinators in support of the families. There are also Family Readiness Groups/Key Volunteer Groups, Family Readiness Assistants, Family Assistance Staff, where you, as a family member, can take full advantage of any and all services available.

Through out this issue you can learn about our programs. If there is something you would like to see or learn more about in a future issue please don't hesitate to call us at 866-986-4326. Also visit and follow us on our social media accounts.



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A note from our Director

When speaking with deploying Service Members their number one concern is: "Who can take care of my Family, while I am gone".

The WVNG Family Programs Office and Warrior Support programs are designed to make Service Members and Family Members aware of resources and services that are available to them. The Program is moving in the direction of being a more proactive asset to our customer base and providing beneficial resources and services. Our staff is connected with a variety of organizations throughout the communities all across the state. If our customers have an issue or problem, our staff is equipped to handle it.

Region 1 FAC Coverage



Mike Lowry
Tackett House JFHQ
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Region One—Charleston Family Assistance Center

Mike Lowry is located at the Tackett Readiness Center at JFHQ in Charleston – He has been working as a Family Assistance Specialist for six years. He is in the WV National Guard and is very knowledgeable of the ins and outs of the Guard! Please stop by or call him to check on latest resource or if you have a question.

Spotlight Resource for this month is: The Dollar Energy Fund

If you need help with utilities, this program is statewide and can assist. You can visit them at the below website to fill out an application for assistance.

<https://www.dollarenergy.org/>

Program Guidelines:

With the exception of MonPower, Potomac Edison and Peoples Gas customers, applicants must have paid at least **\$100** on their gas and electric accounts in the past three months. Any applicant age 62 years of age or older will have a payment requirement for gas and electric utilities of **\$75**.

For MonPower, Potomac Edison and Peoples Gas customers, applicants must have paid at least **\$150** on their account in the past three months. Any applicant age 62 years of age or older will have a payment requirement for electric utilities of **\$100**.

Applicants seeking assistance with their water utility account must have paid at least **\$50** in the last three months.

Exceptions may be made in cases of extreme hardships.

The maximum grant amount for Appalachian Power Company customers is **\$300**. Applicants for all other utility companies may receive up to **\$500**.

Applicants can only receive one grant per utility, per program year. **(10/1/2018 – 9/30/2019)**

Grant awards are based on need and each family's circumstances are different. Grant amounts are determined on a case-to-case basis.

If a customer's utility service is off or in threat of termination when they apply and the maximum grant amount will not restore service or stop termination, the application will be denied. The amount needed to restore service or stop a termination is determined by utility review. Notification will be sent to the customer advising them that their application was denied and that an additional payment is required in order to be considered for assistance.

For more information and guidelines please visit: <https://dollarenergy.org/>

Region 2 FAC Coverage



Amy Long
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Region Two—Parkersburg Family Assistance Center

Amy Long is located at 1500 Blizzard Drive Parkersburg. She has been working in Family Programs for ten years and a military spouse for 20 years. She has dozens of resources and has assisted countless Service Members, Veterans and their families get the help they need. For more information on the FAC program or resources in her area stop by and visit or call.

Spotlight Resource for this month is: We Have Your Six Mid Ohio Valley

This is a new 501c3 in Parkersburg. We Have Your Six will transition military Veterans into Permanent Housing Solutions by getting them the help they need through VA medical benefits, disability, GI Bill for education, or help finding a job. They provide help with transportation through Operation Transportation and provide Veterans with physical and mental healthcare programs to help end the Veterans cycle of homelessness. We will also provide our Veterans with transportation to outside care. Additionally, they offer music therapy through a program called MOV Healing Strings as well as emotional support groups like the Buddy to Buddy program.

If you would like to learn more about this organizations visit their website at <https://wehaveyoursix.org/> or contact Gloria Husk at 304-966-2040.

Region Three— Kingwood Family Assistance Center

Lisa Dixon is located at the Reserve Training Center in Kingwood. She has worked with Family Programs for ten years. She is very knowledgeable of her region and the resources available. To learn more about this area please stop by or call.

Spotlight Resource for this month is: Operation Welcome Home

Operation Welcome Home is a 501c3 non-profit job placement organization dedicated to helping veterans and their families overcome barriers to employment and providing them with the knowledge and resources needed to secure a fulfilling position in the civilian workforce.

They also provide a common meeting place at Mylan Park for veterans to congregate, share what's on their mind, form bonds and simply relax with other veterans who understand their trials and triumphs. Ultimately, Operation Welcome Home develops individualized employment plans with our veterans that will help in their transition to civilian life by gaining meaningful full or part-time employment!

For more information visit their website at <http://welcomehomewv.com/> or call 304-681-212-9264

Region 3 FAC Coverage



Lisa Dixon
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Region Four—Martinsburg Family Assistance Center

Lou Anne Kramer is located on Kelly Island Road at the Martinsburg Armory. She is our newest FAC and started with us only nine months ago! She is excited to meet local Veterans and Service Members and assist them with any needs they may have. If you need assistance and live in her area call or stop by!

Spotlight Resource for this month: Four State Community Veterans Engagement Board (CVEB)

CVEB unites Veteran advocates around a common mission to improve outcomes for Veterans within the community. It is led by local community leaders whose ultimate passion is to impact positive change in the lives of our Veterans.

Although the concept of the board was envisioned by the Department of Veterans Affairs, we are a devoted community-based framework that was established July 2016 within the Martinsburg, WV community. They convene monthly to develop local solutions, create a network of service providers, ease access to resources, and provide a feedback mechanism to hear the voices within the communities for Veterans, Service members, and their families. The CVEB is poised to extend an impactful reach to 22 regional Veteran communities within the Four States of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

We also promote veteran/community engagements by connecting with local agencies that matter, such as:

- Veterans Affairs Medical Centers
- Department of Health and Human Resources
- Veterans Service Organizations/Officers
- Veterans Religious Outreach
- Veterans Justice Outreach
- Vocational Rehabilitation & Educational Counseling
- Veterans Job Assistance
- Physical and Mental Disabilities Assistance
- Initiatives to end Veterans Homelessness
- Patient Care Services

For more information on the CVEB visit their website at <https://fourstatecveb.org>

Region 4 FAC Coverage



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SUPER SATURDAYS

9Feb and 2Mar

Veterans and Service Members
can get their taxes done for free.

**Call Lou Anne
for more information!**

Region 5 FAC Coverage



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Lewisburg Armory
304-201-3830
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Region Five – Lewisburg Family Assistance Center

Kelli Higginbotham is located at the Lewisburg Armory in Maxwelton. She has been with family programs for five years and has been the Family Assistance Coordinator for a little over a year. She has formed several community partnerships in her region who are able to assist Service Members, Veterans and their families when needed. If you'd like more information on resources or assistance in this region please call or stop by.

Spotlight Resource for this month: State of WV Department of Veterans Assistance

The mission of the West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance (WVDVA) is to aid and advise honorably discharged West Virginia veterans and their qualifying dependents and to ensure they are provided the care, assistance and recognition they deserve. Numerous programs, sixteen field and claims offices and three facilities fall under the purview of the WVDVA, enabling the department to meet this goal.

The local Veterans Service Officer in this region is Gary Walkup Jr. If you are in need of assistance with disability claims please contact Gary at 304-647-7500.

Region 6 FAC Coverage



Heather Neal
Glen Jean Armory
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Region Six—Glen Jean Family Assistance Center

Heather Neal is located in the Glen Jean Armory on Wood Mountain Road. She has been with the Family Assistance Center for over a year and has been a military spouse for over 20 years. She has made several new contacts for resources in her coverage area and is ready to assist Veterans and Service Members in her region who are in need. If you need assistance or would like to know what all is available for you stop by or call her.

Spotlight Resources for this month: Beckley VA Medical Center

The Beckley VA Medical Center strives to be a trusted and resilient partner for Veterans, offering readily available, safe and compassionate care of exceptional quality within an integrated system

THEIR GOALS

1. Establish an institute that focuses on recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff and ensuring leadership succession planning.
2. Establish VISN-wide referral patterns that optimize quality of care.
3. Provide quality care by using the most experienced providers and proven clinical practices.
4. Utilize community partners to provide timely and seamless care to Veterans using fee basis or the Choice Act.
5. Utilize advanced technology to deliver care to Veterans at their preferred location.
6. Provide transparency to internal and external partners on the financial wellness of the VISN.

Family Readiness Support

What is FRSA?

Family Readiness Support Assistants (FRSA's) are a component of the Commander's unit Family readiness program, and support Family Readiness goals at the state and unit levels. They provide administrative and logistical support to the Commander in support of their Unit Readiness Program, and training and volunteer program support within the State Family Program Office at the Joint Forces Headquarters. FRSA's are responsible for volunteer management and training, and support Family readiness, adaptability and resilience training under the Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness Program to ARNG Family members.

What we do for the Military?

Provide assistance in the development and implementation of the Commander's Family Readiness Program to include a well-being focus for Soldiers, Families, and children during all phases of the deployment cycle and sustainment.

What we do for Military Families?

Provide training, hands-on assistance, and information to unit Family Readiness Groups on all aspects of Family readiness, well-being, and Deployment Cycle Support; maintain up-to-date Family Readiness library including, but not limited to, directives, policies, regulations, and program material.



West

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Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is a DoD-wide effort to promote the well-being of National Guard and Reserve members, their families and communities, by connecting them with resources throughout the deployment cycle.

Commanders and leaders play a critical role in ensuring that National Guard and Reserve Service members and their families attend Yellow Ribbon Events where they can access information on healthcare, education, employment, and financial and legal benefits.

For more information on Yellow Ribbon events please call ILT Ruggles.



ILT Mollie Ruggles
Yellow Ribbon Events Coordinator
Tackett House JFHQ
304-561-6721
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WV National Guard Behavioral Health Crisis Line
304-561-6640



Susan Izzo
Lead Child and Youth Program
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susan.c.izzo.nfg@mail.mil

Donna Truman
Child and Youth Program (east)
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donna.s.truman.nfg@mail.mil

Mission Statement:

"To promote and sustain the quality of life and resilience of NG children and youth by providing secure, timely, flexible, high-quality support services and enrichment programs."

Child and Youth Program

The Child and Youth Services (CYS) is an integral component of the National Guard's comprehensive approach to Family Readiness. By upholding the well-being of the entire family, the CYS offers outcome based activities designed to foster positive youth development and support the unique strengths and challenges of National Guard children. This high quality, out-of-school time program exists in 54 States, Territories and the District of Columbia to mitigate risky behaviors, enhance resilience, develop positive coping strategies, and assist our National Guard youth in reaching their full potential as the next generation of leaders.

Age-appropriate activities and support services are offered in four service delivery areas:

- Art, Recreation & Leisure
- Sports, Fitness & Health
- Life Skills, Citizenship, Character Development & Leadership
- Academic Support, Career Development, Mentoring & Intervention

Eligibility

The CYS is available to school age dependents, ages 6 to 18 years, of National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, regardless of deployment status (including traditional drilling Guardsmen), Survivors, and Active Component Soldiers and Airmen geographically-separated from installation-based program support. While child care type services are not offered within the core program, resources for assistance are available.

Core Program Elements

National:

- Guard Teen Panel
- National Youth Symposium

State Program:

- State Teen Panel (STP)
- State Youth Symposium (SYS)
- Youth Development Programming
- State Opportunities & Military Youth Adventure Camps
- Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) Support

UP COMING CHILD AND YOUTH EVENTS

Date	Location	Event
6 January	Eleanor Armory	Valentines Care Packages
11 January	Summersville Armory	Family Game Night
19 January	Parkersburg Armory	Disaster Preparedness Supply Kits
2 March	Summersville Armory	Dr. Seuss Read Across America

For more information on Child and Youth events or to register for any of the above events please call Susan or Donna

TRICARE—Health Benefits Advisors

Toney Colagrosso has over 34 years in uniform and 39 years of experience in CHAMPUS/TRICARE benefit counseling. Sherry Cantrell has been a military spouse and TRICARE dependent for over 30 years. Toney and Sherry assist guard members and their families with TRICARE benefit counseling and updated TRICARE services.



Our primary mission is to assist Service Members, Retirees and their Families with issues or concerns they are facing with TRICARE coverage and claims. We have established personal relationships with TRICARE Representatives allowing for direct assistance with your issues, often expediting the process.

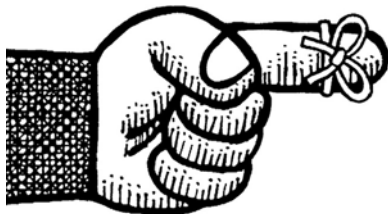
Toney Colagrosso
Beneficiary Counseling and
Assistance Coordinator
304-552-2938
tony.colagrosso.nfg@mail.mil

We can assist you with determining eligibility, explanation of benefits and cost and explanation of coverage for individual and family plans.

Sherry Cantrell
Beneficiary Counseling and
Assistance Coordinator
sherry.l.cantrell.nfg@mail.mil

TRICARE Health Plan options

Plan	Single Monthly Cost	Family Monthly Cost
TRICARE Reserve Select	\$42.83	\$218.01
TRICARE Young Adult	\$214.00	
TRICARE Retired Reserve	\$451.51	1083.40



JUST A LITTLE
Reminder

TRICARE open enrollment has ended. Plans can now only be changed by a life changing event.



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**Personal
Financial
Counseling
services are
always at no
cost, private
and
confidential**

Personal Finance Counselor

Personal Financial Counseling (PFC) can help you and your family: manage finances, resolve financial problems and reach long term goals such as getting an education, buying a home and planning for retirement.

Services Provided:

- Confidential financial consultations for individuals and families
- Referrals to military and community resources
- Support for family members during deployment
- Help with credit management and budgeting
- Help navigating benefits
- Retirement Planning
- Blended Retirement Questions
- Thrift Savings Plan
- Improving credit for Security Clearances

Training and Workshops available:

- Money Management
- Budgeting and Developing Spending Plans
- Debt and Credit Card Management
- Consumer Rights and Obligations (dealing with creditors)
- Financial Planning: Reaching Life Goals
- Financial Readiness and Economic Security
- Financial Readiness for Deployment
- Transition to Civilian Life
- Home Buying and other major purchases

If you would like to schedule a private appointment with our PFC or a briefing for your unit call Rosa Lee today.

Survivor Outreach Support (SOS)



Leigh Ann Hill
Tackett House JFHQ
304-561-6719—Office
304-382-1431—Cell
leigh.a.hill8.ctr@mail.mil

SOS demonstrates the Army's commitment to Families of the Fallen by providing support and standardized services to Active, Reserve, and Army National Guard Families. SOS is a holistic and multi-agency approach to delivering these services by providing access at garrisons and communities closest to where Families live.

Our mission is as follows:

- Expand and improve services to Survivors
- Define roles and responsibilities for all agencies and all components
- Improve responsiveness and streamline the assistance process for Families
- Provide access to Benefits Coordinators, Financial Counselors and Support Coordinators locally, and Long Term Family Case Management.

Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA)

What Transition Assistance Advisors can do for you...

Transition Assistance Advisors work with other Joint Forces Headquarters staff members and Directors of State Family Programs to build a state network of support with Veterans Affairs and community organizations for Service members and their families to access in their community.

Transition Assistance Advisors (TAAs) will:

- Help you cut through the red tape. We provide information and assistance to Service members and their families to help them understand and access state and federal benefits as well as services through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Veterans Business Administration (VBA) Military Health System and the Department of Labor.
- Meet your Post-Deployment needs. We coordinate with VA, TRICARE, Veteran Service Organizations, and other federal, state and community resources to provide important information and help with obtaining services to meet your needs during the post-deployment period.
- See you through changes in your Military Service. We participate in the mobilization and demobilization process to brief and advise members and their families about available VA entitlements and available resources in their communities.
- Ensure your health and well-being are taken care of. We help coordinate activities for the Post-Deployment Health Reassessment event (a screening evaluation for any lingering physical and mental health conditions Service members may experience at 3-6 months post-deployment).
- Strive to be your personal problem solver. We research and resolve issues associated with entitlements whenever you or your family members encounter problems.
- Get the right folks involved when you need their help. We advise the Joint Forces Headquarters and coordinate with Family Support Specialists, Employer Support Group to give you the access to entitlements available through Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Labor and other veterans' entitlement and benefit programs.



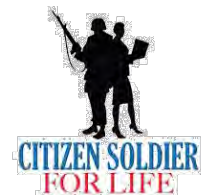
Allan Mollohan
Tackett House JFHQ
304-561-6711—Office
304-807-2526—Cell
joseph.a.mollohan.ctr@mail.mil

Citizen Soldier For Life (CSFL)

The National Guard Citizen Soldier For Life (CSFL) program prepares and connects service members with financial and employment services in an effort to enhance readiness and boost resilience by providing information that give them the advantage they need.

CSFL Counselors support our service members through employment and financial literacy, combined with providing resources and assistance across the entire soldier lifecycle and into retirement. The services that we offer are:

- eBenefits Registration
- Career Planning with an emphasis on analyzing the gaps
- Job Search Assistance
- Resume and Cover Letter Prep
- Mock Interviews



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Steven Ellison
Glen Jean Armory
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Kevin Cook
Eleanor Armory
304-546-0277
cook4243@yahoo.com

We have three Career Readiness Counselors across the state. Please reach out to them for any of your employment needs.

For a full list of civilian, technician and AGR job opening within the WV National Guard please visit:

<http://www.wv.ng.mil/HRO/>

West Virginia Family Programs Important Numbers

Family Programs Director	SFC Jayme Persinger	304-561-6480 (D) 304-541-1023 (C)
Chaplain	LTC Michael Allen	304-561-6490 (D) 304-400-9290 (C)
Chaplain	CPT Justin Elliot	304-201-3947 (D) 304-552-6002 (C)
Family Assistance Center Coordinator	Kelli Higginbotham	304-201-3830 (D) 304-932-8561 (C)
Charleston Family Assistance Specialist	Mike Lowry	304-561-6545
Parkersburg Family Assistance Specialist	Amy Long	304-561-6107
Kingwood Family Assistance Specialist	Lisa Dixon	304-791-4055
Martinsburg Family Assistance Specialist	Lou Anne Kramer	304-201-3753
Glen Jean Family Assistance Specialist	Heather Neal	304.201-3221
Senior Family Readiness Support Assistant	Vacant	
Family Readiness Support Assistant (west)	Brandi Buckland	304-201-3885
Family Readiness Support Assistant (east)	Mark Dunbar	304-201-3837
Lead Child and Youth Program	Susan Izzo	304-561-6720
Child and Youth Program (east)	Donna Truman	304-201-3754
Tricare Health Benefits Advisor	Toney Colagrosso	304.552.2938
Tricare Health Benefits Advisor	Sherry Cantrell	
Yellow Ribbon Program	ILT Mollie Ruggles	304-561-6721
130th Air Wing Family Program Coordinator	Beth Melton	304-341-6625
167th Air Wing Family Program Coordinator	Sherry Lewis	304-616-5590
Personal Financial Counselor	Rosa Lee McNeal	304-561-6784
Survivor Outreach Support	Leigh Ann Hill	304-561-6830
Transition Assistance Advisor	Allan Mollohan	304-561-6711
Resiliency, Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention	MAJ Bridgett Saunders	304-561-6825
Citizen Soldier For Life Counselor	Rachel Moles	304-553-8184
Citizen Soldier For Life Counselor	Steven Ellison	604-921-6995
Citizen Soldier For Life Counselor	Kevin Cook	304-546-0277
Child Development Center	Front Desk	304-561-6468



24 hour Toll Free Number
866-986-4326

MILITARY
ONESOURCE
Call. Click. Connect.
1-800-342-9647

 **American Red Cross**
877-272-7337

 **ESGR**
EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF
THE GUARD AND RESERVE
304-201-3579

Help for Homeless Veterans
877-4AID-VET
va.gov/homeless | (877) 424-3838

ID Card Locations:

Charleston Air Guard	Mon-Fri 8a-3:30p	304-561-6822	Fairmont Armory	By Appointment Only	304-201-3821
Camp Dawson	By Appointment Only	304-791-4308	Glen Jean Armory	By Appointment Only	304-201-3220
Martinsburg Air Guard	Tues & Thurs 7a-3p	304-616-5295	Cross Lanes Armory	Mon-Fri 8a-3:30p	304-721-0615
Parkersburg Armory	By Appointment Only	304-561-6100	Martinsburg USCG	By Appointment Only	304-264-3824