

# ARMY FAMILY ACTION PLAN CONFERENCE

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# Top Five Issues of Ft. Wainwright Conference



- 1. Dental Coverage for Families at Ft. Wainwright through United Concordia Insurance**
- 2. TSP Matching Funds for Service Members**
- 3. Child Development Center Availability**
- 4. Assistance for Domestic Abused Families**
- 5. Additional Post Deployment Family Reintegration Support**
- 6. Transportation for Youth**



# *Five Most Valuable Services*



**Medical**

**Commissary**

**Gyms**

**Child and Youth Services**

**MWR Services**



## 2006 Top Six Active Headquarters, Department of the Army AFAP Issues



- #497-Allow Soldiers with at least ten years of service to transfer their MGIB benefits to their dependents
- #473-Improve processing times for critical finance transactions
- #586-Authorize chiropractic services for all TRICARE beneficiaries
- #596-Establish a searchable convicted Sex Offender Registry OCONUS comparable to CONUS registries and make it available to the military community.
- #578-Amend AR 600-8-10 to authorize use of permissive TDY for fathers upon birth of a child
- #575-Allow service members to accumulate 90 days of leave until termination of service.



# Community & Family Services Workgroup



## **Title: Child Development Center Availability**

**Issue Status: Working**

**Scope:** The current Child Development Center does not meet the needs of the current and expected population of Ft. Wainwright. Due to lack of availability, Families are forced to find child care services off post at higher rates and additional costs. This creates financial hardships for Families and affects Soldier readiness.

**Recommendation:** Build an additional Child Development Center

## **Title: Timely Access to Ft. Wainwright**

**Issue Status: Working**

**Scope:** It takes too long to get onto Ft. Wainwright during heavy traffic times. This affects anyone trying to gain access to post. Delays cause excessive inconveniences and possible safety hazards. This can include traffic congestion both on and off post and road rage. Timely access is crucial to the smooth operation of Ft. Wainwright.

**Recommendation:** Hire more gate guards and Re-conduct Installation Management Command traffic survey of a points during peak hours of use when post is at full strength.



# Community & Family Services Workgroup



**Title: Shelters for all school bus stops on Ft. Wainwright**

**Issue Status: Working**

**Scope:** There are no protective shelters for children while waiting for the bus. The harsh and unpredictable weather poses serious health and safety risks for children in the Ft. Wainwright community. It is imperative to *provide* a safer environment for our children while waiting for the bus.

**Recommendation:** Build heated and lighted enclosed shelters for children to wait for busses.

**Title: Family Deployment Cards**

**Issue Status: Working**

**Scope:** Family members of deployed Soldiers are entitled to certain benefits throughout Ft. Wainwright. There is currently no way to distinguish a deployed Family member except by showing a paper copy of orders. Paper is easily destroyed and inconvenient to carry around. Family members need an easier, less stressful way to prove their deployment status when trying to access their benefits

**Recommendation:** Issue controlled deployment cards to Family members through unit Rear Detachment Command and or Family Readiness Groups



# Community & Family Services



## **Title: Shuttle Service between Ft. Wainwright and Fairbanks**

**Issue Status: Working**

**Scope:** There is currently no public transportation between Ft. Wainwright and the Fairbanks community. Taxis are extremely costly. Walking can be hazardous due to Fairbanks' extreme weather conditions (extreme cold and icy roads) and impractical due to distance. Lack of affordable transportation isolates Soldiers from the Fairbanks community and off-post activities. If transportation were provided, it would bridge the gap.

**Recommendation:** Provide free transportation from Ft. Wainwright to Fairbanks' main bus depot.

## **Title: AAFES Service Station Not Competitive**

**Issue Status: Working**

**Scope:** Gas prices and services are too high compared to off post. Gas and services such as winterization are necessary for the living conditions of Alaska. AAFES is supposed to be saving the military money but they are not meeting these standards. AAFES has a strong bond with the military community. In order to retain this bond, they should strive to be as competitive as possible.

**Recommendation:** Lower the prices of gas and services to beat major competitors off post.



# Troop Support Workgroup



## **Title: Additional Post Deployment Family Reintegration Support**

**Issue Status: Forwarded**

**Scope:** The existing post deployment Family support reintegration options are insufficient. Currently they are geared toward the Soldier and spouse/Family separately rather than the entire Family together. The Chaplain does have a retreat program, however not all feel comfortable due to the perceived religious nature of the program. A reintegration program that involves the entire Family as a whole would better benefit the Families and the Army.

### **Recommendation:**

- 1. Implement specific Family reintegration support program for a consistent time period post-deployment (approximately 2-6 months post-deployment).**
- 2. Make the program Family specific (i.e. Families that have toddlers, teens, etc.)**

## **Title: Hard Copy Welcome Packets**

**Issue Status: Working**

**Scope:** Hard copy welcome packets are not available at all installations. These welcome packets allow Soldiers and their Family members to familiarize themselves with their gaining installation and surrounding communities when automation support is not available. Without a hard copy reference, it may make their transition more difficult.

**Recommendation:** Ensure all ACS Relocation Managers have automated and hardcopy Welcome Packets available for Soldiers and their Families.



# Troop Support Workgroup



## Housing Options for Single Soldiers E-4 and Above

Issue Status: Working

**Scope:** Single junior enlisted Soldiers are required to live in the barracks. Many of these Soldiers are capable to live on their own. These responsible and more mature Soldiers are being treated as adolescents. In addition, they are being held responsible for inappropriate behavior of other Soldiers. Morale of these Soldiers would improve with the opportunity of having a choice of their living environment.

### Recommendation:

1. Allow E-4 and above the option to move off post if specific criteria are met, (i.e. timeliness, maturity, demonstrated financial responsibility).
2. Provide separate barracks for these Soldiers.

## Relocation Education for Initial Entry Training Soldiers

Issue Status: Working

**Scope:** Initial Entry for Training Soldiers are not receiving proper relocation information about entitlements for PCS move, OCONUS and CONUS. Initial Term Soldiers arrive to new duty stations without receiving sufficient information prior to relocation. Soldiers have financial, transportation and Family issues upon arrival to a new duty station. Due to the lack of information about entitlements, Soldiers are experiencing financial hardships.

### Recommendation:

1. Create educational program for IET about relocation entitlements for Soldiers and their Families.
2. Subject matter experts required to give educational information to Soldiers.



## Entitlements/Medical Workgroup



### ***TITLE: TSP Matching Funds for Service Members***

Issue Status: Forwarded

**Scope:** Service members have very few incentives to participate in the TSP. They are not authorized to receive matching funds for investing in their future and retirement.

Because of the lack of incentives, Soldiers are less inclined to participate in the TSP and rely more on civilian investment companies. Improving incentives for service members would improve retention rates, longevity of service and the ability to provide for better retirement opportunities.

**Recommendation:** Authorize Service Members the same incentives as *DOD* civilians by allowing them to receive TSP matching funds up to 5%.

### **Title: Assistance for Domestic Abused Families**

Issue Status: Forwarded

**Scope:** Spouses involved in domestic abuse cases are not entitled to immediate financial or transportation benefits for their children while living in government quarters. The Soldier is removed from housing and is not required to provide support for their children. Currently, kids in some cases are not being fed nor adequate transportation provided for emergencies. A program is not in place to provide immediate assistance to these Families.

**Recommendation:** Establish a program to provide additional funds that are solely dedicated to providing food vouchers and transportation within 24 hours to displaced spouses with children involved in domestic abuse cases and living in government quarters.



## Entitlements/Medical Workgroup



### **Title: Dental Coverage for Families at Ft. Wainwright through United Concordia Insurance**

**Issue Status: Forwarded**

**Scope:** Dental coverage from United Concordia provides adequate coverage for exams, cleanings, annual x-rays and routine procedures such as fillings. Adequate coverage is not provided for procedures such as root canals, crowns, tooth extractions, orthodontics and implants. The lack of coverage causes Families stationed at Ft. Wainwright to pay excess amounts out of pocket which causes them to elect out of needed dental procedures.

#### **Recommendation:**

- 1. Increase table of organization and equipment positions at Ft. Wainwright within DENTAC so that on-post dental facilities can provide major dental work for dependents that is not covered adequately through United Concordia.**
- 2. Authorize DENTAC to send dependents out on consults when there is no a dentist in place to provide services needed**



# Entitlements/Medical Workgroup



## **Title: Next of Kin/Family Transportation Entitlement from Alaska When a Sponsor is Severely Wounded** **Issue Status: Working**

**Scope:** When a sponsor is severely wounded and transferred to a Primary Care Facility, next of kin are authorized to fly to that location. Because of the geographical separation from Alaska to the lower 48, it is often not possible for spouses in Alaska to travel with other primary Family members (AR 600-8-1 Ch7). The stress of knowing a Family member is severely wounded is difficult and the spouse is not in a mental state to travel alone. Many times, the only primary next of kin is the spouse. Authorizing the spouse of a wounded warrior to pick an authorized travel partner would help alleviate a lot of the unnecessary stress of traveling alone.

### **Recommendation:**

- 1. Authorize the spouse of a wounded warrior to pick a travel partner of their choice to travel to a Primary Care Facility.**
- 2. Authorize the spouse to be escorted by a Casualty Notification Officer, Casualty Assistance Officer or Rear Detachment Service Member when a friend or Family member is unavailable.**



# Youth Workgroup



## **Title: Transportation for Youth**

**Issue Status: Working**

**Scope:** There is no transportation for the youth to get around post and to Youth Services (YS). **Factors:** Free bus off limits to youth under 18, Dual working parents. **Impact:** Decrease number of youth coming to YS leads to decrease number of activities available for youth. Increased youth problems in the community. Kids can't use teen support groups at the YS. Kids walking in -30 degree weather. **Who would benefit –** Parents and teens. Parents wouldn't worry about where their kids are. **Positive impact on youth academically. Positive impact on the community.**

## **Recommendation:**

- 1. Authorize funding for transportation. Pick up at North Town. Consistent pick up and drop off schedule.**



# Youth Workgroup



**Title: Please Send the 6<sup>th</sup> Graders Back to SAS**      Issue Status: Working

**Scope:** 6<sup>th</sup> graders are too immature to be a member of the Youth Services. They are not mature enough to be around older teenagers. **Impact:** Having 12 year olds hanging around 17 year olds. Inappropriate behavior during activities.

**Benefit:** Both would benefit. SAS has more age appropriate activities. Benefits older youth, less problems at the YS.

**Recommendation:** Send 6<sup>th</sup> graders back to SAS.

**Title: Activities Wanted**      Issue Status: Working

**Scope:** There are not enough activities for the youth. Same activities over and over. **Impact:** Limiting activities will decrease the percent of youth attending.

**Benefit:** By having a greater variety in activities there will be a higher percent of youth coming to YS.

**Recommendation:** Alpine Water Slide, Sumo Wrestling, Ping Pong Tournaments, Monthly Organized Competitions.



# Youth Workgroup



## **Title: Operation Advertise**

**Issue Status: Working**

**Scope:** Not enough youth know about the YS, especially the new youth. The community has limited knowledge about Youth Services. For example within our group, one youth didn't know for three years and another didn't know for awhile. **Impact:** Low attendance rate, decrease number of activities, decrease funding. **Benefit:** More youth attending YS, more activities, friends telling friends.

**Recommendation:** Flyers, newcomers briefings, newspaper ads, radio announcements.

## **Title: We Want Our Gym Back**

**Issue Status: Working**

**Scope:** SKIES and sports programs are taking all the gym time allocated for Youth Services. SKIES starts after school when teens come to YS. Sports takes up the whole gym. Currently soccer teams use half the gym and Tae Kwan Do, the other half. The schedules are Monday through Friday and Saturday. **Impact:** Causing less people to come to YS. Those who do come then leave. Less activities scheduled for YS. **Benefit:** Everyone in YS, youth and Youth staff. YS utilized for what it was meant for, the youth. Made for the youth, used for the youth.

**Recommendation:**

- 1. SKIES and Sports programs find other building to use.**
- 2. Build a separate sports complex.**