

## APPENDIX B: Frequently Asked Questions

### FRG Funding Frequently Asked Questions

#### FRG FUNDING [8/20/2009]

How do FRGs get their money?

The FRG APF SOP should include a requirement that FRG leaders fill out purchase request forms and submit them to the Commander for approval. Commanders can use their government purchase card to purchase supplies, equipment, room rental, or any other approved item to support FRG mission activities. By using the government purchase card, the unit purchases the items, pays the bills and maintains a detailed record of APF support to FRGs.

Will funding come from each brigade, or from a garrison account?

The funds come from the unit commander's appropriated funds (APF). The unit commander should project budget needs, request funds, and discuss funding guidance with the chain of command. Budgeting for mission activities is not new for a commander.

How can I provide APF support to my FRG?

Commanders, with FRG leader input, should develop a budget plan. The commander should review the appropriated fund support provided to the FRG the previous fiscal year (1 October- 30 September) and then develop a plan for the upcoming year. The commander and FRG leader should review and modify the plan, if necessary, to fit within the unit's available mission funds. After the annual budget projections are received, the Commander should develop a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the FRG which describes what type of APF support is available, the budget allocation, and the procedures for requesting support.

My FRG leader would like to hold an FRG meeting and luncheon. The meeting agenda includes discussing upcoming training exercises, introducing new members, reviewing ACS classes for FRG members, and planning for a unit car wash. What actions are authorized, and what funds can be used?

APFs may be used to support the meeting, provide equipment, and print newsletters and materials necessary towards carrying out the meeting activities. All refreshment or luncheon costs may be paid using the FRG's informal fund or the ACS supplemental mission account intended for FRGs, if money is available. APF monies cannot generally be used for food or refreshments. Regarding the unit car wash, FRGs may only conduct internal fundraising for their FRG informal fund. They must request permission to fundraise as described above. Commanders should not approve internal fundraising unless consistent with the FRG's informal fund SOP. If it is approved, the proceeds are kept in the FRG's informal "cup and flower" fund, IAW AR

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600-20.

Our FRG has many social activities. Why not include "socializing" with the FRG mission activity, so that we can use the commander's government credit card to pay for FRG parties and outings?

FRG's are established as official Army entities to provide activities and support that enhance the flow of information, increase the resiliency of unit Soldiers and their families, provide practical tools for adjusting to military deployments and separations, and enhance the well-being and esprit de corps within the unit. FRG mission activities which are funded with APFs, must abide by all laws and regulations governing the use of those monies. APFs shall not be used for social activities.

Unit Commander would like to send the FRG leader, who is a statutory volunteer, to Family support training. What funds are authorized?

The unit commander uses APFs to pay for this expenditure. Statutory volunteers may be sent on Invitational Travel Orders to training, as provided IAW AR 608-1, 10 U.S.C §1588, and the Joint Travel Regulation, Appendix E, Part I, paragraph A, and the Secretary Army Travel Policy. If the FRG leader is the unit Commander's Family member, the unit Commander must send the request to authorize travel to the next higher level officer in the Commander's chain of command, to avoid potential violation of the JER, conflict of interest provisions.

FRGs whose Armed Forces members are assigned to duty or ordered to active duty in conjunction with a contingency operation are authorized appropriated funds to provide for needed Family support including child care, education and other youth services. How does this work?

Commanders can pay for child care, education and other youth services using APFs, for Family members of Soldiers who are activated for a contingency operation, or who are assigned duty in support of a contingency operation, or who are deployed to a contingency operation. See 10 U.S.C. 1788, DoDD 1342.17 Family Policy and DoDI1342.22, Family Centers. This authorization can enable more Soldiers and families to attend FRG meetings prior to and during contingency operations.

My commander said that the unit has arranged with the Child Development Center to provide childcare for the unit's statutory volunteers. Since the unit will pay the bill monthly using the APF Government Purchase Card, he won't reimburse our childcare if we use a different provider. Can he do that?

Yes he can. In fact, this is the most efficient way for a unit to manage childcare for statutory volunteers if they are located on a garrison. The CDC provides a bill monthly to the unit for all of the childcare charged that month to the unit and the APF credit card holder pays the bill. As a management control mechanism, the commander should also implement a childcare coupon for the volunteer to give to CDC after it has

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been signed by the designated unit representative. The coupons can then be matched to the charges on the bill. Commanders of units not located on the installation or with geographically dispersed families will need to provide FRG volunteers with childcare policies and procedures.

My unit was denied a global phone for morale or operational purposes by the commander due to limited funding. Can the FRG raise funds to purchase and provide maintenance/use costs for a commercially purchased global phone?

No. APFs are authorized for the purchase and maintenance/use costs of a global phone. FRGs cannot use their private or informal funds for something that is authorized to be purchased with APFs.

My unit was denied use of a VTC. A commercial company has agreed to conduct a VTC for us. Can the FRG raise funds to pay for the VTC?

No. For the same reason the FRG cannot fund the global phone - it is an appropriated fund expense.

### REIMBURSEMENT [2/8/2011]

Under what specific conditions is reimbursement granted for volunteers?

AR 608-1, para 5-10g covers the reimbursement criteria for volunteers. This is provided the commander has approved the expenditure and funds are available. It is recommended the unit commander have an SOP which informs the volunteers what funds are available, and how to request reimbursement.

How will the reimbursement of volunteer incidental expenses for child care costs be made, and to whom-- the volunteer or the provider?

We assume you are requesting information regarding the reimbursement of incidental expenses for statutory volunteers registered through ACS, IAW 10 U.S.C. 1588 and AR 608-1, chapter 5. The unit commander must approve the expense in advance and should provide an SOP on the reimbursement procedures. The reimbursement depends upon the commander's approval and availability of funds. The money comes from the unit commander's appropriated mission funds.

What forms will govern the monies used for reimbursement?

Check with the commander's SOP for FRG budget procedures.

Is the FRG volunteer required to register with the CDC prior to requesting reimbursement of child care?

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The volunteer is required to in-process through the servicing ACS Center. The volunteer must be a statutory volunteer. If the volunteer wants to be reimbursed for childcare costs, he/she should check with the commander on whether or not childcare expenses are being reimbursed. The volunteer should review the Commander's SOP on the reimbursement of incidental expenses, including childcare. Note that the volunteer does not have to use the Childcare Center, unless the commander has decided that the Childcare Center must be used for reimbursement.

May the unit commander reimburse an FRG volunteer's child care expenses incurred while conducting FRG business?

Yes, statutory volunteers may be reimbursed for incidental expenses, to include child care costs. The Commander may reimburse child care expenses incurred while the volunteer was conducting FRG business, consistent with AR 608-1 and 10 U.S.C 1588. However, FRG social events are not considered official FRG business so the Commander may not pay FRG volunteer childcare costs incurred while participating in a social event.

What is the definition of volunteering (in order to qualify for the reimbursement of incidental expenses) - FRG leadership roles or does attending the FRG meeting constitute time as a volunteer?

FRG members attending an FRG meeting are not volunteers. Statutory volunteers provide voluntary services to the unit commander in furtherance of the FRG mission. The definition of statutory volunteer can be found at AR 608-1, para 5-4c; statutory volunteers are required to have a job description, and to be supervised like an employee (AR 608-1, para 5-9k). The FRG leader, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, and others who hold designated leadership positions should all be statutory volunteers. They should in-process through the Mobilization and Deployment Program Manager and Army Volunteer Corps Coordinator and receive a signed job description from the command. The unit commander should prepare a SOP covering the procedures for reimbursement for incidental expenses, so that volunteers know what is and is not covered.

### DONATIONS [2/8/2011]

Can my FRG accept a donation and deposit it into our informal funds checking account?

Yes. The FRG may accept unconditional donations of \$1000 or less into the FRG's Informal Fund from an individual, business or private organization, after gaining approval from the unit commander and unit or garrison ethics counselor, IAW AR 1-100. The FRG informal fund account may not exceed \$10,000 income per year, nor shall it exceed a \$10,000 balance at any time. Donations count towards these maximums. FRGs may not accept donations that exceed \$1000. The Garrison Commander may accept donations, including those that exceed \$1000 for the ACS supplemental mission account. The ethics counselor should be consulted before any

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donations are accepted.

Unit Commander stationed at Garrison "X" receives an offer from a local business, to make a \$20,000 donation to support "local Army families". May the Unit Commander accept the donation?

The unit Commander should inform the Garrison "X" Commander of the donation offer. The Garrison Commander may accept this donation meant for Family support, into the Garrison FRG supplemental mission activity, as provided by AR 608- 1. The donations become non-appropriated funds (NAFs), and are accounted for using department code/sub-account, SA J9, so that FRG intended gifts/donations are accounted for separately from other supplemental mission uses. The Garrison Commander should request the garrison Judge Advocate's office review the gift offer prior to acceptance.

Are the rules for the use of Morale, Welfare and Recreation {MWR} NAFs the same as for supplemental mission NAFs?

No. Supplemental mission NAFs are used for a different program and purpose than MWR NAFs. Therefore, the rules for the disbursement and use of SM NAFs are different than for MWR NAFs.

I was told that FRG Supplemental Mission Activity donations must be shared equally with all FRGs on the garrison. Has that changed?

Yes. Garrison Commanders will coordinate distribution of donations to FRGs based upon need and donor intent. The donation does not have to be divided among all FRGs. For example, the garrison commander can choose, with the Unit Commander's input, to divide the donation among FRGs with deployed Soldiers only or only to units that are planning reunion activities for redeploying Soldiers.

What use is authorized for FRG Supplemental Mission Activity use?

FRG Supplemental Mission Activity donations intended for Family support or FRG use are not Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) NAFs. These supplemental mission NAFs are managed separately under a different account code, and the rules regarding their expenditure are different than the rules for the expenditure of MWR NAFs. ACS supplemental mission NAFs intended for FRG or Family support may only be used to supplement the FRG mission activity. Commanders may use ACS supplemental mission donations intended for FRG use, for any purpose that the commander determines clearly supplements an established mission of the FRG. The use must be consistent with this regulation, AR 215-1, and DoDI 1015.15. The first priority in using these supplemental mission NAFs should be to encourage maximum attendance and participation at FRG meetings, such as by providing food and refreshments. Using supplemental mission donations to support a unit ball is an example of an unauthorized expenditure because it fails to supplement an established

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mission of the FRG. Commanders may not authorize the use of supplemental mission funds for any purpose that cannot withstand the test of public scrutiny or which could be deemed a misuse or waste of funds. Using supplemental mission donations to fund a lavish cruise to promote "cohesion" among FRG members is an example of an excessive and inappropriate use of supplemental mission NAFs.

Does supplemental mission donations given to an FRG count as Income to the FRG Informal Fund?

No, these are two entirely separate pots of monies. Supplemental mission donations belong to the Army's Non-appropriated Fund Instrumentality; Informal "cup and flower" funds belong to the informal fund's members. Therefore, Supplemental mission donations have no impact on the FRG informal fund income cap.

Several FRGs which receive support from the Garrison "X" ACS, have heard about a donation to the ACS supplemental mission account. The FRGs requested permission to use the supplemental mission NAFs to provide transportation and tickets to a festival or amusement park. May they do so?

Possibly. Supplemental mission NAFs may be used for FRG social activities. To receive some of the donated funds, unit commanders must submit an approved purchase request which includes a brief description of the item(s) requested, total funds required, dates the items are needed, and vendor or source of the items to be purchased to the DFMWR for processing.

My mother wants to donate \$100 to our FRG Informal Fund. Can we accept it?

Yes, as long as the FRG has not exceeded the \$10,000 annual income cap. The FRG can accept donations of \$1000 or less for its informal fund; however these donations count as income to the FRG.

A local car dealer wants to donate \$2000 worth of products to the FRG to put into care packets that will be sent to the unit's deployed Soldiers. Can the FRG accept the donation?

No. The unit can only accept money or tangible goods valued at \$1000 or less. Donations valued at more than \$1000 must be given to the Garrison Commander, after the donation has been approved by the Legal Ethics Counselor. However, the donation does not have to be shared with all FRGs- the Garrison Commander may decide what units receive the donated goods.

### FUNDRAISERS [2/8/2011]

Should FRG fund-raising caps be based on number of people in the unit the FRG is supporting vice a standard amount based on echelon of the FRG?

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Army Directive 2008-1 increased to the limit on the Family Readiness Group Informal Fund from \$5,000 to \$10,000. This increase is for all units Army-wide. The increase was effective 7 March 2008.

I was told our FRG could only hold fundraisers at our own motor pool? Is this correct?

Not necessarily. The JER authorizes official fundraising by organizations composed primarily of Department of Defense or Department of the Army employees and their dependents when fundraising among their own members or dependants for the benefit of their own welfare funds. The Army Office of General Counsel (Ethics and Fiscal Law) and the Army Standards of Conduct Office have interpreted this to mean that an Army organization -including but not limited to units, installations, and Family Readiness Groups- may officially fundraise from its own community members or dependants and from all persons benefiting from the Army organization. For example, an installation may benefit from the Brigade or Unit FRG, thus permitting a Brigade or Unit FRG to fundraise throughout the installation. Fundraising must be (1) for the FRG informal fund, as opposed to a private charity; and (2) approved by the unit commander and coordinated with the commander with cognizance over the location of fundraising, if different from the organization area. Commanders shall consult with their SJA or Ethics Counselor and avoid all conflicts with other authorized fundraising activities.

I am the FRG Leader for an Army Reserve unit. Our Reserve unit trains at a public building not located on an Army installation. Can we hold a fundraiser in front of the building?

No. Since the unit is located in a public building that is shared with non-Army businesses, the FRG may only fundraise among its own members in its own spaces.

I am an FRG leader. In the past we held many big fundraisers which these new guidelines limit in scope. Frankly, these events built esprit de corps. We are struggling to re-define the purpose of FRG activities. Suggestions?

Certain FRG mission activities are essential and include FRG member meetings, FRG staff and committee meetings, welcome activities for new members, and the publication and distribution of FRG newsletters. FRGs should provide activities that enhance the flow of information from command to the Family, and serve as a referral resource. FRGs should consider holding classes and workshops relevant to their membership. FRG leaders and commanders should speak with their members to better identify training needs and contact ACS or one of the many other garrison agencies available for FRG support, FRGs can create resilient families that stick together in both celebration and crisis.

My FRG is unhappy with the prohibition against external fund raising and wants me to set up a private organization to do our FRG fundraising? As a commander, may I do this?

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No. Commanders cannot organize private organizations (POs) or direct their activities, including how POs spend their money. Private organizations (POs) may be established by individuals, including FRG members if they so desire, to support shared goals and objectives. However, as stated in the G1ALARACT message. "These POs may not receive preferential treatment and must be treated the same as all other similarly situated POs IAW the Joint Ethics Regulation (JER), and AR 210-22, Private Organizations on Department of the Army Installations. To prevent potential conflicts of interest, if such POs are established, its leaders must consist of different persons than the FRGs' leaders". FRG members and commanders should remember not to use government or FRG resources or government equipment for PO business.

You might also take into consideration that donations to the FRG Informal Fund cannot exceed \$1000 and that the donation counts as FRG income for the annual income cap. The FRG would benefit more from a local private organization donating to the Supplemental Mission Account intended for FRGs. The donations do not count as income to the FRG.

My division is planning a Division Ball. Can my FRG conduct fundraising activities to support the Division Ball?

No. Planning and contributing funds to support a Division Ball is not an FRG responsibility. The Division Ball is also not an MWR event for which non appropriated funds or commercial sponsorship would be authorized. Division Balls are a private social event which should be funded by the attendees, or their private organizations (established IAW AR 210-22, Private Organizations) should their members choose to do so.

My Battalion is planning a Holiday Party. Can the FRG conduct fundraising to support the Battalion Holiday Party?

Yes. FRGs can conduct internal fundraising following their commander's approval after consultation with their ethics counselor, IAW AR 600-29 and the JER, to support this Family event.

May the FRGs which fall under my Brigade hold a fundraiser to benefit our FRGs' informal funds?

Yes. It is possible that a Brigade could hold an internal fundraiser for its own members, to benefit its own members, consistent with AR 600-29 and the JER. It is essential that no fundraiser be held without the permission of the commander, in consultation with the Brigade's Judge Advocate ethics counselor.

If my Brigade FRG is selling unit magnets as a fundraiser, and a non-member of the Brigade wishes to purchase a magnet, could we sell it to the non-member without violating the "internal fundraising limitations?



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Yes. FRGs who are given permission by their command, in consultation with their Judge Advocate's ethics counselor, to have an internal fundraiser should make every effort to abide by their commander's rules regarding that fundraiser.

May my FRG do a fundraiser in their own community as long as it doesn't infringe on another unit?

We can't tell from your question which community you are referring to. If you mean off-post, in the civilian community, then the answer is no. Official Army activities, to include FRGs, are prohibited from engaging in external fundraising. However, your FRG may be able to do a fundraiser at a central location on the installation. Your unit commanders should consult with their Judge Advocate's ethics counselor regarding this specific fundraising question.

### INFORMAL FUNDS [2/8/2011]

Informal funds may be used for purely social activities, etc. Does that include helping to defray the cost for a unit formal?

Informal funds are private monies which belong to the informal funds' members. Planning and contributing funds to support a unit formal is not an FRG responsibility. Therefore, our guidance is not to use FRG informal funds monies for unit events. Unit formals are also not an MWR event for which non appropriated funds are available, nor would commercial sponsorship be authorized. Formal balls are a private social event which should be funded by the attendees, or their private organizations should their members choose to do so.

Is the \$10,000 cap for informal funds enforceable retroactively?

FRGs informal funds may not exceed an annual gross income cap of \$10,000 per calendar year. If your FRG informal funds exceed \$10,000, the FRG needs to not engage in any internal fundraising.

If the FRG Informal Fund account has reached the limit of \$10,000, are they unable to make any additional deposits from fundraisers currently scheduled?

Commanders should not authorize FRG fundraisers when the FRG informal funds account has reached the \$10,000 cap. We advise commanders to cancel fundraisers for FRGs who are already at their maximum limit. FRGs are not established as a fundraising organization.

Our battalion is having a holiday ball, in which the battalion pays for reserving the location, DJ, etc and the soldiers buy tickets for their dinner. Normally the FRG helps the battalion with this event by decorating (and purchasing the decorations for) the tables for the ball. Can we use our informal funds to purchase the decorations?

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The Battalion should use their informal funds to purchase the decorations for their holiday ball. The Battalion holiday ball is not an FRG responsibility. FRG members' informal funds should only be used for the benefit of the FRG members, not the entire Battalion.

My commander wants the FRG informal fund to be bonded. This is expensive; does the Army have a program that covers this?

No. First, bonding the informal fund is not a requirement but it is the commander's option." The Army does not provide bonding for FRG informal funds. We recommend the commander consider the value of the FRG informal fund and the cost of bonding when making this decision.

My FRG would like to give going away gifts to our deploying Soldiers, such as books, magazines, calling cards and gift certificates. We also want to send "care packets" to the Soldiers during the deployment. Should we use the FRG's informal funds for the gifts and care packets, or the unit's informal funds?

You have an option -the FRG Informal Funds or the unit's Informal Funds. The FRG Informal Funds may be used if the membership agrees and Soldier care packages are included in the Informal Fund SOP. Since this activity only benefits the unit members and not the FRG Family members, the FRG may consider asking the commander if unit Informal Funds may be used.

My Unit Commander wants to organize an FRG picnic, provide transportation, buy welcoming gifts to new FRG members, and pay for pony rides. What APF support is authorized?

None. APFs may not be used for this purely social activity. If the FRG has informal funds, they may be used; also, the FRG may request funds from the FRG Supplemental Mission Activity, if available. The use of government vehicles to support the picnic is also not authorized, since the FRG activity is purely social.

Our FRG has \$15,000 in its informal fund checking account. What do we do?

Follow the guidance in AR 608-1, Appendix J to ensure your informal fund procedures and paperwork are in order. FRG informal funds are capped at \$10,000.

How can our FRG establish an informal "cup and flower" fund for births, birthdays, meals and parties?

Commanders may authorize FRGs to maintain informal funds for social events, similar to a cup and flower fund. The commander, or delegated representative, should sign a letter designating an FRG informal fund custodian and alternate,

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responsible for informal fund custody, accounting, and documentation. Operation of the fund will be consistent with Army Values, DoD 5500.7-R, Joint Ethics Regulation (JER) and AR 600-20, Command Policy. The brigade commander, or delegated representative, must publish an organizing SOP for informal funds management procedures. For further guidance, see the Commander's Guide, informal funds section.

My FRG has a bank account for its informal funds. Do we need to close the account and await funding from the chain of command?

No. Commanders may authorize FRGs to keep informal funds for activities which cannot be funded with government money. The informal funds are private monies belonging to the individual FRG members. FRG mission activities are funded by commanders using government money. The commander's mission funds (APFs) must be spent when supporting the official FRG mission, in accordance with fiscal and ethics law principles.

One of my Soldiers is taking R&R leave at Edelweiss in Germany. Her spouse lives in Texas. This Soldier has not seen her Family for 3 years. Can the FRG pay for the spouse's ticket, or a portion of the ticket; with their informal funds?

No. FRG Informal funds must be used for activities that support all of the members of the FRG. However, there are other agencies that may be able to assist the spouse, such as Army Emergency Relief and local charitable and volunteer organizations.

Can the FRG's informal funds be used to buy food and drink for the FRG meetings?

Yes. The FRG's informal funds could be used to purchase refreshments for FRG meetings, as long as some of the funds had been earmarked for refreshments. Informal funds use is limited to expenses consistent with the purpose and function of the fund. Other examples of authorized uses of informal funds include social events such as FRG parties or outings. Any disbursements of the informal funds that are made should be for specific planned purposes and should be for the benefit of the FRG members as a whole.

Our FRG is having a holiday party. We are using our informal funds. Can we also use NAFs?

No. You are correct to use FRG informal funds, assuming doing so is consistent with the FRG's informal fund SOP. However, since the FRG is not an MWR activity or NAFI, NAFs cannot be used to support this FRG event.

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