

## **2009 West Point Army Family Action Plan (AFAP)**

The annual West Point Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) conference was held 17-18 November 2009. 64 delegates representing West Point's demographic groups were divided into five workgroups: Force Support; Child, Youth and Education; Housing, Relocation and Public Works; Family Support, Consumer and Medical/Dental and Single Soldier. Workgroups reviewed 124 issues and prioritized 14 issues for adoption into the AFAP process. Delegates briefed the following results to COL Michael Yarmie, Chief of Staff of the United States Military Academy, and COL Dan Bruno, Garrison Commander, at the conference's closing session.

### New AFAP Issues:

- Army Air Force Exchange Services (AAFES) "Limited Privileges" for Department of Defense (DOD) Civilians at West Point: Currently, DOD civilians cannot utilize the on-post PX. Recommendation is to extend this privilege to them.
- Permanent Change of Station (PCS) / Temporary Duty (TDY) Option for Military School Attendance: Service members are required to PCS to attend mandatory schools that are greater than 180 days but less than 365 days, creating hardship to Family members. Recommendation is to accommodate a PCS/TDY option at the Soldier's discretion while attending these schools.
- Standardized On-going Financial Management Training: The majority of enlisted Soldiers and Family members are experiencing financial difficulty, but there is no formal standardized program beyond the First-Termers Financial Readiness Course. Recommendation is to implement standardized financial management training opportunities at the unit level.
- Religious Support Facility at West Point: Religious support programs lack adequate meeting space and Family members are being turned away from programs. Recommendation is to establish an interfaith facility that accommodates religious support programs and childcare.
- Short Notice Childcare Reservations: Hourly childcare reservations are very limited on short notice, adversely impacting those who need appointments for short-notice medical appointments. Recommendation is to reserve 10% of daily hourly childcare for this purpose.
- Indoor Play Area at West Point: There are limited choices for indoor play during winter months at West Point. Recommendation is to use a current facility for designated age appropriate child play areas.
- Parking in Residential Areas: There is inadequate parking in housing areas causing street congestion and safety hazards. Recommendations are to 1) Amend the current policy to allow for two assigned parking spaces and one visitor space, and 2) Develop additional off-street parking in and around residential areas.
- Balfour Beatty Communities (BBC) Clearing Policy: Out-processing clearing procedures lack consistency, quality control, clear standards and consumer protection creating financial and emotional stress during a time-constrained PCS move. Recommendations are to 1) Create an independent community council to work with BBC and the service member to establish a detailed standardized list that applies to both residents and contractors for cleaning standards, 2) Amend out-

processing standards to establish quality control and 3) Identify renovation and preventative maintenance projects prior to move-out so that cleaning requirements can be modified.

- Quality Control of Maintenance Standards of Family Housing: Potential safety and health hazards are not being identified due to unclear and/or insufficient inspection standards in Family housing. Recommendations are to create a team of qualified home inspectors to conduct preventative maintenance checks and home inspections on a scheduled basis; 2) Expand Residential Communities Initiative (RCI) duties to include advocate responsibilities and 3) Provide access to maintenance, work order and inspection records of residential properties.
- Suicide Prevention Family Training: Current suicide prevention training programs are not effectively reaching Family members. Recommendations include the implementation of suicide prevention/awareness in Army Family Team Building (AFTB), improved marketing of resources and age appropriate materials for children.
- Exceptional Family Member (EFMP) and First Duty Assignment: Family members are not enrolled in EFMP prior to first duty assignment. Recommendation is to notify Families of EFMP enrollment as part of initial in-processing and to follow-up with EFMP evaluation prior to first duty assignment.
- Geographical Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS): BAS rates are standardized nationwide and do not take into account cost of living differences. Recommendations are to 1) Adjust BAS rates to reflect the cost of living in various geographic locations and 2) Implement BAS II for single Soldiers in the Army.
- Functional Academic Skills Training (FAST) Class: There is no longer an in-class option for the FAST which may inhibit a Soldier's ability to improve their Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) score. Recommendation is to re-establish the classroom option of the FAST class.
- Class B/ASU Uniform Issue at West Point: Staff and faculty are required to wear Class Bs/ASUs rather than the ACU standard throughout most other Army installations. Recommendation is to issue two sets of Class Bs/ASUs to newly assigned staff and faculty upon arrival at West Point.

A teen workgroup consisting of 10 teens from grades 7-11 met on 7 November to identify issues impacting their well-being. Following are the three

- Music Store: There is no location on West Point to purchase music equipment. Recommendation is to establish a permanent music store that mirrors "Sam Ash" inventory and services.
- New Kids Sponsor Program (NKSP): When kids move to a new military community, they don't know where to meet other kids. Recommendation is to establish a NKSP Army-wide which pairs new kids up with a volunteer from their grade for one week to introduce them to their new community.
- Movie Theatre Enhancement: Currently, the West Point theatre does not allow for food and drink. In addition, movies are no longer current when they reach the theatre. Recommendations are to allow food and drink in the current location or consider a new location, accommodate additional hours for school breaks, holidays and matinees and to keep movie selection current.

Top Five Most Valuable Services, by Workgroup:

- Force Support: 1) Hospital, 2) Housing, 3) Child, Youth & School Services, 4) Medical/Dental care, and 5) FMWR Facilities
- Child, Youth and Education: 1) Medical/Dental, 2) Child Development Center, 3) Commissary, 4) Housing, and 5) DODEA Schools
- Housing, Relocation and Public Works: 1) Medical/Dental, 2) Housing, 3) DODEA Schools, 4) Commissary, and 5) Child, Youth & School Services
- Family Support, Consumer and Medical Dental: 1) Medical/Dental, 2) Housing, 3) Commissary, 4) Housing, and 5) Child, Youth & School Services
- Single Soldier: 1) PX/Convenience, 2) Physical Fitness Center, 3) Commissary, 4) Medical/Dental, and 5) BOSS
- Teen: 1) PX, 2) Outdoor Recreation, 3) Youth Services, 4) Entertainment and Performing Arts / Movie Theatre, and 5) Family Support during Deployment

Delegates also voted on the top six active HQDA AFAP issues:

1. Inferior Shipment of Household Goods (307)
2. (TIE) In-state college tuition (521)
2. (TIE) Military Spouse Unemployment Compensation (524)
3. (TIE) Bereavement Permissive TDY (628)
3. (TIE) Temporary Lodging Expense Duration (645)
4. Distribution of Montgomery GI Bill to Dependents (497)

**The next West Point AFAP Steering Committee meeting will be held on February 9, 2010 at 2:30pm in the Jewish Chapel Conference Room.**

**The AFAP conference results are posted on the West Point AFAP website, [www.westpointmwr.com/afap.htm](http://www.westpointmwr.com/afap.htm).**