

Final Minutes of the Military Family Support Working Group phone conference of the Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI), Florida Defense Alliance (FDA) was held on December 17, 2008 at 1:30 p.m.

### **Members Present**

Dougherty, Louis	Florida National Guard
Dunlap, Dorothy	Tampa Bay Work Force Alliance
Fallon, Brian	Florida National Guard
Fisk, Scott	Special Projects Coordinator Escarosa Career Center
Forehand, Shawn	Veterans Program Coordinator, AWI
Jacobs, Stephanie	MSEA Workforce Development Board of Okaloosa and Walton Counties/JobsPlus
Kurtz, Stan	Assistant State Veterans' Program Coordinator, AWI
Lopez, Vanessa	MSEA South Florida Workforce
Murphy, Michael	MSEA Program Coordinator AWI
Piazza, Patty	MSEA First Coast Workforce Development Board, Inc./WorkSource
Sherman, Eric	Office DUSD MCFP
Wilson, Shaquanna	MSEA Escarosa Career Center

### **Staff present**

McPherson, Rocky	Director Military and Defense , Enterprise Florida/ Florida Defense Alliance
Pena, Juliana	Program Manager Military and Defense, Enterprise Florida Inc.

### **Meeting Agenda**

- I. Greetings and Introductions
- II. FDA Web site changes and updates reviewed
- III. FDA MFSWG letter of invitation and review of suggested persons to invite to attend working group
- IV. DOD Key Quality of Life Issues Review/Update
- V. Presented by Eric Sherman, Regional State Liaison Office  
Deputy under Secretary of Defense Military Community & Family Policy
- VI. Review of current childcare barriers/problems for regions/bases
- VII. Recap of meeting and expectations/assignments for next meeting

**Meeting start time 1:35p.m.**

## **Greetings and Introductions**

The following new members were welcomed at the meeting:

Michael Murphy, newly assigned MSEA Program Coordinator, AWI

Stan Kurtz, newly assigned Assistant State Veterans' Program Coordinator, AWI

Brian Fallon, Florida National Guard works with Pat Flynn and Howard Grant

Scott Fisk, Special Project Coordinator at Escarosa Career Center

## **FDA Website changes and updates review**

The group members were asked at the Semi-annual meeting held in October 2008, to visit the Florida Defense Alliance Web site and provide feedback regarding its content.

The following feedback was forwarded to Juliana Peña of Enterprise Florida Inc.

- Update employment contact information to include all the MSEA throughout the State (provided by Michael Murphy)
- The current news and information page as well as the Grant information page is great
- Update information under FDA members tab:
  - the organizational chart
  - the minutes of previous meetings
  - the working groups are incorrect in name and also the membership rosters are outdated

A suggestion was made to possibly add a Blog option to the website however; Juliana stated the site is not capable of supporting a Blog at this time.

Shawn Forehand and Stan Kurtz will be submitting updates for the Veterans Program.

## **FDA MFSWG letter of invitation and review of suggested list of working group invitees.**

The following feedback was provided on the draft FDA letter of invitation:

- Michael Murphy suggested the letter was too long and should be kept to one page.
- Juliana Pena suggested that instead of putting the objectives of the FDA and the Working Group in the letter we could refer them to the FDA website for more information.
- Shaquanna Wilson stated that we may lose them if we refer them to the website instead of providing all the information for them.
- Rocky McPherson agreed the letter should be one page with the missions included but refer to the website for the objectives.

Patty Piazza, Rocky, and Juliana will continue to develop the letter. The goal is to have it ready for dissemination for the statewide base commanders meeting tentatively scheduled for the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of February.

Patty forwarded a document example for the proposed list of invitees; this will need to be addressed in the upcoming meetings. The document can be used as a quick reference as you come across people that may be a good fit.

Jodi Schwartz and Vanessa Lopez have suggested the following possible members:

From Vanessa:

Joe Pagan, Employment Readiness Program Manager  
Deana Jacobs, Director Family Support Program  
Jerry Havens, Relocation/Spouse Employment Program Manager  
Lori Carrington, Transition Relocation Manager/Ombudsman Coordinator

From Jody:

Denise Shriver, MFEA Panama City  
Andrea Reese, FL JSFAP Mil One Source  
Anita Pembleton, Director Airman & Family Readiness Center Tyndall AFB

It was reiterated that the purpose of inviting new members is to broaden the identification of issues affecting the military families in Florida, as well as identifying possible resolutions for those issues.

It was stated that perhaps the ISFACS would be able to assist defining the “problems” and the Commanding Officers or Commanders could be provided with those issues, and as result assign their personnel to the working group that best fits an issue.

### **DOD Key Quality of Life Issues Review/Update**

Eric Sherman briefed Department of Defense (DoD) efforts to work with Florida to improve their Gold Seal Quality Care Rating Standard to make it compatible with DoD effectiveness standards. He distributed the new 2009 DoD Key Quality of Life Issues (please contact Patty Piazza if you did not receive it). It was noted that Key issue #3, which was previously focused on “In-State Tuition Rates for Military Families” has been replaced with “Increase Access to Quality, Affordable Childcare for Military Families” since the In-State Tuition rate is now mandated by federal legislation.

### **Review of current childcare barriers/problems for regions/bases**

Rocky opened the discussion, building on the brief by Eric Sherman, that Florida has a Gold Seal Quality Care rating system but is not on the DoD list because Florida is only in partial compliance with the DoD standards. The reason for this is that Florida has a number of accrediting agencies that are not recognized by DoD as such. It was stated that incentives needed for childcare providers to receive accreditation from a DOD compliant agency, would be the access to training, building improvements and modifications and standardization of inspections of quality care for the military families.

Patty stated that she recently spoke with a military spouse who was a certified child care provider at her past duty station. They lived on base but since they transferred to Florida and bought a house the military spouse was not allowed to be a DOD certified child care provider because she lived off base. Her understanding of the reason given to her was “it is a manpower issue;” there are not enough people to do the DoD mandated home inspections. It was suggested that streamlining the accrediting agency list for the State of Florida to comply with DoD guidelines would alleviate the manpower issue for home inspections by DoD.

Lou Dougherty said that National Guard Child Care Program (NGCCP) that provides subsidies to eligible National Guard families. Eligibility includes those on Title 10 in support of the Global War on Terror, and spouses working, attending school, or seeking employment (up to 60 days). Providers must be state-endorsed to receive the subsidy. The subsidy provides \$100-\$300 per month to help pay childcare expenses for deployed service members. He provided the Subsidy Utilization Report for review.

Mr. Dougherty also reiterated that the Florida Department of Children and Families Web site (<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/childcare/>) has 14 accrediting agencies listed as well as all the information about the Gold Seal Quality Care Program.

Jodie Schwartz provided the following feedback via e-mail:

In the Panama City area childcare has been less and less of an issue due to the weakening economy. There are many home providers with vacant slots and the waiting lists at the Child Development Center are non-existent for some ages and shorter for the infant population.

Vanessa Lopez provided the following update via e-mail:

Some of the problems childcare providers in Region 23 (SouthCom/ Miami) are faced with include: (This information was provided by Ms. Ileana Gonzalez Director, Child and Youth Services for the US Southern Command/Army Garrison).

- Parents prefer a childcare on a military installation; however none of the bases in South Florida provides this service
- Many of the centers in Broward County have opted not to use the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) certification and if these centers are not certified, they will not get the subsidy from the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA). Spouses who are willing to work prefer to leave their kids in an accredited center. In many cases, they would rather stay at home than send them to a non-accredited center due the high tuition cost.
- There is no hourly care. NACCRRA will provide a 60-day waiver for spouses to look for work or school {but there is no drop off care available}.
- Gold Seal Quality Care Program is not used in South Florida; Army looks for NAEYC or National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC) Certifications.
- There are long waiting lists for childcare centers and not all the centers have military preference.

## **Recap of meeting and expectations/assignments for next meeting**

- Continued smoothing of Letter of Invitation
- Continued review and input for the FDA website improvements.
- Continued submission from each group member of suggested persons to be part of the MFSWG.
- Provide current childcare barriers/problems for regions/bases.
- Review Florida's Department of Children & Families website <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/childcare/>.

## **Next FDA Meeting**

The attendees was queried about the frequency in which the group should hold phone conferences in between FDA semiannual meetings and the majority agreed every other month would be sufficient. The next meeting will be scheduled prior to the statewide Base Commanders meeting tentatively schedules on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of February.

Patty Piazza thanked the attendees for their participation and encouraged them to contact her if they have any questions.

***The meeting was adjourned at 2:25.***

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