Foreword

One of my key responsibilities as Commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) is to generate and maintain operationally ready air forces. Our aviators and their families are absolutely critical to my ability to accomplish this task.

Canada’s Defence Policy, Strong, Secure, Engaged, formally recognizes that families face significant challenges associated with frequent relocations, deployments and other service-related separations. For RCAF families, stressors may also be magnified by the unique demands we place on our personnel, including shiftwork and on-call duties as well as ongoing employment in high tempo domestic operations.

The RCAF is fortunate to have access to many high quality family support resources and services provided under the overarching Morale and Welfare Services Program umbrella. However, care for our personnel and their families remains, at its core, a Command responsibility. The RCAF Family Sponsor Program is unique, in that it provides a tangible opportunity for all RCAF leaders to proactively contribute to an organizational culture of military family support. By emphasizing strong communications between members, families and the chain of command, you can empower families to support one another and help build a more robust sense of community within your units, your Wings, the RCAF and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).

You and the rest of your leadership team play a crucial role in ensuring successful implementation of this important, family-focused initiative. It is essential that you work collaboratively and in full partnership with your local Military Family Resource Centre, especially as it pertains to the management of all Program volunteers.

Remember, our ability to Fly In Formation with RCAF families is directly linked to the degree of support that you, as a member of a Command Team, dedicate to the Family Sponsor Program. You are already working hard for our families; however, we must also strive to meet and exceed families’ expectations for consistent levels of family support from unit to unit.
The RCAF Family Support Team is available to assist you as you implement this unique RCAF initiative. Contact them with any questions at RCAFFamily_ARCfamille@forces.gc.ca.

A.D. Meinzinger  
Lieutenant-General  
Commander Royal Canadian Air Force
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Introduction

Background

Following the publication of the 2013 Department of National Defence/Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman’s report: *On the Homefront: Assessing the Well-Being of Canada’s Military Families in the New Millennium*, RCAF senior leadership proactively stepped forward to engage RCAF personnel, families and national/local family support partners to discuss a wide range of family support issues. In response to some of the feedback from these diverse groups of people, the RCAF established both the RCAF Family Support Team (FST) and the RCAF Family Advocate (Fam Adv). The primary message families shared during those visits was clear: *We need a stronger sense of community and more family-friendly communication within the RCAF – especially at the unit level.* This desire from families was the impetus for the creation of the Family Sponsor Program.

Why is the Program Important?

The Program acknowledges the requests of military families for consistent, locally-based, family-focused communications and stronger personal connections within the military community. The Program is designed to:

- Promote individual, family and unit readiness.
- Establish and maintain continuous contact with all families within the unit.
- Encourage peer-to-peer family support.
- Enable grass-roots solutions.
- Link families to unit leadership and CAF family support partners.
- Build strong and resilient families and communities.
- Ensure a consistent level of unit-based family support across the RCAF.
Program Outcomes

Through partnerships between unit Command Teams and the Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC), a volunteer Family Sponsor will be assigned to families who are relocating and those experiencing extended service-related separation. This methodology was chosen in order to effect a number of positive outcomes for both families and the RCAF at large:

- Increase awareness of existing family support programs and resources.
- Foster ongoing communication among families and reinvigorate unit-based social networks.
- Identify/resolve issues at the earliest stage.
- Be inclusive of ALL family structures and dynamics.
- Establish a feedback mechanism for families at the local level.
- Enhance family resiliency and increase readiness and retention.
- Facilitate smoother family postings through early contact/information sharing.
- Better prepare families for and support families during service-related separations.
- Empower families to shape the RCAF community they live in.
Program Function and Structure

Organization and Information Flow

Each individual and organization involved in the Program has a unique and important role to play in ensuring the Program’s success. Figure 1 provides an overview of the general flow of information within the Program.

Figure 1
### Wing/Unit Family Sponsor Team Dynamics

Figure 2 provides a quick overview of the primary role of each individual/organization that makes up the Program Team at the local level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wing Command Team</td>
<td>Is responsible for Program oversight at all RCAF units in their area of responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wing Family Sponsor Program Coordinator (WFSPC)</td>
<td>The WFSPC is responsible for the overall Program coordination and enduring support of the Program at all RCAF entities in the WComd Team’s area of responsibility. Issues with the Program at large from a unit Command Team perspective should be raised to the WFSPC for consideration and action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Command Team</td>
<td>Establishes and supports the Family Sponsor Program at the unit level; works collaboratively with the MFRC to ensure effective Program execution and volunteer recruitment. Meets with Lead Sponsor on a regular basis and Sponsors on, at minimum, a quarterly basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Family Sponsor Program Representative (UFSPR)</td>
<td>The UFSPR assists the MFRC with recruitment and orientation of the Lead Sponsor. Provides Lead Sponsor with Posting/Deployment/TD instructions and assists the MFRC in facilitating orientation training for Sponsors. Primary Point of Contact for unit-specific Program questions/concerns. Coordinates Comd Team/Lead Sponsor interactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead Sponsor</td>
<td>A volunteer family member connected to the unit. In cooperation with the MFRC, coordinates Family Sponsor assignments and maintains Unit Family Roster. Contributes to Unit Family Network. Coaches/mentors Family Sponsors. Is the primary Program POC with MFRC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsors</td>
<td>A volunteer family member connected to the unit. Sponsors reach out to their assigned families to provide peer-to-peer support in the form of information and referrals. Act as a personal connection to the unit and larger military community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFRC</td>
<td>The go-to organization for military family support. Working in close collaboration with the Unit Comd Team, will be responsible for the overall Program volunteer management process and the bulk of Program execution. An invaluable resource for Sponsors as they partner with unit families and a key partner in ensuring the overall success of the Program. Each MFRC will designate a staff member to act as the primary point of contact (POC) for program volunteers to reach out to when resource-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
related assistance is required. The extent of MFRC involvement in the program will vary slightly based on location.

| Families | Interact with Sponsors, MFRC and the Unit Comd Team as required. |

**Building the Team - Roles and Responsibilities**

Now that you are familiar with the general team dynamics and organization of the Program, you should familiarize yourself with the specific roles and responsibilities of all the key players.

**Command Team**

The Program is a Commander’s responsibility at every RCAF unit. Command Teams are composed of the unit Commanding Officer and senior ranking non-commissioned member (CWO, MWO or WO). These Command Teams are the critical focal point for the Program and are accountable to their higher chain of command for Program implementation and durability. Each Command Team is responsible for:

- Establishing and supporting the Program at the unit level.
- Assisting the MFRC with the appointment of Program volunteers.
- Welcoming new volunteers to the unit (see sample welcome letter at Annex E).
- Ensuring unit personnel are fully aware of this valuable Program and vigorously encouraging individual family participation in the Program (see sample recruiting/participation letter at Annex F).
- Keeping an open channel of communication with the Lead Sponsor and the volunteer Sponsor cadre, meeting regularly with the Lead Sponsor and at least quarterly with Sponsors.
- Providing guidance to Lead Sponsors and Sponsors regarding direct communications with the Comd Team (i.e. CCIRs, contact information, after hours contact, etc)
- Providing unit specific Program guidance to the Unit Family Sponsor Program Representative.
- Coordinating the collection of family contact info for Program purposes (see Annex C – Reaching out to Families).
Military Family Resource Centre

MFRCs are provincially incorporated, federally funded not-for-profit organizations that hold liability for the volunteers they manage. MFRC’s have rule and regulations in place to protect the MFRC volunteers and these rules need to be respected. Based on the terms of an approved Partnership Agreement between the RCAF and Military Family Services (MFS), the MFRCs will have responsibility for the Program’s volunteer management process. In addition, the MFRC will conduct the bulk of the Program execution on behalf of the RCAF. This allows the RCAF to leverage the MFRCs expertise in delivering the existing Military Family Services Program. Close collaboration between the MFRC and the local Comd Teams will be expected, so as to ensure Program effectiveness and continued feedback/input by the unit leadership. Specifically, the MFRC will be responsible for the following aspects of the Program:

- Recruiting volunteers through a general advertising/communication campaign.
- Advertising the establishment of the Program within their respective areas of responsibility.
- Appointing Sponsors and Lead Sponsors in collaboration with unit Command Teams.
- Ensuring volunteers are screened (including Criminal Record and Child Abuse Registry checks).
- Maintaining volunteer records.
- Delivering the Program Orientation and other optional training to all volunteers, including any MFRC-specific volunteer training.
- Assigning Sponsors to families in collaboration with the Unit Lead Sponsor and/or Unit Family Sponsor Program Representative (UFSPR).
- Providing ongoing mentorship and support to Sponsors and Lead Sponsors.
- Communicating Wing and national level family support information to Sponsors on an as required basis.
- Collecting, reviewing and submitting local, Program-related "best-practices" to MFS.
- Providing Program feedback to MFS and to the local WFSPC.
- Encouraging and facilitating appropriate local grassroots initiatives related to the Program.

Unit Family Sponsor Representative (UFSPR)

Each unit has a UFSPR who is selected and appointed by the Command Team. On behalf of the Commanding Officer, the UFSPR will be the principal military unit POC for the Program and will be responsible for implementing and nurturing the Program at the unit level. The UFSPR should be a seasoned, senior military member. The UFSPR works closely with the Lead Sponsor and is responsible for the following:
• Liaising with Wing authorities for all Program related needs and linkages to higher headquarters.
• Facilitating the MFRC’s volunteer recruitment efforts at the unit level as required.
• Assisting the MFRC with unit-specific orientation of the Lead Sponsor.
• Assisting the MFRC and the Lead Sponsor with unit-specific orientation of Sponsors.
• Ensuring the MFRC receives copies of all Posting In/Out messages as well as notification regarding all deployments/training/TD of 30 days or more.
• Communicating timely, relevant information regarding unit events, family support partner activities and other important matters to the MFRC and the Lead Sponsor.
• Assisting the MFRC with the mentoring of the Lead Sponsor if/as required.
• Meeting with the Unit Comd Team and the Lead Sponsor regularly and with Sponsors at least quarterly (or more frequently as directed by the Comd Team).
• Providing feedback/reports to Wing authorities regarding Program statistics, observations or Best Practices, on an as required or on-demand basis.

**Lead Sponsor**

Lead Sponsors are volunteers; they are the critical link between other volunteer Sponsors and both the RCAF chain of command and the MFRC. Lead Sponsors are appointed by the MFRC in collaboration with the Comd Team. Any adult family member connected to the unit is welcome to be considered for this position; however, they should be carefully selected in order to ensure they are capable of carrying out their duties in a way that brings credit to the Program, the unit and the RCAF.

At the unit-level, the Lead Sponsor works closely with the UFSPR to ensure that the Program runs smoothly and meets the specific needs of unit families. The Lead Sponsor will help recruit new Sponsors as needed, mentor existing Sponsors alongside the MFRC, and coordinate Program activities for the unit and its Sponsors. A formal Volunteer Lead Sponsor Work Description is included at Annex A; however, these are the most important things to keep in mind about Lead Sponsors, from a Comd Team perspective:

• Lead Sponsors are essentially the team lead for the Program within the unit; however, they remain volunteers and care must be taken to ensure that they are not overtasked.
• Lead Sponsors will work closely with the MFRC and the UFSPR to coordinate and track Sponsor assignments. They should also maintain a direct link to the Comd Team for family support issues.
RCAF Family Sponsor Program

- Lead Sponsors will maintain the Unit Family Roster and share information with Sponsors and Families as necessary and appropriate.
- Lead Sponsors are the primary Program point of contact for the unit with the MFRC.
- Lead Sponsors should generally commit a minimum of two consecutive years to the Program.
- The Lead Sponsor is the first point of Contact at the unit for a Sponsor who has questions or concerns.

**Sponsor**

Sponsors are the heart of the Program. They are your allies outside the unit. Sponsors reach out to their assigned families to provide peer-to-peer support in the form of information and resources; they provide families with a personal connection to the unit and the larger military community. Sponsors are appointed by the MFRC in collaboration with the unit Command Team. Any adult family member connected to the unit is welcome to be considered for these volunteer positions; however, care should be taken to ensure that selected Sponsors are individuals who will represent the unit and the RCAF in a positive light. Although a formal Sponsor Volunteer Work Description is included at Annex B, these are the most important things to keep in mind about Sponsors, from a Comd Team perspective:

- Sponsors are ambassadors for the Program, the unit and the MFRC. Their primary job is to reach out to and connect with families who are experiencing relocation or service-related separation.
- Sponsors are responsive to, but not responsible to the unit Comd Team.
- The MFRC ensures that all Sponsors are screened as volunteers; however, Sponsors do not have a government security clearance and shall not be provided with personal information about members or families with the exception of personal contact information for families who have consented to participate in the Program.
- Sponsors are MFRC volunteers and as such are not part of the Chain of Command. If there are concerns about the continued suitability of a Sponsor to represent the unit and/or the RCAF, those concerns should be discussed directly with the MFRC;
- Sponsors should generally commit a minimum period of one year to the Program.
Remember This About Sponsors and Lead Sponsors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead Sponsors and Sponsors are:</th>
<th>Lead Sponsors and Sponsors Are NOT:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>Counselors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>Referral Agents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Taxi Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible</td>
<td>Baby Sitters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Fundraisers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Players</td>
<td>Gossips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduits of Information</td>
<td>Working Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official Unit Representatives</td>
<td>To assume leadership authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Command Team Considerations

Communications

Long term success of the Program depends heavily on the Comd Team’s ongoing engagement and communications with Sponsors and families. Efforts to advertise the Program to both unit members and families and to actively encourage new families to volunteer with the Program will require collaboration with the MFRC as well as effective use of family-friendly communications. In order to assist you in your communications efforts, Annex G provides a basic primer on social media usage for the RCAF.

Unit Family Sponsor Program Database/Roster

This is an essential tool for the Unit Family Sponsor Program effort. The Unit Family Sponsor Program Database/Roster consists of names and contact information for all unit families who have consented to participate in the Family Sponsor Program. As you build the Program within your unit, you will need to seek formal consent to participate from ALL unit family members. The MFRC Consent Form at Annex D shall be used to obtain consent and contact information from families. Once completed by the family, this consent form should be forwarded to the MFRC Program POC for use by the Unit Lead Sponsor.

How a Lead Sponsor maintains this information will be based on the direction and follow-on guidance provided by the MFRC and the Comd Team. Largely, the source will include family members` names, addresses (physical and email) and phone numbers.
This information must remain protected at all times and is only to be disclosed on a need-to-know basis. All information collected by the Unit Family Sponsor Program shall be used solely for specific Unit Family Sponsor Program purposes, under strict confidentiality and in compliance with The Privacy Act; the Privacy Code for Military Family Services Program (MFSP); and, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).

Privacy Issues

Comd Teams have a responsibility to ensure that the personal information of RCAF members and their families is collected and safeguarded in accordance with the Privacy Act. Doing so not only shows respect for members and families, but also protects the credibility and integrity of the RCAF Family Sponsor Program and minimizes risk to the RCAF as a whole.

As Program volunteers, Sponsors will have access to the contact information for their assigned families. Lead Sponsors will have access to a complete list of families who have agreed to participate in the Unit Family Sponsor Program. If a family advises you or a member of your Comd Team that they do not wish to participate in the Program, their contact information shall not be disclosed to volunteers or the MFRC. Generally, volunteers will be privy only to specific information including names, addresses (physical and email) and phone numbers. During their training, volunteers will be taught that personal information must be secured at all times and may only be used for Program purposes (i.e. information may never be divulged to a third party or used for personal gain). During training, Sponsors are also advised to refer third party or media inquiries to the MFRC, UFSPR or Comd Team.

On occasion, as volunteers work closely with families to help them access resources and navigate difficult family situations, families may choose to confide in them and share very personal information. As a commander, you should understand that Sponsors may only disclose information about their sponsored families to you (or to the MFRC) with the family’s permission. The importance of confidentiality and the Privacy Act should be reinforced during Comd Team discussions with new volunteers.

Failing to appropriately protect private information is grounds for immediate dismissal from the Unit Family Sponsor Program.
Unit Specific Volunteer Orientation

As a Comd Team, it is your responsibility to develop a short orientation package for the volunteers attached to your unit. This package should include a written summary and a face-to-face presentation. A PowerPoint template has also been created to facilitate this process and is available on the RCAF Family Sponsor Program page (hosted on the MFS website).

Suggestions for content of the orientation package (at a minimum) are:

Welcome from Command Teams (in person)
Unit Mission Overview
Unit Org Overview
Unit Policies (Conduct, Media etc)
Unit Social/Family Activities
Unit communication processes
Tour of Unit lines (if required)
Command Team/Volunteer Relations
Volunteer Hours of operation
Place of Work/Parking
Confidentiality - Reminder
Communications Procedures (Internal/External)
Use of Long Distance (if required)
Dealing with Media - Reminder
Buddy System/Mentoring of new Sponsors
Resignation/Leaving the Program Sponsor cadre
Annex A: Volunteer Position Description – Lead Sponsor

Purpose: The primary purpose of a Lead Sponsor is to work with the Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC) Volunteer Manager, unit Command Team (Comd Team) and unit Sponsors to execute a unit’s Family Sponsor Program. The Lead Sponsor appointed by the MFRC in collaboration with the unit Comd Team.

Skills Summary: This individual must possess notable communication, coordination and interpersonal skills, a strong desire to support other RCAF families and have good knowledge of existing family support challenges and available national, regional and local family support resources.

Eligibility: Normally a spouse/partner/loved one of a unit member with Sponsor or other relevant experience.

Screening: Lead Sponsors must have a Criminal Records Check and Child Abuse Registry Check.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Complete the required RCAF core Volunteer Orientation, unit specific Volunteer Orientation and any mandatory MFRC volunteer training.
- Maintain a professional image and demeanor at all times.
- Work in close coordination with the MFRC and the Unit Family Sponsor Program Representative (UFSPR).
- Be open and responsive to the MFRC and Comd Team Program guidance.
- Assist the UFSPR with the development and/or updating of unit specific Volunteer Orientation products.
- Assist the MFRC Volunteer Manager with the orientation and recruiting of unit Family Sponsors.
- Assist the MFRC Volunteer Manager with assigning Sponsors to newly posted-in families and/or those who will experience a service-related separation of 30 days or more.
- Coach and mentor Sponsors in concert with the MFRC.
- Create and/or update a unit family roster/database and network.
- Communicate timely, relevant information regarding unit events, family support partner activities and other important matters, as deemed necessary by the MFRC and Comd Team, to the family network.
- Encourage families to become involved in unit functions while being visible and present at as many unit family functions as able.
- Advocate for families to the Comd Team and/or the MFRC as the need arises.
- Meet with unit Sponsors and the MFRC Volunteer Manager regularly; discuss challenges, establish Best Practices.
Submit feedback on the national or unit Sponsor Program to the MFRC Volunteer Manager and Comd Team, on an as needed basis.
Be prepared to undertake Sponsor duties (when circumstances dictate).
Maintain accurate contact lists/records on behalf of the MFRC Volunteer Manager.
Annex B: Volunteer Position Description - Sponsor

Purpose: The primary purpose of a Sponsor is to assist with the execution of the unit’s Family Sponsor Program. Sponsors are appointed by the MFRC in collaboration with the unit Command Team (Comd Team).

Skills Summary: This individual must possess good communication and interpersonal skills, a strong desire to support other RCAF families and have knowledge of existing family support challenges and available national, regional and local family support resources.

Eligibility: Normally a spouse/partner/loved one of a unit member.

Screening: Sponsors must have a Criminal Records Check and Child Abuse Registry Check.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Complete the required RCAF core Volunteer Orientation and unit specific Volunteer Orientation and any mandatory MFRC volunteer training.
- Maintain a professional image and demeanor at all times.
- Work in close coordination with the MFRC and Comd Team (through a Lead Sponsor or Unit Family Sponsor Program Representative (UFSPR).
- Be open and responsive to the MFRC and Comd Team Program guidance.
- Make initial contact with assigned families via telephone or electronic means (as applicable).
- During relocation, provide families with basic local information (Contact Call) and provide links to them for local, regional or national family support partners for larger or more in-depth issues.
- Follow-up with families (normally by phone or in person if/when the opportunity arises) throughout relocation preparations, during the House Hunting Trip and for a few weeks to a month post-arrival at the new location.
- During extended periods of service related separation, contact an assigned family prior to the uniformed member’s departure to determine the level of support required by the family as well as the desired frequency, mode and timing of contact.
- Offer Sponsor contact information should families decline Sponsor assistance.
- Regularly follow-up with families encountering separation (normally by phone or in person if/when the opportunity arises) including up to one month post reunion.
- Maintain a contact/call log for all interactions with sponsored families (and note where families have opted out of the Program) and submit this information to the Lead Sponsor or MFRC Volunteer Manager.
- Encourage families to become involved in unit functions while being visible and present at as many unit family functions as able.
Liaise (with the permission of the family) with the Comd Team (via UFSPR coordination) when matters arise that will significantly affect sponsored families.

Meet with the Lead Sponsor or MFRC Volunteer Manager regularly; discuss challenges, recommend Best Practices.

Maintain accurate records.
Annex C: Reaching Out to Families

Introduction

One of the most significant barriers to the success of any family support effort in today’s RCAF is ensuring that families are well informed of what support services are available to them and what the benefits of participation are. Poor communications has been repeatedly raised as a frustration by families; hence, units must be extremely proactive in order to effectively reach out as early as possible to members and families. However, protecting the privacy rights of members and families is also a Comd Team priority. The following guidelines should assist you in your efforts to connect with families and build a Unit Family Network/Roster.

Consistency of Programming

Units must ensure that the Program is offered consistently to families across the RCAF. Families have repeatedly identified that they appreciate consistent availability of services as they are posted from one location to the next. As the Program gains momentum across the RCAF, families will expect to be offered a sponsor when posted or experiencing extended service-related separation. Units are counted on to meet these expectations as part of the RCAF’s commitment to families.

Obtaining Family Contact Information (Postings)

Making an initial connection with new families is a mission critical aspect of the Program. In order to have the best chance at successfully obtaining consent to participate from the largest number of families possible, while still adhering to Privacy Act regulations, it is highly recommended that the following approach be utilized.

- **First** – E-mail the incoming member at his/her forces account. The e-mail should come from UFSPR at the gaining unit introducing the Family Sponsor Program. The e-mail should encourage the participation in the Program and specifically request that the e-mail be forwarded to uniformed member’s spouse or loved one. Including the uniformed member’s losing unit CO or U/SWO on this e-mail may also encourage a response while also raising awareness of the new Program. The e-mail will advise the uniformed member that a letter will ALSO be sent to the member’s home address welcoming the family to the unit and further explaining the Program. A sample e-mail is included at Appendix I.

- **Second** – Mail a formal, written letter to the member’s home address. The letter should be addressed to “Cpl Boggins and family”. This letter should also explain
the intent of the Program in simple, family friendly language. The letter should be on unit letterhead and signed by the CO or the Comd Team jointly. A sample letter is included at Appendix II.

Although samples are included for your use, you are encouraged to personalize the text. However, please keep the following requirements in mind as you make modifications:

- BOTH the e-mail and the letter should include an e-mail address for the family to reply to (UFSPR or generic unit e-mail). A telephone number and mailing address may also be included, but the majority of families have indicated that they are MOST likely to reply to an e-mail and far less likely to respond by phone or by letter mail. The intent is to make it as simple as possible for families to provide their consent to participate in the Program.

- The sample documents both include mandatory statements regarding the privacy of information shared by the family. These must be included.

- Once a family has responded and provided consent and contact information (or declined support and asked not to be contacted again), that information should be forwarded to the Lead Sponsor and/or MFRC Program POC.

Note: E-mail alone will suffice for single members and should be modified slightly to ask if they would appreciate a volunteer Sponsor (in addition to any military sponsor the unit provides).

Obtaining Family Contact Information (Service-Related Separation and/or Unit Family Network/Roster)

Connecting with the families of those members already posted to your unit – for the purposes of supporting families during a service-related separation or in order to build a Unit Family Network/Roster – is relatively straightforward. You can choose from a number of options in order to reach out to the families and remain within the regulations of the Privacy Act.

- E-mail to member requesting that this information be forwarded to the family.
- Letter to the member’s home address (address to “Cpl Bloggins and family”, etc).
- By personal request/invitation at Unit family events.
- Program advertising utilizing existing social media accounts (MFRC Facebook page or Twitter Account, informal “spouses” Facebook groups, etc).
- Providing member with a consent form for his/her family to complete (eg. Via Unit Orderly Room during in-clearance).
Regardless of the method that is chosen, families should ultimately be asked to complete a formal Consent Form (see Annex D). Completed Consent Forms are to be forwarded to the MFRC Program POC, who will retain them for future reference.
**Annex C – Appendix I – Sample E-Mail to Member for Family**

*Email sent to incoming CAF member’s ‘Forces’ account from the Unit Family Sponsor Program Representative at the gaining unit. (Remove this text along with highlighted sections below that require custom inputs)*

Dear [Incoming member name],

**Please forward this message to your family as it is highly relevant to your loved ones.**

After meeting with thousands of RCAF members and their loved ones, the Family Support Team has learned how important it is to help military families connect with what matters to them.

For this reason, we’ve created the **RCAF Family Sponsor Program!** Our goal is to put out the welcome mat for families who are posted to our area or those managing a service-related separation.

By participating in this program you will be connected with another family member associated with our unit who can welcome you to our community and help you settle in.

Your Family Sponsor will help you connect with the organizations and services that matter to your family, and facilitate your introduction to other families in our unit [provide concise name of unit].

**We will require your email address (or phone number) in order to put you in touch.**

Your privacy is important; we will only use this contact information for the Family Sponsor Program and your information will not be disclosed to anyone outside of the Program.

This volunteer-led program is offered in partnership with the Military Family Resource Centre. As such, you may request access to, or a correction of, your personal information from the MFRC at any time.

If you wish to get involved by volunteering, please let us know! Let’s start building a better RCAF for our families! P.S. For more information, visit: [http://www.rcaf-arc.forces.gc.ca/en/family-support-team/family-sponsor-program.page](http://www.rcaf-arc.forces.gc.ca/en/family-support-team/family-sponsor-program.page)

In addition to this message, we will send a letter to the home address that we have on file to ensure you have full opportunity to participate in this important Program.
Send your family email address (or phone number) to: [appropriate contact email]

Sincerely,

[signature]
Draft LETTER sent to incoming CAF member’s home address from the Unit Family Sponsor Program Representative at the gaining unit. (Remove this text along with highlighted sections below that require custom inputs)

Dear [Incoming member name],

Please share this letter with your family as it is highly relevant to your loved ones.

Postings can be the hardest part of military life. This is why the RCAF is working to enhance your family’s access to support resources and creating new ways for loved ones to get involved in our community.

You may have received an email from our Commanding Officer encouraging you to take advantage of the RCAF Family Sponsor Program. This new program is designed specifically for families who are scheduled to relocate to our area and is offered in partnership with the Military Family Resource Centre.

By participating you will be connected with another family member associated with our unit who is volunteering to welcome you to our community and help you settle in. This volunteer Family Sponsor will help you connect with the organizations and services that matter to your family, and facilitate your introduction to other families in our unit.

We will require your email address (or phone number) in order to put you in touch.

Your privacy is important; we will only use this contact information for the Family Sponsor Program and your information will not be disclosed to anyone outside of the Program.

You may request access to, or a correction of, your personal information from the MFRC at any time.

If you wish to get involved by volunteering, please let us know! Let’s start building a better RCAF for our families! For more information, visit: http://www.rcaf-arc.forces.gc.ca/en/family-support-team/family-sponsor-program.page

Send your family email address (or phone number) to: [appropriate contact email]

Sincerely,

[signature]
Annex D: Consent Form
Annex E: Sample Welcome Letter to Unit Sponsors/Lead Sponsor

123 SQN FAMILY SPONSOR PROGRAM TEAM – VOLUNTEER SELECTION

Dear ;

Congratulations on being selected as a member of the 123 Sqn Family Sponsor Program team. I am confident that your positive contributions to the Program will help make the RCAF a better place for our members and their families!

Our Unit Family Sponsor Program Representative (UFSPR), Rank Name, will be in touch with you soon. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding your upcoming role as a Family Sponsor, please do not hesitate to contact him/her at (telephone number/email). Our Lead Sponsor, Name, will also contact you shortly to provide you with more information about your role. He/she may be reached at (telephone number/email).

Until then, I thank you once again for stepping forward and sharing some of your valuable experience with others. I look forward to working with you in this endeavour.

Yours truly,

I.M. Bloggins
Rank
Commanding Officer
Annex F: Sample Recruiting/Participation Letter

The RCAF Family Needs YOU

The voices of RCAF families have been heard. Your message is clear: We need a stronger sense of community to help families connect with what’s important: people and support.

We are committed to making the RCAF a better home for families, but we need YOUR help.

The RCAF is launching a new way of creating a better community: The Family Sponsor Program will ease the process of loved ones getting settled into their new surroundings and help them connect with other families in their unit.

Here’s where you come in. We’re looking for spouses and loved ones to get involved. This is your chance to build the RCAF community you’ve been looking for.

As a Family Sponsor, you will have training and support from your local MFRCs. You’ll get the skills needed to reach out to those affected by duty-related separations. You will also be the friendly point of contact for new families arriving at your unit.

Your most important task will be to connect families with the resources they need and introduce them to other families within the unit.

It’s simple, but it will make a world of difference!

Get involved by contacting your local Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC) at XXX-XXX-XXXX or by sending the Family Support Team an email at: RCAFFamily_ARCfamille@forces.gc.ca.

You have every reason to feel proud of your military adventure, and now you can have more power than ever to shape the RCAF into the home you want it to be.

Please call me personally if you have any questions!

[Squadron CO]
Annex G: Social Media Primer for Command Teams

Reference: CANAIRGEN 03/14 – RCAF GUIDANCE ON USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Many families today are comfortable and adept at using social media and web-based technology. While social media is a simple way to spread information to large groups of interested individuals, significant public affairs and security implications surrounding its use by DND members means that caution is essential when utilizing this communications method.

Currently, the two primary social media platforms utilized for communicating DND messaging are Twitter and Facebook. D Air PA manages the RCAF national Facebook and Twitter accounts. CANAIRGEN 05/14 outlines key guidelines for ensuring that social media activities fall within existing regulations and minimize risk to the RCAF and its personnel.

Despite the centralized nature of RCAF social media usage, it is possible to use social media to maximize your reach amongst unit families. In doing so, you should consider the following:

- Para 4 (6) of the CANAIRGEN states “Refrain from establishing Social Media sites that represent or appear to represent DND, the CAF, or the RCAF.” This means, for example, that your unit or squadron cannot set up a publicly visible Facebook page associated with your RCAF unit.

- You or Family Sponsor Program volunteers from your unit can set up sites/accounts for the purposes of sharing family support related information via a social media site such as Facebook or Instagram.

- There is a difference between a “page” and “group” on Facebook. Groups require membership and can be set up to limit access (“closed”). They can also be “secret” to render them unsearchable and hence only accessible by an invitation from a current member and may require membership approval from an administrator.

- Facebook groups are generally more secure or private than ‘pages’ and provide a group administrator with more tailored control over access and approved content. For example, groups can be structured so that all posts must be approved by an administrator.

- Your social media groups should be ‘Secret’ and used only by families within your unit and, not visible to the public.
• You or your Lead Sponsor can use existing groups/sites to share information with your unit families. For example, many units or Wings have a generic “spouses” Facebook group which may have a significantly larger reach than more traditional communication methods such as newsletters, Wing newspapers, MFRC welcome packages, etc.

• In some communities, Instagram is being favoured as the social media platform of choice, especially for younger members and families. If Instagram is the preferred social media platform for your unit families, you may wish to consider a private Instagram account. The account owner will need to approve anyone who wants to “follow” the account.

• For simplicity’s sake, and to avoid duplication of effort, it is advised that one primary social media group be used or created per unit for family support purposes.

• The MFRC is an excellent resource on basic social media guidelines. The MFRC will also train Family Sponsor Volunteers who will share this guidance with families.

• Operational Security is a top priority for the RCAF, and should therefore be periodically addressed by the unit Comd Team.

Most MFRCs have an active social media presence. Military Family Services recently published a Practical Guide to Social Media Use which may be helpful for Comd Teams and UFSPRs to review, as these are the guidelines within which the MFRC operates.
Annex H: References

RCAF Family Sponsor Program Information Resources (hosted by CFMWS)

FST DWAN Page (Navigate to: 1 Cdn Air Div/DComd/A1/A1 Family Support)

Family Support Team Internet Site (Public)

DAOD 5044-1 Families

CAF Family Covenant

RCAF Family Core Beliefs

Privacy Act

Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)

Privacy Code for Military Family Services Program

CANAIRGEN 05/14 – RCAF GUIDANCE ON USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Practical Guide to Social Media Use – Military Family Services Program