

HALIFAX & REGION
MILITARY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

UNIT FAMILY REP HANDBOOK





Military Families **Strength Behind the Uniform**
La Famille **La force conjointe**

Canadian Forces Family Covenant

We recognize the important role families play in enabling the operational effectiveness of the Canadian Forces and we acknowledge the unique nature of military life. We honour the inherent resilience of families and we pay tribute to the sacrifices of families made in support of Canada. We pledge to work in partnership with the families and the communities in which they live. We commit to enhancing military life.



Engagement des Forces canadiennes à l'endroit des familles

Nous sommes conscients de la contribution importante des familles à l'efficacité opérationnelle des Forces canadiennes et nous reconnaissons la nature unique du mode de vie militaire. Nous honorons la résilience des familles et rendons hommage aux sacrifices qu'elles font pour soutenir le Canada. Nous promettons de travailler en partenariat avec les familles et les communautés dans lesquelles elles vivent. Nous nous engageons à améliorer le mode de vie militaire.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
MFRC Programs & Services	4
Roles and Responsibilities of a Unit Family Rep	5
About the H&R MFRC	6
H&R MFRC History	7
H&R MFRC Audiences	9
Family Information and Referral Services Team (FIRST)	11
Establishing Yourself as a Unit Family Rep	12
Unit Family Rep Policies and Procedures	13
Representing and Promoting the H&R MFRC	14
Unit Family Rep Recognition	16
Useful Links	18

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEAR UNIT FAMILY REP,

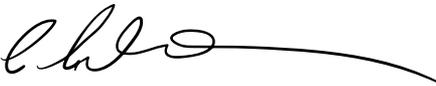
On behalf of the Board of Directors and all of the staff at the Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre (H&R MFRC), I would like to welcome you to what we believe is the best MFRC in the country. We are very proud of and have worked very hard to build the reputation as a great resource for the military community.

In your role as the Unit Family Representative (UFR) there will be high expectations placed on you by your unit and family members. As such, you are being asked to provide a service that is unique to the nation. As you may know, family members play a vital role in the readiness of a unit and support to a military career. We have worked very hard at developing relationships with them. Your approach, professionalism and collaboration with us will be the key to success. We are committed to help you achieve this success as the UFR.

We hope that you will embrace the H&R MFRC and be a goodwill ambassador on behalf of the organization. I am confident that you will enjoy working with families, our Canadian Forces partners and the H&R MFRC team. We certainly value your time and commitment to this position and we thank you for providing such a valuable service to your unit and families.

Sincerely,

COLLEEN CALVERT Executive Director



INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking on the role of Unit Family Representative (UFR) to help keep military families connected and informed. At the Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre (H&R MFRC) we believe that military families are the Strength Behind the Uniform and we are proud to welcome you to a strong military family community. Military families are strong, independent, resilient and resourceful and cope with many unique and challenging circumstances, including postings, deployments and spouses employment.

In 2008, the Canadian Forces Family Covenant was unveiled. The Covenant reflects the commitment to military families and serves as the foundation from which the Department of National Defence can continue to enhance military family services. Working in partnership with the Canadian Forces (CF) we are able to deliver a wide variety of programs and services that are relevant to the needs of military families today, including the UFR program.

We believe that support to military families is a continuous effort. As such, the UFR program was created with that purpose in mind to enhance visibility and support to military families by establishing this role in all units.

To get you started in your role, we have designed this guide as a ready reference for a variety of situations you may experience. This guide will not make you an expert in the field of military family relations, but it is a great tool to help your work be more effective in this role. Along with the information in this guide, we encourage you to get to know the staff at the H&R MFRC as they are a great resource to you.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require further assistance or would like to recommend a suggestion to this handbook. We will do our best to make your work with us most rewarding.



MFRC PROGRAMS & SERVICES

5 DISTINCT AREAS

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY INTEGRATION:

Welcome and relocation assistance, second language courses, employment services and entrepreneurship, support to the Francophone community, and community events.

FAMILY SEPARATION AND REUNION

Deployment... what does it mean? Is your daughter currently in the Sudan? Your spouse away on IR? Whenever someone you care about is away or you are experiencing any work related separation get connected to our deployment services. Deployments can be two weeks or two years. It may be on a ship / boat, to Afghanistan, Sudan, Jerusalem, etc. Contact deployment@halifaxmfr.ca to ensure that all family members (of Regular and Reserve Force) are on our deployment contact list.

PREVENTION, SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION:

Sometimes life throws you a curve ball, and you just need someone to talk to. The MFRC has professional staff available through our Prevention, Support and Intervention program. Whether deployment related, parenting, relationship or another topic, there is a confidential, caring professional only a phone call away.

CHILD/YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND PARENTING SUPPORT:

Licensed daycare, emergency child care, preschool, casual child care, activities for children, youth, and parental education and support. For families with children who are coping with deployments or work related separations a sudden illness or injury may mean no one is available to care for their child. Emergency childcare services are professional and easy to access. If you need a break during a deployment, respite care is also available.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES:

Volunteers contribute on a daily basis to all areas of the Halifax & Region MFRC. Volunteers participate in program facilitation, office administration, newsletter articles and much more.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A UNIT FAMILY REP

ROLE:

Established in 2010, the UFR works with CF members and their families especially when they face challenges that are associated with the military lifestyle. UFRs not only enhance support to military families, but promote a greater collaboration between units and the H&R MFRC. The UFR plays an integral role as an organizational ambassador by facilitating, promoting and referring military families to programs and services of the H&R MFRC.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Preferred rank: PO2/Sgt to Lt(N)/Capt.
- Component: Regular/Reserve Force full time.
- Strong people skills.
- Support from Chain of Command
- Attend meetings, training and networking opportunities.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Act as an ambassador on behalf of the H&R MFRC.
- Act as a knowledgeable resource agent about H&R MFRC programs and services.
- Participate in professional development training, workshops and meetings.
- Promote family activities/programs/services
- (circulate publications, articles and posters,
- Support H&R MFRC fundraisers.
- Act as a referral agent.
- Promote family networks.
- Participate in unit briefings opportunities.

PERFORM VARIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS:

- Coordinate the completion of Family Contact Forms by members of unit
- Maintain a unit display board and literature.
- Submit periodic routine order entries.
- Be visible and accessible within unit – UFR's name/contact information is to be posted in a prominent area and they are to be the main point of contact for unit members.

ABOUT THE H&R MFRC

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The H&R MFRC is a charity, governed by a volunteer Board of Directors made up of a minimum of 51 percent military family members. The H&R MFRC is an independent, non-governmental organization that works in partnership with the Canadian Forces (CF) to deliver a variety of programs to CF members and their families. The H&R MFRC serves military communities within the Halifax Regional Municipality, Shearwater, Central and Northern Nova Scotia, as well as Cape Breton, with service sites in Halifax, Shearwater and Sydney, Cape Breton.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre promotes the health and social well being of individuals, families and communities who share the unique experience of military life.

VISION:

Strong, healthy, resilient military families and communities.

VALUES – WE BELIEVE THAT:

- Military families are military members and those they care about;
- All military families have strengths
- Partnerships with CF and community resources are valued
- Relationships are based on equality and respect for diversity
- Programs are responsive to the military family as a whole and
- The Executive Director, staff and board members work in partnership with individuals and families to strengthen the community.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS STRATEGIC GOALS (2010-2015)

- Goal One: Programming: Excellence in strength-based family programs and services.
- Goal Two: Communication and stakeholder relations.
- Goal Three: Sustainable funding.
- Goal Four: Excellence in Governance: Board succession planning results in an effective and committed board of directors.
- Goal Five: Human Resources: Progressive, professional, supportive work environment.

H&R MFRC HISTORY:

The development of what is now the Halifax & Region MFRC began when Maritime Command chaplains established a family resource centre. Research, and the support of Admiral Crickard led to the enhancement of services for CFB Halifax families through a temporary family support centre between 1985 -1988.

- January 1988: In response to numerous studies by social workers, chaplains, concerned members/ families and health industry professionals, Maritime Forces Atlantic (MARLANT) MFRC was permanently established as a unit within CFB Halifax, utilizing DND civilian and military resources from CFB Halifax and other units of Maritime Command.
- 1991: The Shearwater Military Family Resource Centre (SMFRC) was developed as a volunteer-based, non-profit organization, also focused on promoting the health and well being of individuals, families and the community.
- Mid-late 1990s: Halifax transitioned to the National Military Family Support Program model with funding and support being provided by Director Military Family Services (DMFS) Major changes included the hiring of an Executive Director and civilian staff, electing a Board of Directors made up of at least 51% civilian spouses/partners and implementing nationally mandated core and site specific programs and services.
- 1999: Halifax (MARLANT) MFRC became incorporated and registered as a charitable organization under the Provincial Societies Act. This accomplishment paved the way for Halifax MFRC to accept official donations and conduct fundraising activities.

- January 2002: The HMFRC moved into a new facility in Windsor Park provided by CFPSA and DND. The new facility included a state of the art 50 space daycare. The HMFRC also moved out and closed the 22 space full time daycare in St. Brendan's Chapel in Stadacona.
- March 2003, after being approached by the board of the Debert MFRC to amalgamate, Debert and Cape Breton became satellite offices of the Halifax MFRC.
- April 2006: the Board of Directors for both the Halifax and Shearwater MFRCs merged into one board and hired one Executive Director.
- March 2007: the Halifax and Shearwater MFRCs amalgamated and formed the Halifax & Region MFRC (H&R MFRC).
- Today, the H&R MFRC has three service sites in Halifax, Shearwater and Cape Breton and serves approximately 24,000 Regular and Reserve Force CF members and their families. Offering a variety of programs and services, the H&R MFRC provides quality, strength-based programming to military families in all of the communities served.



H&R MFRC AUDIENCES

The H&R MFRC serves both Regular and Reserve Canadian Forces (CF) members and their families residing in the Halifax Regional Municipality, Shearwater, Central and Northern Nova Scotia, including Cape Breton. Working in partnership with the Director of Military Family Services (DMFS) and the Base/Wing, the H&R MFRC is able to deliver a wide variety of programs and services to military families. Community organizations, individual donors and volunteers also play an integral role within the H&R MFRC. The list below highlights the many audiences the H&R MFRC works with, all of which contribute to the success in providing strength-based programs to military families within the community.

- Military Families
- Military Members and DND Civilians
- Parents of military members
- Youth in military families
- Single Members
- Volunteers and staff
- Integrated Personnel Support Unit, Base Social
- Workers, Health Promotions and other DND Helping Agencies
- Legions
- Military Family Services
- Schools
- Other MFRCs
- Sponsors / Donors
- Community agencies, Hospitals, Churches
- Media
- Government
- RCMP
- Employers

The H&R MFRC offers a variety of programs and services for military families. As part of a national network of MFRCs across the country, programs are offered in the areas of Welcome and Community Integration; Child, Youth and Parenting; Adult and Community; Second Language Services; Prevention, Support and Intervention; Deployment, Employment and Education, Volunteer Development and Outreach. For current programs and services offered at the H&R MFRC, please visit www.halifaxmfr.ca. Below is a list of some of the regular programs and services offered:

CHILD, YOUTH AND PARENTING SERVICES:

- Two licensed daycares
- Weekday Casual Care
- Saturday Casual Care
- Parent & Tot
- “Gym”boree
- Parents helping Children with deployment
- Children and Deployment Workshops
- Monthly Family Events
- Holiday Parties
- Henderson Sweetman Youth Centre (Shearwater Site)
- Youth Committee
- Summer Day Camp
- March Break Camp
- Girl Gab
- Sports Drop-in
- Leaders in Training
- Various Parenting Workshops

ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES:

- Coffee Connections
- Breakaway Program for Seniors
- Out N’ About
- Brunch Bunch
- Emergency First Aid and CPR
- Standard First Aid and CPR
- Women’s Self Defence
- Extreme Couponing – MFRC Style

SECOND LANGUAGE SERVICES:

- Café français
- Parent et bambin
- Francophone Family Activities
- Second Language Training (English and French)

PREVENTION, SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION SERVICES:

- Professional social workers
- Emergency funds
- Housing
- Crisis intervention
- Respite childcare
- Emergency childcare
- Advocacy

DEPLOYMENT SERVICES :

- Pre-Deployment Readiness Information Briefings
- Monthly CO's Briefing and Potluck
- Away Café
- Family Networks
- Monthly Family Activities
- Workshops
- Operation We Care
- Video Teleconferencing (VTC)

OUTREACH SERVICES:

- Support to military families residing outside of HRM
- Community events
- Family activities
- MCDV Network Activities
- Unit briefings / information displays
- Unit Family Rep Program
- Satellite office in Sydney

EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION SERVICES:

- Resume writing
- Interviewing skills and preparation
- Job search
- Cover letter development
- Access to hidden job market
- Facilitation Skills Training (workshop)
- Entrepreneurship Club

VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT:

- Administrative opportunities
- Workshop facilitation
- Special events
- Professional development

FAMILY INFORMATION REFERRAL SERVICES TEAM:

The H&R MFRC offers 24/7 Family Information Referral Services Team (FIRST) consisting of highly qualified staff that are available to address a variety of needs for military families.

With just a simple phone call, military families can access information and referral services, emergency childcare, a duty padre, register for MFRC programs and direct any concerns or questions. Military families can also drop-off parcels to be sent to deployed personnel.

Thanks to this exceptional service, the H&R MFRC is able to put military families first 24 hours a day. Call us FIRST at 902-427-7788 or 1-888-753-8827 (toll free) and get connected!

ESTABLISHING YOURSELF AS A UNIT FAMILY REP

Tips and recommendations that can assist in strengthening your role as the UFR:

1) Publish the following recommended Routine Order entry four times per year (September, December, March and June):

“The Unit Family Rep Program assist military families feel informed and connected through an awareness of programs and services available at the H&R MFRC especially during work separations and deployments.

Military families are the strength behind the uniform, they cope with many unique circumstances, including work-related separations (training, duty watches, deployments and postings). This often proves to be a challenge for those families who try to balance work and family obligations, while embracing the military lifestyle.

To help ensure CF members remain focused on their mission, UFRs work closely with the Chain of Command and the H&R MFRC to promote programs and services to military families especially when experiencing a work- related separation. Securing the knowledge that the CF member’s family is safe and cared for helps increase the resiliency of the member during their absence.

For more information or to provide feedback, please contact your UFR (INSERT NAME) or visit www.halifaxmfr.ca. Please note that it is highly recommended that all members of the unit fill out the Family Contact Form to stay connected and up to date on programs and services available to you and your family.

2) Use of Display Board: Display the MFRC contact poster on the unit bulletin board in a visible area. Ensure the UFR contact information is included on the bottom of the poster. Also, any H&R MFRC flyers sent to the UFR should be posted on the display board.

3) Meet with your unit members. The conversations you have may promote programs and services.

4) Become familiar with our programs and services. Visit regularly our website and attend some of our programming.

UFR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

As UFRs representing the H&R MFRC, you will be viewed by CF members and military families as ambassadors on behalf of our organization. Similarly to staff and volunteers, UFRs are asked to abide by the following policies and procedures while fulfilling their role:

OATH OF CONFIDENTIALITY & CODE OF ETHICS:

It is essential that confidentiality be maintained at all times for legal and ethical reasons, as well as to maintain respectful relationships. Respecting the confidence of staff, volunteers and clients is essential. All information learned directly or indirectly concerning our clients must be held in the strictest confidence and not to be discussed outside the workplace. As a Unit Family Rep, you will be required to adhere to both agreements.

PRIVACY CODE:

The MFRC adheres to the Military Family Services Program Privacy Code that was developed from the Canadian Standards Association Model Code for the Protection of Personal Information about CF members and their families and is protected and used for the purposes for which it was collected. For more information on the MFSP Privacy Code, please refer to the Privacy Code policy.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

A conflict of interest exists wherever an individual could benefit personally, directly or indirectly, or, where someone might reasonably perceive there to be such a benefit and influence. In any real, perceived or potential conflict of interest situation, a member will declare him/herself in a conflict of interest position and remove him/herself from the group until the issue presenting the conflict is resolved.

BOUNDARIES:

It is important to remember that as a UFR you have signed a confidentiality agreement and code of ethics, therefore the onus is on you to uphold professional boundaries with those we serve. Should you find yourself in a situation, like these outlined or other; we encourage you to contact the H&R MFRC. As a strength-based organization, you are a role model for the people who you serve. As such, you need to be conscious that you do not disclose your own personal situations.

REPRESENTING AND PROMOTING THE H&R MFRC

REPRESENTING THE H&R MFRC:

When representing the H&R MFRC, the following statements are the messages we are all responsible to deliver:

- Military families are the strength behind the uniform.
- The MFRC is inclusive of all military families.
- The MFRC provides strength based programs and services.

CORE MESSAGES:

- The H&R MFRC offers services to all members of the CF community and will be sensitive to whom we are communicating with.
- The H&R MFRC partners with CF and civilian community organizations.
- The H&R MFRC is committed to maintaining confidentiality and abides by the CSA Privacy Code.
- The H&R MFRC staff members are knowledgeable and professional.

PARTICIPATION IN MEDIA INTERVIEWS:

UFRs cannot participate in a media activity (including interviews, special events, information requests etc) on behalf of the MFRC without the approval from the MFRC Executive Director and their chain of command. If a UFR receives a call from a reporter they should refer the individual to the H&R MFRC.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF MILITARY FAMILIES:

When photographing a military member or their family, they must sign a “Photo Permission Form” (provided by the MFRC). The form will allow the H&R MFRC to use the photographs to promote the organization and the event. Photo permission must be obtained from a parent of photographed children.



IMAGE AND CONSISTENCY:

NAME USAGE

The following is the spelling format and translation of our official name: Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre to be used in ALL circumstances. This includes but is not exclusive to correspondence, print, web uses.

ENGLISH

Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre

Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre - Shearwater Site

Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre - Halifax Site

Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre - Cape Breton Site

FRENCH

Centre de ressources des familles militaires d'Halifax et régions

Centre de ressources des familles militaires d'Halifax et régions - Site de Shearwater

Centre de ressources des familles militaires d'Halifax et régions - Site d'Halifax

Centre de ressources des familles militaires d'Halifax et régions - Site du Cape Breton

USAGE OF SLOGAN

The correct spelling and usage of our slogan is **Military Families: Strength Behind the Uniform**. In french the slogan is **La famille : La force conjointe**

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY:

The H&R MFRC currently has a Twitter account: twitter.com/hrmfrc and a Facebook page (search for Halifax & Region MFRC on facebook.com). As a UFR, you are viewed by the military family community and outside parties as a representative of the organization. If you operate a personal weblog, Facebook, Twitter or similar account, it cannot directly or indirectly reflect or refer to your position as a UFR or your role with the H&R MFRC. As well, please be aware that any comments you make, photos you post, etc. may be perceived by followers as representing the H&R MFRC or your role. To avoid mixing work with your personal life, give yourself some control by protecting your identity on your blog or updates on Twitter and adjusting your privacy settings on Facebook. If you see people making misrepresentations about the H&R MFRC, refer all misinformation or attacks to Communications Services or the Executive Director.

UNIT FAMILY REP RECOGNITION

As a UFR, you play an integral role as part of the H&R MFRC team. As such, we believe that recognizing individuals for the important work they do with our organization and military families is essential. Aside from the internal satisfaction that comes along with this secondary duty, we want to ensure your efforts are recognized and valued by those around us.

The UFR secondary duty has been established with high expectations from your unit and family members. Our recognition program targets individuals who strive to enhance the quality of life for military families through personal initiatives and involvement with the H&R MFRC. The UFR has performed in a way that is above and beyond the call of duty and has distinguished him/herself in one or all of the following areas:

- Provides support to families and activities.
- Enhances the quality of life of military families.
- Acts as an ambassador on behalf of the H&R MFRC.
- Embraces the CF Family Covenant.

There are two types of recognition that a UFR may receive and may be eligible to receive more than one form of recognition during their term:

- Appreciation letter.
- H&R MFRC Commendation Certificate.

Any individual can nominate a UFR for recognition. All nominations will be reviewed quarterly (June, September, December and March) by committee members of the Family, Separation and Reunion Team at the H&R MFRC. Nominations will be forwarded to the Executive Director for final approval. Nomination forms can be downloaded from the MFRC website www.halifaxmfr.ca.

END OF TERM - DEPARTURE CERTIFICATE:

All UFRs will be awarded a certificate of appreciation for their role as Unit Family Reps. To be eligible for this certificate, all UFRs must have held the position for a minimum of three consecutive months.

Note: Once it is known that the UFR can no longer fulfill its role, it is

recommended that he/she contact the Halifax & Region MFRC as soon as possible to seek a replacement. The newly appointment UFR will be course loaded on the next annual training opportunity.

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

It is important to stay in touch with all UFRs to strengthen the relationship. As such, the MFRC will provide regular opportunities to connect with one another in a relaxed atmosphere to share experiences , provide and receive feedback in a supportive network environment.

UNIT FAMILY REP TRAINING:

This one-day training session is provided to all new Unit Family Reps to familiarize themselves with their newly assigned role and gain a deeper understanding of programs and services available to military families. The training is held at the Halifax MFRC (Windsor Park). Refreshments and lunch will be served to all participants. All training is at no cost to participants.

R2MR WORKSHOP / CYCLE OF DEPLOYMENT

This three hour workshop will familiarize all Unit Family Reps with an overview of the Road 2 Mental Readiness (R2MR) concepts that aim to prepare CF personnel, leaders and their families to identify and meet the challenges related to military service. This training will be offered to all Unit Family reps following completion of the Unit Family Rep Training. The training will be held at the Halifax MFRC (Windsor Park).



USEFUL LINKS/RESOURCES

LINKS:

H&R MFRC (www.halifaxmfr.ca)

Canadian Forces Members Assistance Program

(<http://www.forces.gc.ca/health-sante/ps/map-pam/default-eng.asp>)

MARLANT Helping Agents (<http://halifax.mil.ca>)

Family Navigator (<http://www.familynavigator.ca>)

Military Family Services Program (<http://www.cfpsa.com>)

CF Chaplains (<http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/cfcb-bsafc/index-eng.asp>)

H&R MFRC SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

A Guide to Deployment

Parents Helping Children Through Deployment Parent's Guide to Deployment

Command Team's Guide to the MFRC

Media and the Military Family

Childcare Options

Emergency Childcare Plan

Deployment Video Series

FORMS:

Please return all completed Family Contact Forms to the Halifax & Region MFRC Box 99000 Stn Forces Halifax NS B3K 5X5 or by fax to 902 427-7794.

