Press Release

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Fort Drum SFRD earns DoD certification for family readiness programs

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- Fort Drum recently earned Department of Defense certification for its Military Family Readiness Programs, having met all national standards for its support services to the community.

Certification is a requirement for an Army installation to maintain its family readiness programming, and it is renewed every four years. This was the first certification since the Fort Drum Soldier and Family Readiness Division (SFRD) was established in 2020, under the Directorate of Human Resources.

The certification process began six months after Fort Drum merged Army Community Service (ACS) and the Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) and transitioned its services to the SFRD.

“During that time, we were able to look at the services we had in place, regulatory requirements and the supporting documents that we had,” said Lorilyn Starr, SFRD chief. “We had already begun to consolidate and improve in all of our functional areas.”

This was not an easy feat, considering the SFRD was being established and introduced to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The team had to put forth a great deal of effort to modify their services to meet community needs while maintaining health and wellness guidelines,” Starr said.

Starr said that Rich Stepanek, Family Resource Center operations officer, and Christine Robinson, Employee Assistance Program coordinator, were instrumental in the certification process, capitalizing on their years of experience with ACS and ASAP, to provide a critical and thorough examination of programming.

“This process really serves as a quality assurance and utilization assessment,” Starr said. “Failure to obtain certification can potentially lead to the degradation of services and a decrease in funding. It also provided a platform in which to showcase the benefit of merging the two programs and realigning services. We essentially did more with less.”

The certification also presented another distinct challenge, as Fort Drum was selected to participate in the pilot program that evaluated installations with more rigorous DoD standards.

“The certification was important for us because we were theoretically building the SFRD from the ground up,” Starr said. “Also, certification standards had changed, and this was the first time any installation was being assessed against new criteria. This made it a little more difficult as we really had no other installations to reach out to for best practices and guidance.”

They also had to provide additional levels of supporting documents and proof that the SFRD had no loss or diminishment of services.

“The merger actually allowed us to streamline and enhance our efforts,” Starr said. “We merged all prevention programs to form the Installation Prevention Council. This was a unique effort specific to Fort Drum, and IMCOM had no prior experience reviewing the products we were submitting.”

The Fort Drum Directorate of Human Resources’ SFRD offers essential resources to community members designed to enhance quality of life and to promote resilience and self-reliance. It encompasses services including Army Emergency Relief, Relocation Readiness, Mobilization and Deployment, Family Advocacy, and the Exceptional Family Member, Financial Readiness and Army Substance Abuse programs, to name a few.

The organizations were consolidated at two facilities – the Family Resource Center and the Soldier and Family Readiness Center.

“It has been a remarkable experience helping to develop the SFRD for our community, and I was honored to be a part of the certification process,” Stepanek said. “It means a lot to the entire team to achieve certification and I know, going forward, we will continue to provide the highest quality of life programming and services for our Soldiers, family members, retirees and civilians at Fort Drum.”

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Photo Caption:

The Fort Drum Directorate of Human Resources’ Soldier and Family Readiness Division offers essential resources to community members designed to enhance quality of life and to promote resilience and self-reliance. The SFRD earned Department of Defense certification for its military family readiness program, having met all national standards for its support services to the community. (Graphic by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)