

National Working Group Update



Who we are:

Vision – A strong, cohesive professional association of military family resource centres (MFRCs).

Mission – to enhance the strength of MFRCs and provide a structure to share knowledge and resources.

VALUES

Respect – We treat military families and all who work with and support them with dignity and respect and will not unduly favour one resource or client over another.

Stewardship: We will be diligent, reliable, fair and consistent in all our actions and efficient and effective stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

Integrity: We are accountable for what we do and transparent in how we do it. Our practices are fair, equitable and accessible.

Building Capacity: We value supporting the military family community and helping MFRC organizations to succeed.

Excellence: We promote excellence in all activities. We encourage initiative, creativity and innovation in the constant concern for efficiency and effectiveness in reaching our goals.

Proactive Leadership: We are strategic and work toward being a centre of influence in the MFRC community, characterized by partnerships, collaboration and mutual respect.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed individuals can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead

Where did the idea of a National Association come from?

The idea of a National Association has been around for a long time. In 2002 Dr Ainslie Clark, National Defence Chief of Review Services during the Military Family Services Program review recommended that a national association of MFRCs be created. Since then various committees made up of MFRC Board members and Executive Directors have tried to forward the issue with little success. In 2010 twenty MFRCs pooled resources to fund a “feasibility” study on a National Association. In 2011 due to the difficulty getting national consensus a group of Centres determined the benefits of a national association were so great they formed a working group, received support from DGPFS and DMFS, pooled resources and worked to establish the association.



What are the potential benefits of a National Association of MFRCs?

- Facilitate and promote the exchange of knowledge among members.
- Enhance professionalism through training and professional development.
- Contribute to the effectiveness of MFRCs through standards and best practices.
- Represent the interests of MFRCs.
- Enhance the collective strength of MFRCs and provide a structure to share knowledge and resources.
- National Awareness Campaigns.
- National fundraising and sponsorships.
- Board resources, Board training
- National Insurance, Human Resource, Financial, Legal, EAP programs/consultation.
- Staff benefits.
- Staff resources and training.



Words from the 'field'

“The National Association will help MFRCs become more effective, capturing all the skill, talent, energy and value in each MFRC.”
BGen (ret'd) Fred Bigelow

“There is brilliant work going on in communities, MFRCs would be more brilliant together.”
Leanne Kopp former MFRC Board member

“Time to stop working in isolation, its time to come together and work together!”
Helen Bates MFRC Board member

“Just imagine if we shared the wealth of each MFRCs expertise and experience.” Chantale Dubreuil MFRC Board member

“MFRCs are the best kept secret in the Canadian Forces and a national organization would increase our profile and our ability to be recognized as making a significant and positive difference in the lives of military families and the Canadian communities in which they live.”
Beth Corey MFRC ED

“Canada's Military Family Resource Centres (MFRCs) have done so much for Canadian military families since they began. I am so excited about how much more they will be able to accomplish working together as members of the National Association of MFRCs.” Kerry Chaytor-Crummy former Board member

For more info:

www.mfrc.ca / info@mfrc.ca

What does DMFS think of a National Association?

The National Association was endorsed and supported by Director General Personnel Family Services Support Brig. General Bigelow and Director Celine Thompson in January of 2012. Then in 2013 DMFS/QOL Col Russ Mann reiterated his support for a national association. Col Mann believed that a national association could play a positive role in shaping the national agenda for MFRC boards and staff administration, could have a consultative role and has potential for national projects.

Who is the National Association Working group?

The group has been working together informally for several years and formally since January 2012. They have been working diligently to move the concept of a national association into reality. Kaetlyn Corbould - Board Edmonton, Shannon Bisson - Board Winnipeg, Carolyn O'Malley - Board Halifax, Chantale Dubreuil - Board Valcartier, Lorie Hall Board - Esquimalt, Cindy Howlett - Board St John's. Marie Claude Michaud - ED Val Cartier, Susan Sweetman ED Trenton, Colleen Calvert ED Halifax, Regan Gorski ED Moosejaw, Gaynor Jackson ED Esquimalt.

Who would sit on the Board of a National Association?

The volunteer Board of Directors would be made up of 51% serving or former CF family MFRC Board members. 49% would be made up of Executive Directors, professionals and other interested parties.

When and how will they be elected?

Elections will be held within 18 months of the Association forming, after that the election of half the Board will occur annually at the AGM. Each member MFRC will be presented a slate of candidates to vote for.

How will the NA be funded?

We envision it will be funded through membership fees, sponsorships, grants and national projects

What will it cost to join?

The membership will be \$1 500 for 2013-2014. The membership will allow MFRC members to access all Association services. The Association is looking at ways (sponsors, donors, subsidies) to help MFRCs that won't have the financial resources to pay their membership.

Can we use DMFS funds to pay membership fees?

Yes of course, you may use DMFS funds to belong to a professional association

Several MFRCs contributed funds to support the work of the NAWG, who were they, what did they contribute and what have you spent it on?

Edmonton, Esquimalt, Halifax & Region, Kingston, Moose Jaw, St John's, Trenton, Valcartier and Winnipeg MFRCs each contributed \$1000 and Canada Company contributed \$5000. Funds have been used for professional services, a governance consultant and lawyer to develop bylaws and to file incorporation papers with Industry Canada.

What would the relationship between the NA and DMFS look like?

It is the intent of the National Association to build effective, professional working relationships and partnerships with DMFS.

Would MFRCs lose their independence?

Absolutely not, the association has no authority over an MFRC. The association is there to support, enhance and strengthen the work of Board and staff of the MFRC.



MFRCs

- *Share a common belief in the importance of military families .*
- *Contribute significantly to the operational effectiveness of Canada's military.*
- *MFRCs are the experts in MFSP service delivery and represent the voice of the families across the country.*

If the association received national sponsorships or donations would they be distributed to MFRCs?

We envision that a portion of funds would be retained by the association for projects and a portion would be distributed in a pro rated manner to member MFRCs

What if we don't join now? Can we join later ?

Yes, MFRCs will be able to join at a later time, it is not mandatory to join.

Can OUTCAN C/MFRCs join?

Yes they will be able to join as associate members.

Is there overlap with DMFS

The national association will not duplicate or interfere with the mandate of DMFS, the potential exists to enhance all of our abilities to provide services to and support CF families.

So what happens next?

As soon as all legal documents are signed and we are a federally incorporated charity the working group will become the working Board of the association. They will develop basic governance structure, solicit MFRCs for membership, develop funding requirements, develop the initial priorities for the organization and develop the mechanism and process for the first elections. We are hopeful this will occur NLT 31 March 2013.

Did you know?

- *In 2009 MFRCs established a National Association Working Group made up of various Board Chairs and Executive Directors.*
- *MFRCs share a common belief in the importance of military families.*
- *MFRCs contribute significantly to the operational effectiveness of Canada's military.*
- *MFRCs employ over 350 full time employees and 500 part-time employees, just imagine the possibilities if we worked together*
- *MFRCs mobilize the efforts of 3000 volunteers across Canada.*



Strength through partnership

Leaders in the delivery of Military Family Services, MFRC 's and the senior leadership of the Canadian Forces have embraced the value and significant role families play in the welfare and well being of Canadian Forces members. Recognizing their importance, MFRCs need to work in partnership to provide the member and their family with an extensive array of services, programs and resources that address the social, physical and emotional needs of the family.