



THE TOTAL ARMY SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

TASK: Increase awareness and knowledge about what the sponsorship program is and why it exists.

CONDITIONS: Discussion-Question Based.

STANDARDS: Understand why sponsorship is so important, especially to Soldiers arriving to Fort Bliss, TX.

REFERENCES: AR 600-8-8, The Total Army Sponsorship Program.



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The Army has long believed that the smooth transition between basic training, first duty station, and station to station, will help ease the stress related to adapting to your new environment.

DISCUSSION: Ask Soldiers why they think the sponsorship program exists.

IAW AR 600-8-8, the sponsorship program exists to:

- Assist Soldiers and families during the reassignment process.
- Assist families geographically separated from the Soldier due to duty requirements.
- Improve unit cohesion and readiness by decreasing distractions that hamper personal performance and mission accomplishment, specifically by providing support and assistance, teaching teamwork, and encouraging development of a sense of responsibility.



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Who is eligible for sponsorship?

- Sponsorship is mandatory for first-term Soldiers, but sponsors will be offered to every Soldier conducting a PCS move up to the rank of Colonel.

Why are sponsors important?

- Sponsors are usually the first person a newly arrived Soldier meets from the unit to which he/she has been assigned. They are selected by the chain of command to be the subject matter experts for the new Soldier regarding the unit, post and facilities.



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How are sponsors selected?

DISCUSSION: Ask Soldiers how they think sponsors are chosen. Ask who was sponsored and to think about how close or how different their sponsors situation was from their own.

Sponsors should:

- Be the same grade or above as the incoming Soldier.
- Have the same gender, martial status and military career field or occupational series as the incoming Soldier.
- Be familiar with the unit or post.
- Not be the person being replaced by the incoming Soldier.
- Not be within 60 days of a PCS move.
- Be someone who will reflect positively on the unit.

Why are these things important?



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What are the duties of a sponsor?

- Sponsors will send a welcome letter to the new Soldier within 10 days of being assigned as the sponsor. He/she should also telephone the incoming Soldier if possible, and respond to any follow-up correspondence. If necessary, Sponsors should also help with transportation for the new Soldier and his/her family.

Sponsors to first-term Soldiers will:

- Be big brothers or big sisters to the new Soldier to orient him/her to the surroundings.
- Provide support and assistance during the transition period. This can also reduce the risk for sexual assault, misconduct and suicide gestures/attempts during the Soldiers first year in the unit.

In addition, sponsors to married Soldiers should:

- Acquaint the Soldier and his/her family to the unit and community.
- Be available to provide assistance and need-to-know information required by family members.



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What are some positive things to tell the person you are sponsoring?

- It may be different here, but you will adjust.
- The unit leadership here will take care of you.
- Unit programs i.e. BOSS, MWR, and AER.
- Educational opportunities.
- Off post activities i.e. Nearby cities or events, and recreational off-post activities.

What are some negative things not to say to the person you are sponsoring?

- This unit sucks.
- No one cares about anyone in this unit.
- I feel helpless and stressed out everyday.
- You will never get used to the way things are here.
- I hope you're not married.
- I'm so ready to leave this unit.
- I feel sorry for you and your family.

BOTTOM LINE: YOU ARE ENTITLED TO YOUR OPINIONS, BUT DON'T LET THEM AFFECT THAT SOLDIER'S PERCEPTION OF HIS/HER NEW UNIT. LET THEM DEVELOP THEIR OWN!