

ARNG Strong Bonds Program

What is it? Recognizing the importance of family support, the Army introduced the Building Strong and Ready Families or Strong Bonds program in 1997. Strong Bonds is a Chaplain-led program which assists Commanders in building individual resilience by strengthening the Army Family. The core mission of the Strong Bonds program is to increase individual Soldier and Family member readiness through relationship education and skills training. The Strong Bonds program consists of four sub-programs applied across the Army Force Generation model: Single Soldier, Couples, Families with children, and all Soldiers and Families facing deployment. The events are conducted in a fun, safe, and secure environment while addressing the impact of relocations, deployments, and military lifestyle stressors.

What has the Army done?

The Army National Guard executed \$7.2 million in FY10 to the 54 States and Territories in support of over 320 Strong Bonds events supporting over 19,500 Soldiers and Families. Currently, the ARNG has more than 400 chaplains, chaplain assistants and spouses and family program personnel with the skills and certifications required to effectively conduct Strong Bonds events. Funding provides for training materials, fees, transportation, food, lodging, and childcare for members of the armed forces and their Family members.

What continued efforts does the Army have planned for the future? Strong Bonds funding provides for events sponsored by the Office of the Chief of Chaplain (OCC). The OCC Director of Ministry Initiative provides training and training materials for the full menu of Strong Bonds curricula. For FY10-11, the ARNG is planning on conducting another cycle of Strong Bonds events.

Why is this important to the Army? The Army National Guard supports overseas contingency operations (OCO) as well as domestic missions by mobilizing and deploying forces in the highest possible state of readiness. The Army National Guard coordinates the reset and resilience of its units and Soldiers returning from deployments. In FY10, over 36,000 Soldiers were mobilized in support of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. With such an intense OPTEMPO and with many Soldiers going into harm's way, it is increasingly critical that the Army National Guard deploy ready Soldiers with the strong bonds they and their Family members need to survive and thrive before, during, and after long deployments.

Additional information is available at: www.strongbonds.org