



## eXtension – Military Families Monthly Report

*Reporting Period: 16 November – 15 December 2010*

**Re-Definition:** In previous monthly reports, the term “*Revised Plan of Work*” was used to describe the strategic planning efforts surrounding creating a new direction for eXtension’s efforts based on prior changes made to the original and approved Plan of Work. A more accurate term to describe the developing documents (plan, budget, and budget narrative), which will be used from this point forward, is “**Amendment**”. These documents will now be referred to as the **Amendment to the Plan of Work, Amended Budget, and Amended Budget Narrative**.

### *1. Significant Activities:*

- **Amendment to the Plan of Work, Amended Budget, & Amended Budget Narrative:** These documents, specifically the amended budget and associated narrative, continue to evolve. Details of the *Personal Finance* pilot project remain incomplete and are currently being fleshed out and revised. All other portions of these documents have been completed. As soon as the *Personal Finance* pilot work team provides a suitable proposal for inclusion, the documents will be forwarded to the appropriate units for approval.
- **Resource Site:** The Resource Site (<http://militaryfamilies.extension.org>) continues to show progress with increasing capability and activity. Final adjustments to the *Child Care and Youth Program Training and Technical Assistance* program materials are being made and will be placed on the Site in the near future. Conversations continue to engage other projects in the Partnership.
- **CoP public Web presence:** Planning and organization to establish a public Web presence and focal point for the Military Families CoP is ongoing, including work with the various Concentration Area work teams, NIFA staff, and eXtension leadership. Preparation and planning for the social media strategies associated with three Concentration Areas (Personal Finance, Child Care, Family & Youth Development) are nearly complete. The work teams for each of these

Concentration Areas have formalized their proposals and final reviews are underway by the Military Families CoP leadership before presenting them to NIFA/DoD for approval. The preliminary and basic plans are articulated below followed by a draft position description for the Concentration Leader.

○ *Personal Finance:*

- 1.a. Web conferencing - topics to include those based on needs identified by OPF for the Personal Finance Managers (CEUs as appropriate)
- 1.b. Web conferencing with a social media focus to assist PFMs navigate social media spaces to enhance their learning
- 2.a. FAQs and Ask an Expert - revision of existing FAQs to better suit unique needs of military families and their service professionals
- 2.b. Create new FAQs from the use of the Ask an Expert widget (placed on a number of web pages to assist in this process, extension, pages identified by DoD or OPF)
- 2.c. Highlight FAQs on Personal Finance social media pages (Facebook/Twitter/blogs, etc.)
- 2.d. Engage with the Military Spouse Fellow program to grow the Ask an Expert feature as part of mandatory practicum hours for participants
- 3. Using the expertise in FSA, discover finance behavior research and trends specific to military families and disseminate this info to PFMs and others as appropriate
- 4. Hire and utilize the Concentration Leader to implement the overall social media strategy for the MilFams CoP (to include enhancing the FSA CoP and participation in the Network Literacy CoP)

○ *Child Care:*

- 1. Create a searchable list of children's books for child care professionals to enhance their ability to serve military families
- 2. Provide re-purposed and newly developed FAQs that specifically address issues relevant to child care professionals serving military families
- 3. Develop at least one online training course for child care professionals based on topics identified as critical through social media engagement
- 4. Offer at least two web conferences with appropriate training credit/CEUs for the military's child care staff
- 5. Create a comprehensive list of state training requirements for child care to provide up-to-date information about requirements and training options
- 6. Hire and utilize the Concentration Leader to implement the overall social media strategy for the MilFams CoP (to include enhancing the BKCA CoP and participation in the Network Literacy CoP)

- *Family & Youth Development:*
  - 1. Develop a Military Family Professional Commons to strengthen military family service professionals' understanding of child, youth, and parent development, and family interactions and dynamics
  - 2. Create up to 6 one-hour web conferences to disseminate appropriate research facing military families, as well as practical ideas to assist military family service professionals address the unique challenges these families face
  - 3. Identify, promote, and make available existing JITP and other Extension resources for military family service professionals (e.g., Teen Talk, Online Parenting with Parents and Family Development certification training, Parenting 24/7 Web site, JITP newsletters)
  - 4. Hire and utilize the Concentration Leader to implement the overall social media strategy for the MilFams CoP (to include enhancing the JITP CoP and participation in the Network Literacy CoP)

- *Concentration Leader Position Description (draft):*

The Concentration Leader (1.0 FTE):

- is a member of the Military Families CoP,
- is a member of the appropriate concentration area CoP with knowledge and experience in the CoP subject matter, understands the principles of working within and values of the CoP, and is proficient using eXtension tools and applications,
- is a member of the Network Literacy CoP,
- investigates where the CoI communicates and participates online,
- effectively engages online, where the CoI participates,
- is well-versed and technically adept at using online technologies, particularly those used in popular social networks,
- assists CoP members in building relationships with the target audience,
- connects CoP members and others with specific CoI members as appropriate,
- serves as a bridge between the CoP and CoI, sharing information, needs, and resources among the two communities, and
- is the resource for developing uses of social media and provides, with the assistance of the Military Families Social Media Strategist and other eXtension staff, technical assistance to CoP members,
- works closely with the concentration area and Network Literacy CoPs, *but reports directly to the Military Families CoP Social Media Strategist.*

The flow of information created by the Concentration Leader as well as this individual becoming involved in the communities where the CoI participates will assist the CoP in modifying content for the CoI. Additionally, as relationships are built within the concentration area CoP, other CoP members will be able to interact with the CoI and link information, needs, and resources.

Selection of the Concentration Leader will be a joint effort between the concentration area work team and Military Families CoP. Every effort will be

made to select a candidate who is currently a part of the Cooperative Extension/Land Grant System. The expertise in identifying the acceptable candidate lies primarily with the concentration area CoP(s) with final approval coming from the leadership in the Military Families CoP to ensure that needs are met in the Partnership.

- **Network Literacy CoP:** The application to form the CoP has been submitted to eXtension for approval.
- **Environmental Scan:** The environmental scan survey was re-launched on 15 December 2010 to the selected audience of 4-H Military Liaisons.

## *2. Current deliverable(s), activity, goals/objectives*

- **Amendment to the Plan of Work, Amended Budget, & Amended Budget Narrative:** The primary activity for this reporting period has been the development, revision, and editing of these documents. The goal is to have them submitted for approval through the appropriate channels in the coming weeks.
- **Resource Site:** This internal work site (<http://militaryfamilies.extension.org>) continues to evolve meeting the needs of the Partnership as it develops. Education continues on how to place material on the site with those currently involved. Other partners continue to become involved.
- **CoP public Web presence:** We are in the final stages of strategic planning with hope to launch this effort very early in 2011.
- **Network Literacy CoP:** The Network Literacy plan of work and associated budget has been completed and will be submitted as part of the **Amendment to the Plan of Work** and associated documents.
- **Environmental Scan:** The 4-H Military Liaisons have until Friday, 31 December 2010 to complete the follow-up second wave of the Environmental Scan. Analyses are ongoing and the second wave data will be evaluated when collection is complete. A report will be passed on to Extension Directors and other key leaders beginning in January 2011. Next steps will develop from the analyses of this new information.

## *3. Action still needed to complete the current deliverable(s)*

- **Amendment to the Plan of Work, Amended Budget, & Amended Budget Narrative:** Once a suitable proposal is completed by the Personal Finance pilot

work team, these documents will be submitted for approval to the appropriate units to re-allocate funding.

- **Resource Site:** Collaboration and effort continues on the part of Lead Institutions, eXtension engineering staff, and Military Families CoP leadership to expand the Site.
- **CoP Public Web presence:** Once submitted, approval for re-allocation of funding to launch these efforts is needed.
- **Network Literacy CoP:** Once submitted, approval for re-allocation of funding to launch these efforts is needed.
- **Environmental Scan:** Second wave data is to be collected by 31 December 2010 and then analyses and reporting can be conducted.

#### *4. Relevant challenges that need attention from DoD/NIFA*

- Regular feedback is always appreciated and necessary to ensure the Military Families CoP efforts are headed in the right direction to serve and accomplish the goals and vision of the Partnership.

#### *5. Success stories that would be of interest to USDA and or DoD Leadership*

- The Military Families CoP continues to grow with **89** members and leaders.
- The Network Literacy CoP continues to grow with **74** members and leaders.