

Yellow Ribbon County Program



What is a Yellow Ribbon County?

A Yellow Ribbon County unites key areas and communities throughout a county to create a comprehensive network that connects and coordinates county-level agencies, organizations, resources and employers for the purpose of proactively supporting service members, veterans and military families. In addition, a Yellow Ribbon County connects and supports Yellow Ribbon Communities to provide veteran and military family support at the local level.

Why Become a Yellow Ribbon County?

By developing a Yellow Ribbon County Network, county communities unite to honor and embrace those affected by military service. The outward showing of support enables successful transition all the way home. The county's effort transcends the military to any group in need and builds stronger, more compassionate communities.

How to become a Yellow Ribbon County

In partnership with a county-level Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee, the county will develop a sustainable Action Plan demonstrating their long-term commitment to service members, veterans and military families. The county will identify and connect leaders across the county and individual communities, leverage existing support activities, build awareness and take action at the county level as well as connect local Yellow Ribbon Communities throughout the county.

*Yellow Ribbon County Key Areas:

- **County Leadership:**
 - Suggested members:
 - County Commissioner and Staff
 - County Administrator and Staff
 - State Legislators
 - Veterans Organization Regional Commanders
 - County Veteran Service Officers
 - County Attorney and Staff
 - County Sheriff and Staff
 - Citizen Advisory Committee Leaders
 - Community leaders within the county
 - County-level civic organization leaders
- **Youth and Family Programs**
 - Suggested members:
 - Human Services
 - Library Board/Library Leaders and Staff
 - Park and Recreation
- **Public Safety/Judicial**
 - Suggested members:
 - County Sheriff and Staff
 - Prosecutors/Defenders/Judges/Lawyers
 - Corrections Board
- **County as Employer**
 - Suggested members:
 - Workforce Centers/Extension Programs
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - County Human Resource leaders and staff
- **Medical/Social Services**
 - Suggested members:
 - Community Action Council/Community Support Organizations/Health and Human Services
 - Medical and Mental Health Providers/Associations
 - Public Health
 - County hospitals and medical staff
 - County Crisis Teams

*Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee made up of all areas

Minimum Requirements and Best Practices
COUNTY LEADERSHIP

Minimum Requirement	Yellow Ribbon Best Practices
Support of effort and county leader representation on Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated on all aspects of support network activities/communicating network activities at county meetings/events • Yellow Ribbon training for all newly elected officials • Prominent presence of network on county website/county communication venues • Recognizing activities at county meetings/events • Connecting military families and veterans to local Yellow Ribbon Networks • Providing admin support from staff to Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee • Providing county benefits (waiving fees for activities, providing print services, waiving fees or providing discounts to military families for county services, etc.) • Create volunteer opportunities for county staff to support military support events • Create military-friendly employee support and recruiting policies for county employees • Ensure all county leaders and staff are informed about network services/resources
Annual county leadership update of Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee goals and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special meeting to receive annual update of Steering Committee progress • Regular leader attendance at Steering Committee meetings • Input into annual goals and objectives based on community/county needs
Full support of Yellow Ribbon Communities within County (if applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage all community leaders within county to become Yellow Ribbon Communities. Monitor and support. • Create centralized communication for Yellow Ribbon Network events/support opportunities • Create database of county resources • Provide meeting opportunities for Yellow Ribbon Network leaders to share best practices/solve problems/build relationships • Host resource speakers to educate on needs of service members, veterans and military families • Connect military families to local and county support resources • Recognize successes of Yellow Ribbon communities and individual volunteers

Minimum Requirements and Best Practices for Yellow Ribbon Network Key Area

YELLOW RIBBON STEERING COMMITTEE

Minimum Requirement	Yellow Ribbon Best Practices
Creation of Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee with representation from all key county and Yellow Ribbon Community areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure representation from all key areas responsible for communication and input of network activities/events • Ensure representation from any YR Communities • Professional organization of meetings; consistent meeting time and location • Communication of meeting minutes and agenda to key city/county leaders and the public • Full partnership with local armory leaders and Family Assistance Center specialists
Regular meetings with annual goals and objectives to meet county needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set standard day, time and location for meeting • Focused goals to create sustainability and coordination of efforts throughout monitoring of Yellow Ribbon Communities within the county • Annual review of goals and objectives with county leaders
Continuous commitment to identify and support service members, veterans and military families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yellow Ribbon Booth at county events • Develop a communication/marketing plan specific to reaching veterans and military families • Provide volunteer for community events • Create annual events for military connected residents • Create plan to engage all communities within county to form YR Networks • Develop process to identify needs of service members, veterans and military families within the county • Create database of all military in county and connect to local community networks • Create support groups for military families • Establish partnership with local media to highlight support network events/activities • Ongoing county communication on issues
Annual review of Yellow Ribbon Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review with county leaders annually • Create written annual report to track progress and measure success • Publish successes to military families to highlight commitment and demonstrate sustainability • Create annual focus areas and objectives based on identified needs. • Create annual goals and objectives based on the needs within the county

<p>Continuous education on military support issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veteran or military family member speakers to educate military issues • Military leader speakers to update on military family needs, status of military deployments, identified military needs/challenges • Social service professionals to educate on identified military needs/challenges • Group viewings of applicable media (IE: To Iraq and Back DVD) • Town Hall discussion forums or expert panels • Invite local Family Assistance Center Specialists to educate on military family needs and ways to assist • Connect county leaders to local military armories/airbases • Ensure libraries have print resources available on military family or veteran issues • Sponsor county level survey to identify needs of service members, veterans and military families • Invite local military leaders to build relationships with county leaders and identify partnership opportunities • Ensure Crisis Resource specific to veterans are known by county leadership and crisis teams • Create crisis resource cards for all county leaders and public safety
<p>A "Welcome Home" for all service members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public acknowledgment of Welcome Home from County leadership • Support local Welcome Home ceremonies • Sponsor picnic/party for families • County representation at Welcome Home ceremony or airport • Welcome home card from County Leaders, the public and Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee • County recognition to those who have come home • Welcome Home message in county communication venues • Welcome Home Open House for County Employees • Plan a belated Welcome Home ceremony for Vietnam Veterans in the county

Minimum Requirements and Best Practices for Yellow Ribbon Network Key Area

PUBLIC SAFETY/JUDICIAL

Minimum Requirement	Yellow Ribbon Best Practices
Representation of public safety on Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee	Representatives committed to Yellow Ribbon Network responsible to engage all public safety personnel within the county either by representation or communicating Steering Committee activities.
Continuous commitment to identify and support service members, veterans and military families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold public safety Open House for military families • Incorporate military family identification plan in county events/activities • Develop mentors for military children • Mentor veterans interested in public safety careers • Participate in Welcome Home ceremonies • Support our Troops decal or license plates on all public safety vehicles • Provide public safety volunteers for YR network events/military family assistance • Provide drug/alcohol education to military connected families • Visit military children in the schools
Defined, sustainable and ongoing training/awareness program for all public safety personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual formal, POST board certified training on reintegration/veteran issues • Maintain county military resource referral list • Maintain relationship with local County Veteran Service Officer-invite to meet public safety team and educate on issues/trend across the state • Train personnel on crisis intervention techniques unique to veterans • Maintain relationship with local Armory leader to be educated on issues/trends • Participation of public safety in Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee events • Educate all employees on veterans court program in county
Ongoing process to respond to service member, veteran and military family issues within the county and local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing process to educate public safety personnel on veteran issues • Develop or become aware of specialized Veteran Court programs • Incorporate veteran specific resources in county-level crisis/emergency plans • Develop relationships with local military leaders • Become involved in Veterans Courts-mentor through court process • Create a condolence care plan to assist a military family with the loss of a loved one

Minimum Requirements and Best Practices for Yellow Ribbon Network Key Area

COUNTY as EMPLOYER

Minimum Requirement	Yellow Ribbon Best Practices
Representation of County Human Resources on Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee	Representatives committed to Yellow Ribbon Network from Human Resources within the county by representation on Steering Committee.
Full support of service members, veterans and military families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide skilled employee volunteers to aide veterans and military families • Provide space to support military family/veteran events • Offer free professional development training to military organizations • Create strong veteran recruiting programs • Train HR personnel on military issues/hiring practices • Provide Job Coach Mentors to returning veterans • Create military employee appreciation events and partner with others in the business community to do the same • Create military appreciation displays • Provide speakers to educate staff on military related issues • Partner with local colleges or career centers to support military job seekers • Connect skilled HR personnel with local Workforce Center Veteran Employment Representatives to aide job seekers • Partner with local Chambers to meet the need of veteran job-seekers
Full support of service members, veterans and military family employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create military-friendly policies and procedures for all employees • Create internal support groups for military connected employees • Create military-friendly outreach opportunities for employees • Create vacation donation program for employees or spouses impacted by a military leave • Develop support plans for employees impacted by a military deployment • Provide annual ESGR Training on military support laws • Create a County Wall of Heroes • Create recognition programs for military connected employees • Host Veteran holiday events for employees • Provide an annual Commissioners letter of appreciation to veteran employees • Host an veteran employee appreciation lunch/breakfast

Minimum Requirements and Best Practices for Yellow Ribbon Network Key Area

SOCIAL SERVICE/MEDICAL PROVIDERS

Minimum Requirement	Yellow Ribbon Best Practices
Representation of county social service/medical provider/program on Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee	Representatives committed to Yellow Ribbon Network responsible to engage all Social Service/Medical providers within the county by representation on Steering Committee.
Engage participation in Tricare coverage for medical and mental health providers to meet the needs of the Tricare community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify primary Care Clinics and mental health professionals enrolled in Tricare • County recognition and marketing of participating Tricare providers • Create communication venue to highlight covered medical providers in local area • Communicate location of Tricare providers within the county • Encourage Tricare participation of all mental health professionals/organizations
Create county level crisis teams/resources available to assist local Yellow Ribbon Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure crisis plans include military-specific resources • Volunteer mental health professionals to assist in crisis care • Mental health professional training in issues unique to veterans/military families • Child health specialists to respond to family care/children mental health issues • Child health specialists to train parenting classes/community networks on issues • Provide social workers available to assist military families and veterans • Add military specific mental health crisis issues to current crisis plans • Create process to activate volunteers quickly to assist communities as needed • Build partnership between county-level mental health professionals and community networks • Provide financial planning resources and training for veterans and military families • Create processes to support and identify elderly, isolated veterans • Educate all county employees on crisis resources available to assist veterans and military families • Connect veterans and military families to local Yellow Ribbon Networks • Host training to all mental health professionals on veteran/military family specific issues and resources

Minimum Requirements and Best Practices for Yellow Ribbon Network Key Area

EDUCATION/YOUTH

Minimum Requirement	Yellow Ribbon Best Practices
Representation of county education/youth organizations/program on Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee	Representatives committed to support network responsible to engage all education/youth leaders within the county by representation on Steering Committee.
Full support of service members, veterans and military families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County representation for local recognition ceremonies for graduates entering the service • Host veteran recognition/education events • Provide communication opportunities for families to connect with deployed family members (ie; video conferencing, Skype) • Waive or reduce county fees for military families • Connect military connected youth with park and recreation programs • Develop military connected youth support curriculum in youth programs • Ensure county libraries stock military related books-host book events for authors covering military related issues • Provide transportation to military children for free library programs/military support camps/local sports camps • Develop military teen support group with focus on community service and leadership
Defined, sustainable and ongoing training/awareness program for all youth/family personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer formal CEU credit training on military family/veteran issues • Speakers or support organization booths at staff events • Educate staff on military support services available to military families/veterans throughout the state • Create a condolence care plan for dealing with a military loss • Connect Youth Program support with community school districts • Develop county level communication of military youth resources • Create library programs or appreciation events for military youth • Connect all county youth programs to community networks to increase awareness in communities • Ensure all county Youth Program employees are familiar with the program to connect military families to local YR Networks