COUNCIL
FOR MILITARY SPOUSE CLUBS

Connecting with the Local Community *Inside* the Gate

Establishing relationships within the military installation is crucial for maintaining compliance and achieving support. Knowing where to start can be a bit daunting; it is essential to know the Leadership and who your MSC can serve. Below are some suggestions of who to speak to on your installation to help your Club. Contact the installation's Morale Welfare Recreation (MWR), Military Family Readiness Center (M&FRC), or Service Specific Community Services (ACS, FSS, MCCS, FFSP, etc.) if you need assistance connecting with the people listed below.

Here are some ideas on how MSCs can cultivate mutually beneficial relationships on their installation:

1. **Private Organization Office**: At board turnover, president and possibly executive board should at minimum, make email introductions. Most installations require new documents to be filed with governing executive board contact information. Schedule an appointment to meet with Private Org Rep to go over expectations of filings, learn regulations for events and marketing, etc. Make sure to have the most current checklist and timeline for required documentation.

2. **Installation Commander/Deputy and/or Garrison Leadership:** As the club kicks off the new year, MSC representatives such as the president and an advisor should make an appointment with senior military leadership on the installation. The purpose of this meeting is to introduce the new MSC leadership and provide information about the MSC and its mission to the Command.
    - Give an elevator pitch about your organization, especially if new installation leadership who need to understand your mission.
    - Provide key components of your organization: historical data - years in existence, why and who it has served; current membership and basic demographics; how many events and functions you provide your members each year.
    - Key initiatives such as philanthropy – how much money raised last year, how many people/organizations received funds from you?
    - Inquire how your MSC can support their military community throughout the next 12 months and if there is anything specifically the MSC can do for them.
    - Service Projects: If your MSC plans to do service projects, you may need to inquire about proper procedures for approvals (such as):

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- Offer to assist/provide volunteers for MWR community events like a 10K run or a bowl-athon, Trunk or Treats, or decorating the Club for the holidays, etc.
- Hosting your fundraising events on the installation such as a 5K race, golf tournament, auction, Tour of Homes, etc.
- Membership and guest protocols: Ask about installation specific regulations regarding MSC membership and invited guests. Can civilian community members be MSC members? Learn security protocols for bringing civilians on base for events.
- Ask if there is a monthly community information meeting that you might be able to send a Board Representative to share the club's upcoming events with the key stakeholders.
- If you are on an Army Post, make sure your organization is listed on the MyArmyPost App with current information and links for easy access.

This is mainly just a formality, but it might open the lines of communication so that when you have an issue, there is already a connection and an avenue for open conversation.

3. Talk to the community **Public Affairs Office**.
   - Is there still an installation newspaper? Find out how the Club can leverage the "news" to help get the word out.
   - Sometimes there is a Community Corner for Private Orgs to send in upcoming events for publication.
   - Find out if you can have someone from your club write monthly articles about what the club is doing for submission.
   - Find out when you can invite a reporter to report on your event. What is the process and/or stipulations for inviting a reporter?
   - If there is not a newspaper, find out how the installation is putting out their news. Is it only online? If so, will they allow you to give them information to post as well? Can you have access to the online or email distribution list?
   - Work with the Public Affairs office to talk about reposting and sharing each other's news postings.

4. Go by and meet **the Event Managers** of each of the installation venues.
   Find out if they have special rates if you book on something like a Tuesday rather than a Friday, or if there's a magic number of people you need to hit a discount threshold, etc. If

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they want your business, maybe you can work together to figure out how to make that work? i.e., if the Base/Post is already serving a lunch buffet to their everyday customers, maybe your club can have the same menu, yet meet in a different room to keep the per person cost down? If you sit down with them in advance, it may be possible to negotiate ways to stay under budget.

5. Go by and talk with the **Installation Housing Office**.
    - They usually have resident newsletters/bulletins where you can post your upcoming event information.
    - Many privatized housings neighborhoods have community centers available to sign out to residents to use for smaller events for very low costs or for free.

6. Speak to **Base Exchange and Commissary** to introduce yourself.
    - See how you can partner with both businesses.
    - Hold a registration event or other marketing event outside their doors.
    - Do they have community boards for advertising upcoming events?

7. Build a relationship with **the Legal Office** on the installation.
    - The legal offices' purpose is to protect the command and keep it in Legal compliance, not to support your private organization.
    - However, the legal office can help ensure you maintain compliance with installation and local guidelines and laws.

8. Connect with **other Private Organizations** on the installation. More than likely, you are experiencing many of the same issues that they are as well, and you can help one each other, so promote and collaborate with each other! Strengthen the work of each other and lift each other up. After all, the money you raise often goes to the same population, which is the same population you all serve! The person responsible for Private Orgs often has a list of organizations and Person of Contact (POC) for those organizations on the base.

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