

## SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES (SOS)

- **BLUF:** SOS provides holistic and multi-agency approach that replaces the current Long Term Case Management Program by decentralizing services to installations and communities closest to where Families live.
- Concept of readiness includes being prepared for the possibility of death. SOS is how the Army supports Soldier and Family readiness even during experiences of loss.
- SOS provides support to the local Casualty Assistance Officer to ensure Families receive the most current information on benefits and entitlements and have access to long-term financial and emotional support.
- Keeping personnel files up to date is a way for Soldiers to care for their loved ones. Pre-deployment training revisions address specific funeral, personal, Family, and estate planning issues.
- SOS process places emphasis on the Soldier's responsibility of preparing for the possibility of death before deployment. This preparation involves the Soldier and the Soldier's children, spouse, and extended Family.
- Casualty Assistance Centers are staffed with benefits coordinators and trainers.
- Support coordinators will be housed in the ACS Center and the ARNG Family Assistance Center.
- SOS Coordinator will coordinate the logistics for conducting meetings or hosting networking groups for Survivors within the ACS Center or the ARNG FAC.
- On-going support such as information and referral, Life Skills Education, support groups Supportive Counseling, financial counselors knowledgeable about estate planning, Child and Youth Services, and financial decision-making for Survivors.

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**Q: What additional support is available to surviving Family members?**

**A:** Army Emergency Relief formed a partnership with Armed Forces Services Corporation (AFSC) that provides surviving spouses with lifetime support. This agreement entitles surviving spouses to an array of specialized services at no cost to them. AFSC provides written explanation of the benefits and is available to answer questions about the benefits. Surviving spouses receive an annual printout reflecting projected benefit amounts and are notified of any law changes that affect their survivor benefits.

## **SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES (SOS)**

**Q: What action is the Army taking to ensure surviving Family member needs are met?**

**A:** Army implemented enhanced services to Families of the Fallen. An SOS working group established in February 2008 serves as an advocate for Survivors and advises senior leadership on the resolution of issues affecting survivors.

**Q: What type of services and support will be available to Survivors?**

**A:** Services include an array information and referral to legal, financial, spiritual, and clinical intervention if needed. Financial Counselors, Benefit, and SOS support Coordinators will provide surviving Family member with support for as long as they desire support.

**Q: Who will provide these services to the survivors?**

**A:** The Casualty Assistance Center, ACS and Army National Guard Family Assistance Centers and Reserve Regional Readiness Commands will receive additional personnel to provide on-going support to survivors of the fallen.

**Q: Why is this important to the Army?**

**A:** Nothing reflects the Army's dedication to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice more than serving and caring for Families left behind.

**Q: If this program was just established what is the way ahead?**

**A:** The established Advisory Panel will be the overarching umbrella for programs, services, benefits, and entitlements. The purpose of the Advisory Panel is to serve as an advocate for Survivors and to advise senior leadership on the standardization of programs, services, benefits and proposed solutions to issues impacting surviving Families. SOS services will be coordinated through the Army OneSource and a marketing plan has been developed.

## SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES (SOS)

- Legal support for survivors includes estate planning, will preparation, probate planning, and assistance in preparing estate-related tax documents.
- Service delivery strategies include a variety of modalities such as internet/web based accessibility, outreach, face to face services, and groups services.
- Services available 24/7 with foreign language and special needs accommodation capabilities. Services offered at stateside, overseas, and geographically dispersed locations. Services will be augmented through contracts or partnerships with the civilian sector.
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