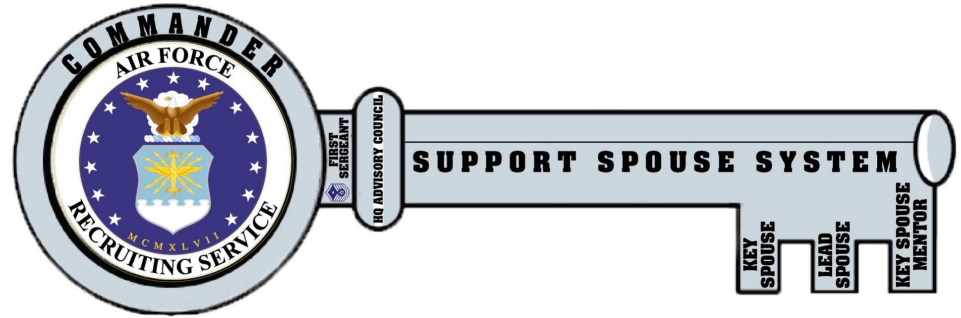


Lead Spouse Considerations

2022



Intro

Lead Spouse, welcome to AFRS Support Spouse System (SSS), supporting the AFRS Spouses Network (SN)! We are so happy to have you with us as we support AFRS families together. The SSS is a “coalition of the willing”. This system is essential as recruiting is so unlike any other job in the Air Force with our recruiters and their families dispersed throughout every corner of the country and beyond, often without base services. Together we are striving to equip, connect, and encourage our AFRS families.

Thank you for your participation and we look forward to our AFRS families getting to know you!



AFRS Support Spouse System Roles Defined

Lead Spouse - Focal point for helping create a sense of family **community** within our units. Lead Spouses can be:

- **Traditional Lead Spouse** - The Commander's Spouse who is available to participate in the unit, encouraging community and connectivity.
- **Appointed Lead Spouse** - Alternatively, another spouse appointed by the Commander may sometimes be the best fit to serve in this role for a variety of reasons and circumstances.

Key Spouse - Focal point for connecting families to **resources** and support.

Key Spouse Mentor - Usually an experienced Key Spouse who is willing to support Key Spouses by sharing their expertise, providing encouragement, and advocating for families.



Mrs. Brown, SPOUSES SITREP, Vol 2, Nov '21:

Spouse of Chief of Staff of the Air Force

“Command Spouses are married to someone in a leadership role (commander) within a unit, squadron, group, wing etc. There are no “official duties” or “defined roles” for a spouse of a commander; however, supporting your military member in their role as a commander to enhance unit family morale can be incredibly rewarding.

Lead Spouses are volunteer advisors that advocate or serve as an ambassador for the unit’s military members, civilians, and their families. A lead spouse is often an experienced military spouse who supports the unit when there is no current command spouse, or the command spouse is unable to volunteer in that role.”



Be:

- Be yourself (we all bring different gifts).
- Be caring (ask people about their lives).
- Be patient (with yourself and others).
- Be realistic (goals and expectations).
- Be open (to receiving new ideas and feedback as well as sharing new ideas and feedback).
- Be communicative (with leadership as well as with families).



Things to consider:

- Consider being accessible (AF gmail/phone).
- Consider requesting in-briefings in your unit (great way to understand conversations with your own spouse, and building relationships while getting to know the unit).
- Consider coffee with the Shirt or Pro Supt and other spouses in the unit.
- Consider looking for wingman (do not go at this alone).
- Consider ways to build culture and continuity (consistent planning, things the entire squadron knows happens every year, i.e....HQ spring picnic, Zoom with the Commander in the fall, Christmas party).
- Consider building a relationship between spouses and the booster club!
- Consider flyers for any local events. We've truly found these to be helpful at HQ.



This is going to look different for everyone:

I love to show up.

I love to be my spouse's "intel officer".

I love to provide access to my spouse.

I love to open my home.

Carl Struck - Starbucks



Community enriches our lives. If tragedy comes we'll be far better positioned to respond.

CONSIDER gathering regularly live or via Zoom.

When in person, CONSIDER doing things easy and cheap.

Potato night, Pictionary, coffee and dessert.

CONSIDER traveling with your spouse when possible.
Gather spouses when you do!

CONSIDER coffee with the Shirt (did we mention that?).



Thoughts regarding our homefronts:

Be a sounding board. This is where getting to know the unit and its challenges and opportunities could be invaluable.

Command/leadership is challenging and time consuming, but continuing to grow and thrive in your personal life and your relationships is critical.,

COMMUNICATE with your spouse. EX: My “Eddie notebook”. Find a system to consistently be in sync!

Encourage your spouse to bring home what they are learning about leadership and people as they are “Air Forcing” as it helps everyone grow.

Family involvement in recruiting can be a blessing. Look for opportunities for your entire family to be involved.

Get sleep. Eat right. Move.

Find a rhythm. Each assignment is different. Are you connecting? Communicating? Stay at it until you get in a good groove for this season.



Other Helpful Information:

1. **Legacy Emails:** Legacy emails have been created for specific positions on the advisory council, group Lead Spouses, and squadron Key Spouses. (AFRSKSxxx@gmail.com)

If you are a squadron LS, consider making your own gmail that you can continue to use in the future if your active duty member has other leadership positions in the future. EX: thomastroopsaf@gmail.com.

Also consider business cards as they are very helpful!

2. **“IDEA” Book, “Intentionally Designed Enthusiastically Articulated”, For Spouses by Spouses:**

This upcoming year we are going to continue with the creation of our “IDEA book.” A place to deposit “IDEA’s”, resources, templates, suggestions for events, gatherings, squadron annuals, and more. This is part of our effort in finding solutions to recreating the wheel.

You can send all your “IDEA’s” to this email!
AFRSScholastic@gmail.com



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3. **Annuals and semi-annuals** are training conferences organized by the Squadron to celebrate the year by recognizing individual, flight, and squadron accomplishments, accomplish required training, opportunity for professional development and prep for the upcoming year. During these events spouses are normally encouraged to attend and can be the perfect fellowship opportunity for Spouses.

Prior to event:

Meet with the Squadron Leadership and or Training Team to discuss details of event (dates, location, spouse participation and training opportunities (SAPR, Resiliency, Suicide Awareness, Commander's Call, etc.)

Use Recruiter Agenda to coincide/plan Spouse Agenda (above training, new KS training, Spouse All Call/Ice Breaker, Leadership Meet and Greet, Hails and Farewells, etc.)

SSS in the past have found it super helpful to be available as people are checking in at annuals. Hang out and meet as many spouses as you can if possible. Also, request a spouse picture after the dinner before the awards. After the picture, use this time to huddle to thank your spouses, gather information, and whatever message you are wanting to share. This is the one moment you will have the most spouses in one spot! Use this moment wisely!!

*Refer to Idea Book for other options and be flexible with possible last-minute changes



4. Communication and support for SSS:

The Advisory Council wants to support and encourage you. We have an AFRS SSS roster that we use to send emails out several times a year. Let us know how we can be helpful!

A. PLEASE JOIN OUR FB PAGES:

AFRS Support Spouse System (SSS) - This is a place where Support Spouses can connect, ask/answer questions, and encourage one another!

AFRS Spouse Network (SN): The Force Behind the Force - This FB page is for ALL AFRS spouses!

B. ALL CALLS:

September, January, April (The first full week of the month, offered Thursday evening 8pm CST and Saturday morning 9am CST). These are offered to all AFRS SSS and are designed to share new resources and training, encourage one another, and give you a place for questions.



C. Please connect with SSS Spouses in your squadron and group. With legacy emails you can reach out to any unit at AFRS. Get to know them! Check in on them and see how you can be encouraging.

The Advisory Council at HQ has spouses who can answer questions, connect you with someone who might be helpful, or guide you to resources... no need to go it alone.

- AFRS Lead Spouse:
AFRSLeadSpouse@gmail.com
- AFRS Key Spouse Coordinator:
AFRSKSCoordinator@gmail.com
- AFRS Command Key Spouse Mentor:
AFRSCmdKSM@gmail.com
- AFRS School House Coordinator:
AFRSSchoolHouse@gmail.com



Thank you for your willingness to serve!

Air Force life, especially in the Air Force recruiting enterprise, is certainly a team sport and strong families help fuel our success at home and on the bag! So, thank you for stepping up and helping be part of this great Support Spouse System. We know everyone, especially those that tend to lend a hand, lead busy and engaged lives. We just need your moments, your talents, and your willingness at a level you can give. Thank you. We are grateful.

Maj Gen Ed and Dinah Thomas
Chief MSgt Antonio and Mary Goldstrom

Updated September 7, 2022

