

# Providing Policy, Resources, and Capabilities to Increase Resilience and Readiness

## Transcript: U.S. Army Resilience Directorate Outreach Webinar

*December 14, 2022*

### **Presenter:**

Sergeant Major Sharita Onugha, U.S. Army Resilience Directorate, Senior Enlisted Advisor  
Office Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, Pentagon

Lytaria Walker: [00:00:01](#) Welcome to the Army Resilience Directorate Outreach Webinar for December. At this time, all participants are in listen-only mode. However, you may ask questions at any time by placing them in the Q&A box. There will be several opportunities for questions throughout the webinar, and we should have some time at the end as well. Today's webinar has been approved for one hour of live continuing education units. Participants must obtain CEU certification through their local commanders by downloading the webinar presentation slides as attendance verification. The slides will be posted in the chat box at the end of the webinar, and they will also be emailed to you at the conclusion as well. Please note the views of ARD Outreach Webinar presenters are their very own and are not endorsed by the Department of the Army or the Department of Defense.

Lytaria Walker: [00:01:40](#) This month, our guest is Sergeant Major Sharita Onugha. SGM Onugha is the nominative senior enlisted advisor for the United States Army Resilience Directorate Office, Deputy Chief of Staff, G1 Pentagon. Beginning May 10th, 2023, she will serve as the United States Army Installation Management Command G9 Senior Enlisted Advisor. Since joining the Army in 1996, she has held several positions, including Cyber Center of Excellence Sergeant Major; United States Army Signal School Office Chief of Signal Enlisted Division Proponent Sergeant Major; Signal Enlisted Development College Sergeant Major; Senior Drill Sergeant for the 551st Signal Battalion, Fort Gordon, Georgia; and NCO Academy Advanced Leader Course Senior Small Group Leader. Onugha has a master's degree in business management from the University of Phoenix and is a graduate of all Army professional military education courses. She is also a certified resilience-building leadership professional trainer, and she is certified in Total Army Instruction, Master Resilience, Executive Leadership, and Combative Instruction. Her awards and decorations include the Honorable Order of St. Barbara Award and the Bronze Order of Mercury, along with others for her

service at home and during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Her passions include serving others, road cycling, running, weightlifting, traveling, and lifelong learning. She is married to CW3 Obinna Onugha, and they are the proud parents to 12-year-old daughter, Trinity. Sergeant Major Onugha, thank you for joining us this morning. Take it away, ma'am.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:03:51](#)

Absolutely. My pleasure to be here. And thank you for that gracious rendition of some of the things that I've experienced in my military career. It's weird to hear it. But my favorite two to hear about are CW3-promotable, Obinna Onugha, my husband, and my beautiful 12-year-old superstar daughter. They actually give me much joy in life. The other thing you mentioned out of all of that is my passion about serving people. I have been blessed to be selected to be at the Army Resilience Directorate, as all of our programs focus on advocating for our people and creating policies and programs to help with their quality of life and their holistic wellbeing and increasing resilience and reducing harmful behaviors.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:04:57](#)

I feel like the military has really built me up for across all of my different positions and experiences in the Army. So I'm exactly where my heart wants to be, where God wants me to be, and Army Talent Management got it right for me for a little bit of job satisfaction while I really get after the Army's mission. So I'm happy to be here. He blessed me to continue to smile while I continue to serve our teammates as I take on the IMCOM G9 position serving in the capacity of morale, welfare, and recreation for our families and our civilians and our Soldiers. So I get to smile for the rest of my 30-year career.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:05:52](#)

The reason why I wanted to come to you all today, if you all know, recently, the Army G1 has taken responsibility for the Total Army Sponsorship program from G9. G9 was doing an excellent job with really trying to home in on the services that were provided through the sponsorship program. But during the realignment. Before, we were really focused on mission and response in regard to a lot of our programs. But now our primary focus is on ARD, our full-blown division that is focused on integrated prevention efforts. Sponsorship falls right in line with the things that we are doing, and I'll explain to you why that is later. So in August, we became fully responsible for the sponsorship program, and we have been making efforts to understand what that looks like in our portfolio and our day-to-day business practices and how that aligns with the needs of the Force.

- SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:07:29](#) But the biggest thing is, although we cannot predict the end result of our prevention operating environment, we still have an idea of those desired characteristics. And quite a few of those descriptors, they will align with positive command climate and the concept of TIMS, cultivating a culture of care, pride, and ownership across the entire Army. I just want to tell you about how we're getting after that in ARD and what you can be doing right now with the program as we continue to modify the regulation and business practices to improve execution across the Force. So these are things you can get started on right now until the big picture comes out in the end.
- SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:08:30](#) You all know the general descriptor of the sponsorship program, but the bottom line is that—and you all have to excuse me, the reason why I'm changing my slides as well is so that I can stay on point because I can talk. And if I don't stay focused on my notes and how I am getting through this, I'll be all over the place, and I want you all to have time for questions and answers. So if you see me look over, it's just to look at my notes really quick. So in general, the sponsorship program is to help commanders, in an organized manner, successfully integrate their newcomers into the organization. It's a very important thing that needs to happen as trust is built through that process. And trust is the basis of how we integrate our Soldiers into our organization, our Soldiers and our Families and our civilian teammates.
- SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:09:33](#) One of the great opportunities of serving our nation is living and working in new, different places. One of my favorite things about joining the military is being able to travel and see new things. But I was a foster child coming out of the system and joining the military for the first time, a whole new environment. And my first duty station was Korea. I didn't know anyone. I didn't have a sponsor. I had the people that sent me from basic training to AIT, and AIT put me on a bus and sent me over to Korea, and there was a bunch of people at the end of the bus waiting to talk to me. I'm looking at the mountains; I'm looking at all these people that look different from me because I came from Elkhart, Indiana, this small place in the middle of Midwest.
- SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:10:32](#) And I had never really seen anything different than what I was experiencing. And I was nervous. I didn't know who to trust, I was just clueless. That experience let me know now how important the sponsorship program is. It is my passion to really get a grip on this thing, so it helps our newcomers and our families as they face these challenges, regardless of what level of leadership they are. Basically, adjusting to a new community, it presents all kinds of challenges, but I know that we can

overcome those challenges by building that initial trust and that familiarity with our Soldiers and our families, between the unit and the community. So that's where military sponsorship comes in to provide those principles of support, the standards of service, and the policies, functions, and the governing program to really get after effectiveness as well as customer service. So we have to look at the performance of the program, but we also have to look at, "Did that Service Member receive what they needed from us?"

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:12:05](#)

I want to talk about the critical role of the sponsor and make sure you understand their actions in regards to executing the program, the soft skills of it, as well as understanding the platform which we use to execute that program. The commander is responsible for gluing all of that together to ensure that our program impacts our readiness and mission success in a positive way. And that is through a successful transition of our Soldier into the unit. That sponsor is the first person that is going to serve as an ambassador for that organization, for the Army. That familiarity and that trust and that reliability is established through that one person. So I want to talk about the critical role and the first descriptors of responsibilities of that sponsor, and that's making that first contact; that first hello, that first, "Hi, I am so glad you're joining our team. This is my information. I would like to know what the best way is to contact you, whether it's cell phone, email." Get all those things to establish thorough communication between the newcomer and the sponsor.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:13:45](#)

If you're not quite sure how to create those welcome emails, there are examples in AR 600-8-8 in the appendix. They literally lay out the type of things that you need to say in your first contact email, as well as on Military OneSource. The training will provide you the information to put in that welcome email. The second critical responsibility is sending that welcome letter or that packet with that initial important information that a Service Member needs to start their transition, regardless of where they're coming from. The third requirement is assessing the needs of that Service Member, and then keeping the Soldier informed throughout the entire process, and then seeing the Soldier through completion of the sponsorship program in addition to completing that survey at the end. We'll get into details, but I want you to understand that these are the five major responsibilities, and they're laid out in the regulation. They're laid out in the training. They're laid out in every doctrine and resource that I've seen related to sponsorship, these five responsibilities.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:15:14](#) One of the important things is, after you've established that communication and you've sent that welcome letter packet, now you all are going to start that back and forth communication where you begin to assess that Service Member's needs. I could not think of a better picture than the chief's triangle to depict all of the things that you need to consider when you're making that assessment of that Service Member and their family's needs. Because these are all the things that you need to consider that will impact how the Service Member sees their integration or their transition process; the things that they need as an individual coming into that unit, their mission requirements, things that they need to understand, documents that they might need to fill out.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:16:08](#) As far as family and peers, you need to understand the assessment needs of the entire family. I know this sounds funny, but even if the Service Member has pets, you want to understand the pets, especially if they are going OCONUS or PCSing from OCONUS. There are stringent federal laws in regard to how you transport your pets through airlines and those things. So you have to make sure you do a complete assessment of the Service Member and their family members' needs. Additional things to consider while you're assessing those needs are things like EFMP and TRICARE transfers, because you know that TRICARE is cut in regions. So once they begin to transition, if this is a current serving Service Member, they're going to have to transition their TRICARE, and they're going to have to pick a new care provider.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:17:18](#) Those things are critical to put in place ahead of time, especially when you have family members who fall in the EFMP category. If they have kids, you want to think about your school liaison program on the Military Kids Connect website. The Military Kids Connect website will connect the children with the sponsor of their own, of like age, like interests, so that the child will have someone that they can talk to and prepare for that transition process. I was trying to get my daughter to log on the website and check it out because we're getting ready to transition to San Antonio. And I was like, "Baby, why don't you just log in and see if you could get a kid sponsor and see what it's like." And this 12-year-old looked at me, and she said, "For what, Mom? We've PCSed five times. I know how to do this," and so I went on the website myself.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:18:43](#) Consider the needs of all of the family members additionally. The next thing you need to consider when you're assessing the needs is that the things in the social determinants of health and how they impact the Service Member and the family members'

needs. I spoke a little bit about that when we were looking at the triangle, but those categories include the healthcare, which we discussed about TRICARE and EFMP. You want to think about neighborhoods and the environment in which the Service Member is interested in moving into. Some people have different quality of living requirements. Some people want to live away from the hustle and bustle of the city. Some want to live in the middle. Some decide that schools and education, which is one of one of the areas of impact, will guide their living choices. So you want to think about all these different categories as you are assessing the need of your newcomer.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:20:06](#)

Once you have assessed the needs and you've identified major points of discussion or concerns, then you can look at resources and websites and those things that will help you decrease risk factors to ensure that the Service Member has a positive transition into the organization, the community as well as increasing the protective factors, those things that make that Service Member feel comfortable transitioning to this new place. I know that people are already reaching out to me from San Antonio to identify needs for my child, needs for living quarters, things for education for my kid. And they're doing that now, and I don't report until June. They are already establishing a sense of trust and reliability and communication from this first contact. So those things are important in decreasing risk factors and increasing protective factors. Even if they don't know the agencies and organizations on ground to help them prepare, that one person of communication will make them feel like they can get the information that they need related to that new area that they're transitioning to. And if that sponsor doesn't know it right off the bat, they'll feel comfortable knowing that sponsor will go get them the information that they need and bring it back.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:21:49](#)

Let's talk about who all is eligible to receive services from the sponsorship program. We have three tiers, and the first tier of Service Members are your young Soldiers, your new recruits, and your new officers graduating from AIT and Officer Basic Course. Sponsorship is mandatory for them because they are new to the culture of the Army all together. Not just the location, but the whole culture is brand new to them, and that initial set of trust is essential to them feeling safe. And all Service Members, all family members, all teammates deserve to feel safe and protected as they're moving about their military career. Tier two Soldiers are non-commissioned officers, or your second term Soldiers, and they got a little bit of time under their belt, but PCSing and from one place to the other can still be challenging. The nuances of moving to a different

organization with a different mission set and a whole different area can still be challenging.

- SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:23:22](#) Tier three are your senior NCOs and your officers, and they are not required to have a sponsor, but they can request sponsorship, as well as the commander can require sponsorship for senior NCOs and officers coming into their organization. If there are specific challenges or things that are unknown to the average serving Service Member. Say for instance, sergeant majors coming from mostly tactical units all over the place, everywhere except for MDW, I had never been to DC except to run the Army 10-miler. So coming here, it was a requirement for me as a Sergeant Major with over 25 years in the Army to have a sponsor, and my family and I greatly appreciated that.
- SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:24:22](#) So tier one, two, and three. Many people don't really understand these different levels of sponsorship, but each one of them require a different level of service based off of your needs assessment. But the goal of each of these tiers is to coach these individuals to be self-sufficient in their new organization, their new installation, their new community as quickly as possible. There are several types of sponsorship provided to those different tiers of newcomers. You have your advanced sponsorship, which is the most preferred sponsorship service, as this one is done ahead of time, and you get a good grip on what the Service Member and their family needs prior to arrival. There is more coordination, and there is more of a seamless transition as that Service Member hits ground.
- SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:25:37](#) Out-sponsorship. That is when a Service Member is transitioning from that particular installation, they're PCSing out, and this would be for tier one to tier two. This might be a critical element even though they had a successful first-time PCS. The second one may be a bit complicated, going to a new location or if there's a lack of communication with the receiving sponsor; it might be slim to none. So that outgoing sponsorship will provide that Service Member some type of safety or confidence in transitioning from that one location to the next.
- SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:26:27](#) Your emergency PCS and special cases. Those are going to be last-minute separations from the Army. Care plan separations, or say somebody has to do an expedited transfer, things that might not have such a great reason as to the transition, but nevertheless require sponsorship. So that emergency PCS and special case. This is not always happening, and this causes a major issue, especially with our Service Members who are receiving last minute separation or PCS notifications. But this is one of the categories. Reactionary sponsorship is when the

Service Member may have had one sponsor, and due to some significant issues or situations, now a different sponsor has to be assigned. Advanced arrival sponsorship is the most preferred method of the Army, but individuals will not be held back from PCSing just because they don't have a sponsor.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:27:46](#)

Taking all those things into consideration: your contact, your needs assessment, your welcome packet, all the things that we discussed earlier, as well as identifying the risk factors and the protective factors and what tier they're in. By the time you get to this particular stage, the end of the sponsorship session, which should last at a minimum 45 days, you should have that Service Member at a semi-ready state. Those top blocks are what you should have pretty much laid out for your newcomer. They should understand helping resources. They should, by that time, understand their housing situation, community programs for them or their family members, healthy relationships. I would focus on that and understanding, are there any challenges between that Service Member and their family members that you could provide services to help them get over those things?

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:28:56](#)

And then, of course, the financial needs. If you are not confident in your skills or capabilities to address financial concerns, then you know you have to look up the services, the agencies that provide that type of aid. That's your ACS. You have other financial education agencies that can help better prepare your newcomer for their financial concerns at their new installation. Say for instance, I came from Georgia where the cost of living was wonderful and affordable. Then I come over here to DC, and this little COLA and this BAH that they gave me didn't even pack a punch into the cost of living here. I had to really get down in the nitty gritty in regard to understanding my financial requirements and how I was going to get after them.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:30:01](#)

And I, as a senior NCO, did seek financial education services to get after that. I'm in a much better place because of that, and I didn't have a sponsor to tell me that because of my experience. But there may be a tier one or tier two Soldier that may not understand the need to prepare financially for transitioning to places of high cost of living. But those top five categories, you should have a pretty good grip on getting them to their ready state across those areas. By the time you do your warm handoff to their first line supervisor, they'll be getting after all those things below.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:30:49](#)

This is the part that I really want to focus on, and I want to get after questions and answers, but please follow along with me over at least the next two slides. They are critical as to how

we're realigning the sponsorship program and also the roles and responsibilities. Starting with the incoming Soldier, you all know that they should receive their notification, and then the unit should receive a notification that they have a new Soldier coming in. Once that happens, the unit should be assigning a peer-to-peer sponsor, someone with like interests, like living situations, skill sets, et cetera, that would be a good match for your newcomer, especially if they have a family. You don't want to assign a single Soldier that may not understand the dynamics with bringing in a new family to that installation and that community.

SGM Sharita Onu...:

[00:32:03](#)

So peer-to-peer assessment is very important. Once that is assigned, that sponsor makes that initial contact. Then we need to make sure we execute filling out the 5434 found in your ACT (Army Career Tracker). I'll tell you how to get to all of that. Your sponsor will then, in response, complete the 5434 and make sure that they input all this data, update all this data in the Army Career Tracker. They will continue to work with the newcomer throughout their transition, throughout their PCS to their new duty station. Just like we have with any other program, the sponsorship works on echelon. So from battalion to brigade to installation to ACOM or comparable major commands, we have to have a sponsorship coordinator. Your installation sponsorship liaison will identify the brigade, and brigade will identify the battalion, and each are responsible for the subordinate echelons' training requirements, unit SOP, and making sure they understand how to actually execute their program. The problem that I'm noticing is that a lot of people are not trained in their duties and responsibilities. The detail portions of how to execute those five major responsibilities that we discussed earlier. In order to get a clear understanding of that, you need to take the official sponsorship training.

SGM Sharita Onu...:

[00:34:03](#)

There are two categories of training. You have one that explains the sponsorship awareness. That helps the sponsored Soldier or newcomer understand what they can expect from their sponsor. Then you have your ESAT training that tells the sponsor how to execute their duties as a sponsor. And then you have part two, which is your Army Career Tracker platform training. So each echelon of coordinators has their own duties and responsibilities training laid out in ACT. If you are a liaison or a coordinator, it is my opinion that you should take all three training sessions, so you understand what the Soldier needs or is expecting, what the sponsored Soldier is supposed to do, and how to operate and monitor and execute the program through the Army Career Tracker.

- SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:35:24](#) You need to take the training that is on ACT. So those are three things you need to look at. Now, the Military OneSource is the only official site for sponsorship training right now. We used to have sponsorship training in ALMS, but that went away due to some conflict, and we are working on trying to get that reestablished. But currently all services, Marines, Navy, everyone, they use the sponsorship training that is located on Military OneSource. However, I've made it very nice for you, and I created this hyperlink in this slide. So if you click on it, it'll take you directly to the training site for your sponsorship awareness training, as well as the second category there, your ESAT training. The sponsorship awareness training is about an hour long and is very general in regard to really understanding how to plan your move, how to do transportation appointments, different sites that the Service Member can go to help prepare them for their transition. In my opinion, and a lot of organizations are doing this already. They're requiring all of their Service Members to take this training because everybody should understand the complications of moving from one installation to the other.
- SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:36:57](#) The ESAT training. They're utilizing that for all of the Service Members they have identified to execute sponsorship roles and duties. They are saving the sponsorship certificate that is provided from ESAT. A lot of it was common sense for those that are junior NCOs and up. It was two-and-a-half hours, five modules set in a gaming platform. It was actually cool and fun. I enjoyed it. You get a coin for each module that you complete. Once you get all five modules, it has stated that you're certified as a trained sponsor, and it'll produce a certificate for you to show that you have taken that training and completed it successfully. You can provide a copy of that to your battalion or brigade, whatever level you're at, your battalion sponsorship coordinator, so that that can be put in the system of record.
- SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:38:31](#) I hope you're keeping your questions about all this stuff. Once you complete your ESAT training, this is what your certificate will look like. This is my certificate. I blacked out my little name and my date of completion. But I wanted you all to know that I don't advise anybody to do anything that I don't do myself. So this is the certificate here. This is the certificate that you get for the sponsorship general awareness training. So both produce a certificate, but the one for the ESAT training is a certification certificate, and this one is pretty much a participation certificate, if you all understand what I'm saying.
- SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:39:32](#) What I did for you all here is I consolidated all of the regulations that we use as supporting doctrine for the sponsorship

program. Your main source is the 600-8-8, which I will tell you is under modification right now as ARD is reconsolidating all of the main roles associated with executing sponsorship program. And that's policy, your integrator, everything that we need to do to make sure we establish reporting roles and responsibilities across the Force. We are addressing the changes from G9 to G1 in the regulation. As soon as we really get a grasp on what needs to be changed immediately, the idea is to come out with an Army directive that will clear up those changes until we completely address all those things in the regulation, and it is published.

SGM Sharita Onu...:

[00:40:42](#)

It is easier to get an Army directive out than it is to publish an Army regulation. My focal point is to get you all something to guide you through these changes immediately, if that makes sense. The reason why I put the Army Community Service regulation there is because this is the crux of all of the services that you really need to help a newcomer and their family members transition. They have everything, language services, financial services. They can tell you how to get to the lending closet, food assistance, everything that you need to get that family established in their new community, at least temporarily until they figure out their long-term plan. You can get that information from the Army Community Service. Now, what the ACS does not do is they do not provide training for the sponsorship program, and that is identified that way in the regulation as it stands now, but that is not their responsibility.

SGM Sharita Onu...:

[00:41:54](#)

Those two trainings on the Military OneSource, they're all self-enrolled, self-paced. You get the certificate yourself, and you submit it to your coordinator. And the ACT training, it is set up, monitored, and executed between you and your battalion, brigade, and installation sponsorship coordinators. So the ACS is our service providers, and we got you on the training piece. Also, we put the regulation there for reassignments and orders, because a lot of times there are so many questions and concerns in regard to detailed requirements for Service Members who have a more complex transition plan, EFMP and all kinds of things. But this reassignment regulation will help you consider those most important things that need to be annotated in the orders.

SGM Sharita Onu...:

[00:42:55](#)

Say for instance, they need your passport and any other things you might need for overseas. Those type of complex things are covered in there. The ESAT training covers each and every one of these things that we've talked about. That thing laid out everything so clear. It wasn't even funny. I was like, "Man, I wish I had known about this training 2, 3, 4 years ago when I was

bringing other people. It would've made it easier for me to use that checklist to make sure I've covered everything." I identified quite a few websites and links for you all to take you directly to these topics that we've discussed, but the most important link that I've identified here where it says "TASP Policy Help," it is very important you understand that I have linked that particular hyperlink directly to the ARD help desk because currently the link in ACT takes you back to AMC, which they are no longer the integrators, it is now ARD.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:44:24](#) So until we get that hyperlink fixed, this TASP Policy Help, any questions, concerns, anything you need addressed immediately, you click on that link, and it takes you right to our email box, and our operations monitors that. And when they have questions or concerns for TASP, it will take you there.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:44:54](#) I basically told you that was the link for your help. But if you have trouble, and you're not getting the answers that you need, please see my email there. I'm the only Sharita Onugha in the whole Army. Matter of fact, in the whole world. I checked. So if you send me an email on global, I will answer you immediately or get you to the resource that you need in regard to any questions or concerns for TASP. The next two slides are trifolds or brochures that explain the Army Career Tracker and how we use it to execute the sponsorship program.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:45:52](#) The last part I want to answer. We do a good job of establishing sponsorship for Service Members PCSing from one installation to another while they're serving. But the one thing we need to really improve is providing sponsorship for those that are transitioning. There is an ETS sponsorship program for Service Members who are transitioning to their hometown. What this program does is provide a once-serving military, a veteran, in that person's hometown who is familiar with the services, products, and all these things that fall in the categories listed there. Employment, housing, family, social, medical care, and others. They are familiar with those agencies, and they have coordination with the services associated with those agencies, and they can help provide a seamless transition for the Service Member as they transition out of the service.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:47:04](#) Because what happens is, when they're going through the transition program, they're getting all this information all at once, and they can't keep up with it. So by the time they transition and they get to their new hometown, now they're stressing out because now they can't remember everything that they got during the transition briefs. So that sponsor is there to help guide them through that. This is an all-volunteer program.

So after somebody retires, they volunteer to be a sponsor in their area that they're located, and then this sponsorship program matches the requester with the sponsor and sees them through that process. It is supervised by these trained professionals. The links there will take you to the website so you can read more about it. I'm hoping you all will spread the word because the idea is to reduce stressors and improve life coping skills so we can reduce suicides and other harmful behaviors of not only our serving Soldiers, but our veterans as well. I know I went fast, but that was a lot of information, and we were cut short on time. Well, we were a little short on time. So I want to leave the last few minutes for you to ask any major questions or concerns that you have. Anything that we don't get to here, remember the help desk email as well as my email address.

Lytaria Walker: [00:48:44](#)

Thank you, Sergeant Major O. Thank you so much for the presentation. We will now take a few questions from the audience. If you would like to ask a question, please type your question in the Q&A box, and we will read them aloud. There will be a short delay before the first question is announced. Let's see what we have here. First question: Do Soldiers leaving AIT receive out-sponsorship especially to overseas assignments? This was a huge concern in Korea where Soldiers were not having sponsorship, consistently similar to your experience.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:49:29](#)

I mentioned it in slide eight, where out-sponsorship can be offered for Service Members out-processing. It's not a requirement. I agree with you, it should be especially to our Soldiers at high risk, especially those first termers. So what I am doing is collecting all of the recommendations for changes to the sponsorship program so that we can address it as we modify the regulation to be more effective. So I'm taking your recommendation, and I will add it to those things considered as modifiable to the regulation. I'm not sure who asked me for that one. One thing that I believe in is all the policy updates. I like to communicate with the Force as to what they need as well as what the ASL guidance are to ensure that its beneficial for our Service Members as well as for the Army. So bring it on.

Lytaria Walker: [00:50:53](#)

Next question: Is there any talk about adding a chapter in AR 600-20 for sponsorship with the People First initiative push to ensure all commands are establishing a good sponsorship program in their organizations?

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:51:13](#)

There's not talk of it before, but there'll be talk of it now. I think that's a good point. We're pretty much doing that across all of our other regulation updates, so there'll be talk of it now. Thank you.

Lytaria Walker: [00:51:33](#) Next question: Can a civilian person who is not in the active military be a sponsor? I am a federal contractor and work with units.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:51:44](#) So I'll get back to you on that. Because it is an all-volunteer program and they are in need of assistance, I'm not sure. I will ask that question to Mr. Eastman—he is a retired general—and see the rules and regs on that piece, and I'll come back to you because I know we're saving these questions.

Lytaria Walker: [00:52:11](#) Here's a long one. Is there any talk or thought about requiring prospective sponsors to take a local ACS community-specific sponsorship training? ACT training provides info on logistics of sponsorship, but it does not touch on the local nuances within a community. Most ACS centers do in fact provide sponsorship training. However, it is poorly attended because it's not mandated. Up until ACT was rolled out here in USAREUR-AF, there was a policy memo requiring potential sponsors to attend ACS face-to-face training, which is specific to the ins and outs of the local community.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:53:00](#) One of the things is the new alignment of the sponsorship program is along the G1 Level. So each battalion, brigade, and installation sponsor coordinators, they are supposed to be sitting in the one-shop. They're directly reporting to the senior mission commander. So the garrison now is only providing those services. So if the senior mission commander wants to add ACS training about the services they provide locally to the unit SOP, that is strictly up to the senior mission commander. That is not something that we are going to require in our regulation as we don't have ownership over ACS if that makes sense. But the mandatory ESAT training for personnel executing sponsorship roles covers everything that ACS will provide. Then that individual just needs to understand what the local nuances are in regard to what they learn from the Army level, if that makes sense. I hope that makes sense.

Lytaria Walker: [00:54:50](#) We'll move onto the next question. Is there talk of adding specific requirements and resources for Soldiers PCSing to remote locations?

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:55:05](#) I probably would need clarification as to what that looks like. I've been trying to do that during my battlefield circulations, like Alaska. I just came back from Alaska not too long ago, Camp Shelby, Mississippi. Oh my God, do they need help. So I think I need to clean up how we're looking at that, what we're looking for, and which programs best would be associated with

evaluating, if that makes sense. But I will collect that one as well.

Lytaria Walker: [00:55:40](#) Next question: Is there a specific training for ETS sponsorship program? I would think a different skill set than while in service.

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:55:51](#) Yes. So the ETS sponsorship program, if you are a volunteer, there is an official set of training that you have to complete in order to be a volunteer because it is a supervised program, although it's volunteer. You can't do it without the certification, and it's actually pretty good. But you have to click on the link and read the consent and request to be a volunteer, and then they set you up for the training if you are approved.

Lytaria Walker: [00:56:25](#) Next question: What improvements will there be to the selection of the sponsors themselves, i.e. to reduce risk of misconduct like sexual harassment, sexual assault, fraternization?

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:56:40](#) So that's a tough one. That's going to be engaged leadership. Now that the senior commander is directly responsible for how this program is executed, not so much garrison anymore, that's going to be on the senior commander and the subordinate organizations to select those personnel. Policy will not drive that selection process. I know that might not be what you want to hear.

Lytaria Walker: [00:57:17](#) Next question: Would you say that the sponsorship program directly affects the trust and morale between the command leadership and incoming Soldiers?

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:57:30](#) Absolutely. So I think I actually missed that part. There was a part that, I say sponsors, they're a direct representative of the unit, the installation, and frankly the entire Army. And you know the nation is watching how we do all of this, and sponsors can ease that adjustment to a new duty station and community. But one of the first things that I wanted to mention was that we have junior NCOs, they own the culture of small units, and they are most likely the ones who are serving as sponsors most of the time. So we have to empower them with resources and education and training, so that they feel confident in providing these services to their Service Members. So when they're calling and they're talking to their newcomer, they're saying, "Hey, I got you. Look, how many kids you need? We're going to hook you up with the military school liaison..." This, that, that, and the third. If they're confident about what they're presenting during that communication, there's already a sense of reliability and trust established there. There you go.

Lytaria Walker: [00:58:48](#) I think we have time to sneak in one last question. Would we actually add sponsorship to AR 600-20 when it is already in its own regulation, AR 600-8-8, the Total Army Sponsorship program?

SGM Sharita Onu...: [00:59:06](#) No, we will not be adding it to 600-20. It will stay in its own regulation. But there will be reference to the commander owning all of their programs and how they execute it. So it will be for the commander to understand what policies relate to their duties and responsibilities as far as the programs go.

Lytaria Walker: [00:59:33](#) Well this will wrap up our Q&A session. Thank you, Sergeant Major O. Thank you for joining today's webinar. Once the webinar ends, you will be prompted to complete a survey. We appreciate your feedback as this helps us to improve upon future webinars. If you'd like to receive invitations for ARD webinars and receive the latest news and information from the Army Resilience Directorate, please go to ARD's website at [armyresilience.army.mil](http://armyresilience.army.mil) and sign up for notifications. Please also follow us on ARD's newly launched LinkedIn and Instagram platforms. Sergeant Major O, thank you so much for joining us. Thank you for the presentation. Thank you for your insight. It's greatly appreciated. Participants and listeners, thank you for joining us today, and have a wonderful rest of your day. This concludes our 11:00 AM webinar. Thank you.