



**2023 U.S. Army Community Partnership Award**  
**Fort Riley-Kansas State University Institutional Partnership Program**  
(Dr. Art DeGroat, Executive Director of Military Affairs, Kansas State University)

**General Purpose of Collaboration:** The purpose of this institutional partnership is to mutually support the strategic objectives of two major regional institutions—the U.S. Army’s First Infantry Division community at Fort Riley and Kansas State University—the first operational Land Grant College in America. The common institutional objectives shared by both members of this partnership being served are: providing professional development, enhancing quality of life and developing a vibrant, diverse community. The operational design and practices of this unique partnership are based upon meeting each other’s common needs of human development and community-building using “whole-of-institution” approaches. As such, the university commits its intellectual and social capital, educational and cultural platforms and national leadership relationships to deliver educational, applied research and a myriad of outreach activities for 52,000+ person military community of Fort Riley. Fort Riley affords the university rare access to engage their military people, national security missions and geo-strategic relationships to advance the educational and research enterprises of the universities faculty, students and staff; as well as offering a key community to provide outreach and extension services to. For over a fifteen years, the enduring success of this “first-of-its-kind” have been the application of university-based human sciences and services with military professionals assisting military families well-being and healthy lifestyles to help mitigate the stressors of an era of persistent combat and security deployments abroad. Most recently, K-State’s expertise in the area of human capital development, readiness and entry into the workforce has been applied to Fort Riley’s challenges of transitioning soldiers and families back into gainful employment, independent lifestyles and social readjustment. All elements of the K-State campus community have been brought to bear on these three mechanisms of social change aimed to broaden the military-connected constituent beyond their unique social culture.

**Impact on the Fort Riley Community:** K-State provides over 6,500 individual “institutional broadening experiences” to promote well-being, professional development and cultural competency engagements each year to Fort Riley community members per year at no-cost to the Department of the Army. Additionally, it provides subject-matter expertise and technical assistance in a myriad of fields of professional practice in support of the 4,000 person Department of the Army Civilian workforce. Many of these programs are considered by the Department of Defense as “cost avoidance” that significantly reduce budgeted financial costs while making qualitative enhancements to the services rendered to military families and soldiers. In recent testimony to the Kansas Board of Regents, it was estimated the value of these engagements to Fort Riley rate to be \$4 to \$6M per year of charged. Additionally, Fort

Riley people, through this partnership now enjoy an unprecedented level of access and participation in all campus-related activities to include scholarship, sports and arts experiences as integral members; thus creating vital social connections and boosting quality of life for transient military families residing in a small Midwest town of unfamiliar culture. At the strategic level, this partnership enables senior military leaders access to non-military/defense leaders (University) for consultation on organizational challenges from perspectives based upon differing institutional logics. As a direct result of this partnership, Fort Riley has achieved numerous distinctions from the Department of Defense that a typical divisional-base installation would not be able to achieve—as reported by senior Fort Riley officials and formal notifications. The myriad of on-going activities, programs and opportunities that the University delivers at no-cost to Fort Riley include:

**1. Improves Quality of Life for Soldiers and Families:**

- Deliver over 500 free or low-cost live arts experiences for military families through the McCain Auditorium Military Audience Outreach program
- Serve over 5,000 military families at K-State Big XII Football “Fort Riley Day” game; and Military Appreciation Day at national Intercollegiate Rodeo
- Offers at no-cost supervised, graduate student counselors as interns from K-State Institute for Health & Security of Military Families to Chaplains and other military healthcare programs at Fort Riley-estimated value per year is \$30,000

**2. Improves or enhances readiness:**

- K-State assists Fort Riley’s Military Behavioral Healthcare system and serves as an outreach partner to build more care capacity and additional adjunctive care through its strategic partners with private and public medicine (priceless)
- Provides no-cost access to world-class professionals, clinician and venues for the SRUs Adaptive Fitness program to include concussion treatment, athletic training , sports medicine, nutrition and other human performance capabilities of our world class athletics program (valued at \$35,000 of free services)
- Provides no-cost athletic training support for the Fort’s FitNation program for orthopedic injuries of soldiers-rehabilitation (valued at \$40,000 per year)
- Serves as lead sponsor and partner of the re-invigorated 1st ID Combatives Program and Competitive Team- to include offering free Unit Wellness Training sessions in self-defense (valued at \$60,000 per year)
- Professional expertise sharing with Military Child Education initiatives-College of Education
- Delivers over 6,000 individual broadening experiences per year between Division I student athletes and Soldiers & unit leaders through formal Partnerships with 11 NCAA sports teams and programs at K-State
- Delivers world leaders to address Fort Riley leaders to discuss relevant national security issues through the University’s Landon Lecture and Political, Diplomatic and Military Lecture Series events for professional development (Estimated value \$100,000 per year)

**3. Modernizes a service, system, or other process**

- Provides Fort Riley with professional cultural anthropology services enabled by the Army’s first intellectual capital sharing IGSA
- Kansas State University shares its national leading expertise, scholarship and influence to enhance the Fort’s Soldier, Spouse & Family transition assistance

efforts; to include connections with the University's Career and Employment Center (valued at \$120,000 per year of no-cost expertise and services)

**4. Improves cost or other efficiencies**

- K-State serves as a major community recreation partner and sponsor USAG Fort Riley DFMWR (annual in-kind and paid sponsorships through DFMWR valued at \$70,000)
- Provides no-cost, off-site meeting venues for major FR unit activities (valued at \$5,000/year)
- Provides technical and financial support to Combined Scholarship Program of Greater Ft Riley for Spouses and Military Child College Education (valued at \$47,000/year)

**5. Expands capability; supports Army priorities**

- K-State serves as a lead partner in a community military healthcare alliance partner with Irwin Army Community Hospital
- K-State is a major support to US Army Recruiting (USAREC) effort
- Drama Therapy program for SRU
- K-State provides no-cost Athletic Training support of Fort Riley H2F program
- K-State serves as primary sponsor and supporter of Fort Riley Officers and Civilians Spouse Club (valued at \$30,000/year)
- KSU Senior leadership, Military Affairs and Governmental Affairs serve as active advocates for a strong FR on Governors Military Council, U.S. Senate Veterans Affairs Committee and with legislative leadership from Kansas
- Serves as major host and sponsor of CYS-DFMWR Pathways to Adulthood Youth Developmental program (CWS/DFMWR) to over 40 military youth (valued at \$3,000)
- K-State offers Fort Riley Soldiers local expertise and assistance to apply for Army ROTC Green to Gold program; and executes its Army ROTC program to provide Fort Riley first access to the best new junior officers in the nation as evidenced by their OML rankings

**6. Improves community relations.**

- K-State Division of Communication and K-State Athletic Department publishes over 200 Fort Riley-connected media announcements per year to over 300 major media outlets, to include global scientific, national athletic, corporate partners, governmental and public media (over 100,000 strategic mentions are delivered per year at no-cost to Fort Riley valued at \$250,000 in free mentions)
- Serves as major community partner and sponsor to FR's most important VSOs USO, Society, AUSA, etc
- Fort Riley Day Football Game

**Impact on the Institution:** Kansas State University derives a multitude of positive impacts resulting from this unique partnership. Most notably is the authorized access afforded to our research community to develop, test and implement evidence-based practices needed to sustain and improve military societal and operational demands—many which are transferred to the larger field of service. As a result of strategic access to national defense leadership, K-State sent a delegation to the active battlefield of Basra, Iraq in 2010 to help the U.S. Army and Iraqi Minister of Education restore service of its university. As an unintended consequence, K-State has realized a 10.6% overall growth in enrollment of quality military-connected students through earning a reputation of trust and inclusion with the military—particularly among the Post 9-11 era generation. For Kansas State students, this partnership has

resulted in major growth of academic internships in public service with the USAG at Fort Riley —from 21 to 118 in the past ten years. These additional internships account for growth for these academic programs, as well as offering more public sector employment opportunities for our graduates. Today, each of our 11 NCAA sports teams have formal partnerships with military units at Ft Riley- that stimulate peer-to-peer growth and mutual understanding between student-athletes and soldiers through engaging activities. Off the courts and fields, these student -athletes participate in military training, conduct sports camps for children of deployed soldiers and send game videos to troops in combat. Lastly, our successful performing arts “military audience outreach” program resulted in the DOD awarding a service medal to its Director; as well as the FortRiley DFMWR winning a national recreation services distinction.