

Host Family Handbook



HOME

ABILENE



AWAY FROM HOME

**Abilene Home Away From Home (AHAFH)
Host Family Handbook**

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FORWARD

The Abilene Home Away From Home (AHAFH) Program offers select local families a unique and rewarding opportunity to provide Airmen a “Home-Away-From-Home” during their first enlistment in the military. It also offers local families the opportunity to meet first-hand our fine young Air Force men and women of Dyess Air Force Base (DAFB), the air and space leaders of tomorrow. If you have the desire and commitment to make a difference in a young Airman's life, this is the program for you!

This brochure has been designed to not only encourage your participation in the program, but to aid you as a host family. It provides valuable information on five major areas: the philosophy surrounding the AHAFH Program; provide insight into an Airman’s life and responsibilities at DAFB; provide general information on a variety of topics concerning your responsibility as a host family and provide information on how and when to contact Airmen including a telephone directory for First Sergeants and other useful phone numbers.

On behalf of DAFB, we wish to express our appreciation to you for your active involvement in the AHAFH Program. As a partner in caring, not only will you play a significant role in the life of an Airman, but you may also find it to be one of life's most rewarding experiences.

President, Abilene Home Away From Home, Inc.

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HISTORY

The AHAFH Program was founded in 2017 to offer mentorship and family style companionship to the youngest service men and women living in DAFB dormitories during their first enlistment.

A joint effort by local civilian community partners and the 7th Bomb Wing and 317th Airlift Wing created a program modeled after the Department of Defense's service academies where civilian partners could be paired with the base's Airmen to provide off-base, off-duty interactions which fill an emotional void that the base's agencies are unable to fill.

AHAFH initially began with six families hosting twelve Airmen. Within a year, it had expanded to include more than 30 families hosting 57 Airmen. We hope to continue to grow the program so every first term airman has a local family to call home.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to assist first-term Airmen at DAFB who are just out of basic training and/or technical training, by pairing these young heroes with Abilene host families. These families will introduce the airmen to the local area and help alleviate the anxieties of being away from home – many of them for the first time. Host families provide a welcoming place to relax, have home cooked meals and offer opportunities to learn more about West Texas. Host families can provide fun and a getaway from the stress and day-to-day requirements of life in the Air Force. The goal of our program is to provide all eligible, first-term Airmen with a **“Home Away From Home”**.

VISION

To provide alternative free time experiences for at least 50% of the unmarried, first-term Airmen who live in the dormitories at DAFB.

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ABOUT AHAFH

The AHAFH is an incorporated, 501(c)3 foundation and is a private organization. It is not a part of the Department of Defense or any of its components and it has no Governmental status.

The program is managed by a fifteen-member voting Board of Directors consisting of a President, Co-Coordinators, Secretary/Treasurer and two non-voting ex-officio members. Most decisions require a majority vote of the Board of Directors. All positions are voluntary and unpaid.

Constitution and By-Laws are available upon request.

Income is generated through private donations and philanthropic organizations. The Corporation and the Board fully supports the anti-discrimination policies promulgated by the Department of Defense. No military member or Host Family will be denied participation in the AHAFH program based on race, color, religion, gender, or sexual preference and will comply with all applicable local, state and federal laws governing corporation activities.

Background checks shall be performed on all adults living in the home of a host family applicant. The background checks shall include, but not limited to, an individual's criminal history, the sexual offense registry, and the violent offense registry. The cost of the background checks will be assumed by the organization.

THE PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

The AHAFH Program is designed to provide Airmen with an avenue to form friendships and gather support beyond the formal work environment. If you can remember leaving behind the comfort and security of your parents' home, then you will understand the needs of the young men and women in the AHAFH Program. Rigorous military standards can tax even the best of spirits, producing feelings of great stress to make the grade in some members, and in others, moments of loneliness, homesickness and doubt. As a host family, you provide a home-away from-home during an Airman's first years at DAFB. You serve as their mentor, friend, and advisor, providing a caring environment to relax away from the pressures of work and future deployments. You are also in the position to serve as a positive adult role model helping them understand their role as a member of the armed services and reinforcing positive social values.

The AHAFH Program Office attempts to match host families with Airmen who share the same basic characteristics. Airmen can request "by name" host families. When two families request the same Airman, we honor the wishes of the Airman.

Once matched with an Airman, the minimum requirement is to meet with them at least once a month and contact them at least one other time during the month by phone, text or email. There is no requirement to spend money on these Airmen or house them for any length of

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time. The main purpose of the program is to bring them into your home to join your family for events like game nights, cookouts or sporting activities. You can also assist them in finding local businesses when they need an oil change, dry cleaning service, etc. As a host family you may also act as a mentor and provide advice on life or health matters. Always work within your comfort zone and remind them of their unit leadership if matters are beyond your expertise (see attachment 4).

We also know sometimes matches may not work for one reason or another. In these instances, the Airman or host family can request a new match.

The “**official**” relationship lasts for the duration of time that the Airmen resides in the DAFB Dormitories (dorms) but some relationships are long lasting.

Questions specific to the AHAFH Program may be addressed to the Program Office at 325-669-2741.

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PROGRAM DETAILS

YOUR ROLE AS A HOST FAMILY

Airmen from DAFB are held to a very high standard as professionals who are responsible for multi-million-dollar pieces of equipment. It is imperative that you understand these standards and help set the Airmen up for success. While the Airmen you interact with will typically be the age of an average college student, their responsibilities are generally far greater. Failure to live up to their professional responsibilities will have the potential to seriously injure fellow service members and can have career-ending effects.

Alcohol and the Airman

Texas Law- Providing Alcohol to Minors - Alcohol use as it relates to the Airmen is in accordance with Texas laws; the individual must be 21 years of age or older to buy or consume alcohol. While those over the age of 21 may drink alcoholic beverages, it is not encouraged. Remember, alcohol use has been linked to poor judgement, vehicle accidents, sexual assaults and more. Do not condone situations where alcohol use can lead to criminal activity.

Host family Activities

Airmen do not expect to be entertained or taken out to expensive meals or events. On the contrary, they are looking for the warmth and friendship of your family in their home away-from-home. Letting them become part of your family is the greatest gift you can give. They may want to use your phone to call parents or friends, but you are not required to overextend yourself financially. If the Airmen does not have a cell phone, you should suggest that Airmen acquire a calling card in order to pay their own bills. Ultimately, the freedom to make a sandwich, drink a soda, sleep, watch TV, or just hang out combined with your willingness to listen and your concern for them as individuals are the most precious gifts these service members can receive.

Airman-Host family Relationships

Airmen will strive to please you by good behavior to earn a return invitation. They are expected to be courteous guests and to express their gratitude. They are taught to address military superiors and their elders as "Sir" or "Ma'am". Relations between host family and Airmen need not be excessively formal and we rely on your good judgment in this area. However, if you experience problems with your Airman, please contact the First Sergeant Immediately (phone numbers are available in attachment 4).

Host Family Dividends

Aside from the personal satisfaction you receive in hosting an Airman, you may be asking yourself what you get in return. Airmen will normally invite you to events as their guest. Traditional military events such as promotion ceremonies show their appreciation for you hosting them. Remind your Airmen they can sponsor you on base to attend a function. They just need to provide their military I.D. to the base Visitor Center along with your (and anyone over 16 years old) Driver's License or Student I.D. and proof of auto insurance. They will also volunteer to help you with tasks or projects as they are genuinely grateful for

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your caring and seek to find ways to demonstrate their gratitude. While the AHAFH Program provides many dividends, participants often gain their most satisfying moments merely by interacting with their Airman. By sharing a family atmosphere, these family ties can continue for years.

The Host Family's Role in Correcting the Airman

Airmen need to learn from their mistakes...that's part of their ongoing training. Overlooking an error or mistake will only encourage them to continue the behavior. One experienced host family recommends establishing house rules for Airmen visiting your home. They further added that it is unfair to expect Airmen to follow your rules if you don't tell them what the rules are.

Perhaps the most important things you want to remember about house rules are that the rules must clearly and accurately reflect your expectations of the Airman's behavior in your home.

Some suggested house rules you may want to address include:

- ❖ We each have a right to our own opinions and the right to disagree with the opinions of others but do it respectfully.
- ❖ Request the Airman call to let the Host Family know if they would like to come over for an unplanned visit and call early enough so the Family can adjust plans or let them know if it is not a good time.
- ❖ If Airman or Host Family is unable to visit for an extended period of time, courtesy calls, texts or e-mails from time to time are means to keep each other updated on how things are going.

Other areas you may want to address from the start include:

- ❖ Your policy on arriving unexpectedly for a meal and bringing additional Airmen to your home.
- ❖ Cleaning up after themselves while visiting your home (this may include a list of duties such as making the bed if they slept over, rinsing out dishes, etc.)
- ❖ Putting things back where they found them or items not to be touched.

Other Helpful Hints:

- ❖ Be a sounding board.
- ❖ Give Airmen responsibilities as a family member.
- ❖ Expect the same courtesy from an Airman as you would a family member.
- ❖ Teach your Airmen and learn together.
- ❖ If possible, have an open house to meet the Airman's parents if they visit.
- ❖ Take pictures for the Airman's family, future reunions and our Facebook page.
- ❖ Be patient - Airmen are sometimes busy and there may be periods where they cannot visit.
- ❖ Treat your Airmen like an adult - not a child. Mentor them but don't baby them.
- ❖ Enjoy your time together - Airmen feel host families are influential and positively impact their future.

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BASE RESOURCES:

Stay in your comfort zone when providing help or advice. DAFB has resources to help Airmen in a variety of areas. The Airman and Family Readiness Center can provide general financial counseling, family counseling, car buying assistance, loan closet, Airmen's Attic and more. For their spiritual needs, they have the base Chapel and Soul Fire Café. The Unit First Sergeant is also a wealth of knowledge and resources. You do not have to deal with the tough issues alone – seek help (attachment 4 has resources and contact information).

HOST FAMILY APPLICATIONS

Call the AHAFH Program Coordinator at 325-669-2741 or email myabihome@gmail.com for details regarding the application process. Please ensure that you also have a Liability Waiver on file.

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ABOUT THE AIRMEN

UNDERSTANDING THE AIRMAN

To successfully interact with an Airman, it is important to understand their professional life. This section is designed to familiarize the host family with the terms and acronyms frequently used by Airmen.

Military Ranks – See Attachment 1

Military Time – See Attachment 2

Common Acronyms – See Attachment 3

THE US AIR FORCE CORE VALUES

In addition to the academic, physical, and military responsibilities the Airmen assume, they are also charged with stringent moral responsibilities. Airmen accept and live by the USAF core values which are: Integrity First, Service Before Self and Excellence in all that we do. These values, ingrained into the individuals during basic training, is based upon the traditional concept that an Airman's word is a bond and that Airmen must be uncompromising, forthright, and honest in all activities throughout life.

Why Military Life Is So Demanding?"

The defense of the United States and its concept of deterring war rely heavily upon the ability of the Air Force to discharge its mission properly. In our modern world, we need Airmen of great ability, skill, and judgment.

These future leaders are the Air Force Airmen of today whom you will be encouraging and advising.

The self-discipline, mental toughness, knowledge and leadership skills that our country needs dictate intensive and demanding training.

Your efforts and concern as a caring participant can make a big difference in assisting an Airman who may need an occasional retreat from the dormitory living environment. Your willingness to give Airmen your time, to listen sympathetically and to show your genuine concern will one day bear fruit far beyond the smiles you will earn from them today. In short, your involvement is vital to the Airman's experience and the shaping of the air and space leaders of tomorrow.

Daily Airman Life

From overviews on academic requirements to survival training, it will be evident how vital your role as a host family is in the development of an Airman through the off-duty support you provide. The following section is designed to acquaint you with the daily life of an Airman.

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Academics - First term Airmen are required to study and pass a variety of courses that strengthen their knowledge in the profession of arms as well as their core specialty.

Fitness - Athletic participation is required of all Airmen. All Airmen complete a physical fitness test every six months. Failure to meet standards may result in removal from the military. All Airmen participate in squadron-run and individual physical fitness programs. In addition, Base-run intramurals sports are available for those who are interested.

Aviation - All Airmen at Team Dyess work directly in support of the USAF mission to fly, fight and win! Not every AF member pilots an aircraft. Maintainers, personnel specialists, fuels technicians, fire fighters, law enforcement, dining facility workers and more are all vital to the overall AF mission.

Workdays - Not all Airmen work Monday-Friday nor do all work from 7:30am-4:30pm. Some work shifts and some work weekends on a regular basis. This will require flexibility on your part to meet the needs of your Airman. In addition, DAFB often supports short-notice taskings. Please be understanding if your Airman must cancel plans with only a few days' notice (or less).

Deployments - You can expect that your Airmen will probably deploy during their first year or two at DAFB. Deployments typically last 4-6 months. This is a great opportunity for you to support them while they are down range by sending care packages and letters to keep their spirits up.

SEXUAL ASSAULT




For allegations of sexual assault, DAFB has a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) and Victim Advocates (VA) available to ensure the respectful and dignified care of the victim. If an Airman confides in a host family that they were sexually assaulted, the victim should be encouraged to call the SARC immediately at 696-5499 or 268-6937 to discuss reporting options.

AIR FORCE RANKS

The modern USAF was established on September 18th, 1947 following the conclusion of World War 2 but maintains a history as far back as 1907. Prior to 1947, the USAF operated as the 'United States Army Air Forces' (USAAF) and the service contributed to both World War 1 and the Second World War. The modern Air Force has seen major combat actions since the Korean War and fields a variety of aircraft to cover all manner of mission types. Formally, USAF rank abbreviations are not displayed with an ending period. Additionally, the USAF does not maintain a 'First Sergeant' rank common to other branches of American military service. Instead, the rank is denoted by the special addition of a diamond within the insignia and observed as a duty / job title. Similarly, the diamond is replaced by a star for the Chief Master Sergeant and Command Chief Master Sergeant ranks. Note: The Five Star rank is generally reserved for [wartime](#) but is also bestowed as an honorary rank in some cases.






Enlisted Grades (E-1 - E-9)

Grade	Insg.	Abbrv	Title
E-1	NONE	AB	Airman Basic
E-2		Amn	Airman

E-3		A1C	Airman First Class
E-4		SrA	Senior Airman
E-5		SSgt	Staff Sergeant
E-6		TSgt	Technical Sergeant
E-7		MSgt	Master Sergeant
E-7		MSgt	Master Sergeant (w Diamond)
E-8		SMSgt	Senior Master Sergeant
E-9		CSMSgt	Chief Master Sergeant

E-8		SMSgt	Senior Master Sergeant (w Diamond)
E-9		CMSgt	Chief Master Sergeant
E-9		CMSgt	Chief Master Sergeant (w Diamond)
E-9		CCM	Command Chief Master Sergeant
E-9 Special		CMSAF	Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

Officer Grades (O-1 - O-10)

Grade	Insg.	Abbrv	Title
O-1		2d Lt	Second Lieutenant
O-2		1st Lt	First Lieutenant
O-3		Capt	Captain
O-4		Maj	Major
O-5		Lt Col	Lieutenant Colonel
O-6		Col	Colonel

O-7		Brig Gen	Brigadier General
O-8		Maj Gen	Major General
O-9		Lt Gen	Lieutenant General
O-10		Gen	General Air Force Chief of Staff
Special		GAF	General of the Air Force

Military Time

0100 = 1:00 a.m.

0200 = 2:00 a.m.

0300 = 3:00 a.m.

0400 = 4:00 a.m.

0500 = 5:00 a.m.

0600 = 6:00 a.m.

0700 = 7:00 a.m.

0800 = 8:00 a.m.

0900 = 9:00 a.m.

1000 = 10:00 a.m.

1100 = 11:00 a.m.

1200 = Noon

1300 = 1:00 p.m.

1400 = 2:00 p.m.

1500 = 3:00 p.m.

1600 = 4:00 p.m.

1700 = 5:00 p.m.

1800 = 6:00 p.m.

1900 = 7:00 p.m.

2000 = 8:00 p.m.

2100 = 9:00 p.m.

2200 = 10:00 p.m.

2300 = 11:00 p.m.

2400 = Midnight

Terms and Acronyms

AFA	Air Force Association
AFAM	Air Force Achievement Medal
AFCM	Air Force Commendation Medal
AFAS	Air Force Aid Society
AFI	Air Force Instruction (regulations)
AFR	Air Force Reserve
A&FRC	Airman and Family Readiness Center
ANG	Air National Guard
BAH	Basic Allowance for Housing
BAS	Basic Allowance for Subsistence
CAR	Casualty Assistance Representative
CC	Commander
CCF	First Sergeant (also referred to as “First Shirt” or “Shirt”)
CPO	Civilian Personnel Office
CV	Vice Commander
DEERS	Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System
DFAS	Defense Finance Accounting System
DOD	Department of Defense
EFMP	Exceptional Family Member Program
EFMT	Emergency Family Member Travel
FLO	Family Liaison Officer
GOV	Government Owned Vehicle

HYT	High Year Tenure
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
LOD	Line of Duty
MEB	Medical Evaluation Board
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPOY	Maintenance Professional of the Year
MSM	Meritorious Service Medal
MTF	Military Treatment Facility
NCOIC	Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIC	Officer in Charge
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PCM	Primary Care Manager
PCS	Permanent Change of Station
PEBLO	Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officer (MEB)
POV	Privately Owned Vehicle
Pre-Sep	Pre Separation
SARC	Sexual Assault Response Coordinator
SBP	Survivor Benefit Plan
SF	Security Forces
SG	Surgeon General

SGLI	Servicemen's Group Life Insurance
SRB	Selective Reenlistment Bonus
TAFMS	Total Active Federal Military Service
TAP	Transition Assistance Program
TDY	Temporary Duty Assignment
TIG	Time in Grade
TIS	Time in Service
UOD	Uniform of the Day
VA	Veterans Administration
VGLI	Veteran's Group Life Insurance

**BASE PHONE
NUMBERS**

CCF = First Sergeant

Unit	Admin Number	CCF Number	Notes
7th BOMB WING UNITS			
7th Bomb Wing - 7 BW	696-2121	696-8022	
7th Bomb Wing Chaplain - 7 BW/HC			
7th Bomb Wing Protocol Office - 7 BW/CCP	696-5610		
7th Bomb Wing Public Affairs Office - 7 BW/PA	696-2161		
7th Comptroller Office - 7 CPTS		696-8022	
7th Maintenance Group - 7 MXG			
7th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron - 7 AMXS - 9 AM	696-4466	696-6172	
7 AMXS - 28 AMU		696-4162	
7th Component Maintenance Squadron - 7 CMS	696-5605	696-3387	
7th Equipment Maintenance Squadron - 7 EMS	696-1790	696-1793	
7th Munitions Squadron - 7 MUNS	696-5006	696-2066	
7th Medical Group - 7 MDG			
7th Aerospace Medicine Squadron - 7 AMDS	696-3081	696-2323	
7th Medical Operations Squadron - 7 MDOS	696-2347	696-2323	
7th Medical Support Squadron - 7 MDSS	696-5439	696-2323	
7th Mission Support Group - 7 MSG			
7th Civil Engineer Squadron - 7 CES	696-2250	696-2553	
7th Contracting Squadron - 7 CONS	696-2352	696-4782	
7th Communications Squadron - 7 CS	696-3302	696-4782	
7th Logistics Readiness Squadron - 7 LRS	696-2267	696-3956	
7th Force Support Squadron - 7 FSS	696-2960	696-2962	
7th Security Forces Squadron - 7 SFS	696-3388	696-2887	
7th Operations Group - 7 OG			
9th Bomb Squadron - 9 BS	696-1499	696-1299	
28th Bomb Squadron - 28 BS	696-4583	696-1299	
7th Operations Support Squadron - 7 OSS	696-2262	696-1299	
317th AIRLIFT WING UNITS			
317th Airlift Wing - 317 AW	696-5859	696-5936	
317th Airlift Wing Protocol Office - 317 AW/CCP	696-8742		
317th Operations Group - 317 OG			
39th Airlift Squadron - 39 AS	696-3025	696-6390	
40th Airlift Squadron - 40 AS	696-4001	696-7242	
317th Operations Support Squadron - 317 OSS	696-1337	696-5936	
317th Maintenance Group - 317 MXG			
317th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron - 317 AMXS	696-3492	696-1578	
	696-5953	696-3738	

