

PREFACE

The Pre-Separation Guide has been developed to augment, expand, and enhance the five components of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), which include:

- » **Pre-Separation Counseling**
which is conducted and administered by the Military Services.
 - » **Department of Labor (DOL) Transition Assistance Program**
Employment Workshops that are facilitated and sponsored by DOL.
 - » **Veterans Benefits Briefings**
which are facilitated and conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
 - » **Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP),**
which is also facilitated and sponsored by VA.
 - » **Personalized coaching and Practicum**
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Today, retiring personnel can begin the TAP process 24 months before they retire; all other separating Service members begin TAP 18 months before separation. Impending changes to regulations mandate that TAP begins no later than nine months until separation.



Service members begin the TAP process with a review and completion of DD Form 2648, “Pre-Separation Counseling Checklist,” which provides an overview of all pertinent benefits available to them.

Installation TAP Counselors follow up on this form and provide individual Service members the necessary counseling, advice, and facts as appropriate. This Pre-Separation Counseling process represents the most holistic, personal, and extended component of TAP. While all components are educational and useful, the Pre-Separation Counseling provides the opportunity to plan and prepare effectively for all aspects of transition. Service members will find this guide most useful in its role in guiding them through this component. Figure 1 illustrates the TAP Process Overview.

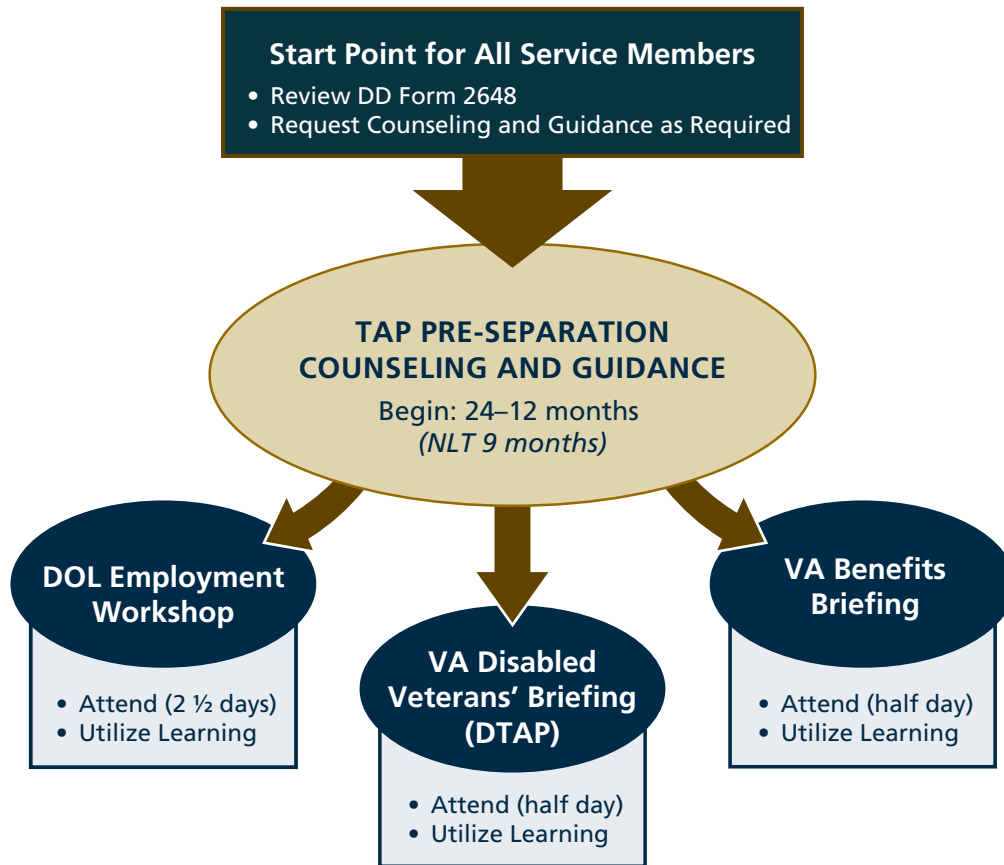


FIGURE 1. TAP OVERVIEW

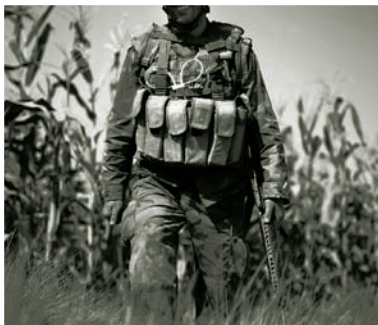
WOUNDED WARRIORS AND TAP

The DTAP for Service members who have, or think they have a service-connected disability (SCD), is a briefing sponsored by the VA, in conjunction with the Department of Defense (DoD). It is offered following a VA Benefits Briefing, a DOL Employment Workshop, or separately. Contact your local Transition Office to find out when a DTAP briefing is scheduled on your installation. If DTAP briefings are not available at your installation, the Transition Office Staff will refer you to other sources where similar information is available.

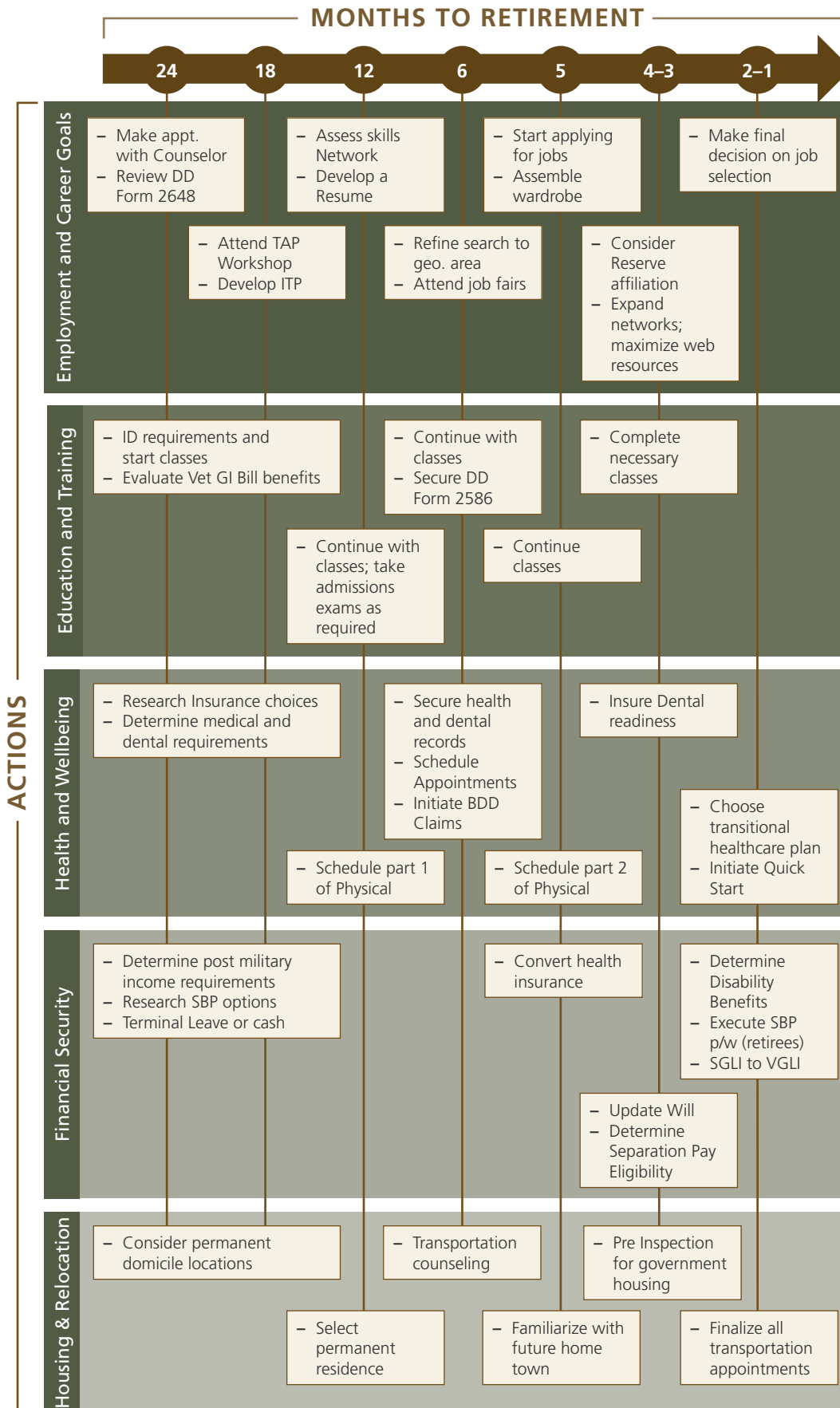
DTAP provides separating Service members with specialized information about the VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program, eligibility, and how to apply for benefits. Separating Service members should attend DTAP if they believe they have a SCD, are being referred to a Physical Evaluation Board, or are placed in a “medical hold” status by their Service.

The TAP process requires planning, conducting research and making important decisions that are vital for your future. This Guideline is intended to help you with those tasks.

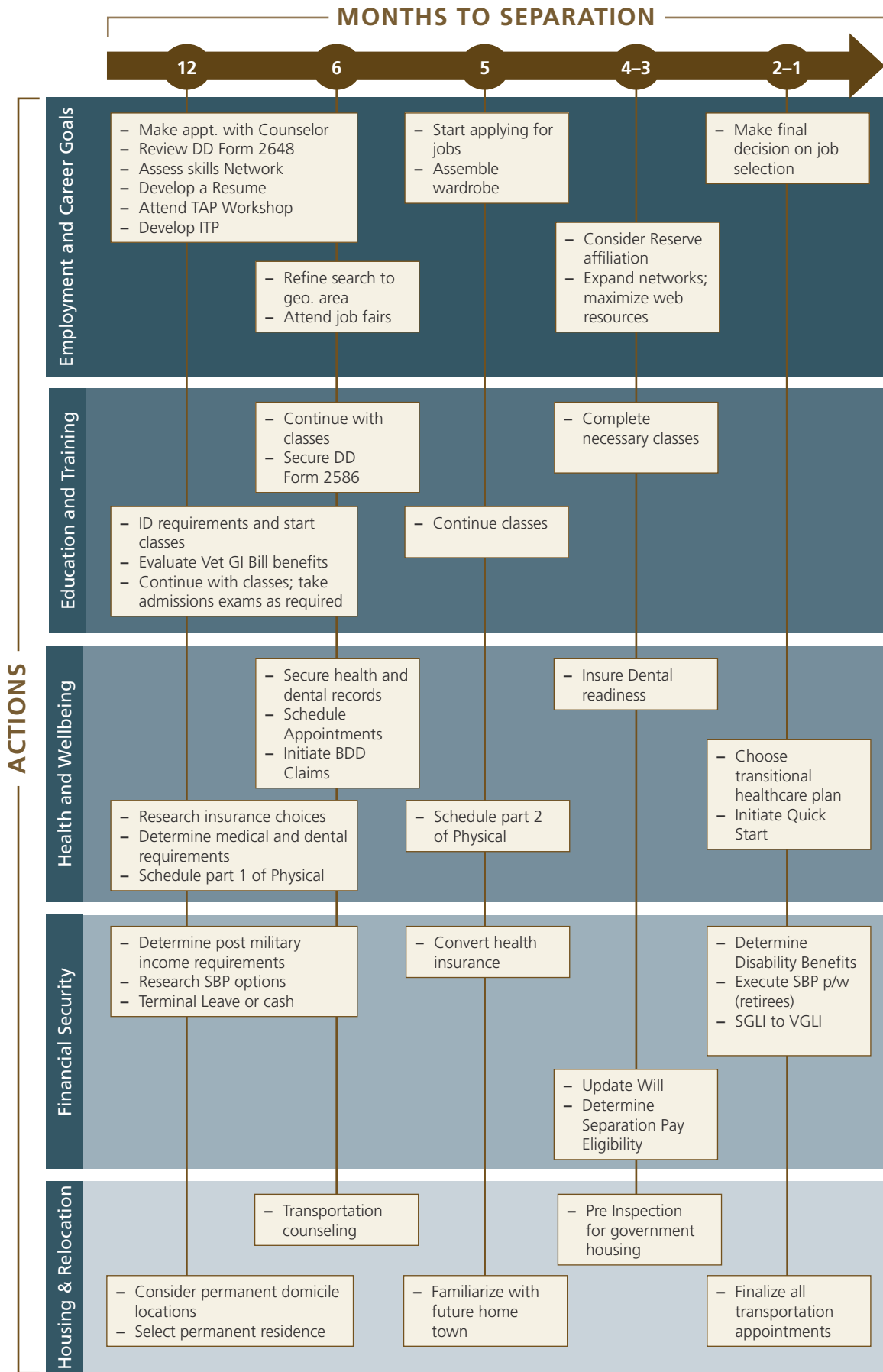
INTRODUCTION



TAP TIMELINE FOR RETIREMENT



TAP TIMELINE FOR SEPARATION



This guide, a product of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), provides information on the many services, benefits, and resources available as you prepare to transition to civilian life. It is designed to help you make informed decisions by providing planning considerations, facts and advice and by identifying helpful resources.

The *Pre-Separation Guide* consists of five chapters that generally define life's major priorities:

- Education and Training •
- Employment and Career Goals •
 - Financial Security •
 - Health and Wellbeing •
- Relocation and Housing •

Topics found within these chapters align with those subjects listed on the DD Form 2648, "Pre-Separation Counseling Checklist." The purpose of this checklist is to allow you the opportunity to receive more in-depth counseling about these topics from trained and qualified TAP professionals.

THE TAP CONCEPT

The TAP is evolving from an end-of-service activity to a full lifecycle model.* The lifecycle methodology stresses a continuum of career, financial, educational, and personal development techniques and strategies throughout the course of a military career. This evolution encourages and enables you to compare your military skills and training to related civilian skills or qualifications *throughout* your military service, not just at the departure point of service when it may be too late to incorporate improvement strategies. The end state for this TAP evolution is that transition becomes a well-planned, organized, and thoughtful progression that empowers Service members to make informed career decisions, be competitive in a global work force, and become positive contributors to their communities.

* The components of the lifecycle are: recruitment, training, sustainment, deployment/mobilization/demobilization/deactivation, retention, and separation/retirement.

THE TAP PROCESS

Today, most Service members begin the TAP process 24 months (Retirees) to 12 months (most others) prior to separation with a review and completion of the DD Form 2648, “Pre-Separation Counseling Checklist.” Initiating TAP at this point in time may appear to clash with the “lifecycle model” that stresses planning and preparation throughout one’s military career. However, many Service members actually do begin transition planning and utilizing benefits well before this 24–12 month point. For example, some Service members take advantage of the Montgomery or Post 9/11 GI Education Bill early in their military service in order to be more competent and competitive, whether in their current or future career. Many other Service members plan and begin a personal financial program early in their careers—undertaking similar actions that a TAP/Command Career Counselor would advocate when advising them before separation. When the TAP evolution is finally complete, these lifecycle skills and practices—and more—will universally be associated with the TAP. Figure 2 illustrates this evolutionary process.



FIGURE 2. TAP MILITARY LIFECYCLE

Transition Career Counselors who work at Military Service installations provide coaching that helps you to learn as much as possible about the benefits you've earned and will enable you to achieve your goals for post-military life. Figure 3 illustrates this relationships.

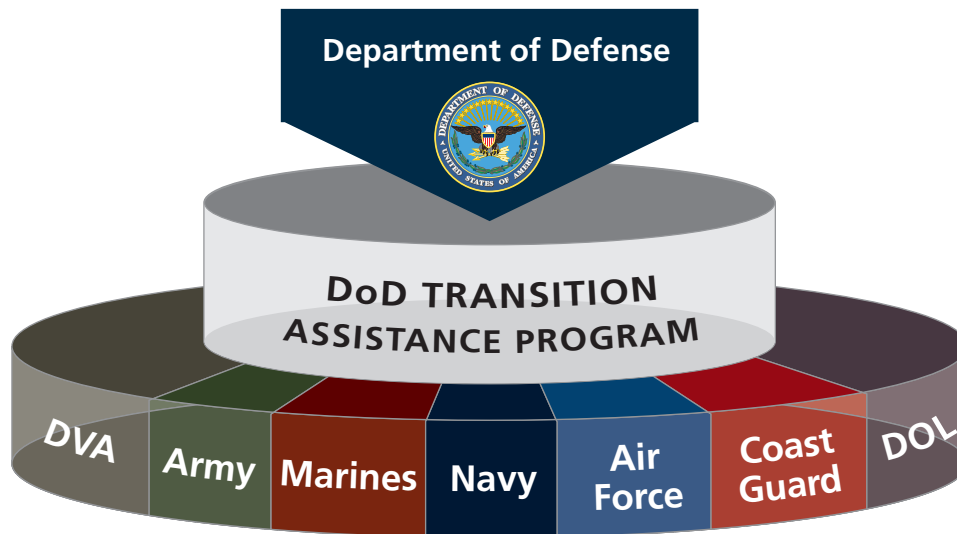


FIGURE 3. TAP RELATIONSHIPS

Military installations provide TAP services specific to their Military Services, as follows:

Army	Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP): www.acap.army.mil
Air Force	Airman and Family Readiness Center: www.afcommunity.af.mil/transition/
Navy	Fleet and Family Support Center (redirect): www.nffsp.org
Marine Corps	Career Resource Management Center (CRMC)/Transition and Employment Assistance Program Center: www.usmc-mccs.org/tamp/index.cfm
Coast Guard	Worklife Division—Transition Assistance. Coast Guard Worklife staff can be found at the nearest Integrated Support Command: www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wk/wkw/work-life_programs/transition_assistance.htm