



PRE-SEPARATION GUIDE

ACTIVE COMPONENT



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The material contained in this guide is current as of the date of its publication. It is important that you check with your local transition council and/or Command Career Counselor to ensure you have the most up-to-date information. You can also refer to the www.TurboTAP.org website for updated information.

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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**
-

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.

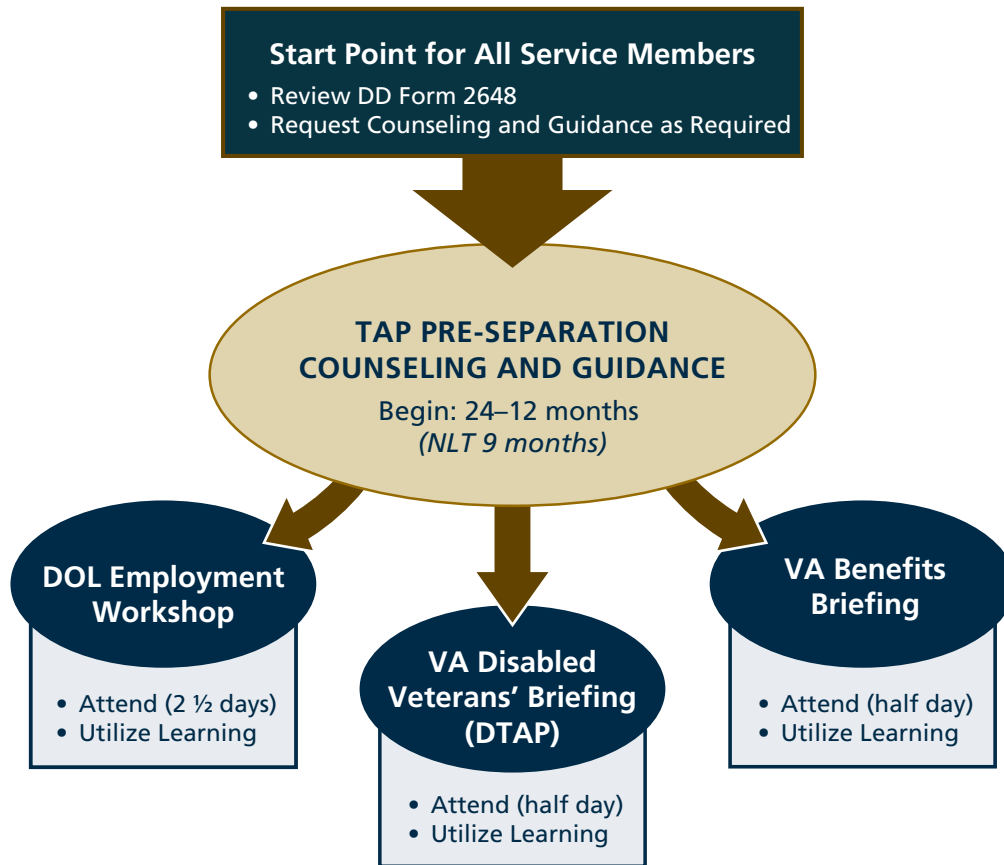


FIGURE 1. TAP OVERVIEW

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.

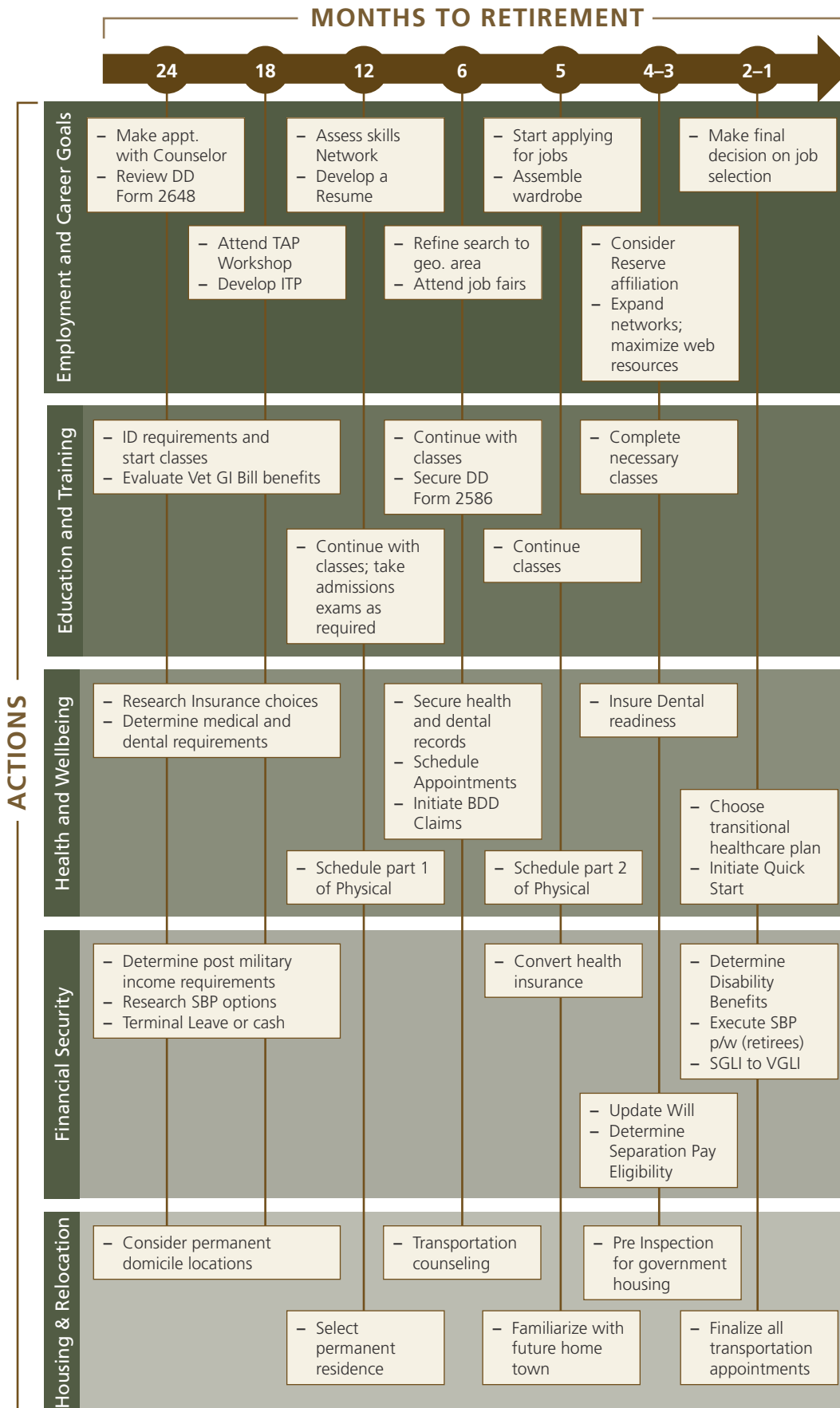
DTAP provides separating Service members with specialized information about the VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program, eligibility, and how to apply for benefits. Separating Service members should attend DTAP if they believe they have a SCD, are being referred to a Physical Evaluation 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.

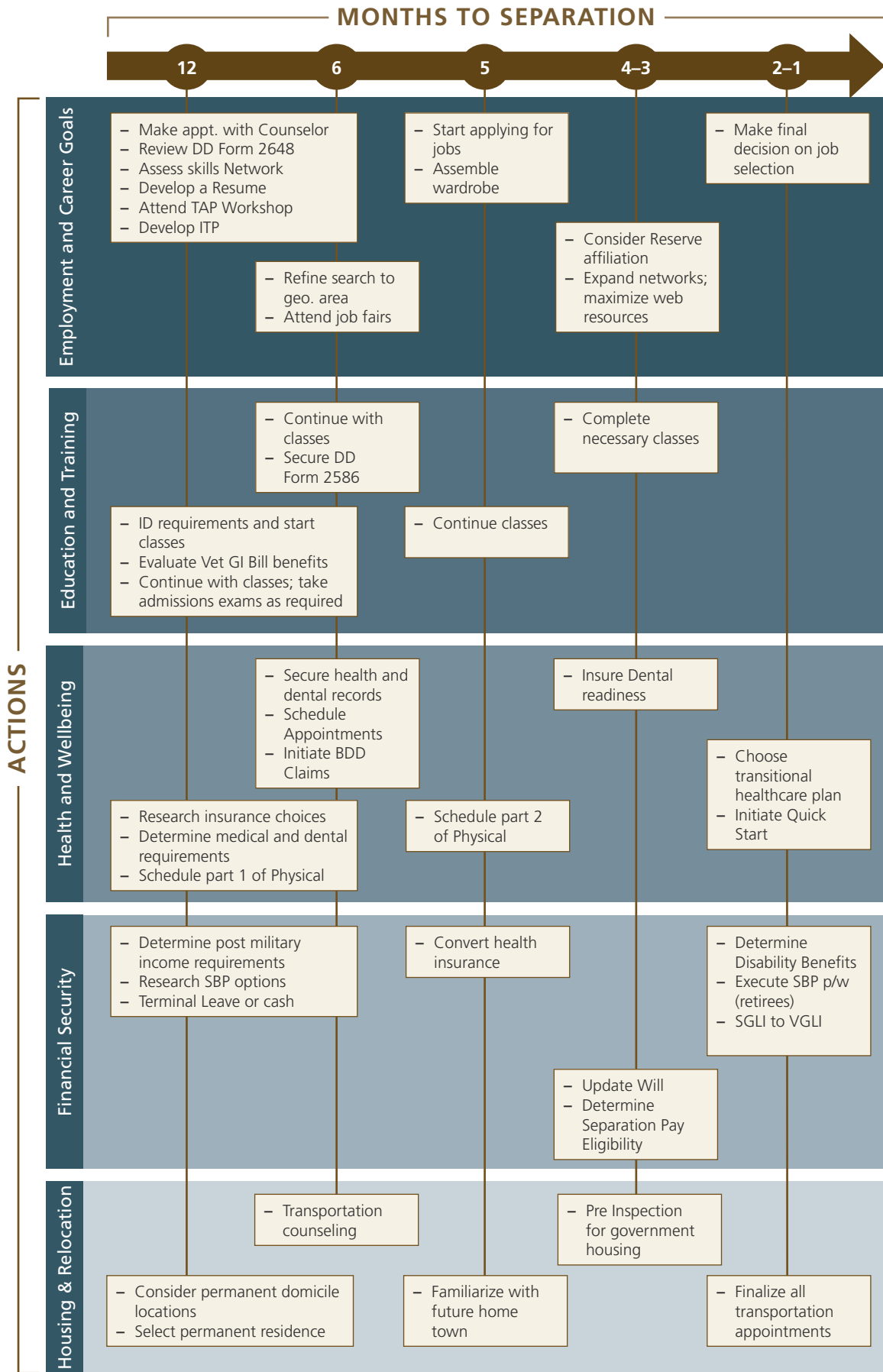
INTRODUCTION



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.

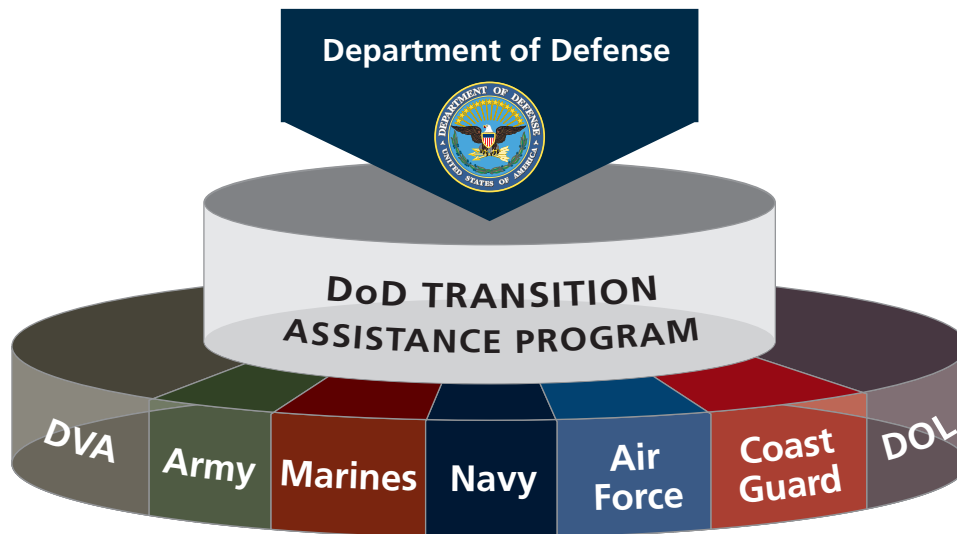


FIGURE 3. TAP RELATIONSHIPS

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

CHAPTER 1

EDUCATION AND TRAINING



WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

The transition from military to civilian life includes assessing and evaluating your options for future success, but keep in mind that success often depends on having the right education or training credentials. If you have not evaluated your education status and options, now is the best time to start.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

GUIDANCE COUNSELING

Before you separate, go to your local Education Center where counselors can help you determine your education goals. If you think you need additional education or training, an education counselor will guide you to the appropriate curriculum and institution and help you with the paperwork necessary to enroll in an academic or vocational program.

CAREER ASSESSMENT

A counselor can also recommend aptitude tests or vocational interest inventories to help clarify your career goals. These tests can help you pinpoint job skills in which you might excel and then relate them to specific occupations and careers in the civilian world. Some tools include: The “Strong Interest Inventory,” “Self-Directed Search,” or “Career Assessment Inventory,” as well as computerized counseling systems like “Discover.” These can help you select jobs and careers that more closely match your personality, background, and career goals.

ACADEMIC PLANNING

In order to achieve your career goals, you may need more formal education requisites than you currently possess. Counselors can also advise you on non-traditional educational opportunities that can make it easier for you to get a diploma, vocational certificate, or college degree. These non-traditional opportunities include the following:

- » “Challenge exams,” such as a college-level equivalency exam. You can convert knowledge learned outside the classroom into credits toward a college program, which can save you time and money.
- » Attending school part time while continuing to work full-time.
- » Collaborating with the veterans’ coordinator at the college, university, or vocational school of your choice to explore the various VA educational benefits that might lead to programs specific to your needs.
- » Determining if your military learning experiences can translate to course credit.

- » Taking advantage of distance learning opportunities. Today's technological advances enable you to enroll in educational programs in which courses are offered by accredited educational institutions in a variety of multimedia and electronic remote formats.

TESTING

Some colleges and universities require test results as part of the application process. Installation Education Centers normally provide testing services, which include:

- » **Vocational interest inventories** help you identify careers that are most likely to interest you.
- » **Academic entry exams** include the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), American College Testing (ACT), or the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and are offered only a few times each year.
- » **Credit by examination** is an exam program that can lead to college credit. If you score high enough on a specified exam, you may be exempt from taking a certain class or course requirements. The College Level Examination Program (CLEP), which provides up to 30 college credits and the DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) are also offered free to Service members on active duty.
- » **Certification examinations** help translate military training into civilian terms. Examinations are available in many skill areas, and upon successful completion you receive certification that documents your skills in equivalent civilian occupational standards.

FACTS AND ADVICE

VETERANS EDUCATION BENEFITS

The VA administers and provides financial assistance to several veterans' education programs. Included are college degree programs, technical and vocational programs, correspondence courses, flight training courses, and on-the-job training (OJT) and apprenticeship programs. In order for a program to be eligible for VA funding, it must be accredited by a state-approving agency.

Programs for which VA financial assistance is available are the Post-Vietnam-era Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP), the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) and the Post 9/11 GI Bill. As a rule, the benefits under VEAP and MGIB must be used within 10 years of separation from active duty. You have 15 years to use Post-9/11 benefits.

Post-Vietnam-Era Veterans' Education Assistance Program (VEAP)



ELIGIBILITY

With the exception of few veterans who signed delayed entry contracts before January 1, 1977, VEAP is for those veterans who first entered active duty between January 1, 1977 and June 30, 1985, and who made a contribution to a VEAP account before April 1, 1987. Service members who participated in VEAP but withdrew their contributions may start new allotments or make lump-sum contributions at any time while they are on active duty.

Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB)



ELIGIBILITY

With the exception of some officers commissioned after December 31, 1976, the MGIB is for those Service members and veterans who came on active duty on July 1, 1985, or later and who did not decline—in writing—to participate in the MGIB program.

To be eligible for the full 36 months of MGIB benefits, veterans must normally meet the character of service and minimum length of service requirements. Some veterans who are separated from active duty early for the convenience of the government may also receive the full 36 months of MGIB benefits. Depending on the reason for separation, other veterans who are separated from active duty early may be eligible for reduced MGIB benefits, prorated based on length of active duty; one month of benefits for each full month of active duty.

Some veterans who were eligible for the Vietnam Era GI Bill (VRA) have increased MGIB eligibility. They must have had some remaining VRA entitlement on December 31, 1989, when all benefits under the VRA expired. With some exceptions, they must have served on active duty from July 1, 1985 through June 30, 1988. For these veterans, the 10-year period of time in which they must use MGIB benefits is reduced by any time, from January 1, 1977 through June 30, 1985, that they were not on active duty.

Individuals who are involuntarily separated from the military and who were not originally eligible for the MGIB may have a second opportunity to receive MGIB benefits. This includes officers not normally eligible for the MGIB because they were commissioned after December 31, 1976 as a result of graduating from a service academy or after completing a ROTC scholarship, and people who declined to participate in the MGIB. Contact your Education Center or VA for details.

\$600 Buy-Up Program

For every \$20 you contribute, you can receive an additional \$5 on your monthly MGIB full-time rate. If you're eligible for the maximum 36 months of MGIB benefits, contributing the total \$600 will increase your total benefit by \$5,400.

GI Bill Apprenticeship and On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programs

When training on a new job, you can receive benefits from the VA in conjunction with your salary while you are enrolled in the program. You will receive approximately:

75% *of the full-time benefit for each full month of training during the first six months of training.*

55% *of the full-time benefit for each full month of training during the second six months of training.*

35% *of the full-time benefit for each full month of training during the remainder of the training.*



ELIGIBILITY

If you are qualified for the MGIB or the Montgomery GI Bill for Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) and you have or are planning to start a new job or apprenticeship program, you can apply for this benefit. In some cases, the VA will even pay retroactively for OJT from the past 12 months.

Post 9/11 GI Bill

The Post 9/11 GI Bill is an education benefit program that provides Service members, Veterans, and some dependents with college tuition and stipends for housing and books. This program went into effect August 1, 2009 and applies to college courses taken after July 30, 2009.



ELIGIBILITY

To qualify, you must serve a minimum of 90 days on active duty after September 10, 2001. This includes active duty service as a member of the Armed Forces or as a result of a call-up or order to active duty from a reserve component (National Guard and Reserve) under certain sections of Title 10 or Title 32.

Effective August 1, 2009 but not payable until October 1, 2011, qualifying service expands the Post 9/11 GI Bill to include Active Service performed by National Guard members under title 32 USC for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, or training the National Guard; or under section 502(f) for the purpose of responding to a national emergency.

Benefits under the Post 9/11 GI Bill vary depending on a Service member's state of residence, number of education units taken, and amount of post September 11, 2001 active duty service. The total percentage of benefits eligibility aligns with active duty service as follows:

- 100%** 36 or more cumulative months
- 100%** 30 or more consecutive days with disability-related discharge
- 90%** 30 or more cumulative months
- 80%** 24 or more cumulative months
- 70%** 18 or more cumulative months
- 60%** 12 or more cumulative months
- 50%** 6 or more cumulative months
- 40%** 90 or more days

Some periods of active duty service are excluded. Periods of service under the following do not count toward qualification for the Post 9/11 GI Bill:

- » National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Public Health Service (PHS), or Active Guard Reserve
- » ROTC under 10 USC 2107(b)
- » Service academy contract period
- » Service terminated due to defective enlistment agreement
- » Service used for loan repayment
- » Selected reserve service used to establish eligibility under the MGIB (MGIB chapter 30), MGIB-SR (MGIB-SR Chapter 1606), or the Reserve Education Assistance Program (REAP chapter 1607).

Transferability of Post 9/11 GI Bill Benefits

In order to transfer this benefit to one's dependents, the Service member must "elect" the Post 9/11 GI Bill, at which time all benefits under the MGIB are forfeited.

- » Transferability became effective August 1, 2009, and for those in the PHS and NOAA, the effective date is August 1, 2011.
- » Service Secretaries have approval authority for transferability (it is NOT a guaranteed entitlement).



ELIGIBILITY

To transfer benefits, the Service member must be in the Armed Forces on or after August 1, 2009.

- » Members who separate from active duty, or who leave the Selected Reserve prior to this date are ineligible to submit an application.
- » Members who retire or transfer to the Retired Reserve prior to this date are ineligible to submit an application.
- » Members must have completed *at least six years of service* in the Armed Forces and agree to serve *four* more years in the Armed Forces from the date of application in order to transfer benefits.



ELIGIBILITY

Applicability applies to any member serving in the Armed Forces on or after August 1, 2009, or in the PHS and National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration after August 1, 2011, who:

- » Has served a minimum of six years of service in the Armed Forces (active duty and/or Selected Reserve) and agrees to serve an additional *four* years in the Armed Forces, or
 - » Has served more than 10 years of service in the Armed Forces (active duty and/or Selected Reserve) and is precluded by standard service or Department of Defense (DoD) policy (e.g., High Year Tenure, Reduction in Force) from completing the full four year obligation, and agrees to serve such additional time up to the service-specific policy, or is or will become eligible to retire, transfer to Fleet Reserve or Transfer to the Retired Reserve during the period of August 1, 2009 through August 1, 2013 and agrees to serve the additional period, if any, as specified below. (A Service member is considered retirement eligible if he or she has completed 20 years of active Federal service, or 20 qualifying years of service for Selected Reserve).
- » Transfer of benefits may be to a spouse, child, or a combination of both, as reported via Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS). The following rules apply:
- Service members can add dependents, revoke or change election while in the Armed Forces.
 - Service members can *only* revoke or make election changes after leaving the Armed Forces; they cannot add dependents.
 - Veterans may transfer up to 36 months of educational benefits or remaining entitlement months if benefits are already used prior to conversion from another educational program.
 - This benefit is not considered in any property settlement resulting from a divorce.
 - In Dual Military Couples, both Service members may transfer benefits to dependents.
 - Child must enroll full-time in school and Member must update DEERS with this information.
 - Spouse may use benefits immediately if the Service member has completed a minimum of six years of service in the Armed Forces. A child may use benefits after the Service member has completed 10 years of service in the Armed Forces.



ELIGIBILITY

Period of Benefit

- » **Spouse:** Up to member's 15 year delimiting date
- » **Child:** From age 18 up to age 26 (regardless of member's 15 year delimiting date)

Must have received High School Diploma, General Education Development (GED), or equivalent, or reached age 18.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS

Federal Student Aid is an office of the U.S. Department of Education and offers billions of dollars in financial aid to help millions of students manage the cost of education each year. There are three categories of federal student aid:

- » Grants
- » Work-study
- » Loans

Even if you are still on active duty, you can apply for financial aid such as Pell Grants or Federal Stafford Loans.



See the **Resources** section of this chapter for website and phone numbers.



ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for federal student aid is based on financial need and several other factors. The financial aid administrator at the college or career school you plan to attend will determine your eligibility. Generally, eligible applicants:

- » Demonstrate financial need (except for certain loans—your school can explain which loans are not need-based).
- » Have a high school diploma or a GED certificate; pass a test approved by the U.S. Department of Education; meet other standards your state establishes that the Department approves; or complete a high school education in a home school setting that is treated as such under state law.
- » Be working toward a degree or certificate in an eligible program.
- » Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen.
- » Have a valid Social Security Number (unless you're from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, or the Republic of Palau).
- » Register with the Selective Service, if required. Maintain satisfactory academic progress once in school.
- » Certify that you are not in default on a federal student loan and do not owe money on a federal student grant.
- » Certify that you will use federal student aid only for educational purposes.

VA Benefits and Federal Student Aid

Veterans' educational benefits can still be used in conjunction with Federal Student Aid. The application includes this query, which the school will take into account when computing and preparing your aid package.

Family Members

Federal Student Aid provides a tool called *FAFSA4caster*, which is designed to help students and their families plan for college. The *FAFSA4caster* provides students with an early estimate of their eligibility for federal student financial assistance. Military dependents that are enrolled in college and are eligible to receive Pell Grants should check out two new programs: Academic Competitiveness Grants and National Sailor and Marine ACE Registry Transcript Grants (National SMART Grants).

READMISSION TO POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

The College Affordability and Opportunity Act, commonly referred to as the Higher Education Act, guarantees readmission rights for Service members. An institution of higher education may not deny readmission to a Service member who was a student but had to leave the institution to serve in the uniformed services. Furthermore, the Service member must be promptly readmitted with the same academic status.



ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for readmission, the Service member must have served voluntarily or involuntarily in the Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserves on active duty, or on active duty for training or full time National Guard duty under Federal Authority, for more than 30 consecutive days.

An otherwise eligible Service member qualifies for readmission if:

- » The institution is given notice of absence for service
- » The cumulative length of absences does not exceed five years
- » The student gives notice of intention to return to school

The institution is not required to readmit the Service member if:

- » The institution determines that the student is not prepared to resume the study where the Service member left off
- » There are no reasonable efforts the institution can take to prepare the student to resume or complete the program of study



THE VETERANS UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM (VUB)

The VUB Program is a free U.S. Department of Education program designed to help eligible veterans refresh their academic skills so that they can successfully complete the college program of their choosing.

The VUB Program services include:

- » Basic skills development, which is designed to help veterans successfully complete a high school equivalency program and gain admission to college education programs
- » Short-term remedial or refresher classes for high school graduates that have put off pursuing a college education
- » Assistance with applications to the college or university of choice

- » Assistance with applying for financial aid
- » Personalized counseling
- » Academic advice and assistance
- » Career counseling
- » Assistance in getting veterans services from other available resources
- » Exposure to cultural events, academic programs, and other educational activities not usually available to disadvantaged people

The VUB program can improve skills in:

- » Mathematics
- » Foreign Languages
- » Composition
- » Laboratory Science
- » Reading
- » Literature
- » Computer Basics
- » Tutorial and Study Skills Assistance
- » Any other subjects you may need for success in education beyond high school



ELIGIBILITY

To participate in VUB, you must meet all of the following criteria:

- » Be a U.S. military veteran with 181 or more days of active duty service and discharged on/after January 31, 1955, under conditions other than dishonorable
- » Meet the criteria for low income, according to guidelines published annually by the U.S. Department of Education, and/or be a first-generation potential college graduate
- » Demonstrate academic need for VUB
- » Meet other local eligibility criteria as noted in the local VUB Program's Approved Grant Proposal, such as county of residence, etc.



JOB CORPS—HELPING VETERANS START NEW CAREERS

Job Corps is a program for those separating Service members who need to develop additional job skills. At Job Corps, you can train for a new and rewarding career alongside other veterans. After training, staff will work with you to find a job for up to 21 months.

Job Corps offers hands-on training to eligible veterans through the age of 24 in America's fastest-growing careers. Each year Job Corps provides training and support services to more than 100,000 young people in more than 100 career areas at 123 centers across the nation. Job Corps training for veterans is absolutely FREE. Throughout your training, you will receive a basic living allowance. As your training progresses, your living allowance will increase. Job Corps can also help you get started after you graduate with a transition allowance. This allowance is based on your academic and career skills achievement while in Job Corps.



WHAT DOES JOB CORPS OFFER TO VETERANS?

Veterans receive priority enrollment at all Job Corps centers. While you may attend any Job Corps center in the nation, there are three centers that offer dorm areas exclusively for veterans. You will be living among other veterans who are also transitioning from the military to civilian life. Those centers are:

- » Atterbury Job Corps Center—Edinburgh, Indiana
- » Earle E. Clements Job Corps Center—Morganfield, Kentucky
- » Excelsior Springs Job Corps Center—Excelsior Springs, Missouri

For a map of all centers, visit www.recruiting.jobcorps.gov.



WHAT HAPPENS AT JOB CORPS?

While most of your time on center will be devoted to career training, you may spend some time taking academic classes. When you arrive you will be required to take a test to assess your academic skill level. Although you already have your high school diploma or GED, you may need to take additional classes in subjects such as math and English to prepare you for your career area.

You will have the chance to train with Job Corps employer partners on actual work sites. Job Corps has partners in every corner of the country who are looking for qualified people to train and hire.



STUDENT VETERANS OF AMERICA (SVA)

Founded in 2008, Student Veterans of America is a coalition of student veterans groups on college campuses across the United States. SVA has two major components: the executive staff and student veteran groups.

SVA member chapters are student groups that have formed on college and university campuses to provide peer-to-peer networks for veterans who are attending those schools. These groups coordinate campus activities, provide pre-professional networking, and generally provide a touchstone for student veterans in higher education. Each local group plays a critical role in ensuring that every veteran is successful after their service.

For a map of all chapters across the United States, visit www.studentveterans.org.

RESOURCES

DoD VOLUNTARY EDUCATION PROGRAM

For separating Service members, the DoD Voluntary Education Program (VEP) website offers a wide variety of educational information of interest and use. The website was originally established to provide support for military education center staffs worldwide and later expanded to provide direct support to active and Reserve Component Service members and families. This support includes information on all programs provided by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support (DANTES) including the Distance Learning Program, Examination Program, Certification Program, Counselor Support Program, Troops to Teachers, and a wide variety of educational catalogs and directories.

Links are provided to each of the services' education programs and to a wide variety of education-related resources. There is also a Directory of Education Centers on the website, which contains information on all of the services' education centers worldwide, including postal addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses.

The primary goal of the website is to provide information for Service members to select, plan, and complete their program of study, either while on active duty or upon separation.

DoD VEP website: apps.mhf.dod.mil/pls/psgprod/f?p=VOLED:HOME:0

TRANSCRIPTS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SPECIFIC TO MILITARY SERVICE

Army

The Army's Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System (AARTS) automatically captures your military training, Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) and college-level examinations scores with the college credit recommended.

AARTS website: aarts.army.mil

Navy and Marines

The Navy and Marine Corps use the Sailor and Marine ACE Registry Transcript (SMART) system. This system automatically captures your training, experience and standardized test scores.

SMART website: <https://smart.navy.mil/smart/welcome.do>

Air Force

The Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) automatically captures your training, experience, and standardized test scores. Transcript information may be viewed on the website.

CCAF website: www.au.af.mil/au/ccaf

Coast Guard

The Coast Guard Institute (CGI) requires each Service member to submit documentation of all training (except correspondence course records), along with an enrollment form, to receive a transcript.

CGI website: www.uscg.mil/hq/cgi

Veterans

Under most circumstances, veterans are eligible to use their former service branch's transcript program. However if you are not eligible for AARTS, SMART, CCAF, or CGI systems, you will need to fill out DD Form 295, "Application for the Evaluation of Learning Experiences during Military Service" and provide your DD Form 214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty," to receive credit for your experience.

MGIB ELIGIBILITY

MGIB eligibility can be complex. If you have questions about MGIB eligibility, check with your Education Center, or call the VA toll-free education number, 1-888-GI Bill-1 (1-888-442-4551). You may also get information at the VA Education Service website www.gibill.va.gov.

- » **\$600 Buy-Up Program:** Use DD Form 2366-1, "Increased Benefit Contribution Program," to process your request through your local payroll or personnel office: www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2366-1.pdf.
- » GI Bill Apprenticeship and OJT Programs: Call 1-888-GIBILL-1 to speak to a VA representative about your eligibility.

POST 9/11 GI BILL

Learn more about the Post 9/11 GI Bill by downloading the VA Post 9/11 GI Bill Pamphlet (PDF) at: www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/CH33/CH33_Pamphlet.pdf.

EDUCATION BENEFITS COUNSELING

The VA can provide you with educational counseling after you leave the Service. Contact the VA GI Bill Regional Processing Office by dialing toll-free 1-888-GI Bill-1 (1-888-442-4551) or go to the GI Bill website at www.gibill.va.gov.

Information on veterans' educational benefit programs is available from your installation's Education Center or from the admissions office and/or veterans' coordinator at most colleges and universities.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS

www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov

Application

You can apply online or in writing by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Get further instructions on the application process at www.fafsa.ed.gov. You may also apply for a Federal Student Aid Personal Identification Number (PIN) which allows you to sign your application electronically at www.pin.ed.gov.

You can register with the Selective Service electronically or in writing. For more information, visit www.sss.gov or call 1-847-688-6888. (TTY users can call 1-847-688-2567.)

READMISSION TO POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

For more information, go to www.dantes.doded.mil.

THE VETERANS UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM (VUB)

For more information, as well as a link to individual program locations, visit: www.navub.org.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE MORAL, WELFARE, AND RECREATION (MWR) LIBRARIES

Online resource to bring expert solutions to all Service members *and* their families to help them plan, prepare, and achieve their education and career goals. For more information, visit www.nelnetsolutions.com/dod.

JOB CORPS—HELPING VETERANS START A NEW CAREER

Visit www.recruiting.jobcorps.gov or call 1-800-733-JOBS.

LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION

There are several resources available to assist you in finding civilian requirements for licensing and certification:

- » America's Career Info Net—A Department of Labor (DOL) website. Go to the "Career Tools" section to look up licenses by state, requirements for licensing, and point-of-contact information for the state licensing board: www.acinet.org.
- » The DANTES website has information on certification programs: www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/danteshome.asp.
- » Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL)—Find civilian credentials related to your military occupational specialty, learn what it takes to obtain the credentials, and see if there are available programs that will help pay credentialing fees: <https://www.cool.army.mil> or <https://www.cool.navy.mil>.
- » CCAF Credentialing and Educational Research Tool (CERT)—CERT is a valuable resource for Air Force personnel. The purpose of CERT is to increase awareness of professional development opportunities applicable to Air Force occupational specialties. CERT includes information related to specific Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSCs), such as:
 - Civilian occupation equivalencies (DOL)
 - CCAF degree programs
 - National professional certifications
 - Certification agencies
 - Certification exams by DANTES
 - Professional organizations

For more information, visit: www.au.af.mil/au/ccaf/certifications.asp.

VOCATIONAL SERVICES

Installation Education Centers have information regarding vocational and technical school programs designed to give you the skills needed to work in occupations that do not require a four-year college degree. Education Center Counselors can also show you how to get course credits for non-traditional learning experience (such as military certifications and OJT). The counselors may also help you find out about certification and licensing requirements (i.e., how to get a journeyman card for a particular trade). Local trade unions may also offer vocational training in fields of interest.

CHAPTER 2

EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER GOALS



WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

For most separating Service members, there is a lot to learn about the civilian world. The civilian job market is a major part of that world. Learning how to assess your skills, abilities and knowledge; what to look for in a civilian job; and how to write a resume are a few of the subjects covered in this chapter. This chapter will help you make successful career choices by providing information about options and opportunities for civilian employment and career goals.

Today's job market calls for diversified skills and talent. America's veterans are qualified and capable of meeting these needs, while also offering a level of discipline and mission focus that is extremely valuable in the civilian workplace. Many civilian jobs align with military training and experience, including:

- » Senior Management and Executives
- » Civil Engineers
- » Medical Specialists
- » Auditors
- » Entrepreneurs
- » Case Workers
- » Nuclear Engineers
- » Food Service Managers
- » Mechanics
- » Heavy Equipment Operators
- » Skilled People in Information Technology (IT) and Telecommunications

The Department of Labor (DOL) lists the following as the top-ten fastest growing occupations, projected through 2018:

- » Biomedical Engineers
- » Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts
- » Home Health Aides
- » Personal and Home Care Aides
- » Financial Examiners
- » Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists
- » Physician Assistants
- » Skin Care Specialists
- » Biochemists and Biophysicists
- » Athletic Trainers

DOL also lists the following fields as promising for federal employment:

- » Specialized Workers in Areas Related to Public Health
- » Information Security
- » Law Enforcement
- » Scientific Research
- » Financial Services
- » Registered Nurses, Physicians, and Surgeons
- » Computer and Information Research Scientists
- » Physical Science, Life Science, and Engineering Workers
- » Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

INDIVIDUAL TRANSITION PLAN (ITP)

A carefully thought-out ITP provides the foundation for a successful transition to civilian life. Your DD Form 2648, "Pre-Separation Counseling Checklist," can serve as an outline for your ITP. On this checklist, indicate the benefits for which you want more information and the installation TAP Counselors will refer you to subject matter experts or other resources that will address your concerns. You are eligible for continued transition assistance for the rest of your life.

Create Your Own ITP

Begin your ITP by trying to answer the following questions:

- » What are your goals after leaving the military?
- » Where do you plan to live?
- » Do you need to continue your education or training?
- » Will the job market (where you plan to relocate) provide you the employment you are seeking?
- » Do you have the right skills to compete for the job(s) you are seeking?
- » Will the goals of your spouse and family be met at your new location?
- » Are you financially prepared to transition at this time?
- » What do you plan to do for health care?
- » How will you address the need for life insurance?
- » Which veterans benefits are you planning to use?

PHASES OF ITP

All transitioning Service members go through the same fundamental stages, which are:



As you conduct an honest assessment of your talents, experience, special training and skills, begin by listing your experience and training and extend it to a resume.

- » DD Form 2586, “Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET),” outlines the training and experience you received during your military career. It will help you document your experience, but it is not a resume; it will serve as a helpful reference which you can draw upon when it’s time to write a resume or attend a job interview.
- » You can obtain an official transcript of your education and training credits from your service branch. Each branch has their own system for recording military (and civilian) education and experience; these can be found in the Resources section at the end of this chapter.
- » Resume Writing Tips
 - **Know the Goal:** The goal of the resume is to get an interview.
 - **Tailor the Resume to Your Objective:** Targeting your resume to the employer’s current needs will increase the odds of getting an interview.
 - **Focus on Skills:** By emphasizing skills, you allow the employer to compare your skills to those required for the job.
 - **Formats Can Vary:** Most employers appreciate a work history, list of accomplishments, and skills highlights. Use whatever format with which you are comfortable.
 - **Create a “Scan-able” Resume:** Many companies use computer programs to “scan” or quickly search resumes for relevant terms or key words, rather than have employees spend time reviewing hundreds of resumes. In order to get noticed, make sure to write a resume using key words and phrases your ideal employer might be searching for, and produce a resume in a scan-able format.

It can feel overwhelming to begin exploring possible career options. These simple steps can make it seem more manageable:

- » List jobs you desire and areas you would prefer to be located.
- » List jobs that fit with your knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- » List the resources where you can find out more about these jobs, then begin to research using these resources. The following resources can be helpful:
 - The Employment Assistance Hub of the TurboTAP website can identify jobs that employers nationwide need to fill in the next few months.
 - Career One-Stop Centers exist in all 50 states. Staff at these centers can help identify the geographic areas that have opportunities in your fields of interest.
 - State employment offices offer services such as job interview training, selection and referral to openings, job development, employment counseling, career evaluation, referral to training or other support services, and testing. Your state office also has information on related jobs nearby and can refer you to their state job banks.
 - Your local library is full of helpful publications relating to job searches, including the Occupational Outlook Handbook.
 - The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) can help you explore self-employed small business ownership as an option.

PHASE 3 | Skills Development

-
- » In your research, you may find some attractive and interesting opportunities, but discover that you are only partially qualified for these jobs. Your local Transition Assistance Office and Education Center can assist you in determining the academic credentials or vocational training programs needed in order to be fully qualified. Then you can begin to develop the skills you need to obtain the job you want.
 - » Intern programs, volunteer work, and temporary or part-time jobs often offer opportunities to gain the experience or skills you need to be fully qualified for jobs which you are only partially qualified.

PHASE 4 | Job Search

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- » Network. The vast majority of jobs are filled through referrals, not the want ads. Use your network of friends, colleagues, and family. Networking is the most effective way to land the job you want.
 - Make a list of everyone you know who might have a job lead for you.
 - Send your resume to each person on your list and attach a cover letter.
 - Call each person to whom you send a resume and ask for their suggestions.
 - Send each person a letter thanking them for the help. Call them periodically to see if they have any updated information.
 - Complete Post-Government (Military) Service Employment Counseling before beginning networking to understand your conflict of interest recusal obligations.
 - » Take advantage of job-hunting seminars, resume-writing workshops, and interviewing techniques classes.
 - » Attend job fairs and talk to as many company representatives as possible.
 - » Discuss with your family if creating your own small business (full-time or part-time) is your passion.

PHASE 5 | Job Selection

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- » Consider the type of work, location, salary and benefits, climate, and how the opportunity will enhance your future career.
 - » Determine if the job is a good fit for you in terms of values, culture, and other important intangibles.
 - » Be cognizant of the fact that there countless jobs out there—you don't have to take the first one offered. Nor should you assume that the job you accept will be the only one you have until you retire.
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- » It is easy to forget that a career change affects all aspects of your life, including responsibilities in your personal life. While you transition, try to manage your personal affairs with the same professionalism and care as your job search. Out-processing, relocation, financial management, family needs, and stress management are all important and will need your attention.
- » Your Transition Assistance Office can offer support as you go through this process. Your ITP should integrate all these issues with the employment search activities.

FAMILY MEMBERS

Your career transition may affect more than just you. Remember that family members may also access employment services with help from the installation Transition Assistance Office.

- » Family members can get help in developing their own ITPs.
- » Spouses are highly encouraged to attend the DOL Employment Workshop in order to prepare themselves for the transition from an active duty lifestyle to a civilian one.
- » The Transition Assistance Office will provide individual job/career development counseling, assist in assessing employment skills, and identify employment opportunities.
- » Job training services include workshops and seminars on enhancing job search skills, setting goals, preparing federal employment applications, creating resumes, developing interview techniques, and training for occupational skills.

EMPLOYMENT RESTRICTIONS AFTER LEAVING THE MILITARY

Post Government (Military) Service Employment Restriction Counseling should be completed during the transition process. You will be informed about this requirement when completing your DD Form 2648, "Pre-Separation Counseling Checklist," and will receive a briefing or counseling from an authorized ethics official.

A brief summary of the most common post-government employment restrictions includes:

» **Personal Lifetime Ban**

After leaving government service, you may not represent another individual or company to the government regarding particular matters that you worked on while in government service.

Former Service members may not knowingly make a communication or appearance on behalf of any other person, with the intent to influence, before any officer or employee of any Federal agency or court in connection with a particular matter in which the officer or employee personally and substantially participated, which involved

a specific party at the time of the participation and representation, and in which the U.S. is a party or has a direct and substantial interest. (18 USC 207(a) (1))*

» **Seeking or Negotiating for Post-Government Employment**

Once you have started seeking or negotiating employment with a prospective employer, you may not take any official action that will affect the financial interests of that prospective employer.

An officer or employee may not participate personally and substantially in a particular matter that, to his or her knowledge, will have a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of a prospective employer with whom the employee is seeking or negotiating employment.

» **Official Responsibility Two-Year Ban**

For two years after leaving government service, you may not represent someone else to the government regarding particular matters that you did not work on yourself, but were pending under your responsibility during your last year of government service.

For a period of two years after termination of government service, former government officers and employees may not knowingly make a communication or appearance on behalf of any other person, with the intent to influence, before any officer or employee of any Federal agency or court, in connection with a particular matter which the employee reasonably should have known was actually pending under his or her official responsibility within one year before the employee left government service, which involved a specific party at that time, and in which the U.S. is a party or has a direct and substantial interest. (18 USC 207(a) (2))*

» **Trade or Treaty One-Year Ban**

For one year after leaving government service, you may not aid, advise, or represent someone else regarding trade or treaty negotiations that you worked on during your last year of government service.

For a period of one year after leaving government service, former employees or officers may not knowingly represent, aid, or advise someone else on the basis of *covered information*, concerning any ongoing *trade or treaty negotiation* in which the employee participated personally and substantially in his last year of government service. (18 USC 207(b))*

» **Compensation for Representation to the Government by Others**

After leaving government service, you may not accept compensation for representational services, which were provided by anyone while you were a government employee, before a Federal agency or court regarding particular matters in which the government was a party or had a substantial interest.

This prohibition may affect personnel who leave the government and share in the proceeds of the partnership or business for representational services that occurred before the employee terminated Federal service (i.e., lobbying, consulting, and law firms). (18 USC 203)*

» **Additional Restrictions for Retired Military Personnel and Reservists
Foreign Employment**

* This does not apply to former military enlisted personnel.

Unless you receive prior authorization from your Service Secretary and the Secretary of State, you may forfeit your military pay during the time you perform services for a foreign government.

The U.S. Constitution prohibits retired military personnel and reservists from receiving pay from foreign governments without Congressional authorization. In 37 USC 908, Congress authorizes the Secretary of State and Secretary of the appropriate Military Department to approve such receipt of pay. Each military service has implementing directives. Retired personnel and reservists who violate this Constitutional proscription may forfeit pay equal in amount to their foreign pay.

» **Employment by Department of Defense (DoD)**

Public Law 5 USC 3326 prohibits the appointment of retired military personnel to civil service positions (including a non-appropriated fund activity) in any DoD component for six months after retirement. (This restriction has been temporarily waived following the attacks of 9/11).

» **Employment During Terminal Leave**

<p>Holding a civil office in state or local government</p> <p>While on active duty (including terminal leave), military officers are prohibited by 10 USC 973(b) from holding a “civil office” with a state or local government.</p>	<p>Outside employment</p> <p>If you are currently required to obtain permission prior to engaging in outside employment, that requirement will most likely carry over during terminal leave.</p>
<p>Civilian position in the U.S. Government</p> <p>Military personnel on terminal leave are authorized to accept a civilian position in the U.S. government and receive the pay and allowances of that position as well as their military pay and allowances. (5 USC 5534a).</p> <p><i>Note: While on terminal leave, you are still an active duty Service member, and the restrictions that apply to you while on active duty still apply.</i></p>	

Restriction on representing others to the federal government

You may not represent anybody outside the government to the government on any particular matter involving the government. Military officers working on terminal leave (like all federal employees) are prohibited by 18 USC 205 and 18 USC 203 from representing their new employer to the government. In almost every case, this precludes a member from interacting or appearing in the federal workplace as a contractor. Being present in government offices on behalf of a contractor inherently is a representation. Of course, military officers on terminal leave may begin work with the contractor, but only “behind the scenes” at a contractor office or otherwise away from the government workplace.*

* This does not apply to former military enlisted personnel.

FACTS AND ADVICE

PREPARING FOR THE NEW CAREER

DOL and Service-Sponsored Workshops

DOL sponsors TAP Employment Workshops in conjunction with the installation Transition Assistance staffs. TAP for separating and retiring Service members is a cooperative effort between DOL/Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS), the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Since 1990, TAP Employment Workshops have provided job preparation assistance to over two million separating and retiring military members. Workshops typically run two and a half days; however some local installations may combine this workshop at least 180 days prior to separation.

You should attend the DOL TAP Employment Workshop at least 180 days prior to separation. Spouses may also attend.

TAP Employment Workshops are standardized so that all attending Service members and spouses receive the same high level of instruction. Participants also receive an evaluation of their employability relative to the current job market. The course curriculum provides information on a variety of topics including:

- » Career exploration
- » Resume preparation
- » Strategies for an effective job search
- » Interview techniques
- » Reviewing job offers
- » Prevention of homelessness
- » Entrepreneurship information; and
- » Other available support and assistance.

All Tap attendees receive the same student manual and all TAP facilitators receive the same facilitator manual, Both TAP Employment Workshop manual and the facilitator manual are available via the internet through the NVTI Web site at: www.nvti.ucdenver.edu/home/infoVeterans.

DOL Career One-Stop Centers

Career One-Stop centers are sponsored by the DOL, Employment and Training Administration, and assist Service members and their spouses in all facets of career groundwork. Services available at the centers at the Career One-Stop center include help with self assessment, job search, employment trends, wage and salary information, resume and interview tips, training and education, and available resources.

Job Fairs

Job fairs, which bring together employers interested in hiring former military personnel, are sponsored by installations, communities, and veteran service organizations. Overseas, job fairs are sponsored by the DoD. It is helpful to attend as many fairs as possible, to make contacts, practice representing you to employers, and get interview experience.

Verification of Military Experience

Verification of your military experience and training is useful in preparing your resume and establishing your capabilities with prospective employers. Verification is also helpful if you are applying to a college or vocational institution.

As a Service member, you have had numerous training and job experiences, perhaps too many to recall easily and include on a job or college application. Fortunately, the DD Form 2586, "Verification of Military Experience and Training," which is created from your automated records on file, lists your military job experience and training history, recommended college credit information, and civilian equivalent job titles.



OBTAINING THE VMET DOCUMENT

You can electronically download and print your VMET document and personal cover letter from the VMET website. Simply click the "Request Document" and "Request Cover Letter," tabs and print each of these documents. You must have a current DoD Common Access Card (CAC) or have a current DFAS "myPay" PIN; however, you should retrieve it within 120 days prior to your separation. If you have problems getting your VMET and need assistance, contact your local Transition Counselor.



The VMET website and instructions are located in the **Resources** section at the end of this chapter.



ONCE YOU RECEIVE YOUR VMET DOCUMENT

Identify the items that relate to the type of work or education you are pursuing and include them in your resume. If there are problems with information listed on the form, follow the guidance indicated below for your respective service.

Army	Review and follow the guidance provided by the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) listed on the VMET website.
Air Force	Follow the instructions in the verification document cover letter or contact your Transition Counselor.
Navy	Contact your Command Career Counselor or review and follow the guidance provided by the FAQs listed on the VMET website.
Marine Corps	Follow the instructions in the verification document cover letter. If you need further assistance, contact your Family Services.

Civilian Occupations Corresponding to Military Occupations

Army and Navy “COOL” Credentialing Programs

The Army and Navy both offer Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL). These programs help you to find civilian credentials related to your rating or military occupational specialty. You can learn how to get the credentials and learn about programs that will help pay credentialing fees.

Air Force Credentialing and Educational Research Tool (CERT)

CERT is a valuable resource for Air Force personnel in increasing awareness of professional development opportunities applicable to USAF occupational specialties, crosswalks to CCAF degree programs, national professional certifications, certification agencies, and more.



Websites are located in the **Resources** section of this chapter.

Helmets to Hardhats

This program will help you find career opportunities in the construction industry that match your military background. It is congressionally funded and is a fast and easy way for active duty, Reservists, and Guardsmen to find a career in the construction industry.



The website is located in the **Resources** section of this chapter.

United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP)

USMAP is available to members of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Those who participate in this program are eligible to receive a DOL Certificate of Completion, which provides an advantage in getting civilian jobs.



The website is located in the **Resources** section of this chapter.

VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program for Disabled Veterans (VR&E)

VR&E is a program whose primary function is to help veterans with service-connected disabilities become suitably employed, maintain employment, or achieve independence in daily living.

The program offers a number of services to help each eligible disabled veteran reach his or her rehabilitation goals. These services include vocational and personal counseling, education and training, financial aid, job assistance, and, if needed, medical and dental treatment.

Services generally last up to 48 months, but they can be extended in certain instances. If you need training, the VA will pay your training costs, such as tuition and fees, books,

supplies, equipment, and, if needed, special services. While you are in training, VA will also pay you a monthly benefit to help with living expenses, called a subsistence allowance.



HOW TO APPLY

You can apply by filling out VA Form 28-1900, “Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation,” and mail it to the VA regional office that serves your area. You can also apply online at the website listed in the Resources section of this chapter.



ELIGIBILITY

Usually, in order to be eligible for VA VR&E, you must first be awarded a monthly VA disability compensation payment. However, if you are awaiting discharge because of a disability, you may be eligible for vocational rehabilitation. Eligibility is also based on meeting the following conditions:

- » You served on or after September 16, 1940, and
- » Your service-connected disabilities (SCD) are rated at least 20% disabling by VA, and
- » You need Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to overcome an employment handicap, and
- » It has been less than 12 years since VA notified you of your qualified SCD.

Note: You may be entitled to VR services if you are rated 10% disabled; however it must be determined that you have a serious employment handicap (SEH). Regardless of your SCD rating percentage, you may have longer than 12 years to use your VR benefit if certain conditions prevented you from participating in a VR program or it is determined that you have a SEH.

EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Reserve Affiliation

When you leave active duty service, you have the opportunity to earn cash bonuses and retain many of your military benefits by joining the Selected Reserve or National Guard.

Obligation to Service Continues for Eight Years

When you entered the service, you incurred a military service obligation of eight years. If you are separating prior to fulfilling eight years of service, then some of that obligation probably remains. You **must** satisfy that obligation by becoming a member of the Ready Reserve in one of the following categories:

- » **Selected Reserve**

You may voluntarily affiliate with the Selected Reserve, either with a National Guard or Reserve unit or a Reserve individual program.

- Upon becoming a member of the Selected Reserves, you may be recalled to active duty in time of war or national emergency. You may also be ordered to active duty involuntarily for up to 270 days, for any single contingency operation, without a declaration of a national emergency.
- Members participate and train as required by the Reserve category to which they belong. For National Guard and Reserve unit programs, this usually means a minimum of one weekend a month and two weeks of annual training per year. For Reserve individual programs, the training requirement may be somewhat less.

» **Inactive National Guard**

If you served in the Army, you may become a member of the Army National Guard and request transfer to the Inactive National Guard if unable to participate in regular unit training.

- Currently, only the Army maintains an Inactive National Guard. This consists of National Guard personnel in an inactive status, who are attached to a specific National Guard unit but do not participate in training.
- As a member of the Inactive National Guard, you would be recalled to active duty with your unit. To remain a member, you must muster once a year with your assigned unit.

» **Individual Ready Reserve (IRR)**

If you do not affiliate with one of the above programs, your Service will automatically or involuntarily assign you to the IRR.

- The IRR consists mainly of individuals who have had training and who have served previously in the active component. Other IRR members come from the Selected Reserve and have some of their military service obligation remaining.
- As an IRR member, you may be involuntarily recalled upon declaration of a national emergency. Otherwise, participation requirements may include an annual day of muster duty to satisfy statutory screening requirements.
- IRR members may participate in voluntary temporary tours of active duty and military professional development education programs.

Standby Reserve

If you have not completed your eight-year military service obligation, you will be transferred to a Reserve Component in either the Ready Reserve (Selected Reserve, IRR, or Inactive National Guard), or in the Standby Reserve, under certain conditions.

- » You may be placed in the Standby Reserve if you still have time remaining to complete your military service obligation and are either:
 - Filling a “key” position in a civilian occupation, or
 - Have a temporary hardship or disability.
- » Members of the Standby Reserve have no participation or training requirements, but, in the event of a national emergency, may be involuntarily recalled to active duty. As the term “standby” implies, these reservists will only be mobilized once it has been determined that there are insufficient numbers of qualified members in the Ready Reserve to do the job.



Contact the Reserve Component Transition Office at your installation to see if you qualify for assignment to the Standby Reserve. If you cannot locate this office, contact your installation's personnel office for assistance.

Opportunity for Continued Military Service Beyond Eight Years

If you *have* served eight years or more of active duty, you may no longer have a military service obligation and do not have to affiliate with the National Guard or Reserves. You may however, choose to continue military service by affiliating with a Reserve Component in one of these categories.

Benefits of Joining a Selected Reserve Unit

The benefits of joining the Selected Reserve include the following:

- » Extra pay
- » Opportunity for promotion
- » Full-time employment opportunity
- » Military retirement opportunity
- » TRICARE reserve select
- » Exchange and commissary privileges
- » Morale, welfare, and recreation programs
- » Education assistance
- » Officer and Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) clubs
- » Travel (on a space-available basis)
- » Servicemen's group life insurance
- » Reserve Component survivors benefits plan
- » Legal assistance
- » Family centers
- » Opportunities for contacts in the civilian community
- » Continuation of military ties
- » Reserve Component dental plan

Priority Placement



Priority placement in a Selected Reserve unit is authorized for "Eligible Involuntary" separatees who apply within one year after their separation. Your installation's retention or personnel office can assist you. If you have already separated, **contact** the Reserve or National Guard recruiter listed in your local telephone directory.

Where to Sign Up for the Reserves



WHILE YOU ARE IN THE MILITARY

Contact your installation's Reserve Component Transition Office. The staff will provide you with information about your obligations and benefit. In most cases, they will put you in touch with an active duty recruiter. You can access information about opportunities in the Reserve and National Guard online at the websites listed in the Resources section of this chapter.

ONCE YOU ARE OUT

Contact the nearest Reserve or National Guard unit listed in your local telephone directory. Any recruiting office will refer you to the appropriate recruiter.

OTHER RESOURCES

Many overseas and stateside installations have National Guard and Reserve recruiters located on their facilities.

PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Public and Community Service (PACS)

Put your military training and skills to greater use continuing your service at the national, state, and local levels. Military service has prepared and equipped you with unique experiences possessed by only a small percentage of the American population. In planning for your transition options, consider tools and resources available to help you get your name in front of non-profit, public, and community service organizations such as schools, hospitals, law enforcement agencies, social service agencies and many more for employment opportunities.

This unique career field enables you to lend your military training to help address compelling community issues and challenges in education, public safety, health and human services, the environment, and more. Opportunities may include efforts to tutor children and adults, rehabilitate housing for low-income families, immunize children against preventable diseases, respond to natural disasters, mentor young people, help persons with disabilities and the elderly maintain their independence, and manage after-school programs for social and academic enrichment, to name a few.

At the Federal government level, extraordinary efforts are being made to attract trained military talent into the federal workforce. Transitioning Service members (soon to be veterans) have technical skills in areas of critical importance, and many also already have security clearances required for some Federal positions.

TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES



Troops to Teachers (TTT) Program

TTT is a Department of Defense program that since 1994 has helped thousands of military personnel with the transition from a military career to a rewarding career as a public school, public charter school or bureau school teacher (grades kindergarten through 12th grade.) Today, there are shortages in critical subject areas like math, science, foreign language and special education as well as regional teacher shortages.

To become a teacher, you must be certified. There is not a nationally recognized teacher certification or license. Each state determines the requirement for state certification and this can vary by subject and grade level. If you have ever wondered how to translate your unique set of skills into a new career, TTT can help by providing you the advice, the resources, and the tools you will need to find meaningful work in education.

Through a network of regional and state offices, TTT will acquaint you with the state's certification requirements and help you navigate the transition from military service to a career in education by providing:

- » Counseling and assistance regarding teacher certification processes
- » Information about the different pathways to state certification
- » Leads on employment opportunities

In addition to the regional/state offices, a central website, www.proudtoserveagain.com, offers tips on résumé building, job search resources, interviewing for a position, and much more. The website also includes a Self-Determination Eligibility Guide that helps determine whether or not you are eligible to enroll in the program.

Our nation's youth needs you. They deserve a high quality education taught by individuals with compassion, drive, integrity, and commitment. You have exemplified these qualities throughout your military service. You can help lead our nation's children to a brighter future. Serve again by becoming a teacher.



ELIGIBILITY

- » Length of Service
 - Generally, any veteran with any combination of six or more years of active duty and/or drilling reserves service time
 - Any retired veteran
 - Veterans with a Service Determined Disability (SDD) may also be eligible (a SDD is not the same as a VA Service Connected Disability (SCD)).
- » Education
 - Career Technical/Vocational Subjects: One year of college, or meet the state's vocational certification requirements.
 - Academic Subjects: A Bachelor's degree or higher is required.

Please go to www.proudtoserveagain.com to "Determine your Eligibility."

Services Offered

- » Financial assistance
 - Stipend—Up to \$5,000 to offset tuition, books, and other associated costs incurred in the certification process; or,
 - Bonus—Up to \$10,000 to teach in a qualifying school.
- » Counseling—A TTT office is available for every state or territory to:
 - Assist you make an informed decision on teaching as a second career
 - Individual Counseling
 - ‘Teaching as a Second Career’ Seminar
 - Ensure you understand the state or territory teacher certification or licensure requirements
 - Provide assistance with:
 - Selecting an appropriate certification program
 - Navigating the state certification process
 - Understanding the long-range employment outlook for the state or territory
 - Identifying the subject areas that are experiencing teacher shortages
 - Identifying locales where teachers are needed in the state or territory
 - Resume building
 - Interviewing techniques
- » Mentoring—Each state retains a roster of TTT Mentors who:
 - Are active members of the Troops to Teacher program
 - Have firsthand knowledge of and experience in becoming a teacher
 - Will frequently allow you into their classrooms to observe

TTT “Hire in Advance Program”

This program guarantees teaching jobs for eligible Service members up to three years before they retire or separate from active duty.



ELIGIBILITY

Eligible personnel can send in applications and interview with school officials, who can officially hire them up to three years before they leave active duty. The TTT and the Hire in Advance Program are both open to military spouses.

Veterans Separated Due to SCD



ELIGIBILITY

Those interested in elementary or secondary-teaching positions must have a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college. Individuals who do not have a bachelor’s degree, but have experience in a vocational/technical field may also submit an application.

FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for employment with the U.S. Government are available all over the world. Here are some ways to find out about federal job listings.



Government Jobs Near You

Openings may be available at the installation from which you are separating. You can find out about these from your local civilian personnel office.

Opportunities Overseas

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) maintains federal job information/testing offices in each state.

Working for the DoD

The DoD is the nation's number-one employer of veterans, offering nearly 700 challenging occupations. As a DoD civilian, you can serve with the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or any one of the many other Defense agencies. Career opportunities exist in research laboratories, manufacturing facilities, office complexes, hospitals, military bases, and schools in almost every major population center in the United States and in numerous countries throughout the world.

The DoD offers preference in employment to eligible veterans, along with world-class benefits, and many opportunities for personal and professional growth, travel, and advancement.

Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF) Opportunities

The six major DoD NAF employers are the Department of the Army, the Department of the Air Force, United States Marine Corps, Commander Navy Installation Command (CNIC), the Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM), and the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES). DoD NAF employees are Federal employees paid by Nonappropriated Funds. The majority of DoD NAF employees working in white-collar (non-craft and trades) positions are covered by six pay bands, NF-1 through NF-6 (GS-1 through SES equivalent). A separate pay band structure, CY-I and CY-II (GS-2 through GS-5 equivalent) covers child and youth program workers. DoD crafts and trades positions are paid at local prevailing wage rates.



For specific NAF job opportunities, visit the website listed in the **Resources** section of this chapter or the local NAF Human Resource Office.

Applying for Federal Jobs



Apply for most federal jobs by preparing and submitting the documents requested in the federal job announcement.



If you have any questions, **contact** the civilian personnel office and/or the point of contact listed on the job announcement. If you believe your veterans' preference rights have been violated when applying for federal jobs, contact the DOL, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) for assistance under the Veterans' Employment Opportunities Act of 1998.

Note: Young men age 18 to 26 are required by law to be registered with Selective Service.

Employment Preferences

Involuntarily and Certain Voluntarily Separated Members

Under Chapter 58, Section 1143 (d) of title 10, U.S. Code, eligibility applies to members of the Armed Forces, and their dependents, who were on active duty on September 30, 1990 and who were involuntarily separated under honorable conditions on or after October 1, 1990. Preference eligible veterans shall be identified by possession of a DD Form 1173, "Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card," over-stamped with "TA."

Military Spouses

Under DoD Instruction 1404.12, "Employment of Spouses of Active Duty Military Members Stationed Worldwide," eligibility applies to spouses of active duty military members of the Armed Forces. Under this basic policy, preferences for military spouses are the same as the involuntarily and certain voluntarily separated members, except that military spouse preference has priority over that preference.

Spouse preference applies to jobs graded at NF-3 and below, and the positions paid at hourly rates. Preference applies to any job that is open to competition in accordance with merit staffing practices. Spouse preference may be used for each "permanent relocation" of the military sponsor, or in surrounding localities to which a spouse is willing to travel on a daily basis.



The spouse must have been married to the military sponsor before relocation in the duty station.

Family Members in Foreign Areas



In accordance with DoD Instruction 1400.23 and DoD 1402.2-M, Chapter VII, family members of active duty military members and civilian employees stationed in foreign areas are eligible.

Basic policy allows preference for all NAF jobs. Preferences apply when not at variance with the Status of Forces Agreements, country-to-country agreements, treaties, or as prescribed by DoD Instruction 1400.23.

Veterans Preferences

Veterans have advantages over non-veterans when applying for federal employment. Veterans' hiring preference laws do *not* imply guaranteed placement of a veteran in every federal job. The veterans' hiring preference laws are not applicable to NAF employment.

The Veterans' Preference Point System for Federal Employment

The point system program is administered by the OPM. The VA issues letters to OPM indicating the degree of disability for veterans' preference purposes. A point system is used to determine veterans' hiring preference:

» **Five-Point Preference**

Five points are given to honorably separated veterans who have served more than 180 consecutive days of active duty before October 14, 1976 (including service during training under the six-month Reserve or National Guard programs), or during any war or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized (such as Desert Shield/Storm) and served continuously for 24 months or the full period called or ordered to active duty (including for training). Retired members of the Armed Forces above the rank of Major or Lieutenant Commander are no longer eligible for the five-point preference. Their preference is contingent upon a disability.

» **Ten-Point Preference**

Ten points are given to disabled veterans and veterans who are awarded the Purple Heart and honorably separated.

Hiring preference is also granted to the spouse of an unemployable disabled veteran, the unmarried widow or widower of a veteran, or the mother of a deceased or disabled veteran. Any federal agency personnel officer can give you more information on the point system.

Veterans' Recruitment Appointment (VRA)

The VRA is a special authority by which agencies may appoint an eligible veteran without competition. The candidate does not have to be on an eligibility list, but must meet the basic qualification requirements for the position. The VRA is a convenient method of appointment for both the agency and the veteran. However, use of the authority is entirely discretionary and no one is entitled to a VRA appointment. VRA appointees initially are hired for a two-year period. Successful completion of the two-year VRA appointment leads to a permanent civil service appointment.

***Note:** A veteran may be employed without competition on a temporary or term appointment based on VRA eligibility. Such an appointment is not a VRA appointment and does not lead to conversion to a permanent position.*



ELIGIBILITY

The following individuals are eligible for a VRA:

- » Disabled veterans. Eligible veterans with a SCD of 30% or more have no time limit. For information about specific VRA job opportunities, contact the personnel office at the federal agency where you would like to work.
- » Veterans who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during a war declared by Congress, or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized.
- » Veterans who, while serving on active duty in the Armed Forces, participated in a military operation for which the Armed Forces Service Medal was awarded.
- » Veterans separated from active duty within the past three years.
- » Vietnam or post-Vietnam-era veterans qualify for appointments under VRA until 10 years after their last discharge or separation from active duty or until December 31, 1995, whichever is later.

There is no minimum service requirement, but the individual must have served on active duty, not active duty for training.

VETERANS PRIORITY AT STATE EMPLOYMENT OFFICES

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) mandates that veterans be provided priority in placement services and activities (screening and referral on job orders, mass recruitment, job banks/talent banks) and referral to training opportunities. Veterans are entitled to priority of service in *all* employment and training programs (not just state) paid for in full or in part by the DOL, which includes discretionary funded programs and sub-contractors/grantees of the workforce system.

As a veteran, you receive special consideration and priority from your state employment office, which can provide these and many additional services, as noted below.

» Training Opportunities

State employment offices can offer you seminars on subjects such as resume writing, interviewing skills, and career changes; information on vocational training opportunities; and proficiency tests in typing and shorthand for positions requiring such certification.

» Information

At your state employment office, you will find data on state training, employment, and apprenticeship programs; and statistics regarding employment availability, economic climate, and cost of living.

» VETS Office

There is at least one VETS Office in every state. Veterans' employment representatives may also be found at local employment offices with large numbers of veterans' job applicants. Their job is to monitor and oversee veterans' employment services, administer veterans' training programs, and protect the reemployment rights of veterans.



Make sure you take your DD Form 214, “Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty” (certified copy) with you for your first appointment with the state employment office.

SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMS

Entrepreneurship and Business Ownership

Small business ownership is a career option worth considering. The skills and strengths arising from military experience, such as leadership, organization, international acumen and the ability to work under pressure, lend themselves naturally to entrepreneurship. Many veterans find themselves attracted to business ownership when they leave the military.

A growing number of resources and programs are available in government at the federal, state, and local level to support successful entrepreneurship by veterans and Service members and their spouses. The SBA manages most Federal small business programs for veterans, and a growing number of American academic institutions are delivering entrepreneurial training programs designed specifically for veterans, Service members, and their spouses or caregivers.

Reasons to Consider Entrepreneurship

» Being Your Own Boss

Autonomy is the number-one reason given by new entrepreneurs when making this career choice—both in answering to a boss and in conforming to a set work schedule. Self discipline, a strong sense of responsibility and a willingness to work long hours when necessary are critical prerequisite personal traits.

» Challenge

Many successful entrepreneurs say they are motivated by the unique satisfaction that self-actualization provides through business ownership. However, business ownership entails taking risks on a regular basis, which may discourage some people who happen to be “risk averse” from making this career choice.

» Financial

Entrepreneurship can be an escape from structured pay charts and minimal growth opportunities. However, despite the potential of big payoffs, entrepreneurs sometimes have to work months—even years—before they begin to see big profits. Oftentimes, entrepreneurs take a pay cut when they start out on their own.

» Intangible Desire

Entrepreneurship takes time, energy, and money, but it also takes heart in order to succeed, especially in the face of setbacks.

Skills

Many of the skills needed in entrepreneurship are those gained through military experience, including:

- » Leadership
- » Ability to get along with and work with all types of people
- » Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines
- » Ability to give directions and delegate
- » Good planning and organizational skills
- » Problem-solving skills
- » Familiarity with personnel administration and record keeping
- » Flexibility and adaptability
- » Self-direction
- » Initiative
- » Strong work habits
- » Standards of quality and a commitment to excellence

Other skills that lead to successful entrepreneurship include financial, high energy level and innovation.

Personality

Like any job, there are certain types of personalities that thrive in entrepreneurship.

- » Goal-oriented
- » Independent
- » Confidence
- » Innovative and creative
- » Strong commitment
- » Highly reliable
- » Competitive
- » Desire to work hard
- » Problem solver
- » Good manager
- » Organized
- » Honest
- » Tolerance for failure, but a drive to achieve
- » Idea-oriented
- » Motivated by challenge
- » Calculated risk-taker
- » Courageous
- » Persistent
- » Adaptable
- » Positive

Successful entrepreneurs possess a blend of skills and strengths; they don't necessarily possess every one of the skills and traits listed above. They improve on the ones they have and work to overcome the ones they don't have.

Franchise Ownership

When you purchase a franchise, you get a team of support, which includes marketing assistance, HR tools, and training. Having others who are committed to your success as a business owner and who are willing and able to help when you run into problems is one of the many advantages to franchise ownership.



FIGURE 4. WEIGHING FRANCHISE OWNERSHIP

Advantages of Franchises

» A Higher Rate of Success

Franchise success rate is the top reason why people buy franchises. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, 95% of franchises are still in business after five years. Franchisors (the companies who sell or grant franchises to individuals) evaluate each prospective franchisee (individual franchise owners) and invest in those they think will thrive as franchise owners for their companies. They assess skills, experience, motivation, and financial capacity and select those applicants who can afford the franchise and execute the business model.

» Established Brand Identity

One of the key advantages of operating a franchise is the ability to give consumers a brand they know, quality they trust, and a consistency they have come to expect. Purchasing a franchise means purchasing the reputation of the brand, an established customer base, and a set of products or services that have been successfully tested in communities.

» Foundation Is in Place

In a franchise system, the work has already been done to develop a product or service, identify and reach a target market, build a reputation, and create a replicable business model. While many new business owners spend the first year (or longer) testing

products, sales tactics and marketing avenues, franchise owners already know what works and how to effectively reach their target audience.

» **Business Support**

While some individuals may thrive in the multiple roles business owners must take on, others need support in some or all of the aspects of business ownership. Franchisees get the support they need in the form of training and even on-site assistance. Most franchisors provide human resources tools, specialized software, marketing materials, and other valuable resources that independent business owners must find or develop for themselves.

» **Easier to Finance**

Prospective franchisees applying for a business loan have the advantage of a tested product or service, a successful business model, and a core of support from the franchisor. Banks know that franchises have a higher likelihood of success than other new businesses; as a result, it is often easier to secure a business loan for a franchise than for a business start-up.

Disadvantages of Franchises

» **Factors Beyond Your Control**

The centerpiece of a franchise is the value of the brand. If the brand's reputation becomes damaged on account of the parent company or a branch franchise, the effects on your business may not be good. Most franchise agreements are long term; getting out of one may be difficult.

» **High Costs**

Franchise fees, capital requirements, marketing fees, royalties and other fees add up. In fact, one of the reasons that new franchises fail is insufficient funding and a lack of working capital. However, there are hundreds of reputable, low-cost franchises for those who can make controlling costs a top priority.

» **Restrictions**

Franchises are based on previously-developed, successfully-tested business models and plans. Most franchisors have strict regulations on how individual franchises may operate, and they rarely allow deviations. For example, a franchise owner must sell a specific product or service and advertise with specific marketing materials and slogans. While this may appeal to a business owner who wants structure and support, others may find these mandates too restrictive.

» **Reduced Profits**

A franchise owner's hard work will normally result in higher profits for the business, but most franchisors will require continuous monthly royalty payments equaling 5–10% of profits.

The Business Plan

The importance of a good business plan cannot be overstated; it can make the difference in whether or not you receive a loan or whether someone invests in your company. Although all business plans vary slightly, there are six primary sections that should be included in all plans.

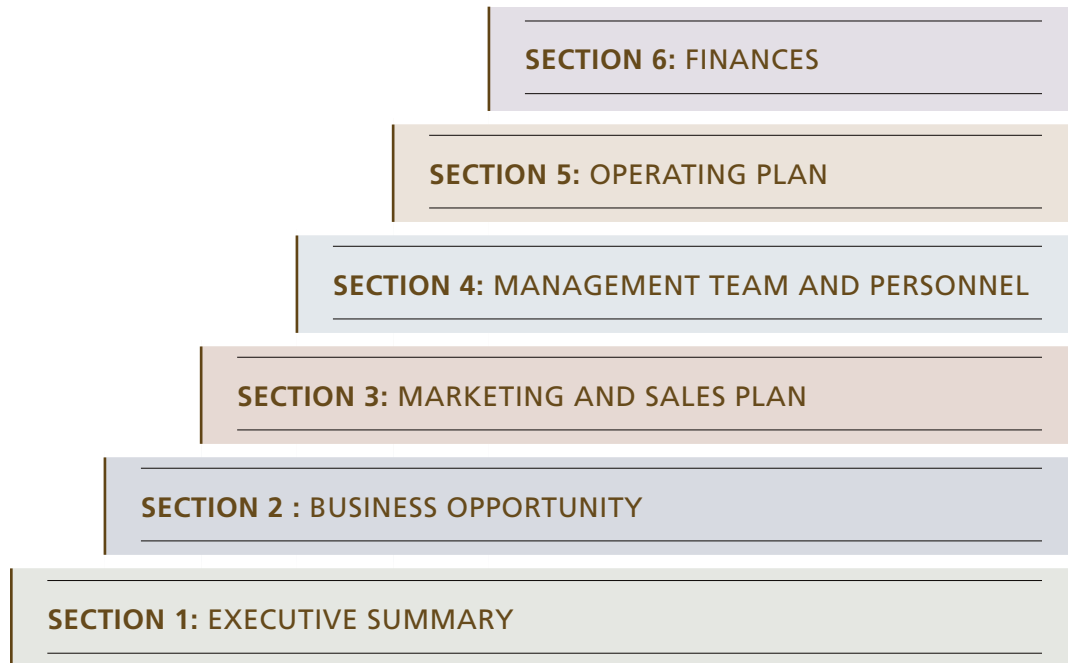


FIGURE 5. BUSINESS PLAN SECTIONS

SECTION 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The executive summary is perhaps the most critical part of your business plan. The executive summary, which should be no more than a couple of pages, should describe your business and highlight the key points from each section of your business plan. For example, it would mention how your product differs from others on the market but would not include an exhaustive list of competitors and their products. If a lender or investor likes what is written in the executive summary, he or she will continue reading; otherwise, you may not get another chance to impress them with your ideas.

SECTION 2

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

This section should first define the simple vision for your company. Provide an overview of your business, including its history, progress to date, and vision for the future. Second, the business opportunity must address your product, including why it is different, why customers will buy your product, whether or not your product is already developed, and whether you hold or plan to hold any patents, copyrights, or trademarks.

SECTION 3

MARKETING AND SALES PLAN

First, define your business and the product or service you are going to sell and provide an overview of your market area. Identify your competition and the products or services they offer, what you can offer that the competition does not, and how you will attract customers away from the competition. Explain how you can offer your product for less money or how you plan to attract customers despite a higher price. Finally, give an overview of how you will sell your product or service (online, face-to-face, etc.) and how that relates to the competition's sales methods.

Next, describe your customers, including their demographics, needs, patterns, and preferences. Describe the size of your target market and what they will find attractive about your product.

Third, outline your marketing strategy by identifying the methods you will use to market your product.

Last, create your marketing budget. For example, if you plan to rent a billboard on the main interstate for three months, find out exactly how much it costs. Do not guess on marketing costs. If costs seem too high, eliminate high-cost options or look for different marketing strategies.

SECTION 4

MANAGEMENT TEAM AND PERSONNEL

This section of your business plan should outline the structure and key skills of your staff.

Define positions, roles and a summary of each person's background, experience, and qualifications. Include the status of each individual (e.g., full-time and part-time); also include descriptions and qualifications for consultants and partners. If you have not begun hiring employees, include the structure and key skills of staff you plan to hire, a timeline for hiring, and the salaries assigned to each position. Identify recruitment and training procedures, timelines, and the costs of employee training.

SECTION 5

OPERATING PLAN

This section should include office space and location, production facilities, and IT infrastructure. Include the costs associated with this location, the benefits and disadvantages to being housed in that location, and whether you rent or own the space. If you have plans for upgrading your space or relocating, include those too.

SECTION 6

FINANCES

The purpose of this section is to inform lenders and investors of how much capital you need, how secure their loans or investments are, how you plan to repay the loans, and what your projected sources of revenue and income will be. Include detailed financial projections by month for the first year and by quarter for years two and three, as well as the assumptions upon which your projections were made, including the breakdown of anticipated costs and revenues for all three years. You should also include cash flow statements, loan applications, capital equipment and supply lists, and profit and loss statements.

Financing Options

Every entrepreneur must take two costs into account: start-up costs and recurring costs. Start-up costs are all of the one-time costs required to start a business, such as a security deposit on office space, furniture and equipment purchase, signage, etc. Recurring costs are all of the costs encountered monthly, such as salary and benefit expenses, insurance fees, monthly rent, etc. If you need to borrow money to start your business, there are several different funding options to consider. Each funding source brings with it a series of pros and cons that should be weighed in order to find a lender to meet your start-up needs.



FIGURE 6. OPTIONS FOR FINANCING SMALL BUSINESSES

OPTION 1

BANKS, CREDIT UNIONS, OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, SBA, STATES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Banks offer a variety of loans and can advise you as to which type of loan would be best for your needs. Some loans, for example, require you to make set payments of both the principal and interest, whereas others require you to pay back only the interest with a lump payment of the entire principal at the end.

The advantage of approaching banks for loans is that banks are designed for just that purpose. The downside is that if you have a bad credit history or have accumulated debt, loan approval can be difficult. Determine whether bank loans are appropriate for your needs by performing research. Locate the banks in your region, find out what types of loans they offer, and learn what their requirements are.

OPTION 1	Credit Unions, other financial institutions, SBA Loan Guaranteed programs, and state and local governments all offer a variety of loan products, ranging from micro-loans with mandatory business counseling to SBA 7a, 504 and Small Business Investment Company (SBIC) loan providers for purchase, operations, infrastructure, growth and other needs. Increasing numbers of State Governments are providing special State Linked Deposit loan programs targeted to veterans and Reserve Component members. SBA employees and counselors can provide localized guidance to available resources and cooperating lenders.
<i>CONTINUED</i>	

OPTION 2	Venture capital firms invest in small companies in return for equity. They look for companies with the potential for high-growth and high-profitability. Although some venture capitalists will invest in companies that are just beginning, they generally seek to fund companies that have been in business for some amount of time, in order to assess progress, growth, and earned revenues. For that reason, acquiring start-up funding from venture capitalists can be very difficult. Also, the earlier the stage of investment, the more equity venture capital firms require. If you are serious about acquiring venture capital funds, look for firms that specifically cater to business in the start-up phase. A good business plan and strong management team will increase the odds of securing venture capital funding.
VENTURE CAPITAL FIRMS	

OPTION 3	Angel investors are individuals who invest their own money in entrepreneurial ventures in return for equity. Angel investors can be persons you know or persons you don't know, and can work as an individual or be part of an Angel group. Angel investors generally invest smaller amounts of money in companies than do venture capitalists. Consider Angel investors for funding when you have exhausted funding from your friends and family but aren't ready to approach a venture capital firm.
ANGEL INVESTORS	

OPTION 4	In some cases, funding can be secured by current or potential partners seeking a share of the business. The advantages to partner financing are that partners considering investment are already knowledgeable about the business idea and have confidence in its future. The approval process may be easier than with a bank or lending firm. The downside is that you are giving up a portion of your control in exchange for this funding.
PARTNERS	

OPTION 5

**FRIENDS
AND FAMILY**

There are benefits to acquiring loans this way, and it is a popular source of funding for small businesses. Friends and family already know you, your character, and your history of credit, debt, and financial management, but they should still review your business plan. The terms on which you must pay back loans from friends and family will likely be more relaxed, and they may not demand interest on the repayment of the loan. The downside to borrowing from friends and family is the potential inability to repay the loan, damaging not only your finances but their finances and the relationships you share with them.

OPTION 6

**SELF-
FINANCING**

Self-financing is the most popular form of financing for small business owners, and it can be beneficial when you approach other lenders. Investing your own money demonstrates your faith that your business will succeed. Forms of self-financing include borrowing against your retirement fund, taking out personal lines of credit, and utilizing a home equity loan. The disadvantage to financing your business this way is that if your business flounders and you are unable to repay the money, you can lose a lot more than your business. Carefully consider whether self-financing is the right option for you.

**U.S. SBA Programs**

Since 1953, the SBA has helped veterans start, manage, and grow small businesses. Today, the SBA provides specific programs for veterans, service-disabled veterans, and reserve and national guard members, and they offer a full range of entrepreneurial support programs to every American, including veterans.

On August 17, 1999, Congress passed Public Law 106-50, The Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999. This law established the SBA Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD), under the guidance and direction of the *Associate Administrator for Veterans Business Development*, to conduct comprehensive outreach, to be the source of policy and program development, initiation and implementation for the Administration, and to act as an Ombudsman for full consideration of veterans within the Administration. OVBD manages the Veteran Business Outreach Center (VBOC) program, the Entrepreneurship Boot camp for Veterans with Disabilities (EBV) program, the Veterans as Woman Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (V-WISE) program specifically for women veterans, and the Operation Endure and Grow (OE&G) program specifically for Reserve Component members and their families.

In addition, Public Law 106-50 created the National Veterans Business Development Corporation, set goals for federal procurement for service-disabled veterans and veterans, established the Military Reservists Economic Injury Disaster Loan (MREIDL), initiated new research into the success of veterans in small business, and brought focus to veterans in the full range of SBA Capital, Entrepreneurial, and Government Contracting programs.

SBA has special, established loans and Surety Bonding programs for Veterans and Reservists, government procurement programs for Veterans across government, established Veterans Business Development Officers in every SBA District Office, and implemented special District Office outreach, counseling and training at more than 1,500 Small Business Development Centers, SCORE Chapters, and Women's Business Centers and online through SBA.

SBA Financial Assistance

SBA administers three separate loan programs. The Agency sets the guidelines for the loans while their partners (lenders, community development organizations, and micro-lending institutions) make the loans to small businesses. SBA backs those loans with a guaranty that eliminates some risk to their lending partners. When a business applies for an SBA Loan, it is actually applying for a commercial loan that is structured according to SBA requirements. Cooperating lending partners who provide the funding receive the SBA guaranty.

The Patriot Express Pilot Loan Program

The Patriot Express Pilot Loan was created by SBA to offer financial, procurement, and technical assistance programs to the military community. Patriot Express is a streamlined loan product with enhanced guarantee and interest rate characteristics. It is available to veterans, service-disabled veterans, active-duty Service members eligible for participating in the military's TAP, Reservists and National Guard members, current spouses of any of the above, spouses of any Service member and the widowed spouse of a Service member or veteran who died during service, or of a SCD.

The Patriot Express Loan is offered by SBA's network of participating lenders nationwide. It features SBA's fastest turnaround time for loan approvals. Loans are available up to \$500,000 and qualify for SBA's maximum guaranty of up to 85% for loans of \$150,000 or less and up to 75% for loans over \$150,000 up to \$500,000. The Patriot Express Loan can be used for most business purposes, including start-up, expansion, equipment purchases, working capital, inventory or business-occupied real-estate purchases and franchise purchases. Patriot Express Loans feature SBA's lowest interest rates for business loans, generally 2.25%–4.75% over prime, depending upon the size and maturity of the loan. Local SBA district offices will have a listing of Patriot Express lenders in their areas.



More details on the initiative can be found on the website listed in the **Resources** section at the end of this chapter.

Basic 7(a) Loan Guaranty

The 7(a) Loan Guaranty Program serves as the SBA's primary business loan program to help qualified small businesses obtain financing when they might not be eligible for business loans through normal lending channels.

Loan proceeds can be used for most sound business purposes including working capital, machinery and equipment, furniture and fixtures, land and building (including purchase, renovation and new construction), leasehold improvements, and debt refinancing (under special conditions). Loan maturity is up to 10 years for working capital and generally up to 25 years for fixed assets.



Visit the website listed in the **Resources** section of this chapter for more information.

Certified Development Company-504 Loan Program (CDC/504)

The CDC/504 Program is a long-term financing tool for economic development within a community. It provides growing businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land and buildings. A CDC is a nonprofit corporation set up to contribute to the economic development of its community.

CDCs work with the SBA and private-sector lenders to provide financing to small businesses. There are about 270 CDCs nationwide. Each CDC covers a specific geographic area. Typically, a 504 project includes a loan secured with a senior lien from a private-sector lender covering up to 50% of the project cost, a loan secured with a junior lien from the CDC (backed by a 100% SBA-guaranteed debenture) covering up to 40% of the cost, and a contribution of at least 10% equity from the small business being helped.

Microloan Program

SBA's Microloan Program provides very small loans and business counseling to start-up, newly established, or growing small business concerns. Under this program, SBA makes funds available to nonprofit community based lenders (intermediaries) which, in turn, make loans to eligible borrowers in amounts up to a maximum of \$50,000. The average loan size is about \$13,000. Applications are submitted to the local intermediary and all credit decisions are made on the local level.

The maximum term allowed for a microloan is six years. However, loan terms vary according to the size of the loan, the planned use of funds, the requirements of the intermediary lender, and the needs of the small business borrower. Interest rates vary, depending upon the intermediary lender and costs to the intermediary from the U.S. Treasury. Generally, these rates will be between 8% and 13%.

SBA Investment Programs

In 1958 Congress created the SBIC program. SBICs, licensed by the SBA, are privately owned and managed (venture) investment firms. They are participants in a vital partnership between government and the private sector economy.

All SBICs are profit-motivated businesses. A major incentive for SBICs to invest in small businesses is the chance to share in the success of the small business if it grows and prospers.

Equity (venture) capital or financing is money raised by a business in exchange for a share of ownership in the company. Ownership is represented by owning shares of stock outright or having the right to convert other financial instruments into stock of that private company. Two key sources of equity capital for new and emerging businesses are Angel Investors and Venture Capital Firms.

Typically, Angel Capital and Venture Capital Investors provide capital unsecured by assets to young, private companies with the potential for rapid growth. Such investing covers most industries and is appropriate for businesses through the range of developmental stages. Investing in new or very early companies inherently carries a high degree of risk. But venture capital is long-term or “patient capital” that allows companies the time to mature into profitable organizations.

Surety Bond Guarantee (SBG) Program

The SBG Program was developed to provide increased bonding opportunities to small veteran and minority contractors to support contracting opportunities for which they would not otherwise bid. If a small construction, service, or supply company bids or performs projects requiring surety bonds, the U.S. SBA program could help make it more competitive.

A surety bond is a three-way agreement between the surety company, the contractor, and project owner. The agreement with the SBA guarantees the contractor will comply with the terms and conditions of the contract. If the contractor is unable to successfully perform the contract, the surety assumes the contractor’s responsibilities and ensures that the project is completed.

The overall surety bond program has two programs:

- » **The Prior Approval Program**—The SBA guarantees 80% or 90% (for veterans) of a surety’s loss. Participating sureties must obtain SBA’s prior approval for each bond.
- » **The Preferred Surety Bond Program**—Selected sureties receive a 70% guarantee and are authorized to issue, monitor, and service bonds without the SBA’s prior approval.

The SBA SBG Program covers four types of major contract surety bonds

Bid Bond	Guarantees the project owner that the bidder will enter into the contract and furnish the required payment and performance bonds.
Payment Bond	Guarantees the contractor will pay all persons who furnish labor, materials, equipment or supplies for use on the project.
Performance Bond	Guarantees the contractor will perform the contract in accordance with its terms, specifications and conditions.
Ancillary Bond	Bonds that are incidental and essential to the performance of the contract.



ELIGIBILITY

In addition to meeting the surety company's bonding qualifications, you must qualify as a small business concern, as defined by SBA. For federal prime contracts, your company must meet the small business size standard for the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code that the federal contracting officer specified for that procurement.



For more information, visit the website listed in the **Resources** section at the end of this chapter.

Government Procurement

The Office of Government Contracting (GC) works to maximize participation by small, disadvantaged, woman-owned, Veteran-owned, or Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned (SDVO) small businesses in federal government contract awards and large prime subcontract awards. GC also advocates on behalf of small businesses in the federal procurement arena.

The federal government purchases billions of dollars in goods and services each year, and it is federal policy that all small businesses have the maximum practicable opportunity to participate in providing goods and services to the government. The goal is 23% of government-wide procurements be awarded to small businesses, which include those owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, qualified HUB (Historically Underutilized Business) Zone small businesses, socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, and women.

The individual program goals are: 5% of prime and subcontracts for small disadvantaged businesses; 3% of prime and subcontracts for HUB Zone businesses; and 3% of prime and subcontracts for SDVO small businesses. The SBA negotiates annual procurement goals with each federal agency and reviews each agency's results in order to ensure that the statutory government-wide goals are met in the aggregate. Additionally, large business prime contractors are statutorily required to establish subcontracting goals for service-disabled and veteran-owned small businesses as part of each subcontracting plan submitted in response to a prime federal contract opportunity.

GC administers several programs and services that help small businesses meet the requirements of government contracts. These include the Certificate of Competency, the Non-Manufacturer Rule Waiver, and the Size Determination programs.

The office also oversees special initiatives such as the Women's Procurement program, the Procurement Awards program, and the Annual Joint Industry/SBA Procurement Conference.

GC Programs

» Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB)

SBA certifies SDBs to make them eligible for special bidding benefits. Qualifications for the program are similar to those for the 8(a) Business Development Program. A small business must be at least 51% owned and controlled by a socially and economically disadvantaged individual or individuals. African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, Subcontinent Asian Americans, and Native Americans are presumed to qualify. Other individuals, including veterans and service-disabled veterans can qualify if they show by a “preponderance of the evidence” that they are disadvantaged. All individuals must have a net worth of less than \$750,000, excluding the equity of the business and primary residence. Successful applicants must also meet applicable SBA size standards for small businesses in their industry.

» Section 8(a) Development Program and SDB Program

While the 8(a) Program offers a broad scope of assistance, including federal contracting assistance to socially and economically disadvantaged firms, SDB certification strictly pertains to benefits in federal procurement. Companies which are 8(a) firms automatically qualify for SDB certification.

» HUB Zone Empowerment Contracting Program

The HUB Zone Empowerment Contracting Program stimulates economic development and creates jobs in urban and rural communities by providing Federal contracting preferences to small businesses. These preferences go to small businesses that obtain HUB Zone certification in part by employing staff that live in a HUB Zone. The company must also maintain a “principal office” in one of these specially designated geographic areas.

» SDVO Small Business Concern Program

Section 308 of Public Law 108-183 amended the Small Business Act to establish a procurement program for Small Business Concerns (SBCs) owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans. This procurement program provides that contracting officers may award a sole source or set-aside contract to service-disabled veteran business owners, if certain conditions are met.

Important Definitions

Veteran—a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.

Service-Disabled Veteran—a person with a disability that is service-connected which was incurred or aggravated in line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service.

Service-Disabled Veteran with a Permanent and Severe Disability—a veteran with a SCD that has been determined by the VA to have a permanent and total disability for purposes of receiving disability compensation or a disability pension.

Permanent Caregiver—a spouse, or an individual 18 years of age or older, who is legally designated, in writing, to undertake responsibility for managing the well-being of a service-disabled veteran, to include housing, health and safety.

SDVO Small Business Contracts—SDVO contracts are contracts awarded to an SDVO SBC through a sole source award or a set-aside award based on competition restricted to SDVO SBCs. The contracting officer for the contracting activity determines if a contract opportunity for SDVO competition exists.

SDVO SBC Set-Aside Contracts

The contracting officer may set aside acquisitions for SDVO SBCs if:

- » The requirement is determined to be excluded from fulfillment through award to Federal Prison Industries, the AbilityOne Program (formerly the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act), Orders under Indefinite Delivery Contracts, Orders against Federal Supply Schedules, requirements currently being performed by 8(a) participants, and requirements for commissary or exchange resale items.
- » The requirement is not currently being performed by an 8(a) participant, and unless SBA has consented to release of the requirement from the Section 8(a) Program.
- » SBA has not accepted the requirement for performance under the 8(a) authority, unless SBA has consented to release of the requirement from the Section 8(a) Program.
- » There is a reasonable expectation that at least two responsible SDVO SBCs will submit offers.
- » The award can be made at a fair market price.

SDVO SBC Sole Source Contracts

A contracting officer may award a sole source contract to a SDVO SBC if the contracting officer determines that none of the SDVO SBC set-aside exemptions or provisions applies and the anticipated award price of the contract, including options, will not exceed \$5.5 million for manufacturing requirements and \$3.5 million for all other requirements, and if the SDVO SBC is a responsible contractor able to perform the contract and the award can be made at a fair and reasonable price.

SDVO SBC Simplified Acquisition Contracts

If a requirement is at or below the simplified acquisition threshold, a contracting officer may set aside the requirement for consideration among SDVO SBCs using simplified acquisition procedures or may award a sole source contract to a SDVO SBC.

MENTOR-PROTÉGÉ PROGRAM (MPP)

Since 1991, the DoD MPP has offered substantial assistance to small disadvantaged businesses. Helping them to expand the overall base of their marketplace participation has produced more jobs and increased national income.

The DoD MPP assists small businesses (protégés) successfully compete for prime contract and subcontract awards by partnering with large companies (mentors) under individual, project-based agreements.

Traditionally, these partnerships have delivered a variety of products and services specialized in: environmental remediation, engineering services, information technology, manufacturing, telecommunications, and health care. Recent Mentor–Protégé agreements have focused on corrosion engineering, information assurance, robotics, circuit board and metal component manufacturing. Future agreements will focus on new technology areas such as radio frequency identification devices and enhanced security assurance.

Many Mentor firms have made the program an integral part of their sourcing plans; while the protégé firms have used their involvement in the program to develop much needed business and technical capabilities to diversify their customer base. Protégé participants have established long-term business relationships with providers of government and commercial goods and services.

Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)

Under certain circumstances, veterans have the right to return to their pre-service jobs after discharge or release from active duty. Your former employer must rehire you if you meet all of the following requirements:

- » Must have left “other-than-temporary” employment to enter military service
- » Must have served in the Armed Forces (either voluntarily or involuntarily) no more than five years, unless at the request of and for the convenience of the government
- » Must have been discharged or released under honorable conditions
- » Must still be qualified to perform the duties of the job; if you became disabled while in military service, you must be able to perform some other job in your employer’s organization (with comparable seniority, status, and pay)



Contact the DOL VETS, for assistance under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994.

Your reemployment rights also protect you against being discharged by your employer without cause for one year (six months in the case of a Reservist or National Guard member returning from training).

RESOURCES

MILITARY SERVICE TAP OFFICES

TAP Offices have programs and counselors to assist you and your family members in seeking employment in government and the private sector. Examples of some employment assistance services are:

Coaching and Counseling

The Transition staff provides individual career development guidance, comprehensive assessment of employment skills, and identification of employment opportunities.

Support Services

Transition Assistance Offices offer computerized listings of jobs, career workshops, and training opportunities, as well as automated resume writing. Many Transition Assistance Offices also provide access to a mini-reference library, word processing, and copying equipment to assist in job search preparation.

Job Banks

Job banks provide information and referrals on temporary, permanent, part-time, and full-time positions in the federal, state, and private sectors.

Workshops and Seminars

A variety of workshops and seminars are available through your Transition Assistance Office to help you and your spouse become more competitive in the job market. Topics include enhancing job search skills, goal setting, interviewing techniques, and preparation of resumes and standard and optional forms for federal civil service employment. One of the most popular job-hunting workshops is sponsored by the DOL. Their two-and-a-half-day Transition Assistance Employment Workshop is one component of the overall TAP. Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP), including VR&E Program information is available online at www.vetsuccess.gov.

Training

Some locations offer occupational skills training for those seeking entry-level classes in typing, word processing, and data entry.

Public and Community Service

There are as many reasons to serve as there are people who serve—from solving problems in your community, to sharing your skills, to serving your country. If you are interested in continuing to serve America, you are encouraged to explore public or community service options at www.nationalservice.gov.

Transition Counselors

Transition Counselors are located in the following offices at local military installations:

- » **Army:** Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP)
- » **Air Force:** Airman and Family Readiness Center
- » **Navy:** Fleet and Family Support Center
- » **Marine Corps:** Career Resource Management Center (CRMC)/ Transition and Employment Assistance Program Center
- » **Coast Guard:** Worklife Division—Coast Guard Worklife staff can be found at the nearest Integrated Support Command

Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Program

You can apply by filling out VA Form 28-1900, “Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation,” and mail it to the VA regional office that serves your area. You can also apply online at vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp.

Contacting VA

There are 58 VA regional offices and 171 VA medical centers located through the nation, in addition to numerous outpatient clinics, vet centers, and national cemeteries. The toll-free telephone number for VA regional offices is 1-800-827-1000. Also, visit the VA website at www.va.gov.

CIVILIAN OCCUPATIONS CORRESPONDING TO MILITARY OCCUPATIONS

Occupational Information Network:

www.acinet.org/acinet/moc/default.aspx?audience=WP

Employment Assistance and Credentialing Programs Websites:

DOL: www.careeronestop.org/CREDENTIALING/CredentialingHome

Army and Navy “COOL”:

Army COOL: <https://www.cool.army.mil>

Navy COOL: <https://www.cool.navy.mil>

Air Force CERT: www.au.af.mil/au/ccaf/certifications

Helmets to Hardhats: helmetstohardhats.org

United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP):

<https://usmap.cnet.navy.mil>

O*Net Online: www.onetonline.org/crosswalk

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL)

DOL Career One-Stop Centers: www.careeronestop.org

DVOP/LVER Locator: <http://dvoplverlocator.nvti.ucdenver.edu>

My Skills My Future: www.myskillsmyfuture.org

My Next Move: www.mynextmove.org

DOL REALifelines: www.dol.gov/vets/programs/real-life

LIBRARY RESOURCES AND WEBSITES

Libraries also offer newspapers, trade journals, magazines, audio and video cassettes, and computer software packages that aid in career identification and planning. You also may find information on state training, employment, and apprenticeship programs as well as statistics regarding employment availability, economic climate, and cost of living. Your librarian can show you where to find these resources and how to use them. Most public and military libraries offer access to the Internet, which can give you access to numerous resources. Specific helpful library resources include the following:

Occupational Information Network: The Dictionary of Occupational Titles (O*NET) provides detailed descriptions of most occupations; available online at: online.onetcenter.org.

The Encyclopedia of Associations: This lists the addresses of professional and industry associations: library.dialog.com.

Dun and Bradstreet; Standard and Poor's Register of Corporations: Both documents offer information on individual companies and organizations. Dun and Bradstreet: www.dnb.com; Standard and Poor: www.standardandpoors.com.

The Occupational Outlook Handbook: This "handbook" created annually by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics addresses the projected needs for various occupations. View the handbook online at www.bls.gov/oco/home.

ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Fraternal Military Associations and Veterans' Services Organizations

Fraternal military associations and veterans' services organizations are good sources of employment information, assistance, and services. Many provide their own job referral and registration services; others sponsor events such as job fairs. All provide networking opportunities to learn about job requirements and opportunities. Lists of Military and Veteran Service Organizations can be found at: www.military.com/benefits/resources/military-and-veteran-associations.

Industry Associations

Industry associations are a source of industry-specific information. You can learn the details about industries as well as find salary ranges, qualification requirements, locations of jobs, and the names and addresses of individual companies and more at: www.bls.gov.

FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES WEBSITES

Federal employment opportunities are at www.usajobs.opm.gov.

GoDefense.com offers veteran job seekers assistance with pursuing DoD civilian careers by providing online career opportunity information and resources. Recruitment Assistance Division (RAD) career counselors can provide assistance with completing required forms and advisory guidance on how to respond to vacancy announcements. Call toll-free: 1-888-DoD-4USA (1-888-363-4872); TTY for deaf/hard of hearing: 1-703-696-5436 or send request by email to daao@cpms.osd.mil. In addition, Recruitment Assistance Division career counselors are available for online chat 12:30–2:30 p.m. Eastern Time on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

OTHER FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT WEBSITES

- » Fed World: www.fedworld.gov
- » Federal Employment Portal: www.opm.gov
- » DoD NAF Employment: www.cpms.osd.mil/nafppo/nafppoemploy_links
- » DoD's Spouse Career Center: www.military.com/spouse
- » USAJOBS: www.usajobs.opm.gov
- » America's Veterans: www.fedshirevets.gov

OTHER EMPLOYMENT WEBSITES

- » www.careeronestop.org
- » www.military.com/careers
- » www.careeronestop.org
- » www.bls.gov
- » www.fedshirevets.gov
- » www.doleta.gov/programs
- » www.doleta.gov
- » www.employerpartnership.org
- » www.vetsuccess.gov

RESERVE AFFILIATION

- » U.S. Air National Guard:
www.goang.com
- » U.S. Air Force Reserves:
www.afreserve.com
- » U.S. Army National Guard:
www.1800goguard.com
- » U.S. Army Reserves:
www.goarmyreserve.com
- » U.S. Coast Guard Reserves:
www.uscg.mil/reserve
- » U.S. Marine Corps:
www.marines.mil/unit/marforres/Stay/PSR.aspx
- » U.S. Navy Reserve:
www.navyreserve.com

STATE EMPLOYMENT WEBSITES

There is at least one VETS Office in every state; find yours at: www.dol.gov/vets/aboutvets/contacts/#regionalStateDirectory.

To locate State Employment Offices visit: www.naswa.org/links.

To locate the local Career One-Stop Center visit:
www.careeronestop.org/jobsearch/cos_jobsites

United We Serve is a nationwide service initiative that helps meet growing social needs resulting from the economic downturn. See many opportunities available: www.serve.gov/index.

This website is a critical component of the Federal Government's strategy for the recruitment and employment of veterans: www.fedshirevets.gov.

TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

Troops to Teachers Program (TTT)

The TTT website provides information, and resource links, including links to state Departments of Education, state certification offices, model resumes, programs leading to teacher certification and job listing sites in public education. An Internet Referral System has been established to enable participants to search for job vacancies online and post resumes for view by school districts searching for teachers. A “Mentor Connection” site provides access to TTT participants who have made the transition to teaching and are available to respond to questions from prospective teachers. Visit site at: www.proudtoserveagain.com.

Defense Activities for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES)

www.dantes.doded.mil

TURBO TAP

The TurboTAP website gives you 24/7 access to helpful pre-separation and transition guides, employment, education, relocation, benefits checklists, and more. The site is your connection to money, benefits, and jobs exactly when you need them, throughout your military career: www.TurboTAP.org.

Employment Hub: www.turboTAP.org/portal/transition/resources/Employment_Hub

Feds Hire Vets: www.fedshirevets.gov

State Job Boards: www.careeronestop.org/jobsearch/cos_jobsites

DOL REALifelines: www.dol.gov/vets/REALifelines/index.htm

VMET DOCUMENTATION

To get your verification document, go to the VMET website at www.dmdc.osd.mil/vmet and download and print the VMET document and personal cover letter from your military service.

You'll need a current DoD CAC or a current Defense Finance, Accounting Service (DFAS) myPay Personal Identification Number (PIN). You should retrieve your VMET within 120 days prior to your separation.

Transcripts of Education and Training Specific to Military Service

- » **Army** : The Army's Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System (AARTS) automatically captures your military training, Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) and college level examinations scores with the college credit recommended. AARTS website: aarts.army.mil.
- » **Navy and Marines**: The Navy and Marine Corps use the SMART system. This system automatically captures your training, experience and standardized test scores. SMART website: smart.navy.mil.
- » **Air Force**: The Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) automatically captures your training, experience and standardized test scores. Transcript information may be viewed at the CCAF website: www.au.af.mil.
- » **Coast Guard**: The Coast Guard Institute (CGI) requires each Service member to submit documentation of all training (except correspondence course records), along with an enrollment form, to receive a transcript: www.uscg.mil.
- » **Veterans**: Under most circumstances, veterans are eligible to use their former service branch's transcript program. However if you are not eligible for AARTS, SMART, CCAF, or CGI systems, you will need to fill out DD Form 295, "Application for the Evaluation of Learning Experiences during Military Service" and provide your DD Form 214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty," to receive credit for your experience.

SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMS

ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESOURCES

The Veterans Corporation (TVC)

The National Veterans Business Development Corporation, doing business as TVC, is a federally-chartered 501(c)(3) organization that was created by Public Law 106-50, the "Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999." This Act recognized that America "has done too little to assist Veterans...in playing a greater role in the economy of the United States." TVC is charged with creating and enhancing entrepreneurial business opportunities for Veterans, including Service-Disabled Veterans. Toward this mission, TVC provides Veterans with the tools and resources they need to be successful in business, including:

- » Access to Capital
- » Access to Business Services
- » Entrepreneurial Education
- » Surety Bonding
- » Insurance and Prescription Coverage
- » Veterans Business Directory

Contact TVC toll-free at 1-866-283-8267 or visit online at www.veteranscorp.org.

Center for Veterans Enterprise (CVE)

The VA established the CVE in 2001. CVE is dedicated to helping veterans succeed in business and specializes in assisting with procurement opportunities. To help coordinate prime and subcontracting business opportunities with veterans for government and private-sector buyers, CVE maintains an electronic business registry. All veteran entrepreneurs, including reservists and members of the National Guard who have been called to active duty of any duration, are encouraged to register their firms and capabilities in this database which is called the VETBiz Vendor Information Pages (VIP). In addition to procurement assistance, CVE provides business coaching, networking, outreach, and other business assistance to veterans. Contact CVE toll free at 1-866-584-2344 or online at www.vetbiz.gov.

Association of Small Business Development Centers (ASBDC)

The mission of the ASBDC is to represent the collective interest of its members by promoting, informing, supporting and continuously improving the SBDC network, which delivers nationwide educational assistance to strengthen small/medium business management, thereby contributing to the growth of local, state and national economies. The ASBDC is a partnership program uniting private enterprise, government, higher education and local nonprofit economic development organizations. ASBDC is dedicated to the sound development of small business throughout America.

Founded in 1979, the ASBDC provides a vehicle for continuous improvement of the Small Business Development Center program. Over 500,000 businesses are assisted by ASBDC member programs on an annual basis. A sizeable number of these businesses are in the dynamic start-up mode, while most are existing businesses searching for stability or planning for growth. Contact ASBDC by phone at 1-703-764-9850 or online at www.asbdc-us.org.

International Franchise Association (IFA)

The IFA, founded in 1960, is a membership organization of franchisors, franchisees and suppliers. IFA's website is dedicated to providing members and guests with a one-stop shopping experience for franchise information. For more than 40 years, the IFA has protected, enhanced, and promoted franchising worldwide. IFA is the official "Spokesperson for Responsible Franchising." Franchisors join for the legislative, educational and networking benefits available as an IFA member. IFA's government and public relations programs are designed to educate and influence public policy makers, and to reduce or eliminate regulations that threaten responsible franchise development.

IFA provides information necessary to stay abreast of the changes facing the global franchise community through educational programs, annual convention, legal symposium, and regional and local meetings. For Veterans, IFA's Veterans Transition Franchise Initiative program is comprised of more than 100 franchise companies that offer Veterans financial incentives to buy and operate their franchises.

Contact IFA at 202-628-8000 or online at www.franchise.org.

Virtual Business Incubator (VBI)

The Veterans VBI created for TVC by Knowledge Industries is a complete one-stop resource for veteran entrepreneurs starting or growing a small business. The VBI guides veterans through business ownership with customized support tools. This is an excellent tool if you need to search for local resources. Visit the VBI online at www.myvbi.org.

SBA RESOURCES

Special Localized Programs

Special local initiatives target Veterans, Service-Disabled Veterans, and Reserve and Guard members. Online and printed business planning guides are available, including: *Balancing Business and Deployment* designed for self-employed Reserve and Guard members to prepare their small business for mobilization, and *Getting Veterans Back to Business* to assist in restarting or reestablishing your business upon return from active duty. These manuals include an interactive CD with a wealth of information on preparing your business and your employees for your absence, re-establishing a small business upon return from Title 10 activation and information on various business assistance resources available to assist you. The CDs also contain information on loans, government procurement, and the full range of SBA's assistance to any veteran.

To learn more about the services and assistance SBA offers to Veterans, Service-Disabled Veterans and Reservists, please explore the links below, or follow-up to our local district offices and programs located in or near your community.

District Office Veterans Business Development Officers (VBDOs)

SBA has established a VBDO in every one of the 68 SBA District Offices around the nation in order to ensure that every veteran entrepreneur has access to the full range of SBA programs. VBD Officers are responsible for providing prompt and direct assistance and guidance to any Veteran or Reservist seeking information about or access to any SBA program. To identify your local VBDO, please contact your local SBA district office, contact OVBD at 202-205-6773, or visit www.sba.gov/VETS/regs.

Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOC)

The Veterans Business Outreach Program (VBOP) is designed to provide entrepreneurial development services such as face-to-face and online business training, counseling and mentoring, and referrals for eligible veterans owning or considering starting a small business. The SBA has 16 organizations participating in this cooperative agreement and serving as VBOC. Center locations and areas of coverage are listed below.

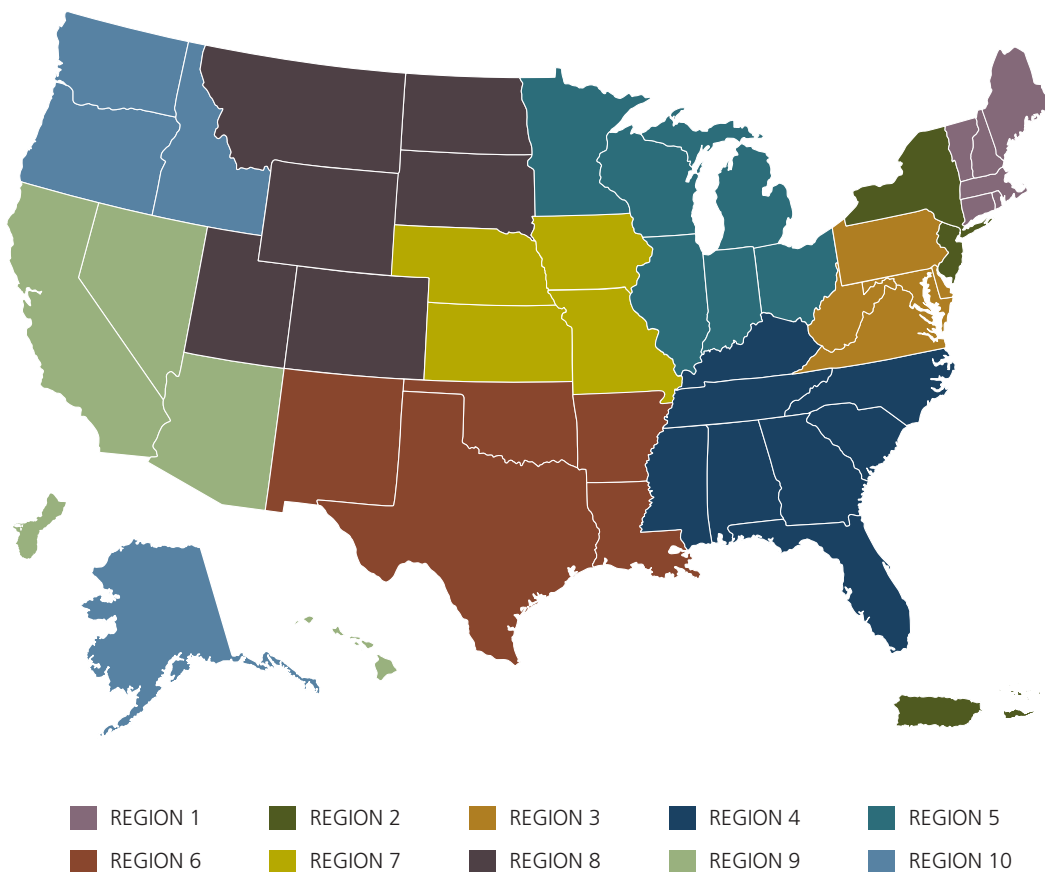


FIGURE 7. VBOC COVERAGE REGIONS

REGION 1



Massachusetts, Maine,
New Hampshire,
Vermont, Rhode
Island, Connecticut

Northeast Veterans Business Resource Center

District Office:

Massachusetts
District Office

Address:

360 Merrimack St.
Building 9, Suite 209
Lawrence, MA 01843

Point of Contact:

Louis Celli, Jr.
P: 617-938-3933
F: 617-507-7799
E: lcelli@nevbrc.org
www.nevbrc.org

REGION 2



New York, New
Jersey, Puerto Rico,
Virgin Islands

The Research Foundation of the State University of New York SUNY @ Farmingdale SBDC

District Office:

Syracuse District Office

Address:

Campus Commons
2350 Broadhollow Road
Farmingdale, NY
11735 -1006

Point of Contact:

John Narciso
P: 631-370-8891
800-732-7232
F: 631-370-8895
E: narcisja@farmingdale.edu,
veterans@nyssbdc.org
www.NYVetBiz.com

The New Jersey Veterans Business Outreach Center—Rutgers Business School

District Office:

Newark District Office

Address:

1 Washington Park
Suite 360
Newark, NJ 07102

Point of Contact:

Scott Snair
P: 973-353-3429
F: 973-353-1110
E: ssnair@njvetbiz.com
www.NJVetBiz.com

REGION 3



Pennsylvania,
Maryland, Virginia,
West Virginia,
Delaware, District
of Columbia

Hampton Roads Veterans Business Outreach Center/Old Dominion University

District Office:

Richmond District Office

Address:

4111 Monarch Way
Suite 106
Norfolk, Virginia 23508

Point of Contact:

Cindy Walters
P: 757-683-5562
F: 757-683-5509
E: cmwalter@odu.edu
www.hrvboc.com

REGION 3

Continued

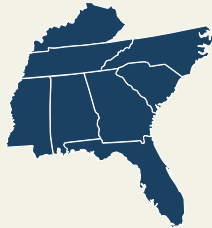
University of PA

District Office:
Philadelphia District Office

Address:
3819 Chestnut Street
Suite 325
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Point of Contact:
Sharon K. Rogers
P: 877-699-VBOC
(1-877-699-8262)
F: 215-573-2135
717-233-4690
E: skrogers@wharton.upenn.edu,
info@vetbizmidatlantic.org
www.vetbizmidatlantic.org

REGION 4



Florida, Georgia,
Alabama, South
Carolina, Mississippi,
Kentucky, Tennessee,
North Carolina

The University of West Florida in Pensacola

District Office:
Jacksonville Florida
District Office

Address:
2500 Minnesota Avenue
Lynn Haven, FL 32444

Point of Contact:
Brenton Peacock
P: 800-542-7232 or
850-271-1108, ext. 19
F: 850-271-1109
E: vets@vboc.org
vboc.org

The Veterans Business Outreach Center @Fayetteville State University

District Office:
North Carolina
District Office

Address:
1200 Murchison Road
Newbold Station
Fayetteville, NC 28301

Point of Contact:
Robert Rehder
P: 910-672-1107
F: 910-672-2122
E: rrehder@uncfsu.edu
www.uncfsu.edu

REGION 5



Michigan, Minnesota,
Wisconsin, Illinois,
Ohio, Indiana

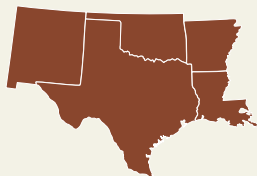
VetBiz Central, Inc

District Office:
Michigan District Office

Address:
711 N. Saginaw St.
Suite 206
Flint, MI 48503

Point of Contact:
Edward Ronders/Matt Sherwood
P: 810-767-8387
F: 810-767-8662
E: ed@vetbizcentral.com
matt@vetbizcentral.com
www.vetbizcentral.com

REGION 6



Texas, New Mexico,
Arkansas, Louisiana,
Oklahoma

The University of Texas—Pan American

District Office:
Lower Rio Grande Valley
District Office

Address:
1201 West University Drive
Edinburg, TX 78539-2999

Point of Contact:
Carlos Gutierrez
P: 956-292-7567
F: 956-665-7561
E: vboc@panam.edu
www.utpa.edu/vboc

Veterans Enterprise Training Program

District Office:
New Mexico District Office

Address:
300 San Mateo NE #106
Albuquerque, New Mexico
87108

Point of Contact:
Lloyd Calderon
P: 505-841-2956
1-877-708-0002
F: 505-841-5560
E: Lloyd.calderon@state.nm.us
www.dvs.state.nm.us/vetpro

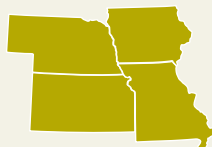
Louisiana Veterans Business Outreach Center

District Office:
New Orleans District Office

Address:
107 South Lake Arthur Ave.
Suite 7
Jennings, Louisiana 70546

Point of Contact:
Charles Achane
P: 337-824-3900
337-296-8580
F: 337-246-3334
E: swlabdc@charter.net
www.lvbc.com

REGION 7



Missouri, Kansas,
Iowa, Nebraska

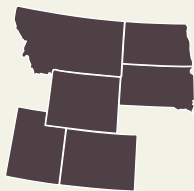
Veterans Advocacy Foundation, Inc.

District Office:
Saint Louis District Office

Address:
4236 Lindell Blvd.
Suite 102
Saint Louis, MO 63108

Point of Contact:
Darcella Craven
P: 314-531-8387
F: 877-825-4190
E: info@vetbiz.com
www.vetbiz.com

REGION 8



Montana, Colorado,
Wyoming, Utah, North
Dakota, South Dakota

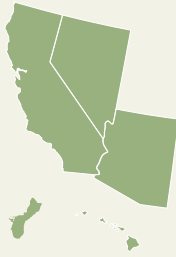
Rocky Boys Veteran's Association

District Office:
Montana District Office

Address:
96 Clinic Road
Box Elder, MT 59521

Point of Contact:
Judi Houle
P: 406-395-4728
F: 406-395-4503
E: houle_judi@yahoo.com
www.rockyboylveterans.org

REGION 9



California, Arizona,
Guam, Hawaii, Nevada

Vietnam Veterans of California—VBOC

District Office:
Sacramento District Office
Address:
7270 E. Southgate Drive,
Suite 1
Sacramento, CA 95823

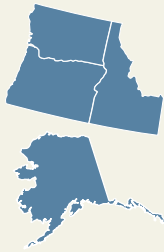
Point of Contact:
Coreena Conley
P: 916-393-1690
F: 916-393-1693
E: cconley@vboc-ca.org
www.vboc-ca.org

Guam Veterans Business Outreach Center

District Office:
Guam District Office
Address:
172 South Marine Corps
Dr. Asan, Guam 96910

Point of Contact:
Frank Crisostomo-Kaaihue
P: 671-475-8392
F: 671-734-5362
E: frank@guamvboc.com
www.guamvboc.com

REGION 10



Washington, Alaska,
Idaho, Oregon

Seattle Business Assistance Center

District Office:
Seattle District Office
Address:
1437 S. Jackson St.
Suite 201
Seattle, WA 98144

Point of Contact:
Lynn Trepp
P: 206-324-4330, ext. 139
F: 206-324-4322
E: lynnt@seattleccd.com
seattleccd.com/drupal/VBOC

Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs)

SBA provides funding, to 1,000 SBDCs in all 50 states and U.S. territories. This program provides a broad range of specialized management assistance to current and prospective small business owners. SBDCs offer one-stop assistance to individuals and small businesses by providing a wide variety of information, guidance, linkages, training and counseling in easily accessible branch locations, usually affiliated with local educational institutions.

SBDC services include, but are not limited to, assisting small businesses with financial, marketing, production, organization, engineering and technical problems, and feasibility studies.

To find your local SBDC, contact your district office VBDO or visit: www.sba.gov.

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)

SCORE is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, D.C. that provides a public service to America by offering small business advice and training. SCORE was formed in 1964 to help small businesses flourish, and SCORE now has more than 10,000 volunteers who can assist business owners with more than 600 business skills. Volunteers are working or retired business owners, executives, and corporate leaders who share their wisdom and lessons learned in business. As a result, SCORE “Counselors to America’s Small Business” is America’s premier source of free and confidential small business advice for entrepreneurs. To date, SCORE has helped more than 7.5 million small businesses through face-to-face small business counseling, low-cost workshops nation-wide, and online support and business guidance.

Contact SCORE toll free at 800-634-0245 or visit online at www.score.org.

Women’s Business Centers (WBCs)

The Office of Women’s Business Ownership provides women-focused (men are eligible as well) training, counseling, and mentoring at every level of entrepreneurial development, from novice to seasoned entrepreneur, through representatives in the SBA district offices and nationwide networks of WBCs and mentoring roundtables. Additionally, WBCs provides online training, counseling, and mentoring. WBCs represent a national network of more than 100 centers designed to assist women start and grow small businesses. To find your local WBC, visit: www.sba.gov/about-offices-content.

Entrepreneurship Boot Camp for Veterans with Disabilities (EBV)

EBV offers cutting-edge, experiential training in entrepreneurship and small business management to post-9/11 veterans with disabilities. The program is designed to open the doors to business ownership for veterans by developing the skills associated with launching and growing a small business, and leveraging programs and services for veterans with disabilities. The EBV program is offered by a network of seven world-class institutions. The program operates on a rolling admission basis; therefore, early application is highly encouraged. Applications can be downloaded from the program website at whitman.syr.edu/ebv. For additional information on the EBV program, contact Raymond Toenniessen at 315-443-0256 or email rmtoenni@syr.edu.

Veterans as Woman Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (V-WISE)

V-WISE is a female veteran training program that is modeled after two existing and successful outreach programs offered by the Whitman School, and will focus on three objective outcomes: training, networking, and mentorship. V-WISE is structured as a three-day, off-site training program, combined with online training and network support structures. Each offering of the program can accommodate 200 veterans and is open to all women veterans of any era or service, with delivery of the program occurring six times (in six cities) over a 36-month time frame. For additional information on V-WISE programs, contact Tina Kapral at 315-443-8795 or visit whitman.syr.edu/vwise.

Operation Endure and Grow (OE&G)

The OE&G program is a new online small business training and management program specifically designated for Member of Reserve Components of the U.S. Military and their immediate family, focused on the fundamentals of launching, growing, or maintaining a successful small business. OE&G is offered by the Martin J. Whitman School of Management in cooperation with the SBA Office of Veterans Business Development. The program includes two different tracks (startup and growth) and offers training to enhance the success and survivability of a reservist-owned small business. The eight-week training program is open to National Guard and Reserve members as well as their family members. OE&G will be offered and managed completely online and available 24/7, 365 days a year. For information on the registration process and listings of program dates, visit www.whitman.syr.edu/EndureAndGrow/About/.

International Trade

The Office of International Trade works in cooperation with other federal agencies and public- and private-sector groups to encourage small business exports and to assist small businesses seeking to export. Through 16 U.S. Export Assistance Centers, SBA district offices and a variety of service-provider partners, we direct and coordinate SBA's ongoing export initiatives to encourage small businesses going global.

Financial Assistance

- » The Patriot Express Pilot Loan Program: www.sba.gov/patriotexpress.
- » Basic 7(a) Loan Guaranty: www.sba.gov/financing.
- » Certified Development Company-504 Loan Program: www.sba.gov/financing/.
- » Micro-loan Program: www.sba.gov/financing.

SBA's Investment Programs

For more information about the SBG Program, visit: www.sba.gov/osg/.

Business Planning and Disaster Assistance for Small Businesses Who Employ or are Owned by Military Reservists

All of the technical assistance programs referenced above can provide pre- and post-mobilization business counseling and planning assistance to any Reservist who owns their own business or to the small business for which they work. The SBA also offers assistance to the caretaker of the business who may manage the business while the reservist owner is activated.

The Office of Disaster Assistance also offers the MREIDL program at very favorable rates and terms. The purpose of the MREIDL is to provide funds to eligible small businesses in order for them to meet operating expenses in the absence of essential employees who have been recalled to active duty. The purpose of these loans is not to cover lost income or lost profits. MREIDL funds cannot be used to take the place of regular commercial debt, to refinance long-term debt or to expand the business. Contact your district office or visit: www.sba.gov/content/military-reservists-economic-injury-loans.

Government Procurement

Contact your local SBA district office or visit: www.sba.gov/about-offices-content.

Subcontracting Opportunities Directory

Contains a listing of Prime Contractors doing business with the federal government: www.gsa.gov/subdirectory.

Procurement Center Representatives

SBA's Procurement Center Representatives (PCR), located in area offices, review and evaluate the small business programs of federal agencies and assist small businesses in obtaining federal contracts and subcontracts.

- » **Traditional Procurement Center Representative (TPCR)**—TPCRs increase the small business share of federal procurement awards by initiating small business set-asides; reserving procurements for competition among small business firms; providing small business sources to federal buying activities; and counseling small firms.
- » **Breakout Procurement Center Representative (BPCR)**—BPCRs advocate for the breakout of items for full and open competition to affect savings to the Federal Government.
- » **Commercial Marketing Representatives (CMRs)**—CMRs identify, develop, and market small businesses to large prime contractors and assist small businesses in identifying and obtaining subcontracts.

Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU)

OSDBUs offer information on procurement opportunities, guidance on procurement procedures, and identification of prime and subcontracting opportunities in various federal agencies. OSDBUs also have Veteran Small Business Representatives and Small Business Specialists who provide marketing assistance and information regarding current acquisition availability. Contact your local SBA Office or visit: www.sba.gov/content/federal-office-small-and-disadvantaged-business-utilization-osdbu.

GC Programs

Contact your local SBA Office or visit one of the websites below:

- » Small Disadvantaged Business: www.sba.gov/about-offices-content/1/2986
- » Section 8(a) Development Program and SDB Program: www.sba.gov/8abd.
- » HUB Zone Empowerment Contracting Program: web1.sba.gov/hubzone/internet.
- » Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Concern Program: www.sba.gov/content/veterans-1.

MENTOR-PROTÉGÉ PROGRAM (MPP)

For a step-by-step approach to participation in the DoD MPP, visit: www.acq.osd.mil/osbp/mentor_protege.

UNIFORMED SERVICES EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT (USERRA)

Contact the DOL, VETS for assistance under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994. A complete list of VETS state directors is available at: www.dol.gov/vets.

CHAPTER 3

FINANCIAL SECURITY



WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Financial well-being and the security of loved ones are concerns that are usually at the top of anyone's priority list; these topics should be considered in detail before you leave the military.

Financial security, life insurance, and legal matters are often linked. It is important to make sure your financial and legal affairs are in order prior to embarking on a new chapter in your life.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Financial security depends on thorough and accurate budgeting and planning, discipline and situational awareness of your needs and resources. Your financial situation is at risk particularly during this transitional period. Careful planning is an effective countermeasure.

Free legal assistance may not be available once you leave the military. Take advantage of this important and useful benefit while you have it.

INCREASING CONSUMER AWARENESS— BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU (BBB) MILITARY LINE®

If you are returning home after an extended absence or simply moving to a new location after your military transition, you'll face decisions on which businesses are reputable or which ones with whom you want to do business. The BBB Military Line®, a program of the BBB Center, provides consumer education and advocacy for military consumers and their families, both in their communities and online.

Experience shows that military personnel are frequently the victims of unethical and unscrupulous business practices. Many are young, often inexperienced, consumers whose salaries can be counted on to arrive twice a month, and are a very attractive target for scam artists and other aggressive promoters.

Common practices directed at Service members include:

- » Short-term loans at rates that may exceed 500% APR
- » Expensive and unnecessary insurance sales
- » Auto sales that charge exorbitant interest on already-overpriced vehicles
- » Real estate "deals" that result in high rate of foreclosure
- » Worthless "work-at-home" offers

In order to reduce the number of military personnel falling victim to these predatory practices, BBB Military Line uses both Web-based resources and local BBB outreach within the continental United States.

FACTS AND ADVICE

PERSONAL FINANCES



FIGURE 8. TRANSITION BUDGETING STEPS

Transition Budgeting Steps

STEP 1

LIST YOUR INCOME

Make a list of all the sources of income you expect to have during your transition and when you expect to receive the income (weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc.). Include your pay and any unused vacation, severance pay, and unemployment compensation. List any interest income (interest from a bank savings account, for example), spouse's income, alimony or child support, and other income you expect to receive on a regular basis. Be conservative. Estimate the *lowest* amount you expect to receive from each source of income. Do not include expected pay from job positions you have not yet started in the civilian environment.

STEP 2

LIST YOUR EXPENSES

On a separate list, write down all of your expenses*. Don't forget:

- » Mortgage or rent
- » Taxes
- » Utilities
- » Food
- » Clothing (including potential new suits or appropriate business attire for interviews)
- » Insurance (life, health, automobile, homeowners or renters, etc.)
- » Car or motorcycle expenses (payments, insurance, registration, gas, maintenance, and repairs)
- » Credit card bills

* *Expenses Calculation Worksheet* provided in Appendix of this manual.

STEP 2

CONTINUED

- » Other loans
- » Magazine subscriptions
- » Cable TV
- » Club dues
- » Gifts
- » Job-hunting costs
(stationery, printing, dry cleaning, etc.)
- » Entertainment and hobby expenses
- » Children's spending money
- » Alimony or child support payments
- » Groceries
- » Personal items
- » Educational costs
- » Household maintenance
- » Religious or charitable contributions
- » All other expenses

Next, list the expense for each item and an average monthly cost. When figuring the average, keep in mind that this is your transition budget. If the cost is not "fixed" (such as rent or mortgage payments that cannot be changed or avoided), plan on the smallest realistic amount on which you can get by.

STEP 3

PRIORITIZE YOUR EXPENSES

After listing all of your expenses, rate them as high, medium, or low priority. High-priority items are things you and your family cannot do without: food, shelter, and clothing. Medium-priority items are important to you, but you can exist without them. Low-priority items should be deleted or temporary suspended.

Example: Rent or mortgage is an "H" (high priority), while piano lessons for your 10-year-old daughter may be an "M" (medium priority), and cable TV might fit into the "L" (low-priority) range.

STEP 4

ASSIGN BUDGET RESPONSIBILITIES

Determine who is responsible for budget tracking if you are married or sharing expenses with a significant other.

Example: You may take responsibility for the rent and clothing, while your spouse may be responsible for the food budget and music lessons.

STEP 5

ESTABLISH A MONTHLY BUDGET

Subtract your total monthly expenses from your monthly income. If you have more income than expenses, put the extra money in a savings account for emergencies.

If your monthly expenses are more than your income, look over the low- and medium-priority items. Work to reduce some and eliminate others.

STEP 6

IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INCOME

After all possible cuts have been made, if expenses are still greater than income, consider ways to bring in additional money. Review possible adjustments to the taxes being deducted from your income such as personal exemptions.

STEP 7**SEEK HELP IF
NECESSARY**

Even after you have cut your expenses and uncovered additional income possibilities, you may still be unable to meet financial requirements. As a final measure, talk to the no-cost Personal Financial Management (PFMs) at the installation, Department of Defense (DoD) Approved Partners, or creditable Consumer Credit Counseling Service in your area to find ways to work with your creditors to delay payments or extend the time for loan repayment. This will assure your creditors that you do intend to pay them over time, and it will help prevent the possibility of bankruptcy.

STEP 8**OBTAIN AN
UP-TO-DATE
CREDIT REPORT**

It is important to have an up-to-date credit report on you and your spouse. You should obtain one at least six months before separation or retirement. You are entitled to one free credit report per year for you and your spouse.

THE SERVICEMEMBER'S CIVIL RELIEF ACT (SCRA)

The SCRA expanded and improved the former Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act (SSCRA). The SCRA provides a wide range of protections for individuals entering, called to active duty in the military, or deployed Service members. It is intended to postpone or suspend certain civil obligations, or to prevent excess interest rates on your obligations in order to enable Service members to devote full attention to duty and relieve stress on their family members. A few examples of such obligations you may be protected against are:

- » Outstanding credit card debt
- » Mortgage payments
- » Pending trials
- » Taxes
- » Terminations of lease

Additional Aspects of SCRA

The SCRA expands current law that protects Service members and their families from eviction from housing while on active duty due to nonpayment of rents that are \$1,200 per month or less. The new provisions update protection to meet today's higher cost of living, covering housing leases up to \$2,932.31 per month—and then be adjusted annually to account for inflation.

It provides a Service member who receives permanent change of station orders, or who is deployed to a new location for 90 days or more, the right to terminate a housing lease.

It clarifies and restates existing law that limits to 6% interest on credit obligations incurred prior to military service or activation, including credit card debt, for active duty Service members. The SCRA unambiguously states that no interest above 6% can accrue for

credit obligations (that were established prior to active duty or activation) while on active duty, nor can that excess interest become due once the Service member leaves active duty—instead that portion above 6% is permanently forgiven. Furthermore, the monthly payment must be reduced by the amount of interest saved during the covered period.

Note: *This law only covers debt incurred prior to military service.*

The SCRA updates life insurance protections provided to activated Guard and Reserve members by increasing from \$10,000 to \$250,000 the maximum policy coverage that the federal government will protect from default for nonpayment while on active duty.

Lastly, the SCRA prevents Service members from a form of double taxation that can occur when they have a spouse who works and is taxed in a state other than the state in which they maintain their permanent legal residence. SCRA will prevent states from using the income earned by a Service member in determining the spouse's tax rate when they do not maintain their permanent legal residence in that state.



ELIGIBILITY

The SCRA covers all Active Duty Service members, Reservists, and the members of the National Guard *while on active duty*. The protection begins on the date of entering active duty and generally terminates within 30 to 90 days after the date of discharge from active duty.

SEPARATION PAY

You may be eligible for additional separation pay; the finance office at your installation can compute the actual amount. This benefit is computed on the basis of 10% of your yearly base pay when you separate, multiplied by the number of years of active service you have accrued, and is considered taxable income.



ELIGIBILITY

If you meet the following requirements, you may be eligible for separation pay:

- » You have finished your first term of enlistment or period of obligated service
- » You have at least six years of service
- » You are separating involuntarily
- » You are not yet eligible for retirement
- » You are not separating under adverse conditions



To find out if you qualify, talk with your unit commander and local personnel and finance offices.

THE THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN (TSP) AND SAVINGS DEPOSIT PROGRAM (SDP)

TSP Participants

If you participated in the Uniformed TSP while you were in the service, you have several options:

- » Leave your money in the TSP. If your money remains in the TSP, it will continue to accrue earnings. Although you will not be able to make additional contributions, you will be able to make inter-fund transfers. You must begin withdrawing from your account no later than 1 April of the year following the year you turn age 70.
- » Receive a single payment. All or a portion of your account can be transferred to a traditional Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or eligible employer plan (e.g., a 401(k) plan or your civilian TSP account).^{*} Certain restrictions apply when receiving this payment. Be sure you completely understand the conditions of transfer prior to initiating this action. In some cases, if you receive the money via your bank account while transferring it to your IRA or 401(k), you may be taxed or incur penalties.
- » Request a series of monthly payments based on a dollar amount or your life expectancy. All or a portion of certain monthly payments can be transferred to a traditional IRA or eligible employer plan.^{*}
- » Request a TSP annuity. You must have at least \$3,500 in your account in order to purchase an annuity.

SDP Participants

If you participated in the SDP, your funds may only be left in your SDP account for up to 120 days after you depart a combat zone, at which time they are automatically paid to you in a lump sum as part of your paycheck. However, once you depart the combat zone, you may make withdrawals each quarter for any amount exceeding the \$10,000 account value maximum or any amount in the case of emergencies if authorized by your commanding officer. Your account will stop accruing interest 90 days after you depart the combat zone.



To request early withdrawal of your SDP funds, you may write, email, or fax the Defense Finance and Accounting Service—Cleveland Center (DFAS-CL) at:

DFAS-Cleveland Center
ATTN: SDP, Special Claims
1240 East 9th St.
Cleveland, OH 44199-2055

Email CCL-SDP@dfas.mil, or fax to 216-522-5060. You must include your name, social security number, and the date you left the combat zone.

^{*} Tax-exempt contributions to the TSP are eligible for transfer to a traditional IRA or eligible employer plan only if the financial institution or plan will accept the funds. Funds not accepted will be paid directly to you. If you transfer balances from your uniformed service TSP account to your civilian TSP account, the TSP will not accept tax-exempt money.



For more information, you can contact the SDP Help Line at 888-332-7411.

OTHER FINANCIAL ENTITLEMENTS

- » **Social Security:** Provides retirement benefits as early as age 62.
- » **Social Security Disability Insurance:** Disability benefits are paid at any age to those who qualify.
- » **Medicare Medical Insurance:** Medicare coverage is available at age 65. If you're disabled, you may be eligible earlier.
- » **Survivors' Insurance:** Upon your death, benefits are paid to your survivors depending on their age and dependency status. Social Security considers a survivor to be:
 - A surviving spouse who is caring for your dependent child may receive benefits until the child is age 16, then again as early as age 60, and a child may receive benefits until age 18, or 19 if still in high school.
 - An adult child disabled before age 22 and remains disabled.
 - A former wife or husband age 60 or older (50–59 if disabled) can get benefits if your marriage lasted at least 10 years.

MILITARY RETIREMENT PAY

Retirement Pay and Compensation

Service members who remain on active duty or serve in the Reserves or National Guard for 20 years or longer may retire and receive retired pay. You fall under one of three retirement systems, depending on when you first entered military service. Your Pay and Compensation Administrative Officer within your command can provide more information.

Non-Disability Retirement Pay Options

- » **Final Pay**—The Final Pay retirement system only applies to members who first entered Service before September 8, 1980.
- » **High-3**—The High-3 Year Average retirement system applies to members who first entered Service on or after September 8, 1980, and before August 1, 1986. High-3 also applies to members who first entered the Service on or after August 1, 1986, and chose to revert to the High-3 retirement plan by not accepting the Career Status Bonus (CSB).
- » **CSB/REDUX**—This system applies only to members who first entered Service after July 31, 1986, and chose to receive the CSB and the REDUX retirement plan.

Disability Retirements

Service members who become wounded, ill or injured may be medically retired. They may receive either a permanent or temporary disability retirement. A Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) determines a disability rating as a percentage of loss of fitness to perform military duties and whether the disability is permanent or temporary (likely to change over time).

Service members with permanent disabilities are transferred to the Permanent Disability Retired List (PDRL), and Service members with conditions that are likely to change are transferred to the Temporary Disability Retired List (TDRL). Members transferred to the TDRL are reexamined every 12–18 months for up to five years, at which time a final determination is made as to whether the member is fit for return to active duty or transferred to the PDRL.



See your Pay and Compensation Administrative Officer in your command or at your Military Treatment Facility (MTF) for additional information and referrals.

Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (CRDP)

Military retired pay has historically been reduced (offset) by the amount of disability compensation a retiree receives from the VA. CRDP is a program that restores some or all of a member's retired pay that is offset by VA disability compensation. To be eligible, a retiree must have 20 or more years of service and have a VA disability rating of 50% or more. It is automatically calculated by the DFAS for new retirees and is being phased in for existing retirees. The phase-in is expected to be complete by 2014, at which time eligible retirees will no longer have their military retirement pay reduced by the amount of their VA disability compensation.

CRDP is a restoration of retired pay. It is therefore taxed and, if applicable, subject to collection actions for alimony, child support, community property, garnishment and government debt just like the rest of your retired pay.

Your monthly CRDP amount cannot exceed the lesser of your monthly gross retired pay or VA disability compensation. If your retired pay is calculated using a percentage of disability rather than your years of service, your CRDP cannot exceed the amount your gross retired pay would currently be had it been calculated at retirement using your years of service. *You do not need to apply—CRDP is automatic.*

Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC)

CRSC provides military retirees a monthly compensation that replaces their VA disability offset. Qualified military retirees are those with 20 or more years of service and those retired due to disability with less than 20 years of service who have combat-related VA-rated disability. Such members are now entitled to a payment that makes up for their military retirement pay being reduced by the amount of their VA disability compensation. CRSC includes disabilities incurred as a direct result of:

- » Armed Conflict
- » Hazardous Duty
- » Conditions Simulating War
- » An Instrumentality of War

Unlike CRDP, CRSC has no phase-in period. Once a military retiree has been determined to be qualified, he or she will receive reduced retirement pay plus an additional sum that makes up for the part of their retired pay that has been offset.

CRSC payment is based on the percentage of your disability that your Service determines to have been combat-related. This percentage may be less than your overall VA disability rating, and consequently the CRSC payment may be less than your offset retired pay.

Your CRSC payment is not a restoration of retired pay. It is a special entitlement payment and is not taxed.

Your monthly CRSC amount cannot exceed the lesser of your monthly gross retired pay or VA waiver amount. If you are a disability retiree whose retired pay is calculated using a percentage of disability rather than your years of service, your CRSC cannot exceed the amount your gross retired pay would currently be had it been calculated at retirement using your years of service.

Unlike CRDP, CRSC is not automatic; you will need to apply to your military service.



ELIGIBILITY

Retired veterans with combat-related injuries must meet all of the following criteria to apply for CRSC:

- » Be in receipt of military retired pay (including Chapter 61 Medical, Temporary Early Retirement (TERA) Retirees and Temporary Disability Retired List (TDRL) retirees); and
- » Have 10% or greater VA rated disability due to injury; and
- » Military retired pay is being reduced by VA disability payments (VA Waiver); and
- » Must be able to provide documentary evidence that your injury was a result of one of the following:
 - Training that simulates war (e.g., exercises, field training)
 - Hazardous duty (e.g., flight, diving, parachute duty)
 - An instrumentality of war (e.g., combat vehicles, weapons, Agent Orange)
 - Armed conflict

Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)

All retirees may choose to participate in the SBP or the Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan (RCSBP). SBP is designed to provide ongoing income for your spouse and minor children, should you die before them. It pays a monthly annuity up to 55% of your retired pay. Retirees are automatically enrolled in SBP at time of retirement unless they choose to decline participation with their spouse's written and notarized concurrence. It is important that both you and your spouse learn as much about the program as possible before making a decision to forego this very valuable government benefit.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION FOR MILITARY

Unemployment compensation for separatees is referred to as “Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service Members (UCX).” Service members separating from active duty under honorable conditions and who have completed their first full term of service may qualify for unemployment compensation. For Guard and Reservists, active duty must be 90 continuous days or more.

Benefits

The law of the State under which the claim is filed determines benefit amounts, number of weeks benefits can be paid, and other eligibility conditions. States also have deduction laws for military retirement or disability income.



FILING A CLAIM

Contact your State Workforce Agency as soon as possible after discharge. It may be helpful to have a copy of your service and discharge documents (DD Form 214 or similar) when you file your claim. In many states, you may now file your claim by telephone and/or Internet. An ex-Service member may file in any one of the 50 states or in the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, or the Virgin Islands.

GOVERNMENT LOAN PROGRAMS

Several government agencies help veterans get loans for homes, farms, and businesses. Loan amounts are usually based on highest income being earned at the time of loan approval.

VA Home Loans

Eligible veterans, including active duty veterans, discharged veterans, and Reservists, may obtain loans guaranteed by the VA to purchase or refinance homes, condominiums, and manufactured homes. Unmarried surviving spouses may also be eligible. VA home loans feature a negotiable interest rate, choice of loan types, limited closing costs, and no monthly mortgage insurance premium. No down payment is required in most cases.



VERIFICATION

The lender will ask you to provide evidence, in the form of a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) that you are eligible to apply for a VA home loan. In many instances your lender will be able to obtain your COE online in seconds. However, since not all COE requests can be processed online, there will be instances in which the veteran needs to apply for a COE through the Winston-Salem Eligibility Center.

Federal Housing Administration (FHA) Mortgage Insurance

The FHA of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) insures mortgage loans for the construction, purchase, and improvement of homes. FHA-insured mortgages allow veterans to borrow with minimum down payments and over longer periods of time.

Application is made directly to any FHA-approved lender; the lender usually serves as the homebuyer's contact with FHA throughout the loan approval process.



Any local HUD field office can provide additional information; look in your local telephone directory for the office nearest you.

Business Loans

Guaranteed, third-party and direct business loans are available to veterans through programs of the Small Business Administration (SBA). SBA offers loans specifically to veterans and Reserve Component members, active Service members and their spouses, widows, and employers.



Contact the nearest SBA office for details, or visit www.sba.gov/vets.

Rural Loans

The Farmers Home Administration is the rural credit agency of the Department of Agriculture. This agency has both direct and guaranteed loan programs that give preferential processing to veterans' loan applications.



To obtain information and applications, contact the nearest office of the Farmers Home Administration. Most are located in rural county seats.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Military installations have legal assistance offices available to assist you and your family members with legal matters such as will preparation, powers of attorney, review of most contracts, debit/credit problems, landlord/tenant issues, family law, tax law, and estate planning. All of these services are a no-cost benefit of your active duty service.

Legal assistance provides quality legal services regarding personal civil legal matters to eligible persons by educating them regarding their personal legal rights and responsibilities. Legal assistance officers are well-versed in the special issues facing those retiring and separating from military service.

LIFE INSURANCE

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) will continue to cover you for the first 120 days after your separation. Beyond 120 days, it's up to you to buy appropriate life insurance that will provide for the needs of your family and estate. Explore the various life insurance options, including those offered by VGLI. By doing so, you will be able to select one that you feel best suits your needs. When shopping for life insurance, the program you choose should pay:

- » Funeral and related expenses
- » A lump sum to pay off outstanding debts (including your mortgage balance, if you have one)
- » A lump sum to pay your children's college tuition and expenses, if desired
- » Survivor income needs or lost earnings
 - **Survivor Income Needs:** A lump sum for your beneficiary to invest at a modest rate of interest to pay living expenses over and above what your survivor's earned income is expected to be (requires a detailed projection of your survivor's income and expenses), or
 - **Lost Earnings:** A lump sum to replace your earnings during your expected working life. For example: If you are age 45 and earn \$30,000 per year, you would earn approximately \$600,000 by age 65. A rule of thumb is to replace 75% of your lost earnings, which would produce a life insurance requirement of \$450,000, in addition to the other lump sum expenses previously mentioned.

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI)



ELIGIBILITY

SGLI is low-cost term insurance protection for members of the Uniformed Services. Those eligible for SGLI include:

- » All Service members on active duty
- » Ready Reservists
- » Members of the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Public Health Service (PHS)
- » Cadets and midshipmen of the four Service academies
- » Members of the Reserve Officer Training Corps

SGLI will continue to cover you for the first 120 days after your separation, just as if you were still in uniform. If you are totally disabled at the time of your separation, your SGLI coverage will continue, free of charge, for up to two years from the date of your separation. Following expiration of your SGLI coverage extension, you must make your own arrangements for life insurance. One option is Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI), offered by the VA.

Traumatic Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (TSGLI)

All Service members eligible for SGLI are insured for traumatic injury protection of up to \$100,000 unless they decline SGLI coverage. It provides automatic traumatic injury

coverage to all Service members covered under the SGLI program who suffer losses due to traumatic injuries. TSGLI payments range from \$25,000 to a maximum of \$100,000 depending on the type and severity of injury. A flat monthly premium of \$1.00 is added to the monthly SGLI deduction, regardless of the amount of SGLI coverage that the Service member has elected.

TSGLI is not disability compensation and has no effect on entitlement for compensation and pension benefits provided by the VA or disability benefits provided by the DoD. It is an insurance product similar to commercial dismemberment policies.

Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI)



FSGLI coverage is available for the spouses and dependent children of active duty Service members and members of the Ready Reserve insured under SGLI.

The Service member's spouse may obtain coverage up to \$100,000 or an amount equal to the Service members' coverage, whichever is less. Age-based premiums are charged for spouses. Each dependent child of the Service member is automatically insured for \$10,000 free of charge. A member can decline or elect lesser spousal coverage in increments of \$10,000, but may not decline coverage for a dependent child.

Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI)

Once your SGLI coverage extension ends, you must make your own arrangements for life insurance.

One option is VGLI, which provides for the conversion of SGLI to a term life insurance policy that is renewable every five years, regardless of one's health, and can be retained for life.



ELIGIBILITY

You are eligible to apply for VGLI if you are insured under SGLI and:

- » You are being released from active duty or the Reserves or were released within the last year and 120 days.
- » You are a member of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) or Inactive National Guard (ING).
- » You are a Reservist who suffers an injury or disability during active duty or inactive duty for training for a period of less than 31 days and become uninsurable at standard premium rates.



You can apply for VGLI within the first 120 days without evidence of good health. After the initial 120 days you have an additional year to apply, but good health requirements must be met.

VGLI provides the amount of SGLI coverage a member had in force at the time of separation from active duty or Reserves. VGLI is issued in multiples of \$10,000 up to a maximum \$400,000. VGLI can be converted at any time to an individual permanent insurance policy (i.e., whole life) with any of 26 participating commercial insurance companies. Since SGLI coverage continues at no cost for 120 days after discharge, VGLI does not take effect until day 121.

VGLI applications are mailed to eligible members on three occasions:

1. Within 60 days after separation
2. Three weeks after the first mailing
3. Fifty-one weeks after separation

Coverage for Service-Connected Disabled Veterans

Veterans with service-connected disabilities are eligible for the following two additional life insurance programs, Service-Disabled Veterans Life Insurance (S-DVI) and Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI):

1. Service-Disabled Veterans Life Insurance (S-DVI)

Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance is life insurance for veterans who receive a service-connected disability (SCD) rating by the VA. The basic S-DVI program, commonly referred to as "RH Insurance", insures eligible veterans for up to \$10,000 of coverage. Veterans who have the basic S-DVI coverage and are totally disabled are eligible to have their premiums waived. If waiver is granted, totally disabled veterans may apply for additional coverage of up to \$20,000 under the Supplemental S-DVI program. Premiums for Supplemental S-DVI coverage, however, cannot be waived.



ELIGIBILITY

You are eligible for S-DVI if:

- » You were released from service under other than dishonorable conditions on or after April 25, 1951, and
- » VA has notified you that you have a SCD, and
- » You are healthy except for your SCD, and
- » You apply within two years of being notified of your SCD.

You are eligible for Supplemental S-DVI if:

- » You have an S-DVI policy, and
- » The premiums on your basic coverage are being waived due to total disability, and
- » You apply within one year of being notified of the waiver, and
- » You are under 65 years of age.

The S-DVI premiums vary depending on your age, type of plan (term or permanent), and the amount of coverage you select.



You may apply for SDVI using the sites listed in the **Resources** section of this chapter.



WAIVER OF PREMIUMS

You may be eligible for a waiver if you become totally disabled before your 65th birthday and stay that way for at least six consecutive months. Premiums for Supplemental S-DVI cannot be waived.

Note: Effective October 1, 2011, the Supplemental SDVI maximum increases to \$30,000.

2. Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI)

Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance is an insurance program that currently provides up to \$90,000 in mortgage life insurance coverage on the home mortgages of veterans with severe service-connected disabilities who:

- » Receive a Specially-Adapted Housing Grant from VA for assistance in building, remodeling, or purchasing an adapted home; and
- » Have title to the home; and
- » Have a mortgage on the home.

The insurance is payable only to the mortgage lender, not to family members. VMLI coverage is available on a new mortgage, an existing mortgage, a refinanced mortgage, or a second mortgage.

VMLI premiums are determined by:

- » The insurance age of the veteran; and
- » The outstanding balance of the mortgage at the time of application; and
- » The remaining length of the mortgage.

Note: Effective October 1, 2011, the maximum VMLI increases to \$150,000. Ninety days later, on January 1, 2012, the maximum VMLI increases to \$200,000.

COMMISSARY AND EXCHANGE PRIVILEGES

The military commissaries and exchanges are integral elements of the military non-pay compensation and benefit package. The commissary and exchange stores are operated at military installations around the world, and offer the same goods, merchandise, and services found in commercial U.S. grocery stores, discount stores and department stores. Eligible patrons of the military commissaries and exchanges consist of military service and family members on active duty; members of the National Guard and Reserves; military retirees; Medal of Honor recipients; honorably discharged veterans with a 100% SCD; U.S. civilian employees of the DoD when stationed overseas; and their dependents.

The commissary system is one of the most valued contributors to the quality of life of our Service members and their families. Active duty members and their families consistently rank the commissary benefit as one of their top benefits, second only to health care.

Through a world-wide system of commissary stores, the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) provides Service members and their families with the opportunity to save on purchases of food and household products and services. Commissary goods are sold to authorized patrons at cost plus a 5% surcharge. Military families save an average of more than 30% on their purchases compared to commercial prices. These are savings that can be worth more than \$4,400 annually for a family of four that does all of its grocery shopping at the commissary.

The military exchanges are managed through three independent world-wide exchange systems: the Army and Air Force Exchange System (AAFES), the Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM), and the Marine Corps Exchanges (MCX).

- » The military exchanges are vital to mission accomplishment. The exchanges have the dual mission of providing authorized patrons with merchandise and service, and of generating non-appropriated earnings as a source of funding for Morale, Welfare, and Recreation programs.
- » The exchanges offer the military community almost every imaginable retail merchandise and service found in mainstream shopping malls, convenience stores, gas stations, and fast food restaurants.
- » Exchanges operate retail complexes to support military communities on nearly every major military installation; through internet and catalog shopping; onboard ships at sea; in deployed locations and contingency operations; and at the site of humanitarian and disaster relief efforts.

INVOLUNTARY SEPARATION

Service members who are involuntarily separated from active duty during the period beginning on October 1, 2007, and ending on December 31, 2012, can continue to use commissary and exchange stores during the two-year period beginning on the date of the involuntary separation in the same manner as members on active duty.

USE OF REVENUE-GENERATING FACILITIES

Service members who, upon separation, will be entitled to a DD Form 2, "Armed Forces of the United States Geneva Convention Identification Card (Reserve)," and/or DD Form 1173-1, "Department of Defense Guard and Reserve Family Member Identification Card," are permitted to use Morale, Welfare, and Recreation revenue-generating facilities (e.g., clubs, bowling centers, golf courses, and more).

DOCUMENTS



Keep performance ratings, service-issued licenses or certifications; DD Form 2586, "Verification of Military Experience and Training" and other service documents (such as your security clearance) in a safe and permanent file. Never give away the original copy of any of these documents.

DD Form 214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty"

This form is one of the most important documents you have because it is your key to participation in all VA programs as well as several state and federal programs. Keep your original in a safe, fireproof place and have certified photocopies available for reference. In most states, the DD Form 214 can be registered or recorded just like a land deed or other significant document.

If you choose not to register your DD Form 214, you still should take steps to protect it as you would any other sensitive document (will, marriage and birth certificates, insurance policies). You may wish to store it in a safe deposit box or at some other secure location. Your local Vet Center can certify your DD Form 214 and have a copy placed on file.

VA Papers

All VA forms and correspondence also should be kept in your file, including certificates of eligibility for loans, VA file number records, and other VA papers.

Family Records

Documents such as marriage licenses, birth and death certificates, and divorce and adoption papers are permanent records that should be kept in your permanent file.

Health Records

You and your family members should know the location of your health records, including medical history and individual immunization records. Keep a copy in a file at home, and know where the original is kept (usually in a military medical facility or doctor's office).

Insurance Documents

Insurance policies and premium payment records should be kept in your permanent file at home.

Wills

All Service members and their spouses should have a will. Once prepared by your local legal services office or through your own private attorney, it should be placed in a safe location with your other important documents.

Correction of Military Records

Each branch of military has its own procedures for correcting the military records of its members and former members. Correction of a military record may result in eligibility for VA and other benefits—such as back pay and military retirement—that the veteran (or survivors) could not otherwise retrieve. Generally, a request for correction must be filed within three years after the discovery of the alleged error or injustice.

If you believe there is an error in your military record, apply in writing to the appropriate Service using DD Form 149, "Application for Correction of Military or Naval Record," which can be submitted by the veteran, survivor, or a legal representative. Get a copy from any VA office listed in the local telephone directory.

How to Get a Review of Your Discharge

Each Service has its own discharge review board. These boards have the authority to change or correct any discharge or dismissal from the Service, unless it was the result of a general court martial. A discharge board has no authority to address medical discharges.



If you feel your discharge decision was not fair or did not consider all the facts in the case, you may request a discharge review. Use the DD Form 293, "Application for the Review of Discharge or Dismissal from the Armed Forces of the United States" obtainable from your nearest VA office. Written applications should be submitted by the veteran, next of kin, or a legal representative. Application must be made within 15 years after discharge.

RESOURCES

FINANCIAL PLANNING ASSISTANCE

Family Centers offer financial planning assistance that can range from individual counseling on money matters to emergency loans. Additionally, Family Centers usually offer group seminars and workshops on several topics:

- » Financial planning for transition
- » Family budgets and spending plans
- » Recordkeeping
- » Insurance
- » Credit
- » Debt liquidation
- » Consumer rights
- » Taxes
- » Investments

BBB MILITARY LINE®—CONSUMER ASSISTANCE FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL AND THEIR FAMILIES

www.bbb.org/military

HELPFUL INFORMATION SOURCES FOR CONSUMER EDUCATION AND FINANCIAL EDUCATION

- » The Federal Trade Commission: www.ftc.gov/bcp/consumer
- » InCharge® Education Foundation: www.militarymoney.com
- » Federal Citizen Information Center: www.consumeraction.gov
- » FINRA Investor Education Foundation: www.saveandinvest.org

CREDIT REPORT

Go to www.annualcreditreport.com to get your credit report. Through this website you can receive one free credit report from each of the credit reporting companies every 12 months. You can also call 1-877-322-8228, or write to:

Annual Credit Report Request Service

P.O. Box 105281
Atlanta, GA 30348-5281

Here is additional information on each of the National Credit Reporting Companies:

Experian National Consumer Assistance

1-888-397-3742
www.experian.com

TRANSUNION
PO Box 2000 Chester
PA 19022-2000
1-800-916-8800
www.transunion.com

EQUIFAX Credit Information Service

PO Box 740241
Atlanta, GA 30374
1-800-685-1111
www.equifax.com

DEFENSE FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE (DFAS)

E: ccl-sdp@dfas.mil
F: 216-522-6924
DFAS-Cleveland
Code PMMCCB
ATTN: Savings Deposit Program
1240 E. 9th St.
Cleveland, OH 44199-2055

WHERE TO OBTAIN A W-2 FORM

You can view and print your W-2 from the MyPay website at mypay.dfas.mil/mypay. You will be able to access MyPay and view your W-2 for one year after you are no longer in a pay status or separated.

MILITARY RETIREMENT PAY

Visit DoD's online Retirement Pay Calculators to see how each retirement system will affect payouts: www.defenselink.mil/militarypay/retirement/calc/index.

CONCURRENT RETIREMENT AND DISABILITY PAY (CRDP)

You can contact the DFAS by calling toll free 1-800-321-1080 to learn about your personal CRDP payment rate. Additional information is available at the DFAS website: mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.

COMBAT-RELATED SPECIAL COMPENSATION (CRSC)

To learn more about the specific eligibility criteria and how to apply, visit one of the following websites:

AIR FORCE CRSC

United States Air Force
Disability Division (CRSC)
550 C Street West Suite 6
Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4708
P: 1-800-616-3775
www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/library/combat

COAST GUARD CRSC

Commander (adm-1-CRSC)
U.S. Coast Guard
Personnel Command
4200 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22203-1804
P: 1-800-772-8274
www.uscg.mil/hq/cgpc/adm/adm1

ARMY CRSC

Department of the Army
U.S. Army Physical Disabilities
Agency/Combat-Related Special
Compensation (CRSC)
200 Stovall Street
Alexandria, VA 22332
P: 1-866-281-3254
E: crsc.info@us.army.mil
www.CRSC.army.mil

NAVY and MARINE CORPS CRSC

Secretary of the Navy Council
of Review Boards
Combat-Related Special
Compensation Branch
720 Kennon Street SE, Suite 309
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374
www.hq.navy.mil/ncpb/CRSCB/combatrelated

Additional information is also available at the DFAS website: mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.

SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN

The DFAS website helps you learn more about the costs and benefits of the SBP: <http://militarypay.defense.gov/survivor/sbp/>.

eBENEFITS

eBenefits, a service of the VA and the DoD, is your one-stop shop for online benefits-related tools and information. This portal is designed for Wounded Warriors, Veterans, Service Members, their families, and their caregivers. Explore eBenefits and become a registered user at: www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal.

NATIONAL RETIREE COUNCILS

The Military Retiree Councils provide a link between members of the military retiree community—retirees, family members, and surviving spouses living throughout the world—and the leaders of their respective military service branches.

Each National Retiree Council is comprised of a board which consists of both senior NCO and officer retirees. The members represent geographic areas within the Continental United States, and at least one at-large representative.

The Retiree Councils meet annually to discuss retiree benefits issues. Upon conclusion of the meeting, they submit an annual report of the most significant issues for the retiree community to the appropriate member of their respective service branch.

Note: *Rather than issuing an annual report, the Air Force Retiree Council sends letters to various Air Staff offices requesting support for specific items.*

Visit each of the National Retiree Council websites to view their annual reports:

- » The Army Chief of Staff's Retiree Council: www.armyg1.army.mil/rso/RetireeCouncil
- » The Secretary of the Navy's Navy and Marine Corps Retiree Council: www.bupers.navy.mil/CommandSupport/RetireeCouncil.
- » The Air Force Retiree Council: www.retirees.af.mil/council.
- » Coast Guard Commandant's Retiree Council: www.uscg.mil/hr/cg122/Compensation/Retirees/default.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

The link for accessing state UCX information is: www.servicelocator.org.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Information on Social Security benefits is available from any local Social Security office; these are listed in the telephone book under "U.S. Government."

You can also go to www.ssa.gov or call 1-800-772-1213.

VA Loans

Detailed information on VA Home Loans is available at: www.homeloans.va.gov/veteran.

LIFE INSURANCE

SGLI, TSGLI, FSGLI

For more information call toll-free 1-800-419-1473 or visit www.insurance.va.gov.

TSGLI

For more information, contact your individual service points of contact:

Army, Army Reserve

P: 800-237-1336

E: tsgli@conus.army.mil

www.hrc.army.mil

Navy, Navy Reserve

P: 800-368-3202/901-874-2501

E: MILL_TSGLI@navy.mil

www.npc.navy.mil

Marine Corps

P: 877-216-0825 or 703-432-9277

E: t-sgli@usmc.mil

www.manpower.usmc.mil

U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS)

P: 301-594-2963

Army National Guard

P: 703-607-5851

E: raymond.holdeman@ng.army.mil

www.hrc.army.mil

Air Force, Air Force Reserve

Active Duty Phone: 800-433-0048

Air Reserve Phone: 800-525-0102

Air National Guard Phone: 703-607-0901

E: afpc.casualty@randolph.af.mil

www.afpc.randolph.af.mil

Coast Guard, Coast Guard Reserve

P: 202-475-5391

E: compensation@comdt.uscg.mil

www.uscg.mil

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

P: 301-713-3444

E: director.cpc@noaa.gov

The VA TSGLI website offers more detailed information on how and where to submit claims at: www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/TSGLI/TSGLI.

SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS LIFE INSURANCE (S-DVI)

VA Form 29-4364, "Application for Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance" to apply for basic S-DVI: www.insurance.va.gov/inForceGLISite/forms/29-4364.pdf

VA Form 29-357, "Claim for Disability Insurance Benefits" to apply for a total disability waiver of S-DVI premiums: www.insurance.va.gov/inforceGLISite/forms/29-357.pdf

VETERANS' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE (VGLI)

Applications for VGLI coverage should be mailed to:

The Office of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance
P.O. Box 5000
Millville, New Jersey 08332-9928

Note: VGLI applications VA Form SGLV 8714, "Application for Veterans" Group Life Insurance" (www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/forms/8714) should be mailed to the address shown on your DD Form 214 or equivalent separation orders. It is your responsibility to apply within the time limits, even if you do not receive an application in the mail.

For more information call toll-free 1-800-419-1473 or visit www.insurance.va.gov.

VETERANS' MORTGAGE LIFE INSURANCE (VMLI)

www.insurance.va.gov/gli/buying/VMLI

www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/veterans-mortgage-life-insurance

Veterans can apply by submitting VA Form 29-8636, "Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance Statement" (www.insurance.va.gov/inforceGLISite/forms/).

For more information on the VMLI program call toll-free 1-800-669-8477 or go to: www.insurance.va.gov.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

The information provided here and in online resources is for educational and general information purposes only. It is not legal advice. Speak with a licensed attorney before relying on the information contained within a legal assistance website to make a decision or take any action. Contact your local installation legal assistance office or use the Legal Services Locator to find your nearest military legal office within the continental United States: legalassistance.law.af.mil/content/locator

Retirees

Retirees can use the installation legal and financial offices on a space-available basis, and depending on the location, may have to wait to see a representative. The installation legal and financial offices will be able to tell you what services are available. It is helpful to call as far in advance as possible. Retirees residing overseas may have restrictions on privileges based upon Status of Forces agreements.

COMMISSARY AND EXCHANGE PRIVILEGES

Commissary customers can find additional information at: www.commissaries.com.

Exchange customers may shop via the internet at: www.shopmyexchange.com (AAFES); www.mynavyexchange.com (NEX); and www.usmc-mccs.org/shopping (MCX). Exchange customers save an average of 20% and do not pay sales tax.

REPLACING A LOST DD FORM 214, "CERTIFICATE OF RELEASE OR DISCHARGE"

You or your next-of-kin can request a copy of your DD Form 214 online by going to the National Personnel Records Center website: www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records.

Or, you can request the DD Form 214 by mail by sending a SF 180, "Request Pertaining to Military Records" or letter to the National Personnel Records Center. Include the following information in your letter:

- » Your full name
- » Social Security number
- » Current phone number (including area code)
- » Approximate dates of service
- » Place of discharge
- » Return address
- » Reason for request

Send this request to:

National Personnel Records Center
Attention: [Your Service, e.g., Army] Records
9700 Page Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63132-5000

CHAPTER 4

HEALTH AND WELL BEING



WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

The experiences of thousands of Service members who have separated from the military suggest that this transition is likely to be stressful for you and your family—this stress may be harmful to you and your family's health and well-being. This chapter acquaints you with some useful knowledge and skills that help you to manage the stress related to separation.

Health care and health insurance for you and your family is one of life's most important needs. Before you separate, you should arrange for health insurance in order to protect you and your family. This chapter will help you make informed decisions about these arrangements.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

EFFECTS OF A CAREER CHANGE

An Identity Challenge

Starting over as a civilian can be a stressful undertaking. The longer the military career, the greater identity one has with it—and the greater the potential for a stressful transition. Part of that stress comes from the loss of identity associated with the rank one has achieved over the years of military service. Rank signifies hard work, achievement, and status, among the many other things that distinguish one's identity. After separation, that rank no longer exists; you are just another civilian with no visible sign (rank) that informs others (and yourself) of your qualifications, achievements, and experience.

On the other hand, the absence of rank can represent an opportunity to grow, to start over, and reestablish an identity.

Expect Stress

Career transitions incur stress, but you can handle it better if you know how to recognize it and how to manage it. Stress is a state of being. It is a physical response, which if left unchecked can lead to mental and physical exhaustion and illness.

Natural stress is considered good because it enables one's body to respond to danger. *Unnatural* stress comes from sustained and unrelenting threats or dangers over which one has no control or period of rest. The body wears out under such conditions.

Harmful stress can be grouped into the following categories:

- » Events that lead to the loss of a special relationship, such as divorce
- » Events you cannot control that make you feel helpless, such as an accident
- » Events with lasting consequences, such as a terminal illness or the loss of your job

Transitioning from the military can have aspects of all three categories. In a sense, you lose many special relationships by losing the daily interaction with your coworkers. If you are transitioning involuntarily, you may be in a situation that is beyond your control. Lastly, transition obviously has permanent consequences for your career.

Stress Indicators

- » Constant fatigue
- » Headaches
- » Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- » Stomach problems
- » More frequent colds or other illnesses
- » Smoking or drinking more than usual
- » Feeling nervous
- » Being irritable or angrier than you want to be
- » Desire to be alone/away from other people
- » Inability to eat or eating more than usual

Managing Transition-Related Stress

- » **Get Going:** Work through the transition process and do not procrastinate. Put your situation in perspective and get on with your life. You are not the first person to go through transition; many thousands have come before you. You have dealt with difficult situations before, and you can handle whatever may be ahead.
- » **Sell Yourself:** Don't be modest about your accomplishments. No one will come looking for you unless they know you are available.
- » **Work at It:** Work at planning your transition as if it were a job. However, keep it balanced or you'll burn out. Take time for yourself and your family.
- » **Lighten Up:** This is probably the most important piece of advice. Do not lose your sense of humor.
- » **Keep Your Family Involved:** Your family has a large stake in your transition and is experiencing many of the same feelings, worries, and uncertainties as you are. Do not keep your plans to yourself; get your family involved in this process.
- » **Volunteer:** Consider doing volunteer work. Your charitable actions will help others, keep you busy and happy, and assist you in getting to know the community beyond the military installations.
- » **Take a Change Management Course:** Consider taking a class in dealing with change before the first signs of stress appear.

HEALTH INSURANCE PLANNING

Transitioning directly to a civilian job normally means no gap in health insurance because the new employer provides it. Sometimes however, there is a gap between the time your service-provided coverage ends and your new employer's coverage begins. Worse yet, you may experience a period of not being employed after leaving the Service. Regardless, you are responsible for paying all the medical costs that you and your family might accrue during this gap in coverage, which could be overwhelming.

Fortunately, several resources are available to ensure continuous, comprehensive, quality health care for you and your family. Consult with the Health Benefits Advisor at your Military Treatment Facility (MTF) for details about specific options and programs. For example, Service members who separate prior to the delivery of a child may be eligible for that child to be delivered in an MTF after separation.

Get a Physical

If military treatment facilities, personnel resources, and local policy permit, you and your family members should arrange for your separation physicals as early as possible. Any problems can be treated while your medical expenses are still fully covered by the Service.

Get a Dental Checkup

Before you separate, you and your family should have routine dental checkups and obtain necessary treatment under the TRICARE Family Member Dental Plan prior to your expiration of eligibility for the program. Treatment can be completed prior to separation, at little or no cost to you. Emergencies will also be taken care of until your separation.

Secure Your Health Records



Get a copy (certified, if possible) of your medical records from your MTF. These records will provide useful background information to the health care professionals who will treat you in the future. Your military health records will be transferred (with your consent) to the VA regional office nearest your separation address.

Department of Defense (DoD) Mental Health Self Assessment Program

DoD Mental Health Self Assessment Program is a mental health and alcohol screening and referral program provided for military families and Service members affected by deployment and mobilization. This voluntary and anonymous program is offered online, by phone, and through special events held at installations and reserve units. Anonymous self-assessments are available for depression, bipolar disorder, alcohol use, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and generalized anxiety disorder. Individualized results and military health resources, including TRICARE, Vet Centers, and Military OneSource are provided at the end of every assessment.

FACTS AND ADVICE

HEALTH INSURANCE

Transitional Health Insurance

The Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP) offers transitional TRICARE coverage to certain separating active duty members and their eligible family members. TRICARE eligibility under TAMP has been permanently extended to 180 days.

There are four categories of eligibility for TAMP:

1. Members involuntarily separated from active duty and their eligible family members; and
2. National Guard and Reserve members, collectively known as the Reserve Component (RC), separated from active duty after being called up or ordered in support of a contingency operation for an active duty period of more than 30 days and their family members; and
3. Members separated from active duty after being involuntarily retained in support of a contingency operation and their family members; and
4. Members separated from active duty following a voluntary agreement to stay on active duty for less than one year in support of a contingency mission and their family members.

Active duty sponsors and family members enrolled in TRICARE Prime who desire to continue their enrollment upon the sponsor's separation from active duty status are required to reenroll. To reenroll, the sponsor or family member must complete and submit a TRICARE Prime enrollment application.

Under TAMP, former active duty sponsors, former activated Reservists, and family members are not eligible to enroll or reenroll in TRICARE Prime Remote or in TRICARE Prime Remote for Active Duty Family Members because both programs require the sponsor to be on active duty. Under TAMP, the sponsor is no longer on active duty and is treated as an active duty family member for benefits and cost-sharing purposes.

Transitional Health Termination

After 180 days, you and your family are no longer eligible to use MTF or TRICARE. However, you may purchase health insurance known as the Continued Health Care Benefit Program (CHCBP). You have 60 days after your initial transitional health care ends to enroll in CHCBP. You and your family members will be issued over-stamped identification cards that denote eligibility dates and allow you to use MTFs.

If you separate voluntarily (not one of the four categories listed above), you and your family are not eligible to use MTFs or TRICARE. However, you may purchase extended transitional health insurance (CHCBP) for up to 18 months. You have 60 days after separation to enroll in CHCBP, which will start the day after you separate.



Transitional health care does not apply to retirees.

Community-Based Warrior Transition Units (CBWTUs)

CBWTUs allow a recuperating soldier to live at home and to access medical facilities near home while remaining on active duty. The primary mission of the CBWTUs is to provide

high-quality health care and administrative processing for Reserve Component soldiers while allowing them to live and perform duties close to their homes and families (they work at an armory or reserve center within the confines of their profiles).

At a Community Based Warrior Transition Unit (CBWTU), an experienced nurse case manager manages the soldier's care. The case manager coordinates health care appointments, tracks the soldier's progress, and ensures that his or her care meets Army and TRICARE standards. Medical care is focused on returning soldiers to their pre-mobilization health status. If after medical treatment, a soldier does not meet retention standards, he or she is referred to a series of boards under the PDES. The Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) has responsibility for determining fitness for duty or any service-connected disability (SCD).

Continued Health Care Benefit Program (CHCBP)

CHCBP is a health insurance program intended to provide veterans with continuous health care coverage on a temporary basis following the termination of military benefits. It acts as a "bridge" between military health benefits and those acquired in the civilian world.

- » CHCBP may entitle you to coverage for preexisting conditions often not covered by a new employer's benefit plan.
- » CHCBP benefits are comparable to TRICARE Standard benefits.
- » A premium payment for the first 90 days of coverage.
- » The premium rates are approximately \$930 per quarter for individuals and \$2,000 per quarter for families. Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc., will bill you for subsequent quarterly premiums through your period of eligibility.
- » The program uses existing TRICARE providers and follows most of the rules and procedures of the TRICARE Standard program.
- » Depending on your beneficiary category, CHCBP coverage is limited to either 18 or 36 months as follows:
 - 18 months for separating Service members and their families
 - 36 months for others who are eligible (in some cases, former spouses who have not remarried may continue coverage beyond 36 months if they meet certain criteria)



Eligible beneficiaries must enroll in CHCBP within 60 days following the loss of entitlement. To enroll, submit the following to the Military Health System:

- » A completed DD Form 2837, "CHCBP Application."
- » Documentation as requested on the DD Form 214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty;" final divorce decree; DD Form 1173, "Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card." Additional information and documentation may be required to confirm an applicant's eligibility for CHCBP.

For all enrollees, CHCBP coverage is effective on the day after the termination of military benefits.

MEDICAL CARE FOR RETIREES

TRICARE offers retiree beneficiaries four options in obtaining medical care.

1. **TRICARE Prime**—This is a health maintenance organization-type managed care program for which retirees are required to pay an annual enrollment fee. Enrollees are assigned a primary care manager who determines the most appropriate, available source of care—either a MTF or a civilian network provider. Enrollees pay little or no co-payment, and usually are not required to file claims for their care.
2. **TRICARE Extra**—This is a preferred provider organization-type program; no enrollment is required; however care has to be provided by a TRICARE network provider. Enrollees are responsible for paying the annual deductible and cost shares at a reduced rate. The network provider will file the claims.
3. **TRICARE Standard**—This is a fee-for-service option that requires an annual deductible and cost share after the deductible has been reached. Under TRICARE Standard enrollees are responsible for filing claims.
4. **TRICARE for Life (TFL)**—If a member or family member becomes entitled to Medicare Part A, whether due to a disability or when they turn 65, they are eligible for TFL. There are no TFL enrollment fees, but enrollees are required to pay Medicare Part B premiums (unless the sponsor is on active duty). When using TFL, TRICARE is the second payer—after Medicare—in most cases.

Supplemental Health Insurance for Retirees

One short stay in the hospital could offset the cost of several years of supplemental health insurance. Even though you are covered by TRICARE, a supplemental insurance policy is a good idea for retirees.

- » TRICARE does not cover all costs.
- » TRICARE has a yearly deductible to be paid.
- » TRICARE has a yearly cap on non-covered expenses; the cap is extremely high, and you are responsible for the cost of non-covered items up to that amount if you are covered by health insurance with your new employer, you may use TRICARE as your supplemental insurance for that policy.



Check with your TRICARE advisor concerning your particular circumstances.

Shopping for Supplemental Health Insurance

There are many places to obtain supplemental health insurance. Several fraternal associations and many commercial insurance companies offer such plans. Insurance plans vary greatly with which medical procedures are covered and the percentage the policy will pay.

When shopping for health insurance, first consider the benefits you may have as a retiree or veteran. Then purchase supplemental insurance. The trick is to find a supplemental insurance plan that covers all your anticipated needs without paying for benefits that duplicate what you already have.

There are five basic types of health insurance coverage:

1. Hospital expense insurance pays for hospital bills either in part or in full. Watch out for policies that do not pay for the first eight to 10 days of a hospital stay (the average hospital stay is fewer than eight days).
2. Surgical expense insurance covers surgeon fees. Beware: For major surgeries, all of the fees may not be covered. Read the policy carefully before you sign.
3. Medical expense insurance covers doctor's visits in the hospital, in the doctor's office or house calls.
4. Major medical insurance pays practically every form of hospital and outpatient care as long as a licensed physician provides the care. Most people choose major medical because it is so comprehensive. However, the payments for this type of coverage are high.
5. Disability insurance pays a percentage of your normal income if a disability prevents you from doing your job.

When looking at your health insurance coverage, take a moment to review your insurance on your automobile, personal property, real estate, and loan payments. Insurers sometimes offer discounts to customers who purchase several types of insurance from the same company.

Health Insurance for Survivors

Family members are entitled to TRICARE benefits as transitional survivors or survivors if their active duty service sponsor who died while serving on active duty for a period of more than 30 days. TRICARE pays transitional survivor claims at the active duty family member payment rate and pays survivor claims at the retiree payment rate for surviving spouses, while children's claims process at the active duty family member rate. Transitional survivors pay no enrollment fees or co-payments when they use TRICARE Prime. They will, however, pay cost shares and deductibles at the active duty family member rate.

VA MEDICAL CARE

VA's medical care system is set up to provide quality medical care to those who need it most and can afford it least. This means that the least fortunate veterans may receive unlimited medical care at no cost. On the other hand, most veterans will find their VA medical benefits are limited. Therefore, these "typical" veterans should *not* rely on the VA as their sole source of medical services.

VA Health Care Eligibility

Eligibility for VA health care depends on a number of variables, which may influence the final determination of the services for which you qualify. These factors include the nature of your discharge from military service (e.g., honorable, other than honorable, dishonorable), length of service, and the VA determination on any SCD claims, income level, and the available VA resources.

Generally, you must be enrolled in the VA health care system to receive benefits offered in the Medical Benefits Package.

The application process determines whether you have qualifying service as a veteran and what your veteran status is by evaluating your character of discharge and the length of military service.

VA Combat Veteran Authority

The VA offers veterans who served in a theater of combat operations and were discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003, an enhanced enrollment placement for five years, or more, after the date they leave the service. If the veteran served in combat after November 11, 1998 and was discharged from active duty before January 28, 2003, he or she may apply for enrollment. Also eligible are activated Reservists or members of the National Guard who served on active duty in a theater of combat operation after November 11, 1998 and left service under any conditions other than dishonorable.

Family Members and Survivors

The VA may provide medical care for the children and spouse of a veteran with a SCD, even after the veteran's death.

VA Health Care Benefits for Disabled Veterans

The law ensures that VA care will continue for disabled veterans with service-connected disabilities.

Veterans with non-service-connected disabilities will also continue to receive VA medical care, but on a space-available basis, and a co-payment may be charged. Laws are subject to change, and there are many applicable details. Contact the VA for the latest information on disability benefits.

Classifying Disabled Veterans

The VA makes an important distinction among veterans based on the nature of their disability. This distinction determines the cost and availability of VA medical services.

	SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY	NON-SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY
OVERVIEW	Any veteran who was disabled by injury or disease incurred or aggravated during active military service in the line of duty will receive VA medical care on a mandatory basis. In general, this means that service will be provided as needed at no cost to the veteran.	Any veteran whose disability originated outside of active service will receive VA medical care on a discretionary basis. Examples of such disabilities might include disabling arthritis that you inherited from your parents, loss of the use of your legs after a fall during a ski vacation, contracting malaria, etc. The VA generally provides medical care to those in the discretionary category on a space-available basis, as long as the veteran agrees to make a co-payment.
OUTPATIENT CARE	If you have a single disability or a combined disability rating of 50% or more, the VA will furnish outpatient care without limitation. If your disability rating is less than 50%, the VA will treat at no cost only those conditions that are service-connected	With very few exceptions, outpatient care is only provided to veterans with service-connected disabilities. Contact your local VA office for details.
HOSPITAL CARE	The VA is required to provide hospital care at no cost. All medical services are covered while you are hospitalized. This coverage also may include transportation under certain circumstances.	Hospital care in VA facilities may or may not be provided to veterans in the discretionary category, depending on whether space and resources are available. However, you must agree to pay a deductible of what you would pay under Medicare.
NURSING HOME CARE	The VA may or may not provide nursing home or domiciliary care, depending on your income and disability. For more information, call the VA.	The VA may or may not provide nursing home care, depending on whether space and resources are available. However, you must pay a co-payment. Contact the VA for details.

Lower Income Veterans

Lower income veterans receive benefits similar to those in the mandatory classification.

VA COMPENSATION AND PENSION PROGRAMS

The VA offers the Veteran Disability Compensation and Veteran Pension programs that provide assistance based on your personal circumstances.

VA Disability Compensation

If you are a military veteran with a service-related disability, you may qualify for monthly disability compensation benefits. These benefits are paid to veterans who are disabled by an injury or disease that occurred while on active duty, active duty for training, or was made worse by active military service. These benefits are tax free. You may be eligible for disability compensation if you have a service-related disability and you were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions. The amount of compensation that can be paid through this program ranges from \$123 to \$2,673 per month, depending on the severity of your disabilities.

Your monthly compensation rate may also include Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) based on other circumstances. For example, you may receive SMC if you have any of the following:

- » Very severe disabilities or loss of limb(s)
- » A spouse, child(ren), or dependent parent(s)
- » A seriously disabled spouse



You can apply for compensation benefits by filling out VA Form 21-526, "Veterans Application for Compensation and/or Pension."



Be sure to attach copies of any of the following documents to your application:

- » Discharge or separation papers (DD Form 214 or equivalent)
- » National Guard Service members should also include a copy of their military orders, presidential proclamation or executive order that clearly demonstrates the federal nature of the service
- » Dependency records (marriage and children's birth certificates), as applicable
- » Medical evidence (doctor and hospital reports)

Veterans Pension

Wartime veterans with limited incomes who are permanently and totally disabled or age 65 or older may be eligible for a Veteran Pension. The Veterans Pension (also known as VA Pension) is a non-service-connected benefit that provides a monthly payment to supplement income.



ELIGIBILITY

- » Discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions; *and*
- » Served 90 days or more of active duty and at least one day of that service had to occur during a period of war*; *and*
- » Countable family income is below a yearly limit set by law; *and*
- » Permanently and totally disabled; *or*
- » Age 65 or older.

The application for Veterans Pension is the same as the VA Application for Compensation.

Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD)

BDD is a popular program, available at limited locations in the United States, that allow veterans' self-identified disability claims to be processed six months prior to separation.



At BDD sites, Service members can submit VA Form 21-526 and medical documentation to a local VA representative in order to establish their claims.

VA schedules necessary specialty appointments and a compensation and pension examination by a VA doctor. Disposition of the claim is projected as a goal of no later than two months after the date of discharge on the DD Form 214.

Quick Start



Quick Start allows Service members the opportunity to submit an application for service-connected compensation while still on active duty, which will speed up the acquirement of VA compensation benefits.

Service members with 1–59 days remaining on active duty, or full-time Reserve or National Guard (Title 10 or Title 32), or Service members who do not meet the BDD criteria requiring availability for all examinations prior to discharge may apply through Quick Start.

Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA): Medical Care for Family Members and Survivors

The CHAMPVA helps pay for medical services and supplies veterans' family members and survivors obtain from civilian sources.

* Anyone who enlisted after September 7, 1980, generally must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which called or ordered to active duty. Military service from August 2, 1990, through a date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation is considered to be a period of war (Gulf War). VA Pension pays you the difference between your countable family income and the yearly income limit. This difference is generally paid in 12 equal monthly payments rounded down to the nearest dollar.



ELIGIBILITY

To qualify, family members and survivors must *not* be eligible for Medicare or TRICARE. The following are eligible for CHAMPVA:

- » The spouse or child of a veteran who has a permanent and total SCD.
- » The surviving spouse or child of a veteran who died as a result of a service-connected condition.
- » The surviving spouse of child of a person who died while on active military service in the line of duty.
- » A surviving spouse who remarries may qualify for care under CHAMPVA after the subsequent marriage is terminated.

Social Security Administration Benefits for Wounded Warriors

Service members can receive expedited processing of disability claims from Social Security. Benefits available through Social Security are different than those from the VA and require a separate application.

The expedited process is used for military Service members who become disabled while on active military service on or after October 1, 2001, regardless of where the disability occurs.



You can apply via the following methods:

- » File online at www.socialsecurity.gov.
- » File in-person at your nearest Social Security office.
- » Call 1-800-772-1213 or TTY 1-800-325-0778 to schedule an appointment.

If filing in person and your disability occurred *while you were on active duty* October 1, 2001 or later, ensure you explicitly report information regarding your military service to your claims representative. If you are filing online you will need to annotate that you became disabled while on active duty in the remarks section so that your case will receive expedited processing.

If your disability occurred while you were on active duty October 1, 2001 or later, make sure to explicitly report it as such and your case will receive expedited processing.

DENTAL HEALTH CARE

Dental care is distinct from medical care. As a result, the types and amounts of coverage are different.

TRICARE Dental Program

The DoD offers the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) through the TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) and the United Concordia Companies, Inc., administers and underwrites the program. The TDP is a high-quality, cost-effective dental care benefit for eligible

family members of all active duty uniformed Service members; as well as members of the Selected Reserve and Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) and their eligible family members.

TRICARE Retiree Dental Plan (TRDP)

The Federal Services division of Delta Dental Plan of California, located in Sacramento, California, administers and underwrites the TRDP. The TRDP offers comprehensive, cost-effective dental coverage for uniformed services retirees and their eligible family members.

The TRDP also makes available a premium-based dental insurance program for military retirees, members of the Retired Reserve receiving retired pay, un-remarried surviving spouses, and dependents. Eligible beneficiaries will pay the full cost of the dental insurance coverage. TRDP features basic dental care and treatment, to include diagnostic services, preventative services, basic restoration services, endodontic, surgical services, and emergency services.

Transitional Dental Care

The VA provides one-time dental care for veterans who apply within 90 days after separation. However, you will not receive dental care if the military provided a dental examination and treatment within 90 days prior to your separation.

Following Separation



You will need to obtain dental insurance from your new employer or through a private insurer. Many fraternal associations provide access to group life, health, and dental insurance at competitive rates.

RESOURCES

STRESS: WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

Various agencies on and off base provide counseling for personal issues, marital issues, parent-child conflicts, stress-related concerns, and alcohol and drug abuse. While you are on active duty, these services are free on military installations.

For information, assistance, and referrals, the following resources are helpful:

- » Family Center, Chaplain's Office, and Military mental health care facility
- » The Department of Veterans Affairs at 1-800-827-1000
- » VA Vet Center: www.vetcenter.va.gov
- » Military OneSource 24/7 Support at 1-800-342-9647; or online at: www.militaryonesource.com
- » Military Family Network: www.emilitary.org

Ameriforce Deployment Guide

This resource offers fact sheets and information for Service members and their families on post-deployment issues, including home, finances, career, and more: www.ameriforce.net/deployment.

National Center for PTSD

The National Center for PTSD is a special center within the VA created to advance the clinical care and social welfare of America's veterans through research, education, and training in the science, diagnosis, and treatment of PTSD and stress-related disorders: www.ncptsd.va.gov.

Courage to Care

Courage to Care is an electronic health campaign for military and civilian professionals serving the military community: www.usuhs.mil/psy/courage.

Military OneSource

This free, 24-hour service provided by the DoD, is available to all active duty, Guard, and Reserve members and their families. Consultants provide information and make referrals on a wide range of issues. You can reach the program at 1-800-342-9647 or through the website at www.militaryonesource.com.

***InTransition* Mental Health Coaching and Support Program**

Are you looking at an upcoming change in status, relocation, or return to civilian life? If so, and if you are currently receiving mental health care, transferring to a new provider can be easy. Change of status can disrupt anyone's military life. *InTransition* provides you with encouragement from a personal coach and access to other resources to help you get started with your new provider, get your questions answered, and continue your treatment. You can reach the program at 800-424-7877; outside the U.S. toll-free: 800-424-4685 (DSN); outside the U.S. collect: 314-387-4700, or through the website at www.health.mil.InTransition.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Transitional Health Insurance

www.tricare.mil/mybenefit

TRICARE

www.tricare.mil

- » Health Benefits Advisors/Beneficiary Counselor and Assistance Coordinators (BCAC) at MTFs: Locate the BCAC for your state at www.tricare.mil/bcacdcao/.
- » TRICARE for Life: www.tricare.mil/tfl or call Wisconsin Physicians Service-TFL at 1-866-773-0404 (1-866-773-0405 TTY/TDD for the hearing impaired).
- » For more information regarding the Retiree Dental Program: Consult the TRICARE website www.tricare.mil or call 1-800-866-8499.

CHCBP

Contact Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc., in writing or by phone for information about CHCBP, which includes enrollment eligibility, application instructions, benefits details, and costs for coverage.

Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc.

Attn: CHCBP

P.O. Box 740072

Louisville, KY 40201

P: 1-800-444-5445

www.humanamilitary.com

VA HEALTH CARE

If you served in the Gulf War, the Office of the Special Assistant for Gulf War Illnesses has established a website in order to provide relevant information: www.gulflink.osd.mil. In addition to the website, you may also call the Gulf War/Agent Orange Hotline at 1-800-749-8387 for additional information.

To apply for VA health care benefits, including enrollment, you must fill out an application. Enrollment forms and instructions can be found at: www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha.

For eligibility requirements, go to: www.va.gov/healtheligibility or call your VA regional office toll free at 1-800-827-1000.

There are 58 VA regional offices and 171 VA medical centers located through the nation, in addition to numerous outpatient clinics, vet centers, and national cemeteries. The toll-free telephone number for VA regional offices is 1-800-827-1000. Also, visit the VA website at www.va.gov.

VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND PENSION

vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp

Vet Centers

Vet Centers provide readjustment counseling and outreach services to all veterans who served in any combat zone. Services are also available for their family members for military-related issues. Veterans have earned these benefits through their service and all are provided at no cost to the veteran or family.

Readjustment counseling provides a wide range of services to combat veterans to help them make a satisfying transition from military to civilian life. Services include:

- » Individual counseling
- » Group counseling
- » Marital and family counseling
- » Bereavement counseling
- » Medical referrals
- » Assistance in applying for VA Benefits
- » Employment counseling
- » Guidance and referral
- » Alcohol/drug assessments
- » Information and referral to community resources
- » Military sexual trauma counseling and referral
- » Outreach and community education

VA's readjustment counseling is provided at community-based Vet Centers located near veterans and their families. There is no cost for Vet Center readjustment counseling. Find your nearest Vet Center in the online Vet Center Directory at: iris.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail or check the local blue (government) pages in your telephone book.

The Vet Center staff is available toll free during normal business hours at 1-800-905-4675 (Eastern) and 1-866-496-8838 (Pacific).

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION BENEFITS FOR WOUNDED WARRIORS

To learn more about this benefit, visit the Social Security Wounded Warriors website at www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors.

DisabilityInfo.gov—The Online Disability Resource

The federal government has created the www.disabilityinfo.gov website, which is designed to give people with disabilities and many others access to the information and resources they need to live full and independent lives in the workplace and in their communities. Managed by the DOL Office of Disability Employment Policy (www.dol.gov/odep), DisabilityInfo.gov offers a broad range of valuable information for people with disabilities and their family members, health care professionals, service providers, and many others.

Easy to navigate, DisabilityInfo.gov is organized by subject areas that include benefits, civil rights, community life, education, employment, health, housing, technology, and transportation. By selecting a category from the tabs at the top of the home page, users are directed to valuable information covering state and local resources, news and events, grants and funding, laws and regulations, and more. Several sections of the site link to disability-related programs geared toward veterans and the military community.

With 21 federal agencies contributing content to this website, DisabilityInfo.gov contains extensive, frequently-updated information on a host of crosscutting topics. Areas of particular interest to the military community and their families include information on the availability of assistive technologies for DoD employees and Service members with disabilities, links to employment programs for transitioning wounded Service members in addition to information on benefits, compensation and health care programs, links to relocation and employment services as well as special needs programs for military families, and many other DoD programs serving troops and their families.

DisabilityInfo.gov also offers a free subscription service in which you can sign up to receive *DisabilityConnection*, a quarterly newsletter, as well as other e-mail alerts covering information tailored to your individual interests. Visit service.govdelivery.com/service/user.html?code=USODEP.

CHAMPVA: Medical Care for Family Members and Survivors

www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/champva/champva

For details and submitting new health care claims, contact:

VA Health Administration Center

CHAMPVA

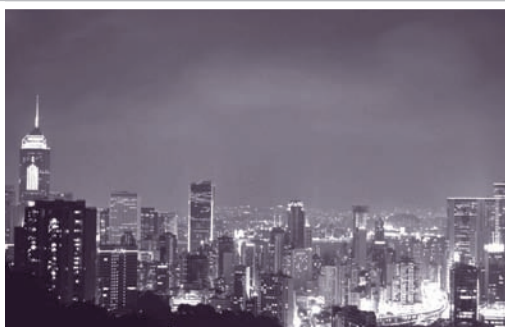
P.O. Box 65024

Denver, CO 80206-9024

P: 1-800-733-8387

CHAPTER 5

HOUSING AND RELOCATION



WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Planning your final move is a major and critical part of your transition from the military. House hunting, buying or renting a home, and moving your family and household goods to a new community are among life's major events. This section contains information that helps you with the process of relocation.

CHOOSING WHERE TO LIVE

Think about where you'd like to live and then consider the realities.

Example: If you were a ship navigator during your military career, you could have a difficult time finding a similar job in a land-locked state like Idaho.

Example: If you were an Army nurse, you may find several excellent opportunities in Idaho's many fine hospitals.

Most career placement specialists recommend that job applicants choose the type of job they want first, *then* go where the jobs are. In making a decision to relocate, you might prioritize as follows:

- » **Job Potential**—Which community is most likely to offer job opportunities that match your skills, experience, and career goals?
- » **Affordability**—Consider the not-so-obvious expenses in addition to the cost of living. Compare local, state income, real estate, personal property and sales taxes. Does the state tax your military retirement pay? Does the location have income and career potential?
- » **Community**—Do you have family or friends there? Can you count on them to help make your transition easier? Do you now, or might you in the future, need to be close to your aging parents for economic or medical reasons? Are you seeking upward mobility with the potential to move, or are you looking for a community to settle for the long term?
- » **Environment**—Would you be happiest living in a city, the suburbs, a small town, or a rural area? Does the climate suit you?

TRANSPORTATION TO YOUR NEW HOME

Once you have chosen your new hometown, you should arrange for transportation counseling. Your entitlement and its limitations will be explained to you during your appointment. Entitlements vary with individual situations.

Schedule an appointment with your installation's Transportation Office as soon as you have your orders. This is important because the availability of movers is limited.

SPECIAL-NEEDS FAMILY MEMBERS



Families with special needs members can find information on the services available in your new community through the Family Center, the United Way/Community Chest, and the community social services office listed in the local telephone directory, or the closest veterans hospital.

FACTS AND ADVICE

HOUSING COUNSELING ASSISTANCE

If you live in government quarters, you must arrange a time for a member of the Housing staff to come to your home to perform a pre-inspection and explain the requirements for cleaning and vacating quarters, as well as options available for you to accomplish them.

If you are moving from a rental property, notify your landlord as soon as possible. The Housing Office can assist you with any landlord problems you may have in conjunction with your separation—e.g., breaking a lease or early termination of a lease.

Involuntary Separations

Individuals involuntarily separated are authorized continued use of military family housing for up to 180 days after separation on a space available basis, subject to Status of Forces Agreements overseas.

RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

Your upcoming relocation is your final move out of military life. Specialists within the Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) will ensure that you are fully prepared for this unique transition. Relocation services include:

- » Needs assessment and planning for individuals and families that are tailored to personal circumstances and requirements.
- » Help in developing a relocation plan—providing information specifically related to your unique situation, linking you with special programs, and referring you to other offices that can provide assistance.
- » Workshops and individual sessions on managing relocation stress for all family members; planning a moving budget; how to buy, sell, and rent; settling into a new community; and other programs tailored for adults or children.
- » Special re-entry services and programs for those Service members who are transitioning from overseas installations.

Department of Defense (DoD) Dependents' Schools Extensions



ELIGIBILITY

Subject to Status of Forces Agreements overseas, and providing each child has completed the 11th grade by the Service member's date of separation, extensions may be granted for dependents of Service members who are involuntarily separating from active duty. They must meet the criteria outlined in U.S. Code Title 10 1141, Involuntary Separation Pub. L. No. 101-510, or be separated due to a medical condition.

Shipment and Storage of Household Goods

Eligible retirees and certain involuntary separatees (e.g., with separation pay and at least eight years continuous active duty) are authorized storage and shipment of household goods for up to one full year. Household goods may be shipped to:

- » Any destination within the U.S.
- » Your home of record outside the U.S.: Your home of record is the place you lived when you entered the military.
- » The place outside the U.S. from which you were initially called to active duty.

All others separatees are authorized storage and shipment of household goods up to six months. Items may be shipped to the location in which you collected separation travel pay:

- » Your home of record. Normally, your home of record is the place you lived when you entered the military. Your official Home of Record is listed in your service record.
- » The place from which you were initially called to active duty.

Authorized Leave/Permissive/Administrative Absence and Travel for Job Hunters

Under DoD regulations, the Secretaries of the Military Departments may authorize administrative absence for any of the purposes outlined below for Service members:

- » Participation in pre-separation job search and house hunting activities that facilitate relocation of members. The permissive/administrative absence authority to facilitate transition into civilian life for house and job hunting for military members being involuntarily separated under honorable conditions—or retiring from active duty—has been extended indefinitely.
- » Service members who are discharged or released from active service as involuntary separatees under honorable conditions (as defined in section 1141 of Title 10 of the U.S. Code) may take excess leave for a period not in excess of 30 days, or such transition administrative absence not to exceed 10 days, to facilitate relocation, unless it interferes with military missions. They (and retirees) may also be authorized:
 - An additional 20 days up to a total of 30 days transition administrative absence for those members stationed outside the Continental United States (CONUS); and
 - An additional 10 days up to a total of 20 days transition administrative absence for those members stationed in the CONUS; and

- An additional 20 days up to a total of 30 days transition administrative absence for those members who were domiciliaries before entering active duty and continue to be domiciliaries of States, possessions or territories of the United States located outside the CONUS, including domiciliaries of foreign countries, and are stationed at a location other than the State, possession, territory, or country of their domicile. Members may be authorized up to a total of 30 days transition administrative absence only for house and job-hunting to the State, territory, possession, or country of their domicile.



ELIGIBILITY

Regulations permit you to use excess leave or permissive/administrative absence in accordance with the following guidance:

- » If you are an eligible involuntary separatee or a retiree, your spouse may take one unaccompanied round trip on the military aircraft for house and job hunting, on a space-available basis.
- » If you are attending a DoD-approved transition assistance seminar, and you are using excess leave, permissive/administrative absence, or temporary additional duty to attend the seminar, you are authorized to use military air transportation, if available. If you are traveling from overseas to CONUS to attend such a seminar, your spouse can accompany you on military air transportation on a space-available basis. Your spouse is *not* authorized to travel within CONUS.
- » Service members separating at the end of a normal term of service (ETS—Expiration Term of Service) or (EAOS—End of Active Duty Obligated Service) are not eligible for PTDY.

VA BENEFITS

VA Home Loans

Eligible veterans, including active duty veterans, discharged veterans, and reservists, may obtain loans guaranteed by the VA to purchase or refinance homes, condominiums and manufactured homes. Unmarried surviving spouses may also be eligible. VA home loans feature a negotiable interest rate, choice of loan types, limited closing costs, no monthly mortgage insurance premium, and no down payment is required in most cases. This benefit may be used more than once.

- » **Down Payment**—A traditional feature of VA home loans is that they typically require no down payment. A down payment is required if the home's purchase price exceeds the reasonable value of the property, the property being purchased is a manufactured home not permanently affixed, or the loan type is a Graduated Payment Mortgage.
- » **Verification**—You will find many lenders to choose from, since most mortgage companies, banks and credit unions participate in this program. The lender will ask you to provide evidence, in the form of a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) that demonstrates you are eligible to apply for a VA home loan. In many instances your lender will be able to obtain your COE online in seconds. However, since not all COE

requests can be processed online, there will be instances in which the veteran needs to apply for a COE through the Winston-Salem Eligibility Center. To obtain a COE in that manner, VA Form 26-1880, "Request for Certificate of Eligibility," would need to be completed.



Please go to the **Resources** section at the end of this chapter to access the VA Form 26-1880.

- » **Realtors**—Most real estate agents are also familiar with the VA home loan program and would be happy to answer your questions.

VA Grants for Home Modifications

Specialty Adapted Housing (SAH) Grant

The SAH Grant is designed to help provide a barrier-free living environment that affords the individual a level of independent living he or she may not otherwise enjoy, such as a wheelchair accessible home. Veterans with specific service-connected disabilities may be entitled to a grant for the purpose of constructing or modifying a home to meet their adaptive needs. This grant is currently limited to \$63,780.



ELIGIBILITY

The SAH grant is available to veterans and Service members who will be entitled to disability compensation for permanent and total disability due to:

- » Loss or loss of use of both lower extremities, such as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair; or
- » Blindness in both eyes, having only light perception, plus loss or loss of use of one lower extremity; or
- » Loss or loss of use of one lower extremity together with residuals of organic disease or injury, or the loss or loss of use of one upper extremity, which so affects the functions of balance or propulsion as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair; or
- » Loss or loss of use of both upper extremities such as to preclude use of the arms at or above the elbow; or
- » A severe burn injury (as so determined).

Special Home Adaptation (SHA) Grant

The SHA grant is for modifying an existing home to meet adaptive needs, such as assistance with mobility throughout the home. Veterans and Service members with specific service-connected disabilities may be entitled to this type of grant. The grant is currently limited to \$12,756. A temporary grant may be available to veterans and Service members who are or will be temporarily residing in a home owned by a family member.



ELIGIBILITY

The SHA grant is available to veterans and Service members who will be entitled to disability compensation for permanent and total disability due to:

- » Blindness in both eyes with 5/200 visual acuity or less; or
- » The anatomical loss or loss of use of both hands or extremities below the elbow; or
- » A severe burn injury (as so determined).



HOW TO APPLY

You can apply for the SAH and SHA grants by completing VA Form 26-4555, "Veterans Application in Acquiring Specially Adapted Housing or Special Home Adaptation Grant," and submitting it to your local VA regional office.

Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA) Grant

Under the HISA program, veterans may receive assistance for any home improvement necessary for the continuation of treatment or for disability access to the home and essential lavatory and sanitary facilities.



ELIGIBILITY

A HISA grant is available to veterans with service-connected and non service-connected disabilities who have received a medical determination indicating that improvements and structural alterations are necessary or appropriate for the effective and economical treatment of their disability.

- » Home improvement benefits up to \$4,100 may be provided to service-connected disabilities.
- » Home improvement benefits up to \$1,200 may be provided to non-service-connected disabilities.

A veteran may receive *both* a HISA grant and *either* a SHA or SAH grant.



HOW TO APPLY

You can apply for a HISA grant by completed VA Form 10-0103, "Veterans Application for Assistance in Acquiring HISA," and submitting it to your local VA medical center.

RESOURCES

Before moving, consult your nearest Family Center, the best source of relocation information and planning assistance. Other useful resources include local chambers of commerce, libraries, bookstores, and the Internet. Use them to find out what you need in order to make informed moving decisions.

FAMILY CENTERS

Family Centers can refer you to offices, programs, and services that may be of assistance as you prepare to leave the military. Examples include the RAP, the Personal Financial Management Program, Information and Referral, Spouse Employment Assistance Program, and the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

Many communities across America have chambers of commerce. Each chamber of commerce promotes its community and is a good source of information about the surrounding area, including the local job market, housing costs, local realtors, cost of living, local taxes, climate, schools and availability of recreation or child care. Ask for the chamber's booklet—much like the relocation packet you received about a new installation when you changed stations.

You can find any chamber of commerce office in the nation at www.chamberofcommerce.com.

LIBRARIES AND BOOKSTORES

Each of the Service Library Programs provides electronic content through their respective portals (www.nko.mil; www.army.mil/ako; www.my.af.mil). The electronic content provides information on relocating, career opportunities, and educational opportunities.

The reference section of your nearest installation library, public library, or bookstore may offer atlases, maps, and geographical information that provide useful information. Tour books and guides in the travel section may provide insights into the community you may someday call home. Military libraries and public libraries also have many other free resources. Libraries also offer computers which can help you keep up to date on the latest news in your new community, apply for a job, check your e-mail, or just chat with friends.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

Extensive automated information on military and civilian communities worldwide can be obtained through the Military Installations and “Plan My Move” features of HomeFront (www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil) and www.relo.usa.com. These features provide research and information, housing directories and services, employment, education, health and wellness, and family issues available near military installations.

Transportation: For more information, please go to: www.defensetravel.dod.mil.

Special Needs: The Military HomeFront website provides information for families with special needs: www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil.

VA Loans: More detailed information on VA Home Loans is available at: www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans.

APPENDIX



EXPENSES CALCULATION WORKSHEET

FIXED EXPENSES

Consider your personal and family expenses that are fixed. Fill in the amount you will need in each category, each month. Total the figures.

Mortgage/rent (Look at a local newspaper for housing costs. For many people, this is 26–36% of annual gross income.)

Car payment and insurance

Medical/dental insurance

Food (groceries, extras and restaurant meals)

Utilities (telephone, gas, electricity, water, cable TV)

Installment loan payments (other than car)

House/life insurance

Property taxes

Other

TOTAL FIXED EXPENSES

VARIABLE EXPENSES

Consider your variable expenses. Fill in the amount you think you will need in each category, each month. Total the figures.

Car repair, gas, oil

Public transportation

Child care (if applicable)

Career search expenses

Medical (doctor, dentist, prescriptions)

Charge account balances

Clothing

Entertainment (consider what you do per week X 4)

Personal expenses (cigarettes, cosmetics, toiletries, haircuts, laundry)

Church and charity giving

Household expenses (home maintenance or repairs)

Savings
Retirement and investments
Tools and equipment
Newspaper/magazine subscriptions, books
Gifts
Vacation and holiday funds
Other
TOTAL VARIABLE EXPENSES

TOTAL FIXED AND VARIABLE EXPENSES

Add the two totals together.

A. FIXED EXPENSES
B. VARIABLE EXPENSES
TOTAL MONTHLY EXPENSES
TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENSES <i>(multiply the monthly expenses by 12)</i>

ACRONYM LIST

- » AAFES—Army and Air Force Exchange Service
- » AARTS—Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System
- » ACAP—Army Career and Alumni Program
- » ACT—American College Testing
- » APR—Annual Percentage Rate
- » ASBDC—Association of Small Business Development Centers
- » BBB—Better Business Bureau
- » BCAC—Beneficiary Counselor and Assistance Coordinators
- » BDD—Benefits Delivery at Discharge
- » BPCR—Breakout Procurement Center Representative
- » CAC—Common Access Card
- » CBWTU—Community Based Warrior Transition Unit
- » CCAF—Community College of the Air Force
- » CD—Compact Disk
- » CDC/504—Certified Development Company-504 loan program
- » CERT—Credentialing and Educational Research Tool
- » CGI—Coast Guard Institute
- » CHAMPVA—Civilian Health and Medical Program for the Department of Veterans Affairs
- » CHCBP—Continued Health Care Benefit Program
- » CLEP—College Level Examination Program
- » CMR—Commercial Marketing Representatives
- » CNIC—Commander Navy Installation Command
- » COE—Certificate of Eligibility
- » CONUS—Continental United States
- » COOL—Credentialing Opportunities Online
- » CRDP—Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay
- » CRMC—Career Resource Management Center
- » CRSC—Combat-Related Special Compensation
- » CSB—Career Status Bonus
- » CVE—Center for Veterans Enterprise
- » DANTES—Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support
- » DD—Department of Defense
- » DeCA—Defense Commissary Agency
- » DEERS—Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System
- » DFAS—Defense Finance and Accounting Service
- » DFAS-CL—Defense Finance and Accounting Service—Cleveland Center
- » DoD—Department of Defense
- » DOL—Department of Labor
- » DSST—DANTES Subject Standardized Tests
- » DTAP—Disabled Transition Assistance Program
- » EAOS—End of Active Duty Obligated Service
- » EBV—Entrepreneurship Boot camp for Veterans with Disabilities
- » EFMP—Exceptional Family Member Program
- » EST—Eastern Standard Time
- » ETS—Expiration Term of Service
- » FAFSA—Free Application for Federal Student Aid
- » FAQ—Frequently Asked Questions

- » FHA—Federal Housing Administration
- » FSGLI—Family Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance
- » GC—The Office of Government Contracting
- » GED—General Education Development
- » GI—Government Issue (refers to WWII Veterans)
- » GRE—Graduate Record Examination
- » HISA—Home Improvement and Structural Alterations
- » HR—Human Resources
- » HUB—Historically Underutilized Business
- » HUD—Housing and Urban Development
- » IFA—International Franchise Association
- » IRA—Individual Retirement Account
- » IRR—Individual Ready Reserve
- » IT—Information Technology
- » ITP—Individual Transition Plan
- » MCX—Marine Corps Exchanges
- » MGIB—Montgomery GI Bill
- » MGIB-SR—Montgomery GI Bill for Selected Reserve
- » MOS—Military Occupational Specialty
- » MPP—Mentor–Protégé Program
- » MREIDL—Military Reservists Economic Injury Disaster Loan
- » MTF—Military Treatment Facility
- » MWR—Moral, Welfare, and Recreation
- » NAF—Non-Appropriated Fund
- » NAICS—North American Industry Classification System
- » NCO—Non-Commissioned Officer
- » NEXCOM—Navy Exchange Service Command
- » NOAA—National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- » OE&G—Operation Endure and Grow
- » OJT—On-the-Job Training
- » OPM—Office of Personnel Management
- » OSDBU—Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization
- » OVBD—Office of Veterans Business Development
- » PACS—Public and Community Service
- » PCR—Procurement Center Representative
- » PDRL—Permanent Disability Retired List
- » PEB—Physical Evaluation Board
- » PFM—Personal Financial Management
- » PHS—Public Health Service
- » PIN—Personal Identification Number
- » PTDY—Permissive Temporary Duty
- » PTSD—Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- » RAD—Recruitment Assistance Division
- » RAP—Relocation Assistance Program
- » RC—Reserve Component
- » RCSBP—Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan
- » REAP—Reserve Education Assistance Program
- » ROTC—Reserve Officers Training Corps
- » SAH—Specially Adapted Housing
- » SAT—Scholastic Aptitude Test

- » SBA—Small Business Administration
- » SBC—Small Business Concerns
- » SBG—Surety Bond Guarantee
- » SBIC—Small Business Investment Company
- » SBP—Survivor Benefit Plan
- » SCD—Service-Connected Disability
- » SCORE—Service Corps of Retired Executives
- » SCRA—Servicemember's Civil Relief Act
- » SDB—Small Disadvantaged Business
- » SDP—Savings Deposit Program
- » S-DVI—Service-Disabled Veterans Life Insurance
- » SDVO—Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned
- » SEH—Serious Employment Handicap
- » SGLI—Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance
- » SGLV—Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Election and Certificate
- » SHA—Special Home Adaptation
- » SMART—Sailor and Marine ACE Registry Transcript
- » SMC—Special Monthly Compensation
- » SSCRA—Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act
- » TAMP—Transitional Assistance Management Program
- » TAP—Transition Assistance Program
- » TDD—Telecommunication Device for the Deaf
- » TDP—TRICARE Dental Program
- » TDRL—Temporary Disability Retired List
- » TERA—Temporary Early Retirement
- » TFL—TRICARE for Life
- » TMA—TRICARE Management Activity
- » TPCR—Traditional Procurement Center Representative
- » TRDP—TRICARE Retiree Dental Plan
- » TSGLI—Traumatic Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance
- » TSP—Thrift Savings Plan
- » TTT—Troops to Teachers
- » TTY—Text Telephone
- » TVC—The Veterans Corporation
- » UCX—Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service Members
- » U.S.—United States
- » USC—United States Code
- » USERRA—Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act
- » USMAP—United States Military Apprenticeship Program
- » VA—Department of Veterans Affairs
- » VBDO—Veterans Business Development Officer
- » VBI—Virtual Business Incubator
- » VBOC—Veteran Business Outreach Center
- » VBOP—Veterans Business Outreach Program
- » VEAP—Veterans' Educational Assistance Program
- » VETS—Veterans' Employment and Training Service
- » VGLI—Veterans' Group Life Insurance
- » VIP—Vendor Information Pages
- » VMET—Verification of Military Experience and Training
- » VMLI—Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance

- » VR—Vocational Rehabilitation
- » VR&E—Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment
- » VRA—Veterans’ Recruitment Appointment
- » VRA—Vietnam Era GI Bill
- » VUB—Veterans Upward Bound Program
- » V-WISE—Veterans as Woman Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship
- » WBC—Women’s Business Center
- » WIA—Workforce Investment Act



TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP)