

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CENTER AND FORT GORDON
Fort Gordon, Georgia 30905-5735**

**USASC&FG Circular
No. 635-1**

12 March 2004

**Expires 12 March 2006
Personnel Separations**

ARMY CAREER AND ALUMNI PROGRAM (ACAP)

Summary. This [document](#) describes the Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) transition assistance organization, statutory authorization, referral documents, transition process, and approximate individual time requirements. It [presents](#) eligibility criteria, and sets responsibilities for commanders, supervisors, and separating/retiring service members.

Applicability. The pamphlet applies to Army personnel stationed at Fort Gordon.

Suggested Improvements. The proponent of this regulation is the Directorate of Human Resources (DHR). Users are invited to send comments and suggested improvements on Department of the Army (DA) Form 2028, Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms, to DHR, ACAP, ATTN: ATZH-HRE, Building 33800, Fort Gordon, GA 30905-5735, and/or submit DA Form 1045, Army Ideas for Excellence Program (AIEP) Proposal, to the installation AIEP coordinator.

Availability. This publication is available at the USASC&FG publications web site at <http://www.gordon.army.mil/doim/imc/Forms.htm> and at <http://www.gordon.army.mil/dhr/ACAP/acap.htm>.

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1. Purpose. The Army established the ACAP to ease the transition from military service into civilian life and employment. It is a comprehensive program that coordinates the spectrum of transition services available to Soldiers, DA civilian employees, and their family members. ACAP is intended to be an enduring service. This document describes the ACAP transition assistance organization, statutory authorization, referral documents, transition process, and approximate individual time requirements. It presents eligibility criteria, and sets responsibilities for commanders, supervisors, and separating/retiring service members. Paragraph 3 below, lists the authorization documents for the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) for separating and retiring service members.

a. Eligible military personnel must receive mandatory pre-separation counseling and complete the DD Form 2648, Pre-separation Counseling Checklist. Based on individual needs, separating/retiring service members may receive a follow-up appointment to develop an Individual Transition Plan (ITP). The ITP guides the separating/retiring service member to service providers to obtain career guidance, benefits information, and/or job search assistance. Commanders and supervisors are to support Soldier and civilian employee access to these resources while balancing mission requirements.

b. Pre-separation counseling is the first step in a substantial benefit to both separating/retiring service members and the Army. All transitioning personnel must receive pre-separation counseling regardless of the character of discharge. ACAP's goal is for every separating/retiring service members, whether mid-career or retiree, to receive the full benefit of ACAP services and the associated service providers.

(1) When separating/retiring service members understand that the Army values their service by ensuring their use of ACAP, they leave the military with a durable and favorable impression. When ACAP assists junior Soldiers in making career planning decisions, it supports reenlistment and transfer to the Reserve Component (RC). For Soldiers who are determined to separate or retire, ACAP counselors assist them in identifying their skills and marketing their military experience to successfully obtain employment. The Army benefits when veterans appreciate the value of their military service and thus encourage enlistment by their future civilian associates.

(2) There is an immediate benefit to the Army in the conservation of scarce resources. Substantial expenditure of training dollars are avoided each time a mid-career Soldier reenlists or transfers to the RC. In addition, most leaders are unaware that the DA must reimburse the states for unemployment compensation paid to separated Soldiers. ACAP services assist veterans in obtaining employment quickly. The Army Research Institute has determined that Soldiers who utilize all ACAP services accelerate their time-to-employment and receive increased earnings. This reduces the amount of Operations and Maintenance Army funds transferred each year to the states. Thus, commanders, unit leaders, directors, and supervisors are to ensure that Soldiers receive the support necessary to use all ACAP and transition assistance services.

c. Mission activities have precedence over transition activities. To perform mission requirements, unit leaders may tell Soldiers when to schedule ACAP and transition services appointments. When it is necessary for unit leaders to require cancellation of a separating/retiring service member's appointment for operational requirements, they must clearly communicate to the separating/retiring service member that they fully support ACAP participation and will provide time periods for the Soldier to make transition assistance appointments as soon as possible.

d. The Fort Gordon ACAP Center is a division of DHR.

2. The Transition Process. The Fort Gordon ACAP Center maximizes the delivery of ACAP program resources and services to the Fort Gordon community in three phases to minimize the time separating/retiring service members spend away from their units.

a. Phase I. The pre-separation briefing focuses on services and benefits the separating/retiring service members may be entitled from various service providers on and off the installation. The pre-separation briefing ensures all transitioning personnel understand their entitlements and benefits prior to their departure from military service. This briefing is conducted at the Fort Gordon ACAP Center, building 33800, Rice Road, Monday through Friday beginning promptly at 0800. The briefing is also offered on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons beginning promptly at 1300. Each briefing lasts for approximately two hours. Counselors provide pre-separation counseling and refer separating/retiring service members to a variety of service providers. ACAP counselors ensure separating/retiring service members are aware of transition benefits as well as a variety of community services including job assistance. ACAP assists all eligible separating/retiring service members and their family members in seeking employment. The Transition Services Manager (TSM) intercedes on behalf of separating/retiring service members, if necessary.

b. Phase II. The ACAP/TAP workshop focuses on employment assistance and Veterans Administration (VA) benefits. The ACAP staff, the Department of Labor (DOL), and the Veteran's Affairs Office, jointly conduct the workshop. The workshop is a two and one-half day event designed with separating/retiring service members in mind. Spouses are also welcome to attend this workshop and use ACAP follow-on services. The workshop is conducted at least bi-monthly, Tuesday through Thursday. It begins promptly at 0800 each morning and ends at 1600 on Tuesday and Wednesday and 1230 on Thursday. It is held at the Fort Gordon ACAP Center. Separating/retiring service members will not have other appointments when attending the workshop.

c. Phase III. A follow-up of Phases I and II through a series of 1 to 2-hour appointments over the last 90-120 days of the separating/retiring service member's active duty time. In this phase, separating/retiring service members are referred to a variety of service providers. ACAP provides separating/retiring personnel with access to various workshops, seminars, vocational counselors, employer databases, a reference library, and electronic media for résumé preparation and transmission. Working with ACAP resources, clients will develop

skills such as professional résumé and a job search strategy that includes personal marketing, proper attire for success, effective interviewing, and salary negotiation.

3. References and Authorizations. The following United States Code (USC), Department of Defense Instructions (DODI), Public Law (PL), and Military Personnel (MILPER) message implement and guide the operation of ACAP. Publication of an ACAP Army Regulation (AR) is not anticipated.

a. Title 10 USC, Section 1142 and 1143.

b. DODI Number 1332.36, subject: Pre-separation Counseling for Military Personnel.

c. PL 107-103, Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001.

d. MILPER Message Number: 02-156, TAPC-PDO, Pre-separation Counseling Checklist, DD Form 2648.

4. General. Commanders, supervisors, TSM, the ACAP staff, and various service providers each have responsibilities to ensure the availability and delivery of comprehensive, high quality transition assistance. Individual separating/retiring service members must communicate their needs and progress to unit leaders and transition staff. ACAP should be utilized by the eligible person and supported by the commander and/or supervisor. ACAP should never be used in a manner that will allow Soldiers to exploit unnecessary or unauthorized time away from their unit and/or commitment to the Armed Forces, in direct violation of AR 630-5, Leaves and Passes. Commanders/supervisors are responsible for ensuring these regulations are not violated while continuing to actively support participation. ACAP is not, nor was it ever intended to be a 6-month (180-day) furlough or training period to prepare departing service members for transition to civilian life or second careers.

a. Commanders/Supervisors will:

(1) Support separating/retiring service members in the transition process and refer eligible personnel to ACAP at least by the 180th day prior to separation. At the first ACAP appointment, separating/retiring service members receive DD Form 2648, a Service Provider List (SPL), and an appointment to begin the ACAP process. Personnel contemplating retirement may initiate their ACAP process 24 months prior to their anticipated retirement date. Junior and mid-career Soldiers may begin their ACAP process 12 months prior to their anticipated separation from active military service. All personnel are to receive pre-separation counseling not later than 90 days prior to their anticipated separation date regardless of the character of their discharge or time in service.

(2) Review and monitor separating/retiring service members' transition assistance appointments and provide time for Soldiers to use necessary services. Mission activities have priority over transition assistance activities.

b. TSM will:

(1) Ensure completion of DD Form 2648 and provide a copy of the form to the separating/retiring service member for the disposition to the transition point for filing in the official personnel record.

(2) Ensure coordination of transition services and referral of separating/retiring service members to necessary service providers. The TSM will intercede with unit leaders on behalf of separating/retiring service members who miss multiple ACAP appointments or who may have specialized requirements.

(3) Request necessary logistical support for the ACAP center and staff.

(4) Provide management performance reports to commanders on pre-separation counseling timeliness or other program performance criteria directed by DA Personnel Command (PERSCOM).

c. Contractor Installation Manager (CIM). The CIM is an employee of the Army centralized ACAP contract administered by PERSCOM ACAP. The CIM supervises the contractor's counselors who provide pre-separation counseling and job search assistance services. The CIM's primary function is to comply with the terms of the contract and operational guidance issued to the contractor by PERSCOM ACAP. The CIM ensures the delivery of all ACAP services at Fort Gordon.

d. Active Duty Separating/Retiring Service Members. Separating military personnel are required to attend pre-separation counseling. At the counseling session, each Soldier will receive a DD Form 2648 and SPL. These documents reflect the Soldier's need to participate in a variety of transition services, classes, and presentations. Upon completion of these documents, Soldiers are required to discuss service provider visits with their supervisors to establish acceptable periods of time for making appointments and follow-up.

(1) Once approved by the supervisor, attendance at transition assistance activities becomes the Soldier's place of duty. Absences from any transition activity can be authorized only by the Soldier's supervisor/chain of command. Unauthorized absences will be treated as absent without leave.

(2) Separating/retiring service members will make activity appointments in accordance with (IAW) supervisory guidance. Soldiers are required to keep their immediate supervisors apprised of their activities and location when away from their units or designated workplace. All offices on the SPL provide their own appointment slips, either automatically or upon request, for the separating/retiring service member to present to his/her supervisor. Attendance at *ad hoc* presentations or unanticipated job search activities must be authorized in advance.

5. Organizational Requirements.

a. Marketing. Commanders, supervisors, service providers, and ACAP staff are encouraged to aggressively market ACAP throughout the community.

(1) Commanders and supervisors of military personnel are encouraged to schedule annual professional development briefings on ACAP. These briefings focus on legal requirements and emphasize how supervisors can monitor or control Soldier participation, progress, and absence from unit duties during the ACAP process.

(2) ACAP will continue to be a regularly scheduled presentation at the installation pre-separation briefing, and the Commander/First Sergeants Course and similar courses that target military leaders.

(3) ACAP will periodically submit transition articles for publication in post print media and/or display on the installation -cable television channel. ACAP will advertise special interest presentations through distribution for posting on workplace/unit bulletin boards.

(4) ACAP will periodically e-mail major unit commanders, directors, and tenants on the organization's compliance with established performance criteria.

b. Classrooms. The ACAP facility provides classrooms and classroom support (e.g., tables, chairs, and audiovisual equipment) for transition assistance workshops and seminars.

6. Pre-separation Counseling.

a. The following categories of personnel shall receive pre-separation counseling:

(1) All active and RC Soldiers leaving active duty with more than 180 days of continuous active service shall receive pre-separation counseling and are eligible for ACAP services regardless of voluntary/involuntary basis.

(2) All active and RC Soldiers being medically retired or separated for disability regardless of duration of service, must receive pre-separation counseling and are eligible for ACAP services.

b. ACAP is not necessary for the following personnel:

(1) Active and RC Soldiers not being medically retired who have less than 180 days of continuous active duty.

(2) Enlisted Soldiers who are being discharged to continue on active duty as a commissioned or warrant officers.

(3) Warrant officers terminating warrant officer status to continue on active duty as commissioned officers.

(4) Officers who revert to enlisted status.

(5) Active duty personnel approved for inter-service transfer to another uniformed service.

7. ACAP Referral Documents. Separating/retiring service members receive a DD Form 2648 and a SPL from ACAP during their first appointment. The DD Form 2648 documents counseling. The SPL lists the service providers that deliver necessary information or services. Service providers range from Dwight David Eisenhower Army Medical Center (DDEAMC) for separation physicals and temporary health insurance, to Army Community Service (ACS), for budget counseling and relocation information. There are 20 various service providers for Fort Gordon.

a. Separating/retiring service members show their DD Form 2648 and the SPL to their supervisors. Supervisors evaluate mission requirements and inform separating/retiring service members' when they may make appointments to visit the various service providers.

b. The SPL provides each service provider's address, telephone number, relevant services, and website. Separating/retiring service members contact the providers for appointments IAW with supervisory guidance.

8. Process and Time Requirements. Soldiers may begin ACAP by *self-referral* or *command referral*. Soldiers who are within 12 months of their scheduled separation date will receive a memorandum indicating they are within the window of opportunity for ACAP services. The service member's commander will also be notified. Commanders must direct chapter discharges when the Soldier is formally advised of the possibility of the chapter.

a. Process Initiation. ACAP services begin when a Soldier determines that he/she expects to separate or retire and contacts ACAP to schedule pre-separation counseling. All personnel at Fort Gordon call 706-791-7333 to schedule pre-separation counseling and subsequent ACAP appointments. It is not necessary for senior personnel to have approved retirement dates or for mid-career Soldiers to have orders. Soldiers who have not contacted ACAP by the time their name appear on the Standard Installation/Division Personnel System (SIDPERS) "Expiration Term of Service (ETS) One Year Loss Roster" will receive a monthly notification letter instructing them to contact ACAP.

b. Expected Time Away from Unit Duties. The amount of time required varies by individual. Soldiers who begin ACAP as early as possible spend less time each week on transition activities than Soldiers who begin shortly before separation.

(1) Generally, motivated separating/retiring service members spend approximately 40 to

60 hours in job search activities. This includes pre-separation counseling, attendance at the 2 - ½ day ACAP/TAP seminar, multiple job assistance appointments, participation in job fairs, and job interviews within the last 45 days of active duty. Spread over the Soldier's last 180 days of active duty, this amounts to an approximate average of 2 to 3 hours per week away from unit duties.

(2) Prior to receiving job assistance follow-up services, PERSCOM mandates that all separating/retiring service members complete the pre-separation briefing. Separating/retiring service members may complete the computer based Job Assistance Training Application (JATA), or attend the two and half day TAP/ACAP seminar. Both, JATA and TAP/ACAP seminars present an overview of the job search process. Once a separating/retiring service member completes the necessary overview, he/she should coordinate with his/her workplace supervisor to determine acceptable times for ACAP job assistance appointments and attendance at job fairs. The average separating/retiring service member schedules approximately five to eight job assistance appointments. Each ACAP job assistance appointment usually lasts one hour. Each job fair is scheduled for an entire day. Separating/retiring service members should attend at least two job fairs.

(3) Visits to other transition service providers are in addition to job search activities. Supervisors and unit leaders should review separating/retiring service member's DD Form 2648 to determine the approximate number of necessary appointments. Supervisors and unit leaders should then provide time for separating/retiring service members to obtain information and/or assistance from relevant service providers (e.g., the separation physical at DDEAMC or budget counseling at ACS).

c. Transition Services Appointments. Once the separating/retiring service member has received the SPL, it is his/her responsibility to coordinate all necessary appointments with the supervisor and the service providers. The amount of time necessary will vary based on the number of service providers and the level of assistance needed.

d. Post Clearance. ACAP participation is required for all separating/retiring service members on the Installation Clearance Record, DA Form 137-e. In order to clear post, the separating/retiring service members must have the DD Form 2648 on file in their DA Form 201. During post clearance, ACAP confirms the Soldier has received the pre-separation counseling and clears the Soldier. Soldiers who are in the process of a Permanent Change of Station are not required to clear through ACAP.

9. Eligibility Criteria and Service Duration. There are four primary groups eligible for ACAP services: Active duty military, DOD civilian employees, RC Soldiers, and adult family members. Army retirees and their adult family members may use ACAP job assistance services for the rest of their lives, on a space available basis. All other separating service members and their adult dependents may use ACAP job assistance services for up to 180 days following their separation date. Eligible civilian employees and their adult family members may use ACAP job assistance services for up to 180 days following their calculated

separation date. Certain others may use ACAP job assistance services on a space-available basis as specified in subparagraph e, below.

a. Active Duty Military Personnel. Separating/retiring service members should be involved with ACAP 24 months prior to retirement or 12 months prior to scheduled separation. This includes Army Reserve National Guard (ARNG), RC Soldiers, and personnel returning from overseas assignments for separation or retirement at Fort Gordon. Personnel from other military branches who request job search services will be provided assistance; they may also receive pre-separation counseling and a DD Form 2648, if acceptable to their service and unit.

b. DOD Civilian Employees. DOD civilians may use ACAP job assistance once they have been notified that their position is subject to Reduction-in-Force (RIF) or results of A-76 actions. Formal notice of separation is unnecessary; however, annual leave or compensatory time must be used until an individual receives official notification of impending separation. Once a DOD civilian has received official notice of pending separation, the supervisor may authorize up to 40 hours for ACAP services as specified in the employee's RIF notice.

c. RC Personnel. RC Soldiers with at least 180 days of continuous active duty, who are leaving active reserve participation due to the end of their service agreement, involuntary separation for reasons other than misconduct or retirement, may use ACAP job assistance services. RC Soldiers who have been on active duty for at least 181 days must receive pre-separation counseling.

d. Family Members. Adult family members with ID cards become eligible for ACAP services once their sponsor has registered in the program. Spouses and adult family members of non-transitioning permanent party personnel request job search assistance at ACS.

e. Exceptions. Personnel not described above who seek transition or job search assistance and personnel seeking extensions to the above time limitations must contact the TSM. It is Army policy to refer all personnel who are beyond the eligibility windows to the Georgia Employment Commission or the VA. The TSM will determine if ACAP should provide additional services, if space is available, and has final authority to permit an individual's participation. Exceptions may be granted or withdrawn based on requirements to service higher priority categories of personnel. Services and/or extensions may be available only for the following categories of personnel:

- (1) Military separatees and retirees up to 180 ~~180~~ days after separation.
- (2) DOD civilian employees beyond 180 ~~180~~ days after separation.

10. Contingency Plans. Pre-separation counseling for all separating and retiring active duty personnel, indicated by a completed DD Form 2648, is required by USC, PL, and military policy not later than (NLT) 90 days before separation. In the event that mission essential

requirements or unanticipated personnel actions preclude timely referral, commanders will refer transitioning personnel as soon as practical. Examples of such situations include but are not limited to:

a. Deployments. The statutory requirement for pre-separation counseling NLT 90 days before separation is not altered for deployed personnel. Commanders must make every effort to have Soldiers receive pre-separation counseling prior to deployment if they are within 24 months of retirement or 12 months of mid-career separation.

b. Retirements. Personnel who are contemplating retirement should contact ACAP 24 months in advance of their anticipated retirement date. Commanders/supervisors must refer personnel who have not received pre-separation counseling upon submission of the Soldier's retirement request. Retirement Services Officer who discovers retiring personnel have not been to ACAP should refer them promptly for pre-separation counseling.

c. Involuntary, Unforeseen, or Chapter Discharges. Commanders refer personnel who are under consideration for involuntary, early, or medical release from active duty as soon as the affected Soldier is formally advised of the possibility. Do not wait for separation actions to be approved prior to referral. This provides at least minimal time for transition assistance activities.

d. Immediate Discharges. Usually these are chapter discharges that have not received pre-separation counseling and arrive at ACAP during the last few days of active duty. Infrequently, these may also be career Soldiers who have chosen to retire at Fort Gordon but missed pre-separation counseling at their previous duty station. Commanders must be aware that such last minute counseling precludes meaningful transition assistance prior to discharge. As long as the Soldier is not barred from the installation, he/she may use ACAP job search assistance for 180 days after discharge. Otherwise, he/she will be referred to the state employment service.

GLOSSARY

Section I
Abbreviations

ACAP
Army Career and Alumni Program

ACS
Army Community Service

AIEP
Army Ideas for Excellence Program

ARNG
Army Reserve National Guard

CIM
Contractor Installation Manager

DDEAMC
Dwight David Eisenhower Army Medical Center

DHR
Directorate of Human Resources

DOD
Department of Defense

DOL
Department of Labor

ETS
Expiration Term of Service

JATA
Job Assistance Training Application

RIF
Reduction-In-Force

MILPER
Military Personnel

ITP

Individual Transition Plan

PCT

Pre-separation Counseling Timeliness

PERSCOM

Personnel Command

RC

Reserve Component

SIDPERS

Standard Installation/Division Personnel System

SPL

Service Provider List

TAP

Transition Assistance Program

TSM

Transition Services Manager

Section II

Terms

ACAP XXI is the DA PERSCOM ACAP standard computer based training and client management software used in the ACAP center. This software presents job search training, simulated interview exercises, an interest inventory, and tracks client progress.

Job Assistance assists eligible separating/retiring service members and their family members in seeking employment. Separating/retiring service members learn to identify their skills, market themselves, research potential employers, interview, and negotiate for salary and benefits.

Pre-separation Counseling is the mandatory counseling that encompasses nine areas of information and assistance prescribed by law and Army policies. This is the first counseling session at ACAP. The transition assistance areas covered in pre-separation counseling are:

- a. Effects of a career change.
- b. Employment assistance.

- c. Relocation assistance.
- d. Education and training.
- e. Health and life insurance.
- f. Personal finances.
- g. Reserve affiliation.
- h. Services for disabled veterans.
- i. Individual Transition Plan.

Pre-separation Counseling Timeliness (PCT) is the measure of a unit's, a directorate's, and/or the installation's compliance with PL. The Army's goal is for 75 percent of all transitioners to receive pre-separation counseling prior to 90 days before separation. PCT performance is automatically tracked by ACAP XXI software and is reported to PERSCOM ACAP on a monthly basis. Units that are below the 75 percent goal receive feedback from the TSM.

Service Providers (SPs) are the various services and programs that provide transition assistance. There are 20 service providers that range from household goods shipping to pre-separation physicals to budget counseling to veterans' service organizations.

Service Provider List (SPL) is the list of SPs that provide transition information or services. Separating/retiring service members receive a copy of this list during pre-separation counseling. The SPL provides the names, locations, and hours of operation, services, and telephone numbers of all SPs.

Transition Assistance (TA) ensures all transitioning personnel understand their entitlements and benefits prior to their departure from military or civilian service.

Transition Assistance Manager (TSM) is the government manager responsible for the overall coordination of transition assistance services, performance feedback to commanders, and is an ombudsman for separating/retiring service members.

Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is a formal 2-½ day seminar presented on post by the DOL, VA, and the ACAP staff.

(ATZH-HRA)

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:

BERNARD E. KULIFAY, JR.
Colonel, GS
Chief of Staff

/SIGNED/

LISA E. McCLEAVE
Director
Information Management

DISTRIBUTION:

<http://www.gordon.army.mil/doim/imc/Forms.htm>