

STARS  AND STRIPES®

FALL 2023

# Transition Guide

November 9, 2023

ACE YOUR  
VIRTUAL  
INTERVIEW  
WITH THESE TIPS

**4** THINGS TO  
CONSIDER  
BEFORE  
MOVING TSP

HOW TO NAVIGATE THE  
POST-MILITARY  
CAREER SHIFT

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOUR SERVICE MEMBER  
TRANSITIONS TO CIVILIAN LIFE



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### Stand Out with Proper Online Etiquette

For transitioning service members, you'll likely find yourself in a virtual interview setting at some point in your civilian career journey. Be prepared.

Page 11



4

#### When a Service Member Transitions to Civilian Life

Your next step can bring a mix of emotions.



12

#### Transition that Comes with Support

Some answers to help you figure out your new civilian career.



14

#### USAA's updated Website for the Military Community

See special resources for military members and their families.



22

#### A Road Ahead at Home for Wounded Warriors

Learn the strategies to help you navigate the road ahead.

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# MILITARY SEPARATION

## WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOUR SERVICE MEMBER TRANSITIONS TO CIVILIAN LIFE

*Courtesy of Military OneSource*

**Your service member's military career is winding down and civilian life awaits. As with all endings and new beginnings, this next stage may bring a mix of sadness, optimism, unease and excitement.**

Learning what to expect during military separation and planning for what comes next can help ease anxiety, clarify goals and set your service member up for success.

### **How your service member may be feeling**

Separating from the military isn't merely trading one career for another; it's a significant change that may affect nearly every aspect of life. It's helpful to be aware of some of the ways your service member may be feeling before, during and after the transition. Your service member may be:

- Excited about new possibilities outside of the military.
- Overwhelmed by the number of choices ahead, including where to live and how to earn an income.
- Mourning the loss of

community, a reliable support system and the deep sense of purpose and camaraderie that comes with being in the military.

You can support your service member just by being available to listen as they sort through their feelings and work their way through the transition.

### **Supporting your service member during the transition to civilian life**

Your service member may have clear goals for civilian life and a plan to meet each one. Or, your loved one may have little idea what to do next. There's a lot to think about when separating from the service, so the earlier your service member begins planning, the smoother the transition will be. Some considerations include:

- **Where to live.** For the first time since entering

the military, your service member has unlimited choices of where to live. Will your service member return home to family? Settle in another part of the country? Rent or buy a home? You might help your service member think through the pros and cons of different areas, including employment opportunities and housing costs. Veterans may qualify for a home loan from the Department of Veterans Affairs, which may influence the decision about whether to rent or buy.

- **Whether to continue their education or enter the workforce.** Some separating service members enroll in college full time, while others start their careers, launch a business or enter a training program or apprenticeship. Your service member may qualify for benefits to help with the cost of education, as well as services to help with the decision.
- **Which career field to enter.** You can help your service member with this choice by talking about ways their military training, skills and experiences

translate to the civilian workforce. You might ask about long-term goals, the education or training required to achieve them and which education and training benefits are available to help with the cost. With goals set, your service member can then research education

or training programs and begin the application process. Or, if the plan is going directly into the workforce, the discussion points might include beginning to network, preparing a resume and identifying potential employers.





**The Transition Assistance Program, or DODTAP**

The Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs offer many resources to help transitioning service members clarify their goals and understand which benefits they qualify for. Among these is the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), which is mandatory for separating service members who have served 180 continuous days or more on active duty. DODTAP offers a

comprehensive curriculum designed to equip service members with the tools and resources to succeed in their civilian lives. It includes:

- Individualized initial counseling during which your service member will complete a self-assessment and begin developing a transition plan.
- Pre-separation counseling to learn about benefits, entitlements and resources.
- A series of briefings focusing on managing the transition, translating military skills to the civilian

world, financial planning, benefits and services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and finding a career.

- Instruction on finding employment, vocational training, higher education or entrepreneurship.

Service members must complete TAP no later

than a year before leaving the military. Retiring service members should begin the process at least two years before retirement.

**Other resources to help with the transition**

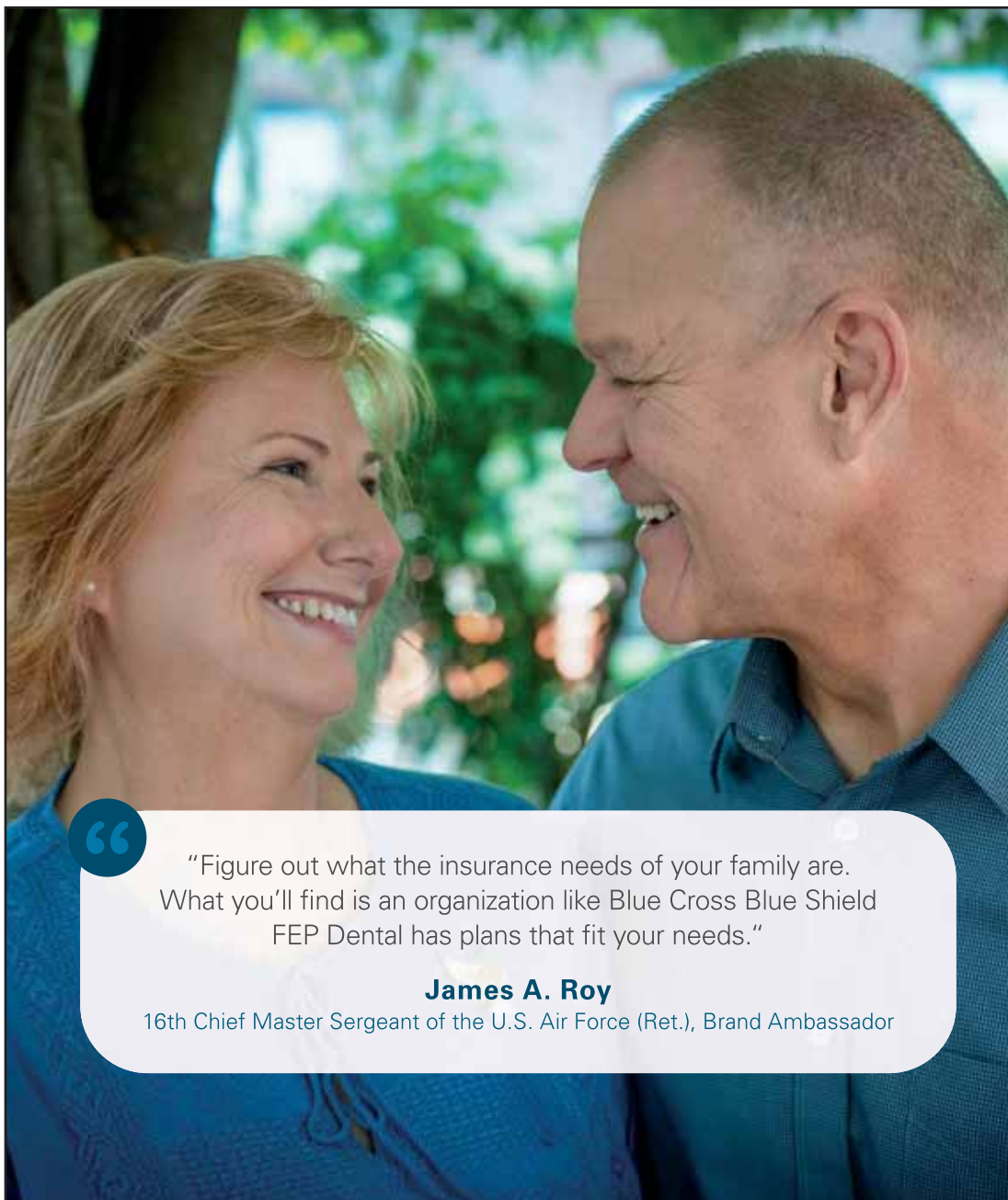
- The Transitioning Veterans Specialty Consultation from Military OneSource is tailored to your service member's unique needs. The series of 45-minute consultations cover goal setting, benefits review, VA assistance, exploring education opportunities, workforce preparation and becoming familiar with online resources.
- The Military Spouse Transition Program (MySTeP) helps military spouses throughout their military journey, including the transition to civilian life.
- Military OneSource is available to veterans and their families for 365 days post separation from the military. Military OneSource

offers non-medical counseling, as well as help with career planning, relocation and housing, personal finances, tax filing and accessing benefits for veterans.

- The Credential Opportunities On-Line (COOL) program is offered by each service branch to help service members translate their training into civilian credentials.
- The Veterans Benefits Administration website lists VA benefits available to veterans. Visit [www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/](http://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/) for more information.

The military equips service members with skills, abilities and experiences that serve them well in the civilian world. These inner resources, along with the support of loved ones like you and the benefits and services available, will help your service member transition smoothly into this exciting next phase of life.

***DODTAP offers a comprehensive curriculum designed to equip service members with the tools and resources to succeed in their civilian lives.***



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## IS YOUR NEXT STEP JOINING THE RESERVES?

# GET THE BASICS

*Courtesy of Military OneSource*

**M**ore than one in four active duty service members tell us they intend to join the reserves. It can be a great option for many service members.

Reserve duty can do more than fulfill your obligation. It's also a good way to keep one foot in the military community and one foot in the civilian world. As a reservist, you can be connected to the benefits of military life and civilian life at the same time.

Reserve duty is also a viable path to the many benefits of retiring from the military. To retire, you'll need to complete at least 20 years of active-duty and reserve years.

### **Reserve Component benefits**

Here's a quick look at the benefits you'll have by transitioning to the reserves:

- **Part-time pay:** Pay is based on rank and service time. Bonuses are sometimes available for high-demand skills.
- **Skills training:** Your active-duty skills will be put to good use in the National Guard or Reserve. Or maybe you'll choose to retrain in a completely

different field. The Reserve Component has different manpower needs, so you may have new career choices available.

- **Health Plan:** TRICARE Reserve Select is available worldwide for qualified Selected Reserve members and their families when the military member is not on active duty orders. Reserve members on active duty for more than 30 days receive comprehensive medical and dental care at no cost.
- **Education:** If you're in the Selected Reserve and have signed up for at least six years, you can access up to three years of educational assistance through the Montgomery GI Bill® for Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR), with a possibility of a "kicker" for certain high-demand fields.
- **Commissary and exchange privileges:** Reserve members have access.
- **Retirement:** Keep the retirement benefits earned on active duty, and continue to earn points toward a reserve retirement.

Other benefits of the Reserve Component? Flexibility. The reserves offer types of duty you wouldn't have available in

traditional active duty. And if you move, you may be able to change your unit affiliation.

Plus, yes, there's that camaraderie that's hard to find. If there are parts of military life you'd miss by separating completely, the reserves offer an excellent alternative.

### **Is the Reserve Component right for you? Find out.**

- Visit the retention counselor or transitional recruiter on your installation.
- Be ready to talk about your career plans, educational goals and potential location.
- If you visit within 180 days of your active duty separation, your counselor can discuss specific billets.

Remember, if you haven't met your military service obligation when you leave active duty, you're required to enter the Selected Reserve or Individual Ready Reserve. In either case, you're subject to recall to active duty.

Have a remaining obligation and haven't joined the Selected Reserve? You'll automatically be assigned to the Individual Ready Reserve. If the reserves are in your future, learn more before you make the transition.

## Mind the Resume Gap: How to Address Employment Breaks

*Courtesy of  
Veterans Affairs' VAnTage Point*

Sometimes you just can't avoid a resume gap.

Maybe you recently transitioned out of the military and found it's taken some time to land your first civilian job. Maybe you're a military spouse who had your career interrupted by several moves. Or maybe life just took an unexpected turn.

No matter the reason, you're probably asking yourself how you address those resume gaps when applying and interviewing for a new position.

The good news is that, here at VA, we understand that life happens. Not only do we care for veterans, many of us are veterans — so we know your work experience is going to look a little different.

### **Addressing the gaps**

Here are some tactics to make sure your resume shines.

*Reframe the gaps.* A short gap on a resume usually isn't a problem, but if they are long or frequent, you may want to redefine those gaps to highlight unpaid activities and accomplishments during that time. Consider including volunteer activities, mentoring, coaching, and attending classes or seminars. If you're a military spouse, planning a move can make it on your resume. "If you planned a move, located living quarters, settled your family, found doctors, restaurants and schools and built interpersonal relationships, you could highlight your organizational, interpersonal and planning skills," recommended Military One Source Spouse Education & Career Opportunities (MySECO).

*Consider a new format.* It might be as easy as making a few tweaks to your resume. Use years instead of months on your work history or summarize your goals and qualifications at the top of your resume to highlight them. "Lead with a Qualifications Summary, a narrative profile summing up your key qualifications for the position. This will draw attention to your strengths," notes Military.com.

*Use your cover letter.* A cover letter can be a powerful tool in a job application. They give potential employers a glimpse into who you are and why you want the job, beyond a cut-and-dry work history. It's also a great place to expand on your resume and show how you used any gaps to develop skills that will be relevant to your work.

*Keep current.* If you're in between jobs, don't let the resume gap become a problem by continuing to stay professionally active. Volunteer, freelance, go back to school, and work to improve your skills.

*Ask a professional.* If you aren't sure the best way to address your resume gaps, consult a career coach. Veterans are eligible for resume help through VA, and military spouses can get free resume reviews through MySECO.



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# VIRTUAL INTERVIEW SUCCESS

## HOW TO STAND OUT WITH PROPER ONLINE ETIQUETTE

Courtesy of HireMilitary

**In today's digital job market, virtual interviews are the new normal. If you're a transitioning service member, you'll likely find yourself in a virtual interview setting at some point in your civilian career journey.**

While it might be tempting to conduct interviews sitting in your car or at home in casual attire, remember that old-school rules of etiquette still apply – even in the virtual world. Here are some tips to help you stand out and ace your virtual interviews.

### Before the Interview

- **Do your research.** Learn as much as you can about the company and the role you're interviewing for. This will help you tailor your answers and demonstrate your genuine interest in the position.
- **Double-check your tech.** Make sure your computer, webcam, and microphone are working properly; you don't want technical issues to disrupt your interview. Check your setup as well. It can be tricky to get good lighting, sound, and camera angle, so do a quick test run beforehand.
- **Choose the right location.** Find a quiet, well-lit room with a clean and professional background. If you're at work on active duty and absolutely must take the interview from your car, open the conversation with a brief apology and an explanation. As long as you're in uniform, your

interviewer should be more forgiving.

- **Minimize distractions.** Close any unnecessary tabs or programs on your computer and turn off your phone. Let the people around you know that you'll be in an interview and ask them not to disturb you.
- **Dress professionally.** Even though you're not meeting in person, you still need to make a good impression. If you're conducting the interview during active-duty work hours, it's okay to wear your military uniform. Just let the interviewer know what to expect.

### During the Interview

- **Get an early start.** Log on to the interview platform a few minutes before your scheduled time so you can troubleshoot any technical issues.
- **Have your resume ready.** Keep a copy of your resume nearby for reference. This will help you answer questions about your qualifications and experience in detail.
- **Show confidence.** Smile, sit up straight, and make eye contact with the camera. Avoid fidgeting or slouching.
- **Pay attention to your body language.**

Positive body language is important in virtual interviews. Smile, nod your head, and gesture naturally to show that you're engaged in the conversation.

- **Manage technical difficulties with grace.** If you experience a technical issue, stay calm and apologize briefly. Then, propose a solution, such as restarting your

computer or switching to a different video conferencing platform.

- **Practice active listening.** Pay close attention to the interviewer's questions and ask for clarification if needed. Don't interrupt; let the interviewer finish speaking before you respond.
- **End with relevant questions.** Prepare a few questions to ask the interviewer about the role, the company, or the industry. This shows that you're genuinely interested in the position and that you've done your research.

### After the Interview

- **Follow up with a thank-you email.** Within 24 hours of your interview, send a thank-you email to the interviewer. Express your appreciation for the opportunity, highlight key points from the conversation, and reaffirm your interest in the position.
- **Maintain a professional online presence.** Your online presence is an extension of your personal brand. Make sure your social media profiles are professional and up to date. Avoid posting anything that could

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HireMilitary is a veteran-owned small business offering FREE job

placement services to everyone in the military community.

We provide DoD SkillBridge/CSP internships for transitioning service members and job opportunities for veterans and military spouses - with full transparency about salaries and benefits for every job listed on our website. When you join our talent pool, our recruiters can match you to current and future opportunities as well.

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Visit HireMilitary.us and see how we can help you kickstart your civilian career!

**Military Transition to Civilian Life Comes with a Full Year of Support from Military OneSource**

*Courtesy of Military OneSource*

Hanging up your uniform and transitioning to civilian life can be both exciting and confusing. It may come with a lot of questions. Have you figured out your civilian career? Found a health care plan yet? Secured a new home base?

You don't have to answer those questions on your own. Military OneSource can help provide the support you and your family need for a successful transition. We've got your back with a wide range of information, answers and support — for a full year after your separation or retirement.

**Career Help**

You developed valuable job skills during military service, and maybe you are looking to translate your skills and experience into a resume that hiring managers can understand - we can help with that. In addition, we can help you and your spouse:

- Identify your career goals
- Apply skills you've learned in the military to job hunting
- Get the most out of job fairs
- Transition successfully to the civilian workforce, and more.

**Moving Support**

Whether you're planning your transition or you're within your first year of civilian life, Military OneSource can:

- Help you understand your housing options

- Connect you with the Department of Veterans Affairs' resources for new homeowners
- Support with your last military move.

**Financial Services**

Military OneSource stands ready to help you understand and work through your finances, including:

- Developing short- and long-term financial plans
- Finding the right kinds of insurance coverage
- Financing a new house
- Filing taxes and using the free MilTax service.

**Direction for Veterans Assistance**

Get all the benefits you've earned. Military OneSource can help point you in the right direction when you:

- Want to go back to school, with tuition assistance and education programs for veterans
- Are considering starting a business
- Need to modify your house to accommodate a disability or injury.

**Confidential Help**

When you leave military service, you'll develop a new identity as a veteran and become part of the civilian community. Service members and immediate family members can get personalized, confidential support during this new chapter in life. Military OneSource can:

- Provide confidential non-medical counseling for things like stress management
- Help you strengthen your closest relationships
- Connect you to a health and wellness coach
- Connect you to a wide range of programs and services for veterans.



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# USAA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

## Launches New Website with Financial Resources Designed for the Military Community

*Courtesy of USAA Education Foundation*



“Whether someone is newly enlisted, a military spouse, senior officer or veteran, we know every stage of military life presents unique financial challenges, opportunities and benefits,” said Ameesh Vakharia, chairman of the USAA Educational Foundation. “We utilized the expertise of our Educational Foundation team to build a one-stop resource to help every member of the military make smart financial decisions that will set them up for success in the future.”

The content and resources on the new site were created by CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professionals on the USAA Educational Foundation team who have more than 100 years of combined financial experience, advanced credentials and deep, personal ties to the military community. They were able to identify specific needs to address and develop:

- Easy-to-use learning guides about budgeting, savings, credit and debt, insurance, investing and estate planning.
- A special Life Events section

**The USAA Educational Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a focused mission to improve the financial readiness of the military community, has launched a new website that offers a variety of helpful resources, including educational videos, financial self-assessment tools, articles and calculators tailored specifically to military members and their families.**



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that includes financial tips and checklists for important life milestones, including military-specific events such as initial entry, moving (PCS), preparing for, or returning from deployment, and transitioning to civilian life.



- Resources to answer questions on various topics such as videos, interactive calculators and worksheets.
- Comprehensive tools and materials for educators to help them provide instruction on basic financial topics.



To begin using the new website and resources, visit [USAAEF.org](https://USAAEF.org).



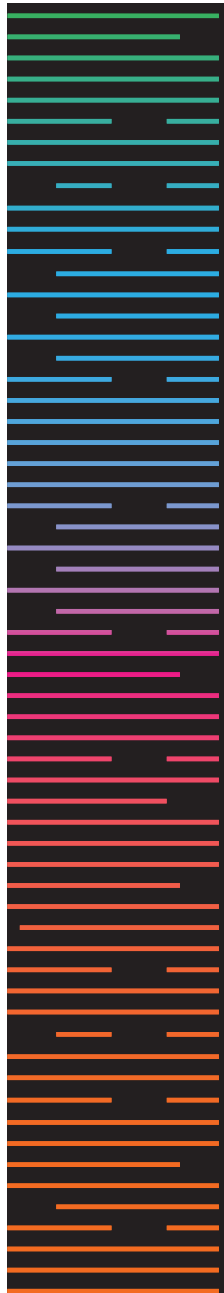
### About USAAEF

Since 1986, The USAA Educational Foundation has served the military community by helping service members and their families become informed financial decision-makers through every life stage. The Educational Foundation is sponsored by USAA, and while both organizations serve the military community, the Foundation acts as a separate organization. It has oversight from an independent board, and serves the military and their families, regardless of USAA membership.



## Committed to Hiring from the Military Community

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# 4 THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE MOVING YOUR TSP

Courtesy of USAA

**B**efore moving your TSP savings, it's important to know some benefits of keeping your TSP in place.

All military or federal government employees who have contributed to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) eventually have to decide what to do with their TSP. "The question members ask is: Should I move it or leave it where it is?" says Josh Andrews, USAA Advice Director and CFP® professional.

"Since each person's situation and needs are different, each person might come up with different reasons for how they answer that question," he says.

Remember the following four considerations as you make your decision:

## 1. You have new TSP withdrawals.

TSP provides options for accessing TSP funds to meet your needs, particularly in retirement. "Having the ability to only withdraw your retirement funds as needed is one key to not outliving your money," Andrews says.

## 2. You can have a TSP and an IRA.

It's not a choice of one or the other. You can leave your TSP account intact and open an IRA for new yearly contributions. "Seek appropriate legal or tax counsel prior to making any contributions," Andrews says.

## 3. TSP has early withdrawal options.

Unlike an IRA, with the TSP you have options for withdrawals after leaving federal service. In the TSP, if you separate from service during or after the year you reach age 55

(or the year you reach age 50 if you meet the qualifications listed by the IRS), the 10% withdrawal penalty doesn't apply. Therefore, if you meet the qualifications, you can withdraw money from your TSP without a penalty before you might be able to do the same with an IRA. If you move your TSP account to an IRA, you could lose this benefit.

## 4. Pay attention to taxes.

If you decide to move your TSP account into an IRA, make sure you transfer the funds directly to your new institution instead of via an indirect transfer (where the money comes to you first). This will help you avoid mandatory tax withholding. "The traditional (pretax) portions of your TSP will be transferred to a Traditional IRA at your new institution," Andrews says. "From there, some people decide to convert their Traditional IRA into a Roth IRA."

Keep in mind that since you haven't paid taxes on the traditional TSP portion, you could have a big upfront tax bill. "Anytime you are transferring between accounts, we recommend seeking reputable tax advice before making any decisions," Andrews adds.

While this list isn't exhaustive, remembering these four guidelines will help you make an informed decision as you decide whether to move your TSP. For more information about leaving the military, visit [usaa.com/leavingthemilitary](http://usaa.com/leavingthemilitary).

# Make Your Final Military Move a Success

Courtesy of Military OneSource

During your military career, you've probably moved a few times – each one a new adventure. For most service members leaving the military, either at retirement or at their end of active service separation, a final move at government expense is authorized. Make your final move the easiest one yet with these tips:

- **Make sure you are aware of your moving benefits.** You may be entitled to a number of benefits that include storage of household goods, travel allowances and a per diem. Travel allowances and other final move benefits vary by service branch, so check with your installation Military and Family Support Center or transportation office for more information.
- **Take to the web.** Visit the following online Defense Department resources to help you get organized and plan your move:
  - The Moving Your Personal Property page on [MilitaryOneSource.com](http://MilitaryOneSource.com) provides comprehensive moving information and contacts, including content from the former Move.mil website. Now you can access moving guides, tips and videos, entitlement brochures, service branch specific customer service contacts, DPS login and more from one easy location.
  - Plan My Move is a relocation tool that can help you get organized by creating checklists for different parts of your move, including tasks related to family, household goods, paperwork and housing. Print your checklists or save them online to track your progress as you complete tasks.
  - MilitaryINSTALLATIONS provides comprehensive information for installations around the world. Find contacts for key programs and services, local resources, maps, community information and more.
  - The Department of Defense Transition Assistance Program has information, tools and training to prepare you and your family for your military-to-civilian transition. Find your nearest Transition Assistance Program office.
- **Talk to professionals.** Contact your local Military and Family Support Center or transportation office and speak to a professional who can help you manage your move. Each move is different, and regulations vary by service branch and location.
- **Start planning early.** As soon as you know where you're going, schedule the move or storage of your household goods. You may have up to a year to complete your transition, however, scheduling your move early will help ensure you move on the date you choose. Learn more about arranging a personal property shipment.
- **Get organized.** Check out pro packing tips from the Defense Personal Property Program, including creating a moving binder, making a photo inventory of your belongings and more.

Remember, you don't have to do this all by yourself. There are resources and services to help you master your final move. Contact your installation Military and Family Support Center, or reach out to Military OneSource. Consultants are available 24/7/365 to answer your questions and connect you with the relocation support you need. Call 800-342-9647, use OCONUS dialing options, or schedule a live chat at [livechat.militaryonesourceconnect.org/webchat/](http://livechat.militaryonesourceconnect.org/webchat/).



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# 5 Questions to Ask Before Going Back to School



Courtesy of The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Going back to school is one of life's big choices. And like all major decisions, it might feel a little overwhelming – particularly if you're just starting to navigate the civilian world again after returning from the military.

Make it a little easier by breaking your decision down into smaller steps. If you're on the fence about whether to continue your education, here are five questions you can ask yourself before taking the leap back into school.

**1**

**What is my goal?**  
 (Or, what do I want to be when I grow up?) This one tops our list for a reason. Once you have an answer to this critical question, you can start working backwards. Before you commit money and time to returning to school, think about what you hope to achieve by continuing your education and where you see your civilian career taking you. You don't want to take courses without an endgame in mind because then you might end up with classes you don't need. If you're not sure of your goal, consider the skills you mastered in the military and how they might translate to a civilian career. Evaluate your strengths using a test, like our CareerScope Assessment, to identify potential job courses. See a career counselor or find someone in your field of interest to meet with or even shadow for a day. But you don't have to do any of this alone. We offer free career and educational counseling to those who are about to leave the military or who have recently transitioned.

**2**

**What should I study?**  
 Once you've decided on a career path, it's time to choose a program of study. If you want to work at VA, you can pick from just about any program. As the largest integrated health care system in the nation, we employ hundreds of thousands of clinical and non-clinical staff across the country. We have job opportunities across the spectrum of careers, not just in health care.

**3**

**Where should I go to school?**  
 There are thousands of colleges in the U.S., ranging from two-year technical schools to four-year liberal arts schools. Narrow down your list by finding a school that offers the program you're interested in and is located nearby if you plan to attend in person. You might also want to consider a school with an active veteran community and resources for former military.

**4**

**Can I afford it?**  
 We want to make sure the answer to this question is a definitive yes. As a veteran, you may be eligible to receive funding for some or all of your college, graduate school or training program through the GI Bill – not to mention the generous scholarships, loan repayment and reimbursement, and partner programs with colleges and universities that are available to VA employees. The VA National Education for Employees Program (VANEED) scholarship even pays your salary and tuition while you pursue clinical licensure.

**5**

**Do I have time?**  
 Juggling a career, family life and school can be a delicate balancing act. Be sure you're at the right place in your life to devote the time you need to your studies. It might be helpful to make a list of the time challenges you foresee and the resources you can put in place to help you manage them. Building this support system now can save you headaches down the road. At VA, you'll find a culture of continuous learning with flexible work schedules, possible telework options and generous leave to help you manage going back to school.



**Work at VA**  
 We try to take some of the stress out of returning to school by offering our employees one of the best education support programs in the nation. With a VA career, you'll not only find a rewarding job helping other veterans but the support you need to continue your education. Visit [vacareers.va.gov](https://vacareers.va.gov) for more information.

# Expansion vs. Transition: Navigating the Post-Military Career Shift



By Robin Grable, CEO of Talents ASCEND

Each year, nearly 250,000 service members like yourself leave the U.S. military and begin the transition back to civilian life. However, the term “transition” may not capture the full essence of the experience. Instead of viewing it as a change, let’s reframe it as an expansion. Leaving the military involves taking the skills acquired during service and broadening them to establish a new career in the civilian job market. It’s about enriching your career portfolio.

## Transferable Skills

Service members possess a wealth of skills, including leadership, discipline, teamwork, and problem-solving, alongside technical proficiencies linked to their military roles. Taking those skills to a comparable civilian role is an option, however, you might be seeking something new. So, how should you proceed?

The initial step is recognizing transferable skills. Compile a list of the skills you’ve honed during your military career. There are several tools out there for translating military skills. However, be cautious, as some only focus on translating job titles. Explore additional resources to help delve deeper into your skillset. Avoid paying for any service that charges you to translate your skills.

Using tools, such as Talents ASCEND, can simplify the process of identifying transferable skills. Review the list of skills provided and pinpoint those you wish to continue using in your future endeavors. This process serves as a foundation for your expansion into a future career path.

## It’s Your Career

As your career path is coming into focus, remember that there might be multiple avenues where your skills are valued. The military represents a unique industry, and employers often emphasize the importance

of industry experience. They will want to see that your previous title compares to the title you are applying for.

If additional education and training are necessary for your desired role, there are several organizations that provide upskilling and certifications. For example, the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) offers college credit by exam and college credit for military training and experience. It is important to look at all the resources and choose which route will be the most beneficial.

## Networking is Your Net Worth

Incorporate networking into your career expansion strategy. Building connections is paramount. You will often hear that “your network is your net worth”, and the adage holds true. Finding individuals in the same desired career or industry can be a valuable commodity. They can share specific training and certifications that may be required, as well as pitfalls to avoid. Learn from others who have walked this path before you, both successes and challenges. The knowledge will empower you to make informed choices that align with your goals.

## Mentors

Regardless of your level of experience, mentorship is invaluable. It’s important to find individuals who are

willing and able to give honest feedback. Growth often arises from constructive criticism, pushing you beyond your comfort zone to become a better version of yourself.

## Embrace the Journey

As you begin to expand your career portfolio, keep this process in mind. Identify your skills, determine your career path(s), network, and seek mentorship. Changing careers, while stressful, can be an exciting adventure. Embrace the journey ahead.



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Why am I so anxious?

Who am I?

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# The Road Ahead at Home and Work for Wounded Warriors

Courtesy of Military OneSource

As a wounded warrior, you deserve the easiest possible transition from military to civilian life. A severe injury does change the way you live, but it does not have to change the course of your career or the quality of your home life. Here are some strategies to help you navigate the road ahead as a wounded warrior.

## Making your home more livable

Making your house accessible and livable within the constraints of your injury can help ease your transition home. Accessibility simply means allowing you to do what you want and need to do as independently as possible. Both technical and financial assistance are available to make your home accessible. Consider these resources to make you more comfortable at home during your transition.

- The Department of Veterans Affairs provides loans and grants to modify the homes of disabled veterans or to help them purchase existing, accessible homes.
- Disabled American Veterans is an organization dedicated to wounded warriors with resources to help them feel at ease in their homes.
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development helps homeowners rehabilitate properties for accessibility.
- Many nongovernment nonprofits also provide building assistance and help with the financing of new homes for injured service members.

## Reentering the workforce

Every injured service member can expect to have a different path back into work. The nature of your injuries, where you live and your specific skill-set, interests and experiences will guide your decision. Your first step is to determine what kind of job you want. Here are some things to consider.

- **Your interests:** Focusing on what you're interested in will help narrow your search and make you happier in your new role.
- **Your job in the military:** As a service member, you have unique experiences, skills, training and traits that will be assets to a new employer. Be open to ways in which those skills might translate to a civilian role.
- **Your challenges:** Identify what may limit your options, such as your injury, your education or your skills, and make a plan to update your talents to match or create new opportunities.
- **Your job before the military:** Skills and experiences that you acquired before becoming a service member may translate to your career now. Try reconnecting with old colleagues and decide if you're still interested in that line of work.
- **Your location:** Whether you're relocating or staying, consider the strengths and limitations of your area. Consider jobs that your region is known for, or focus on companies based there.

There are plenty of resources to help you find your first job after the military. Consider using these services to search and prepare for that first role.

- The military's Transition Assistance Program provides transition support for severely injured service members in each branch. For more information, contact your installation TAP office.
- The Veterans' Employment and Career

Transition Advisor provides valuable information and access to contact information for one-on-one employment assistance and online resources to assist transitioning service members and veterans with their reintegration into the civilian workforce.

- The Department of Veterans Affairs provides vocational training and certifications, and helps with your job search.
- CareerOneStop centers are located around the country and can help you with career exploration, training, job searches and placement.

- The Defense Department Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program provides assistive technology and accommodations to support individuals with disabilities and wounded, ill and injured service members. Effective Oct. 1, 2020, CAP will only provide assistive technology to DOD employees and active-duty service members. However, CAP will gladly conduct assessments, provide information, referrals and assist non-DOD agencies in determining the appropriate AT and AT devices to purchase by their agency. For more

information, visit the CAP website at [cap.mil](http://cap.mil).

## Support going forward

Because of the sacrifices you've made, you're entitled to many benefits during your transition from active-duty military to civilian life. The road ahead is lined with support from Military OneSource and its many resources, from medical services and education to caregivers and counseling. If you have questions, reach out. Consultants are available 24/7/365 to help you find the resources you need to thrive. Call 800-342-9647, use OCONUS dialing options or schedule a live chat at [livechat.militaryonesourceconnect.org/webchat/](https://militaryonesourceconnect.org/webchat/).

USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

## Build a Career with USDA

### Food Inspector Pre-Apprenticeship & Apprenticeship Programs



FSIS invests in service members transitioning from active duty by offering a **4 week Food Inspector Pre-Apprenticeship Program** that provides a career pathway into Federal employment. Upon ETS/retirement and successful completion of the pre-apprenticeship program, service members **transition into a 12-month paid apprenticeship program**.

## Benefits

**GI Bill Certified! GI Bill benefits may be used during the paid 12-month apprenticeship.**

4 week Pre-Apprenticeship Program offers exposure to FSIS inspection processes.

Guaranteed acceptance into a paid 12-month Apprenticeship Program after successful completion of the Pre-Apprenticeship.

Upon successful completion of the 12-month apprenticeship, service members are eligible for Federal Service appointment at the GS-7 level.

### Learn More:

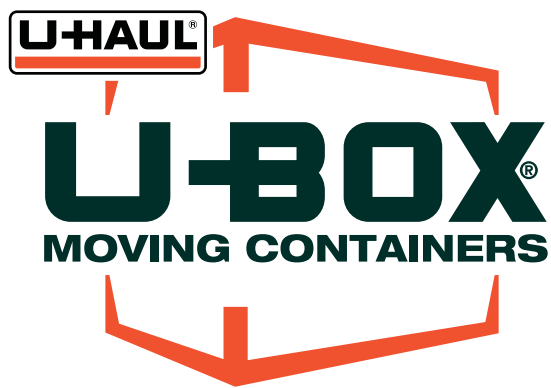


Link: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/careers/food-inspector-apprenticeship-programs>

### Point of Contact

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