



Outreach, Transition and Economic Development

Outreach, Transition and Economic Development (OTED)

Outreach, Transition and Economic Development (OTED) provides a wholistic approach to Veteran engagement, before, during, and after transition from military service to civilian life. OTED engages millions of Veterans, transitioning Service members, their families and caregivers annually through extensive programs. OTED provides access to VA benefits, services, and resources through a network of partners who work together to accelerate economic empowerment and well-being for Veterans and transitioning Service members. OTED administers portions of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and other programs within the Military to Civilian (M2C Ready) framework; 365 days before and after separation.

To better serve Veterans and dependents, OTED collaborates with interagency partners including the Department of Defense (DOD), Departments of Labor, Homeland Security, and Education, the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Office of Personnel Management to carry out the requirements of the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act, Public Law 112-56. OTED highlights the following key programs that are critical to our Veterans successful transition:

1. Transition Assistance Program (TAP)
2. VA Solid Start (VASS)
3. Personalized Career Planning & Guidance (PCPG)



Supports 331 military installations Nationwide, with over 300 contractor employees and support staff serving Veterans

Mission:

Collaborate, inform and advocate for Veterans, transitioning Service members, survivors, family members, and all eligible beneficiaries by highlighting pathways to VA benefits and services to facilitate sustained successful connections.

Vision:

Serve as a trusted leader to all Veterans, transitioning Servicemembers, survivors, and eligible beneficiaries by increasing awareness of and access to VA benefits and services.

Activities:

91,232 TAP Attendees 317,638 TAP Touchpoints
 60,380 TAP Events
 149,498 Veterans Contacted by VA Solid Start (VASS)
 24,233 Priority Veterans Contacted by VASS
 7,826 PCPG (Chap. 36) Applications Processed



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Release history

Version & changes	Date
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Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

TAP is an interagency program designed to help Service members have a smooth and successful transition to civilian life. VA, with interagency partners, implements the five-day TAP curriculum, which Service members are required to take beginning two years prior to retiring or one year prior to separation. The TAP curriculum provides the skill building, resources and tools Service members need to achieve emotional health, physical health and economic stability in civilian life. The full-day VA Benefits and Services course, led by VA Benefits Advisors, helps Service members and their family members understand how to navigate VA and the benefits and services they have earned through their military career. VA Benefits Advisors are also available to Service members throughout their military careers through Military Life Cycle (MLC) modules, One-on-One Assistance sessions and at Installation Engagement activities. In FY2020, COVID-19 impacted worldwide in-person VA transition services. OTED developed a remote support model to keep Service members, Veterans and their loved ones in touch with VA Benefits Advisors for One-On-One Assistance sessions to preserve connectivity and keep them informed on critical VA benefits and services during these unprecedented times.

TAP Services Offered:

- **VA Benefits and Services course:** The VA portion of TAP is a one-day, mandatory, in-person course called VA Benefits and Services, which provides an overview of important topics that range from education, compensation, insurance, health care and survivor and mental health services. This course is also available online for those unable to attend in person.
 - In FY2021, OTED supported 3,804 in-person VA TAP Benefits and Services courses with 91,232 attendees.
 - 144,808 individuals completed the eLearning online VA Benefits and Services course through the VA Transition Online Learning at va.org (formerly the Defense Department's Joint Knowledge Online [JKO]).
- **One-on-One Assistance:** VA Benefit Advisors explain benefits, answer questions and connect Service members, Veterans and their loved ones with resources to meet their individual needs. In FY2021, OTED supported 54,291 One-On-One Assistance sessions (combination of in-person, telephone and email) with a total of 56,510 transitioning Service members, Veterans and their families. One-on-one Assistance sessions from VA Benefit Advisors are listed by region and topics discussed. A session could include one or more topics.
- **MLC modules:** MLC modules are short instructor-led and online information sessions on topics that matter most to active-duty Service members and their loved ones, such as education benefits, home loans and life insurance. MLC modules help Service members connect with VA well before transition so they can get an early understanding of their benefits and plan for their futures, which may lead to more successful transitions overall. In FY2021, OTED supported 324 in-person MLC modules with 6,158 attendees.
- **Installation Engagement:** At the request of installation commanders or other designees, VA Benefits Advisors participate in Installation Engagement events, like new arrival events, Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events, local resource fairs, career-preparedness activities, and spouse events to provide information on where and how to learn more about benefits, programs and services.
- **Capstone:** A mandatory event to evaluate Service member's preparedness to successfully transition from a military to a civilian career.



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TAP satisfaction:

All participants who complete the VA Benefits and Services course can provide feedback through the Transition Assistance Curriculum Participant Assessment (TACPA). TACPA is a DOD-facilitated assessment collecting demographic data, assessment of the course curriculum, materials, facilitators and facilities. Participants also answer questions to gauge their intent to use information learned during the course, whether the course added to their overall knowledge and confidence in transitioning due to the course. Through June 30, 2021, the end of the third fiscal quarter (Q3), VA's cumulative satisfaction score was 95.7%. Satisfaction exceeded the goal of 95% on 4 of 5 questions.

Transition Assistance Curriculum Participant Assessment, FY2021 Q1-Q3

Questions	Achieved	Goal
Facilitators were knowledgeable	96.7%	95.0%
Facilitators interacted well with participants	96.2%	95.0%
Learning resources (notes, handouts, AV, materials) were useful	95.6%	95.0%
I will use what I learned in module in my transition planning	96.1%	95.0%
The module enhanced my confidence in transition planning	93.9%	95.0%
Overall Satisfaction	95.7%	95.0%



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VA Solid Start (VASS)

The first year after separation from military service poses challenges for recently separated Veterans that can make it difficult to adjust to civilian life, and for some, increase their risk for suicide. To provide added support during this critical period, VBA launched the VA Solid Start program in December 2019. Specially trained VASS representatives reach out by phone to recently separated Veterans at three key points (0 to 90, 91 to 180, and 181 to 365 days after release from active duty), to establish a relationship with VA, increase their awareness of available VA benefits and services, lower the barrier to entry into VA mental health care treatment, and support their successful transition to civilian life.

VA Solid Start conversations are not scripted and are instead driven by the specific needs of the Veteran at the time of the call. VASS representatives ask open-ended questions to identify issues or challenges the Veteran may be experiencing at the time of the call, and then direct the Veteran to the appropriate resources, benefits, and services to best meet their needs. Veterans are assigned a specific VASS representative who remains with the Veteran throughout the entire VASS program.

The VA Solid Start program has achieved great success. In FY2021, VASS successfully connected with 149,498 recently separated Veterans, representing a 58.2% successful connection rate, far exceeding the 40% goal.

VA Solid Start Services:

- VA Solid Start addresses transition-related challenges through proactive outreach to encourage Veterans to access and use benefits as tools for success during the first year of separation.
- VA Solid Start calls all newly separated Veterans – regardless of service branch, character of discharge, or service history. This includes all active-duty Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Navy, Marine Corps, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Public Health Service (PHS), and Reserve and National Guard deactivated from overseas contingency deployments of at least 90 days.
- VA Solid Start prioritizes calls to Veterans who had a mental health care appointment within the last year of their active-duty service, helping to lower the barrier to accessing high quality VA mental health care treatment. In FY2021, VASS successfully connected with 24,233 priority Veterans, representing a 75.0% successful connection rate.
- VA Solid Start representatives are specially trained to identify individuals who may be in crisis or at risk for suicide during VASS conversations. When this occurs, VASS representatives complete a warm handover to the Veterans Crisis Line (VCL). In FY2021, VASS successfully connected 12 Veterans in crisis to the VCL for additional care and support.
- VA Solid Start utilizes proactive messaging via email prior to each VASS engagement to provide Veterans with information on the program, including links to resources and the VA Solid Start webpage, and to ask the Veteran to take the VASS call. The targeted messaging also includes contact information for key VA resources, such as the Veterans Crisis Line and the Veterans Benefits Administration National Contact Center, that the Veteran may need to access prior to the VASS call.
- VA Solid Start also provides Veterans with a comprehensive post-call summary via email that includes a summary of the interaction, provides additional information on the topics and benefits that were discussed, and links to pertinent information about earned benefits and services. These emails also include contact information for the appropriate State Veterans Affairs office to help the Veteran access state and/or local benefits that may be available.



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Personalized Career Planning and Guidance (Chapter 36) Benefits

Personalized Career Planning and Guidance (PCPG) is a rebranded execution of Chapter 36 now managed by OTED. PCPG provides career and education counseling to transitioning Service members within six months of leaving the military, to Veterans who have left the military within the past 12 months, or at any time to individuals eligible to use a VA education benefit. In FY2021, 7,835 Service members, Veterans, and dependents applied for Chapter 36 services.

PCPG provides Service members, Veterans and eligible dependents with career counseling, assessment, education planning and guidance resources, unique to the needs of each participant to help them set and achieve personal, career and education goals. Enhanced services made in FY2021 added increased resume support and easier access to PCPG resources.

These services are designed to provide Beneficiaries with personalized counseling and support to help guide career paths, ensure the most effective use of VA benefits, and achieve educational and career goals.

PCPG career and education counseling services include:

- Résumé support
- Education and employment planning
- Detailed skills assessment
- Personalized action plan to achieve education and career goals
- Adjustment counseling to successfully transition to civilian employment
- Connection to VA benefits and services
- Tele-counseling

Working in collaboration with Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) and Education Services (EDU), OTED administers the Contract Counseling for PCPG; both VR&E and EDU will continue to be active partners in the delivery of education and career counseling, and VR&E will continue to offer PCPG benefits through VA Regional Office locations and VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) sites.

PCPG expands Veteran outreach, increasing Veteran eligibility awareness and encouraging Veterans to use the benefit multiple times across their career lifespan as long as they remain eligible. Through a robust marketing plan in FY2022, OTED plans to expand engagement at non-VSOC colleges and universities with high numbers of student Veterans and military installations with high transitioning Service member populations.



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Office of Outreach, Transition and Economic Development (OTED)
Activities FY2021

Transition Assistance Program Attendance and Events

TAP Events	Attendance	Events
One on One Assistance	56,510	54,291
VA Benefits and Services	91,232	3,807
Installation Engagement	16,704	659
Military Life Cycle (MLC)	6,158	324
Capstone	2,226	1,290
Grand Total	172,830	60,371

Figures in this table include virtual instructor-led courses but not VA Transition Online Learning at va.org (formerly JKO).

TAP Attendance for One-On-One Assistance Sessions, by Region,
FY2021 Q1

Region	Sessions	Share of Total Sessions
Asia	1,874	16.8%
Europe	1,150	10.3%
Central	2,340	21.0%
Eastern	1,716	15.4%
Southern	1,927	17.3%
Western	2,151	19.2%
Region not specified	9	<0.1%





TAP Attendance for One-On-One Assistance Sessions, by Region, FY2021 Q2 - Q4

Region ¹	Sessions	Share of Total Sessions
Northeast and Mid-Atlantic	4,899	11.3%
Georgia and the Carolinas	7,639	17.7%
Southeast and Caribbean	6,507	15.0%
Midwest	3,266	7.5%
Texas, Arizona, New Mexico	7,116	16.5%
Northwest, Alaska, Hawaii	4,597	10.6%
California and Nevada	2,466	5.7%
OCONUS Europe, Middle East & North Africa	3,351	7.8%
OCONUS Guam, Japan, Korea, Saipan and Singapore	3,329	7.7%

One-on-One Assistance Session Topics Reported, FY2021

Benefit Topic ²	Number of Sessions	Percentage
Disability Compensation	38,288	70.5%
Education Benefits	23,303	42.9%
Health Care	16,369	30.2%
VA Website Management	12,828	23.6%
State and Local Benefits	8,173	15.1%
Employment Services	7,555	13.9%
Housing and Living Benefits	5,293	9.7%
Family Support Programs	3,927	7.2%

¹ Coding of geographic regions changed in January 2021.

² Figures add to more than 100% because an assistance session could cover multiple topics.



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VA Solid Start Contact

VA Solid Start Eligible Veterans Served

Beneficiary Type	Total
Eligible Veterans	257,039
Number of Eligible Veterans Successfully Contacted	149,498
Eligible Veterans Successful Contact Rate	58.2%

VA Solid Start prioritizes calls to Veterans who had a mental health appointment during their last year before separation.

VA Solid Start Eligible Priority Veterans Served

Beneficiary Type	Total
Eligible Priority Veterans	32,332
Number of Eligible Priority Veterans Successfully Contacted	24,233
Eligible Priority Veterans Successful Contact Rate	75.0%

Veterans Counseled

FY 2021 PCPG (Chapter 36) Cases

Case Status	Number
Applications Processed	7,826
Applications Counseled	2,641
Average Days to Complete (among Eligible Beneficiaries Counseled)	41.6

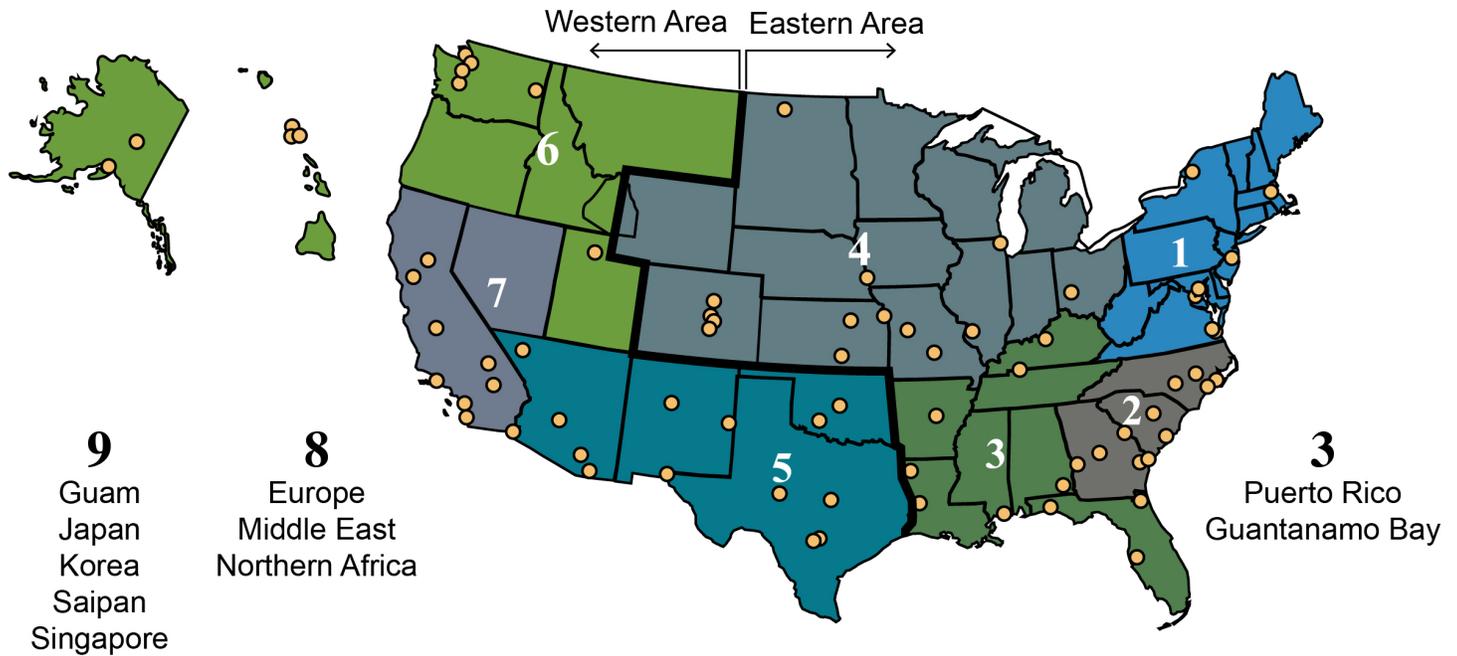


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VA TAP Coverage Model



Contact Information

Outreach, Transition and Economic Development:
1-800-827-1000
Annual Benefits Report (Office of Performance Analysis & Integrity)
202-461-9040

Department of Veterans Affairs home page
www.va.gov
Veterans Benefits Administration home page
benefits.va.gov

eBenefits (Online forms and applications)
www.ebenefits.va.gov
VR&E home page
www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab



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