



SPONSORSHIP



# Service Member/Veteran Toolkit

Welcome to the ETS Sponsorship Program (ETS-SP)! We are excited to join you on your transition journey!

You have taken the first steps by enrolling into the program. Please remain in contact with your ETS-SP team, your transition coordinator and your sponsor. Remember, your success should remain a priority. If you need anything, your ETS-SP team is here for you!

Again, thank you for your time and trusting us to help you with your transition journey. We look forward to moving forward with you!

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## I. Overview

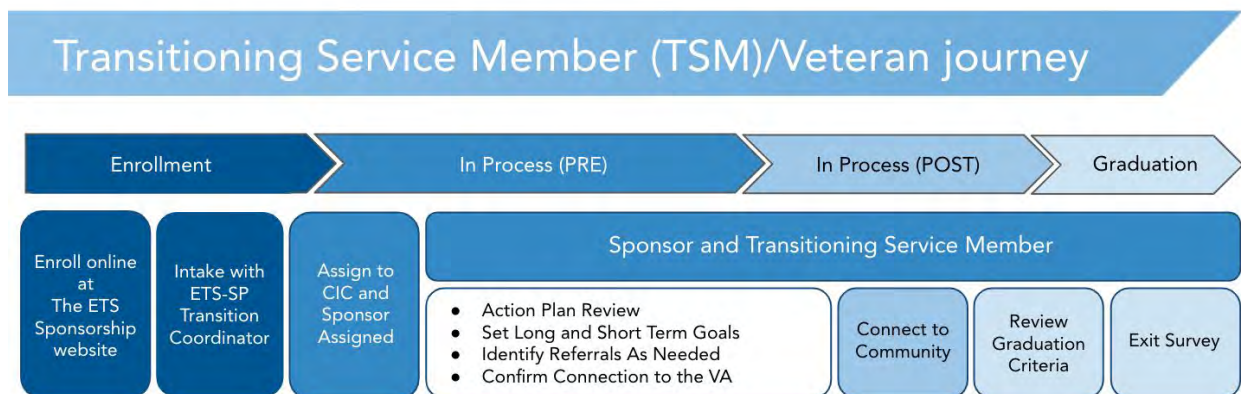
ETS-SP is meant to ensure you, the transitioning service member, are prepared for your ‘next mission’. Your ‘next mission’ is to successfully assimilate into your post-military life through setting and accomplishing attainable goals meaningful to you.

When you received your permanent change of station (PCS) orders, you may have received a PCS sponsor from your new military installation. ETS sponsors strive to fill a similar role for you as you prepare to exit the military and move to your post-military hometown. Our VA trained sponsors possess a unique understanding of your hometown and are connected to federal and community resources.

ETS-SP is unique in that it focuses on the following domains where an ETS-SP sponsor will advise the transitioning service member/Veteran, and connect them to resources:

- ✓ Employment and Education
- ✓ Housing
- ✓ Family and Legal
- ✓ Social and Physical Fitness
- ✓ Medical Care

## II. Transitioning Service Member/Sponsor ETS-SP Journey



The ETS-SP recognizes that every transitioning service member has a unique timeline and a unique story. Our goal is to work with each service member to maximize a successful transition for each unique situation.

## A. Your ETS-SP Journey

### Step 1: Your ETS-SP Transition Coordinator and Your Intake Call

Upon receipt of your enrollment form, an ETS-SP Transition Coordinator (TC) is assigned. Your TC will contact you via email or other preferred method of communication and will set up an appointment to conduct a telephonic initial intake. Your ETS-SP TC will reach out once per month to ensure all is going well and respond to any questions or concerns.

### Step 2: Your ETS-SP Sponsor

Upon completion of the intake process, you will be matched to a certified ETS-SP sponsor, preferably in your new hometown area. You will receive an email introducing you to your ETS-SP sponsor. The matching process is not random. Using the information provided during your enrollment and intake, along with information about available sponsors, and your community, we strive to make the best possible connection.

### Step 3: Your First Call with Your ETS-SP Sponsor

No matter how many months out you may be from your ETS date, the initial phone call should include:

- Introductions,
- Questions to help the sponsor get to know you and your desired outcomes,
- The logistics of communicating, preferred time and method,
- The dashboard (see section B) and any plans to use it for messaging, and
- Determining a time/date/place for your next call or meeting.

### Step 4: Your Action Plan

Your sponsor will discuss your identified action item specifics of the domain areas and concerns you may have. After identifying the specific issues in each domain, short- and long-term goals will be discussed.

Together with your sponsor, you will work on:

- Identifying the actions that need to be taken to achieve each goal;
- Reassessing and updating short-term goals;
- Creating new action plans, as needed; and,
- Working with your sponsor to connect with resources as required.

### Step 5: Graduation and Completion of The ETS Sponsorship Program

Although every situation is different, typically, a Veteran is ready to graduate about a year after first meeting the sponsor. At the conclusion of your ETS sponsorship journey, you and your ETS-SP sponsor will:

- Confirm updated short- and long-term goals lists; and,
- Discuss a roadmap for the future.

## B. Using Your ETS-SP Dashboard

Your ETS-SP Dashboard serves as an information and communication center. The dashboard is a one-stop site that allows you to centralize the relevant information you need to best support your transition journey.

We encourage you to utilize your personalized dashboard to:

- Communicate via message with your sponsor.
- Keep track of your Action Plans.
- Access important links to resources.
- Store important documents safely in your secure data vault.
- Keep up to date on ETS-SP news.
- Access a calendar of local events held in your new hometown that is catered to your interests.

## C. Things to Remember

### Tips to Get the Most of Your ETS Sponsorship

- **Be considerate to schedule meetings ahead of time; value your sponsor's time.**
- **Be available.** Sponsors are able to connect with you regularly via email, text, or phone. Sponsors should meet with you in-person or via teleconference at least once a month.
- **Be resourceful.** Don't expect the sponsor to have all the answers to your questions.
- **Be proactive; bring up relevant matters to discuss with your sponsor.** Don't leave it to the sponsor to decide on what to talk about every time.
- **Be curious and engaged and an active participant.**
- **Be responsible, work hard, and put in your best effort.** Don't forget what you committed to do.
- **Be dependable.** Don't disappear when your schedule gets crazy.
- **Be professional.** Don't ignore your sponsor's attempts to get in touch with you.
- **Give feedback.** Giving your sponsor feedback helps your sponsor know how best to assist you.

## D. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) by Service Members

### **What is ETS-SP?**

ETS-SP stands for the Expiration Term of Service Sponsorship Program.

### **What's that?**

ETS-SP is a program established in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to sponsor service members through the transition process from military to civilian life. ETS-SP is about a personal relationship between the transitioning service member and the sponsor.

### **Who can have a sponsor?**

Any service members/Veterans who are transitioning to a civilian community.

### **What if I am undecided on my final destination?**

- You will choose your final destination and determine the logistics involved in getting there; your sponsor will mentor and assist with resources and guidance.
- If you do not know your final destination, you will be connected to an ETS-SP sponsor who will assist you in the decision making process.
- When you choose your new community, you will be connected to a local sponsor.

### **Why should I have a sponsor?**

- Connect with someone who can share knowledge about your new community with you and your family.
- Develop relationships and engage in shared networks in your new community.
- Gain insight into resources that will help you thrive during transition.
- Make the transition less stressful for you and your family.

### **How will the sponsor work with me?**

- Sponsors will contact you regularly via email, text, or phone.
- Sponsors will meet with you in-person (or via virtual meeting teleconferencing) at least once a month.
- Sponsors will share their knowledge of the local area and available resources with you.
- Sponsors will guide you in identifying goals and developing action plans to achieve these goals.

### **How can I be sure that my sponsor and I will work well together?**

- Every sponsor is certified by the VA.
- ETS-SP is successful only with a solid relationship between you and your sponsor and wants your relationship to work!

### **What do I work on with an ETS-SP sponsor?**

- An ETS-SP sponsor is provided to you for help with transition and assist with any concerns related to transitioning out of the military.

- These concerns may be related to family, employment, education, housing, accessing benefits, etc..
- These needs will be identified during your intake assessment. It is not a problem if you are unsure as to what your needs may be at any particular time, as your sponsor is trained to help you identify these needs and make plans as to how to address them.

**Where and how often can I communicate and meet with my sponsor?**

- Your sponsor will contact you regularly via email, text, or phone, and will meet with you once a month in-person or virtually.

**What do I do if I relocate and am no longer in close regional proximity to my sponsor?**

- If you relocate from your initial/planned destination, you will have the option of remaining with your previous sponsor or switching to a new sponsor in your new destination.

**How long does sponsorship last?**

- Sponsorship usually lasts many months or up to a year. The sponsor will remain connected and continue to support you throughout the transition process until you and the sponsor feel you have successfully and adequately transitioned to your post-military home. However, depending on the nature of your relationship with your sponsor, you may choose to maintain contact once sponsorship has formally ended.

**How can I, as a graduate of the ETS Sponsorship Program, remain involved in the program?**

- Congratulations! As a graduate of ETS Sponsorship, there are many ways to stay involved with the program. You have the opportunity to become an ETS-SP sponsor, small group facilitator, or senior trainer. Transitioning service members/Veterans have an advantage due to their personal experiences within the context of the military-to-civilian transition. Details of the training requirements will become available to you once you graduate from the program.