

# ETS SPONSORSHIP



## Sponsor Toolkit

Welcome to the ETS Sponsorship Program (ETS-SP)! We are happy to have you join our team!

Sponsors are the heart of our program. Your commitment to connect with our transitioning service members makes our program unique and effective. We appreciate your willingness to guide, mentor, and empower our service members as they transition into their new communities.

This toolkit provides an overview of our program as well as the specific role of our sponsors. If you have any questions about any of the material presented, please contact us at ETS-SP National or reach out to your ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator.

Again, thank you for your time and willingness to serve. We look forward to moving forward with you!

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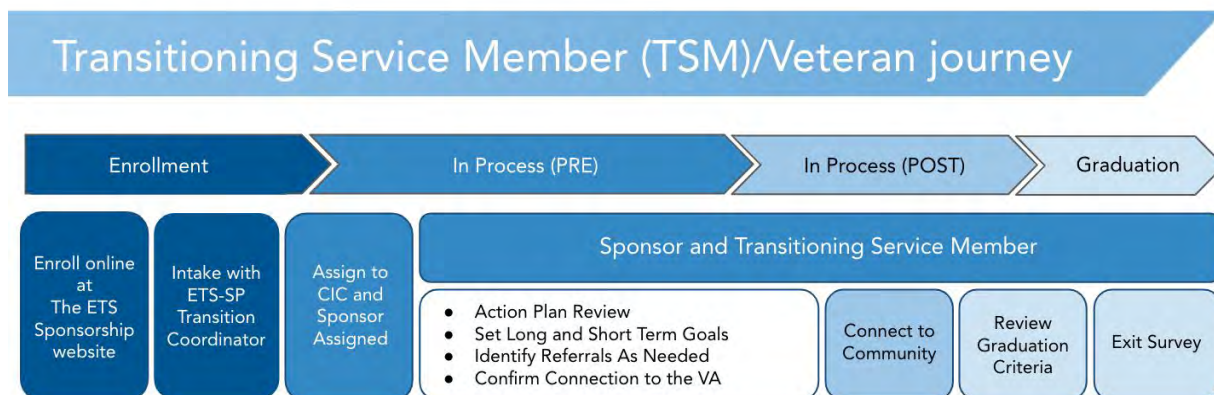
## I. Overview of Sponsorship Process

The transition for a service member back to civilian life is challenging. Veterans may find difficulty in:

- *Relating to people who do not know or understand what they have experienced;*
- *Reconnecting with family and establishing a role back into the family;*
- *Joining or creating a community because there is not a community based structure;*
- *Preparing to enter the workforce;*
- *Creating their new structure outside of what the military has provided for them;*
- *Adjusting to a different pace of life and work.*

The ETS-SP is centered on the relationship between the sponsor and the service member/Veteran. Recognizing the critical role that our communities play in the transition process and understanding the myriad of support organizations that exist to support Veteran transition, the ETS-SP partners with community collaboratives to ensure synchronization of all efforts.

### **Overview of the TSM/Sponsor Journey Process**



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. The ETS-SP achieves this goal through you, the sponsor, and the connection, the relationship, you form with the transitioning service member.

- 1) Service members enroll online at <https://etssponsorship.com>.
- 2) ETS-SP transition coordinator is assigned and coordinates an intake phone call with the service member.
- 3) Service members are matched to an ETS-SP sponsor. We will always reach out to you first to make sure you are available. In the matching email, we suggest to the service member they reach out to the sponsor. Please feel free to introduce yourself via email or call the service member.
- 4) Every month, the ETS-SP transition coordinator will reach out to the service member to do a quick check in. ETS-SP sponsors will receive a monthly update survey each month.

**IMPORTANT**

At no time does ETS-SP National, ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinators, ETS-SP Transition Coordinators, ETS-SP sponsors nor any other entity that is provided access to ETS-SP dashboards disclose individual service member/Veteran personal identifiable information (PII) outside of the ETS-SP network. All PII is stored within the secure ETS-SP dashboard/database and all communication related to PII must be communicated through the secure dashboard. If a service member/Veteran requires services from specific entities, a best practice is to provide the service member/Veteran the contact information for the respective service and have the service member/Veteran initiate contact. The only exceptions are:

- As required by state law (e.g., imminent risk to self or others).
- Local consent provided by service member/Veteran. ETS-SP National acknowledges that Community Integration Coordinators are currently part of existing digital networks. ETS-SP National defers to existing policies and procedures executed at the local level, specific to disclosure of information and additional consent that is needed by service members/Veterans. Consent provided by service members/Veterans does not cover disclosure of PII at the local level. Additional consent must be acquired.
- To such organizations, as the Department of Veterans Affairs, so that they can conduct additional analysis of the data to help us better understand your needs and to evaluate, as well as improve, the programs that we provide to transitioning service members/Veterans.

## II. Roles and Responsibilities

<b>ETS-SP Sponsor (Volunteer)</b>	
<b><i>ETS-SP Sponsor</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Complete the enrollment form and consent;</li> <li>● Agree to and sign the volunteer policies agreement;</li> <li>● Complete the required three training sessions;</li> <li>● Develop a relationship based on trust with the service member;</li> <li>● Assist the service member/Veteran in identifying transition needs;</li> <li>● Guide the service member/Veteran in the identification of goals;</li> <li>● Utilize the ETS-SP dashboard and ensure the service member understands the many areas on the dashboard that can be useful;</li> <li>● Not disclose any service member/Veteran personal identifiable information outside of the ETS-SP dashboard;</li> <li>● Assess graduation readiness; and,</li> <li>● Communicate with the ETS CIC throughout the process.</li> </ul>
<b>ETS-SP Transition Coordinators</b>	
<b><i>ETS-SP Transition Coordinators</i></b>	ETS-SP Transition Coordinators conduct intake phone calls with service members to confirm information and needs assessment and conduct follow up check of sponsor/service member match ups. Transition Coordinators provide weekly updates highlighting issues, complicated challenges, immediate needs, and unresponsive service members or sponsors.
<b>Community Integration Coordinator</b>	
<b><i>ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator (CIC)</i></b>	The ETS-SP CIC is a partner organization or certified sponsor who partners with the ETS-SP National leadership to lead the ETS-SP efforts in a specific community. The ETS-SP CIC agrees to recruit and maintain a local sponsor corps, assist ETS-SP National in enrollment/intake processes if requested, administer and support the service member/Veteran relationship, develop local support and support the state and national effort.
<b>ETS-SP National</b>	
<b><i>ETS-SP National</i></b>	<p>The ETS-SP National office will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide training support to sponsors;</li> <li>● Provide service member/Veteran oversight;</li> <li>● Communicate regularly with CICs and support as required; and,</li> <li>● Continuously evaluate and improve the program.</li> </ul>

### III. The Service Member and Sponsor Journey

After certification, you'll join your transitioning service member on his or her journey in their next chapter of life. Every journey is unique--dependent upon where the service member is on their timeline when they enroll in the program. However, despite the unique situations faced by our sponsors and service members, every journey will share similar phases that are discussed below.

- Getting Matched
- The First Call
- The Action Plan
- Graduation and Completion of the ETS Sponsorship Program

A sponsor should try to normalize and validate the service member/Veteran's feelings. A service member/Veteran who is experiencing difficulties in transitioning is not alone - many others have experienced these challenges and the ETS-SP has ways to help. Sponsors do not promise to have all the answers - Sponsors *do* promise to be committed to exploring different tools and strategies with the service member/Veteran until they find what works for the Veteran. Transition difficulties are serious and real, but can also be manageable and temporary.

#### A. Getting Matched

Once you finish your training sessions, your ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator will match you with a service member/Veteran in your area. The matching process is not random. When the service member/Veteran applies, he or she provides basic personal information and the ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator will use that information, along with information he or she knows about you, the sponsor, and your community to make the best possible connection.

You will receive an email that alerts you to access the information on the ETS-SP dashboard (e.g., service member's contact information and basic personal information, education, experiences, and goals). This information will contain the needs that the service member noted as important to him or her in their enrollment form. These needs will establish the service member's action item list. See the Enrollment and Intake forms in the Resources Section (VI) to preview possible action item tasks.

#### B. The First Call

When the service member/Veteran enrolled, he or she indicated the preferred means of communication (text, email, phone). It is suggested that you contact the service member/Veteran using the preferred means of communication.

Every transitioning service member enters the ETS Sponsorship Program at a different time. Some may enroll twelve months before their ETS date; some may enroll two weeks before their ETS date. Depending upon the timeline, the sponsor's first call and actions leading up to the ETS date will vary.



How often should you communicate with your transitioning service member?	
<b>12 months or more out from their ETS date</b>	1-2 times per month
<b>6-12 months out from their ETS date</b>	2 times per month
<b>4-6 months out from their ETS date</b>	2-3 times per month
<b>0-3 months out from their ETS date</b>	weekly
<b>Once the Veteran is in the community</b>	weekly via phone or email and visit at least once per month in-person
<b>For Veterans who have already ETSed</b>	weekly via phone or email and visit at least once a month in-person

No matter how many months out the service member is from their ETS date, the goal is to establish rapport. In-depth goal setting on these areas will not happen during the initial connection with your service member. Goal setting will occur after a few sessions, when you've built a rapport and begin to move forward together.

The initial phone call should include:

- Introduce yourself. Tell your service member/Veteran about your family, your hobbies, what you do for fun. Share a little about why you are a sponsor.
- Explain the sponsoring process, then ask the following questions.
  - Tell me your story.
  - When will you ETS?
  - Do you know what area you are going to?
  - Tell me about your family, friends.
  - What do you do for enjoyment?
- **Listen.** If the service member/Veteran wants to share about him or herself, listen.
- Acknowledge their strengths and accomplishments. This is something you want to do at the beginning of your relationship.
- Discuss the logistics of communicating. When is a good time to connect with you? Do you have a preference of how I contact you? Phone, email, text? How you communicate will depend upon your service member's preferences. Each relationship finds the communication method that works best for them.
- You should meet in person (or via virtual meeting teleconferencing if your service member/Veteran has not yet left the military) at least **once a month**. See the guidelines as listed per the timeline above. If possible, we encourage personal meetings. In-person meetings should be at a neutral location that feels safe and comfortable. The location should provide the privacy needed to speak openly about personal matters. It should also allow the meeting to take place as long as necessary without interruption.



- Discuss the dashboard and your plans to use it for messaging; encourage the service member/Veteran to take advantage of the data vault and other benefits provided by the dashboard. We encourage sponsors to utilize the Chat Space and Meetings functions that are available on the ETS-SP dashboards to facilitate communication and capture information.
- Before you finish communicating with the service member/Veteran, set up a time/date/place for your next call or meeting.
- You should talk, text, or email to conduct the other meetings per month. You should contact the service member/Veteran at the same time and day of the week if possible. This gives the service member/Veteran structure similar to that of the military. It also makes it clear to the service member/Veteran that you are reliable and serious about being available and supportive.

### IMPORTANT

***What should the sponsor do if the service member is non-responsive and does not reply or return your calls?***

The sponsor should notify the ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator if the service member/Veteran is non-responsive after two attempts to contact him or her. We will try to reach out and see if the service member is still interested in the program, or if there may be a circumstance for their unresponsiveness. There have been some instances where the service member has been training, etc. If the service member remains unresponsive to our team, we will move the service member to the unresponsive list. Our program will continue to reach out and let the service member know they are always welcome to rejoin the program.

## C. The Action Plan

You have established a relationship. You have talked about issues in the domain areas. This phase - the journey phase - can take as long as the service member/Veteran needs.

One of the first things a sponsor does is make a collaborative, initial assessment of the service member/Veteran's status within each of the domains. You will then be able to assist the service member/Veteran in establishing domain-specific goals that can be evaluated on a monthly basis. Working to complete action items and achieve goals is the bulk of the sponsorship process as discussed in detail in session #2 of the ETS-SP sponsor training.

Once the focal domains are chosen, you will work together with the service member/Veteran to:

- Identify the areas where assistance is needed;
- Develop lists of short and long term goals;
- Identify the actions that need to be taken to achieve each goal;
- Create new action plans, as needed; and,
- Connect him or her to resources as required.

At the end of each session, you and the service member/Veteran should review what you have discussed and clearly outline the homework tasks that each will complete before their next meeting. This time should also be used to confirm the date and time for the next meeting. Homework should be simple and manageable. These assignments are supposed to help the service member/Veteran feel motivated; they should allow them to feel capable of mastering things; they should not be overwhelming. Breaking a task down into smaller pieces and tackling one piece at a time through homework makes goals more attainable. Goal sheets are excellent resources that can be used to identify goals and action items and develop homework. A blank copy of a goal sheet can be found in Section VI, Resources.

Not every service member/Veteran will have issues in every domain. Some service members/Veterans may be comfortable addressing two or three domains before feeling well-adjusted enough to explore other domains. This is completely fine! The ETS-SP exists first and foremost to support the service member/Veteran.

At times, you may be faced with action items that you do not know how to complete or are not relevant to your areas of expertise. In these cases, you are encouraged to engage with your ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator or ETS-SP National point of contact. The network and structure of the ETS-SP allows for the sharing of knowledge and resources.

#### D. Graduation and the Completion of the ETS Sponsorship Program

The Graduation Phase consists of the Veteran's final meeting, or final two meetings, and their actual graduation from the program. Although every situation is different, typically, a Veteran is ready to graduate about six months after transition. How do you know if your Veteran is ready?

Utilize these guidelines and ask these questions below to assess the situation:

- Confirm updated short- and long-term goals lists.
- Review the five domains. Discuss the successes and obstacles in each.
- Discuss a roadmap for the future.
- Are there other things you would like assistance with?
- How will you handle obstacles in the future?
- Are you familiar with the resources that are available?

After discussing the information and answers to the questions above, use the checklist below to further assess your Veteran's readiness:

- Does the Veteran show evidence of mental calmness and personal resiliency?
- Is there any evidence of mental or physical health concerns?
- Does the Veteran have a job that supports personal goals and responsibilities?
- Does the Veteran have sufficient housing for himself or herself and their family?
- Does the Veteran have connections and bonds to the community--including a person with whom he or she can manage stressors as they arise in the future?
- Does the Veteran have access to adequate family care for dependents?

- Has the Veteran applied for, completed, or at least been made aware of all eligible military, medical, and educational benefits that are available to him or her?

Finally, if you and your Veteran both agree that he or she is ready to graduate, contact your ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator. When you, the Veteran, and your ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator agree that he or she is ready to graduate, set the graduation date with the Veteran and ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator.

## E. Utilizing the Dashboards

The ETS-SP provides the service member, the sponsor and the Community Integration Coordinator with a dashboard that 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 sponsor your service member.

Sponsors are encouraged to utilize the dashboard to:

- Communicate via message with your service member.
- Keep track of Action Plans.
- Request resource assistance.
- Keep up to date on ETS-SP News.
- Keep up to date and current on ETS-SP training information.

Sponsors are encouraged to discuss the dashboard with the service member and perhaps review the various areas of the dashboard together. The dashboard is an invaluable tool if both the service member and sponsor maximize its usefulness.

## F. Things to Remember

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

- **Establish Expectations And Ground Rules** - Make introductions, answer questions, delineate expectations of the process
- **Do An Informal Needs Assessment** - Review the intake information and develop a list of the service member's priorities or areas of concern
- **Set Goals Mutually** - You and the service member should set goals and prioritize what you'll address together first - develop the action plan.
- **Set A Contact Schedule** - Decide on the best form of communication and a consistent time/day to establish a schedule. Be clear about your time boundaries. Offer enough availability not to leave your service member/Veteran in a lurch, but not so much that they become an annoyance.
- **Listen Carefully First, then Ask and Advise** - Hear what the service member has to say before giving your opinion. Query them on their point of view. They bring insights and perspectives which you may not yet appreciate.
- **Let Them Make Their Own Decisions** - The sponsor is generally more knowledgeable and experienced than the service member. It would be easy just to tell the service member what to do.
- **Be Accountable to Each Other** - If you promise to look into an issue or provide a resource to the service member, do so according to the terms of your commitment. By the same token expect them to meet their pledges to you. Trust and accountability are foundations of an effective mentoring relationship.
- **Check Your Biases and Impulses** - Hopefully you'll get to know your service member reasonably well. Before you do, avoid letting stereotypes distort your impressions. Just like you that person may be different from what's on the surface.
- **Do not** promise to have all of the answers. **Do** promise to commit to exploring different tools and strategies with the service member/Veteran until you find what works.

You are a critical part of our program.  
ETS-SP appreciates all you do for our Veterans!

## IV. Finding Assistance

You have identified short- and long-term goals. What's next? How do you guide the Veteran to achieve these goals? In order to accomplish the action plan, it will be critical to integrate services provided by local agencies outside of the ETS-SP network. Optimally, ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinators will assist in connecting service members/Veterans to needed services within the community.

### A. The Community Collaborative

The ETS-SP mission to assist transitioning service members is shared by many Veteran Support Organizations (VSOs) and community support organizations across the country.

ETS-SP refers to the many organizations that exist in our communities to assist our Veterans as *The Community Collaborative*. Depending on your unique community, your community collaborative may include organizations such as AWP or the Veterans' Administration (VA), an AmericaServes network, or Combined Arms; your community may also have American Legions or Team Red, White and Blue. It may have a Veteran Support Office at the county level. Every community is different and the resources available to assist our Veterans in their transition differ accordingly.

*The ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator ties these support entities together and connects them to the transitioning service member/sponsor pair.*

You, the sponsor, will best be able to support and empower your service member when you are familiar with the resources available in your community. Sponsors should understand the community collaborative, what it consists of and what services each organization can contribute. Sponsors should communicate regularly with the ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator to ensure that you share and update information about these organizations, and about which organization might best serve your service member.

*The sponsor and ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator **connect** the Veteran to the community collaborative- thereby maximizing their efforts and best serving our Veterans.*

**IMPORTANT**

***What should you do if you do not have an ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator and are looking for assistance for your service member/Veteran?***

Through our partnership with America’s Warrior Partnership, use the following link to request assistance. A referral can be made by an ETS-SP team member or the service member/Veteran can do a self referral: <https://www.tfaforms.com/4869063>



Are you seeking assistance from The Network or making a referral for someone else seeking assistance from The Network? Please fill out the information below and a representative will connect with you soon.

I am a: \*

Please select... ▼

Assistance Info

Type of Assistance Needed \*

Please select... ▼

Subject \*

Brief Description of Need

Submit

## B. Other Resources

### *VA Welcome Kit*

The VA Welcome Kit makes it easier for service members, Veterans, family members, caregivers and survivors to understand the many different benefits and services offered by the VA. The Welcome Kit can help guide a service member/Veteran through education, employment, home loans, healthcare or retirement issues. *The VA Welcome Kit includes a handy one-page Quick Start Guide focused on specific topics.*

#### MAIN LINK:

The VA regularly updates the Welcome Kit online as new information becomes available.  
[VA Welcome Kit](#)

#### DOMAIN SPECIFIC RELATED LINKS:

##### *Employment:*

[VA Career and Employment Assistance](#)

##### *Education:*

[VA Education Benefits](#)

[GI Bill Comparison Tool](#)

##### *Housing:*

[VA Housing Benefits](#)

##### *Family & Legal:*

[VA VGLI](#)

##### *Social and Physical:*

[VA Mindfulness APP](#)

##### *Medical:*

[VA Disability](#)

[VA Health care](#)

[VA Records](#)

[VA Vet Centers](#)

[VA Female Veterans](#)



### *Military OneSource*

Military OneSource provides information, resources and support for active-duty, National Guard and reserve service members (regardless of activation status), their families and survivors. Provided at no cost, Military OneSource gives exclusive access to programs, tools, and benefits designed to help ensure service members and their families are mission-ready and able to thrive in both their military and post-military lives.

As a DOD program, Military OneSource offers a wide range of services designed exclusively for the military community. Services include help with relocation, tax support, financial planning, health and wellness coaching, as well as confidential non-medical counseling and specialty consultations for spouse employment, education, adoption, elder care, special needs and more.

#### MAIN LINK:

Military OneSource services are accessible 24/7, service members and family members can call Military OneSource at 800-342-9647 or go to [Military OneSource](#).

#### TOPIC SPECIFIC RELATED LINKS:

[Military Life Cycle](#)

[Family & Relationships](#)

[Moving & Housing](#)

[Financial & Legal](#)

[Education & Employment](#)

[Health & Wellness](#)

[National Guard](#)

## C. Domain Specific Resources

Please find below the most commonly identified areas asking for assistance within each domain from the enrollment form and intake process.

### **General Transition Assistance:**

[DoD Transition Assistance Program](#)

[LinkedIn DoD Military to Civilian Transition Office](#)

### **Employment (most commonly checked areas):**

- Need For Immediate Employment
- Resume and Cover Letter Assistance
- Job Fairs, Networking Opportunities, Corporate Veteran Hiring, and Internships
- Workforce Development Resources

[Department of Labor VETS Program](#)

[CareerOneStop Veteran and Military Transition Center](#)

[USA Jobs - Veterans](#)

[Career Path Decide](#)

[Hiring Our Heroes](#)

[Resume Engine Military Translator](#)

[Recruit Military](#)

[ONet MY Next Move Career Profiler](#)

[VMET \(Verification of Military Experience and Training\)](#)

- Entrepreneurship

[VA Veteran Entrepreneur Portal](#)

[Small Business Administration Veteran Owned Businesses](#)

- Apprenticeships

[DoD Skillbridge Program](#)

[Apprenticeship.GOV](#)

[Hiring Our Heroes Fellowships](#)

- LinkedIn Page Creation

[LinkedIn For Veterans](#)

[LinkedIn Soldier For Life](#)

[LinkedIn Marine For Life \(DC\)](#)

**Education (most commonly checked areas):**

- Using my Active Duty Educational Benefits - GI Bill
- I am Enrolled in School and Don't Have VA Educational Benefits
  - [VA Education Benefits](#)
  - [VA Education and Career Counseling](#)
  - [VA VITAL \(Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership\)](#)
- I would like more information about DoD COOL and Transcripts
  - [COOL Credentialing ARMY](#)
  - [COOL Credentialing MARINES](#)
  - [COOL Credentialing NAVY](#)
  - [COOL Credentialing AIR FORCE](#)
  - [Joint Services Transcript](#)
  - [Air Force Transcript](#)
- I would like more information about College Academic Advisors
- I would like more information about Tutoring and Assistance
- I would like more information about Other Programs and Scholarships
  - [Dept. of Defense Tuition Assistance \(TA\) Decide](#)
  - [College Scorecard](#)
  - [Tutoring with VA Benefits](#)
  - [Military OneSource Education Consultant](#)

**Housing**

- Stable Housing
- Short Term Housing
- Veteran Friendly Resources
- Adaptive Housing
- VA Home Loan / VA Refinancing
  - [VA Housing Assistance](#)
- Homelessness Services
  - [VA Homeless National Call Center](#)
- Other Housing Assistance
  - [Moving-Guide/Retirees-Separatees, Household Goods Transport](#)

**Family & Legal**

- Transitioning Family Needs (Spouse, Children, Extended Family)
  - [Military OneSource Spouse Career Exploration](#)
  - [Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program \(CHIP\)](#)
  - [VA Benefits for Spouses, Dependents, Survivors and Family Care Givers](#)

- ☑ Child Care / Caregiver Support
  - [MilitaryChildCare.com \(DoD website\)](#)
  - [Child Care Aware](#)
- ☑ Life Insurance Plan / VGLI
  - [VA VGLI](#)
- ☑ Exceptional Family Needs / Special Needs Concerns
  - [Military OneSource Exceptional Family Needs](#)
- ☑ Legal Services
  - [American Bar Association Military Assistance](#)
- ☑ Financial Budgeting Assistance
  - [Office of Financial Readiness - USA Learning.GOV](#)
  - [Military Consumer Financial Readiness](#)
  - [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Service Members](#)
- ☑ Transportation Requirements
  - [VA Automobile Allowance Adaptive Equipment](#)
- ☑ Basic Needs (Food, Clothing, etc)
  - [VA Food Insecurity](#)
  - [VA Adaptive Clothing Allowance](#)
- ☑ Other Family Needs
  - [Military OneSource Building Healthy Relationships Consultant](#)

### ***Social and Physical***

- ☑ Classes and Workshops
  - [VA Veteran Training Skills and Tools to Help Users Enhance Aspects of Their Lives](#)
- ☑ Groups that Promote Fitness and Gym Interests
  - [Team Red, White and Blue](#)
- ☑ Volunteer Organizations
  - [AmeriCorps, Volunteer Opportunities](#)
- ☑ Societies and Networking
  - [Soldier For Life](#)
  - [AUSA - Association of the United States Army](#)
  - [The Marine Corps. Association and Foundation](#)
  - [Marine For Life Network](#)
  - [Association of the United States Navy](#)
  - [Air Force Association](#)

- Wellness Retreats and Holistic Options
- Spiritual Opportunities
  - [VA Spiritual and Whole Health Programs](#)
- Other
  - [National Parks Free Access for Veterans and Gold Star Families](#)

**Medical**

- Need to Register with VA
- Currently Enrolled / Registered at VA
  - [DoD Request For Medical Records](#)
- Disability Health and Condition
- Information on Initiating or Upgrading a VA Disability Rating
  - [VA Disability Compensation](#)
- Vet Centers and VSOs
  - [VA Vet Centers](#)
- Health Insurance Concerns
- Health Care Plan
  - [Health Care Coverage Options](#)
- Other Benefits Assistance
  - [InTransitions Coaching Counselor](#)
  - [VA Veterans with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender \(LGBT\)](#)
  - [VA Center For Women Veterans Transition Training](#)

## V. Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

When you begin to work with your transitioning service member, depending on where they are on in their transition timeline, they may have begun their transition assistance program (TAP). This section is here to help you understand the process a transitioning service member will go through (<https://www.dodtap.mil/>).

The Department of Defense Transition Assistance Program (TAP) provides information, tools and training to prepare service members with their military-to-civilian transition. TAP starts no later than 365 days prior to transition for those who are separating or retiring. It is recommended retirees begin the transition process at least two years prior to retirement.

### Components of the TAP curriculum

The mandatory components of TAP are applicable for all service members who have at least 180 continuous days or more on active duty; this includes the National Guard and Reserves.

#### 1. Individualized Initial Counseling

The transition process begins with an Individualized initial counseling between the service member and a TAP counselor. During the IC session, service members complete their personal self-assessment and begin the development of their Individual Transition Plan to identify their unique needs for the transition process and post-transition goals.

#### 2. Pre-separation Counseling

Once the individualized counseling is complete, pre-separation counseling commences. Pre-separation counseling, just like IC, must start no later than 365 days prior to transition. Pre-separation counseling covers by-law information including benefits, entitlements and resources for eligible transitioning service members. Caregivers and spouses are especially encouraged to attend pre-separation counseling with their service member.

#### 3. The DoD Transition Day

The DoD Transition Day follows pre-separation counseling, and is mandatory for transitioning service members. It covers these topics:

- Managing Your Transition gives service members an understanding of the importance of preparing for their transition from military service into the civilian sector and provides an overview of the Transition Assistance Program curriculum. The less obvious topics of transition – such as personal and family transition concerns, the differences in the culture of civilian and military workplaces, transition-related stressors, and the importance of effective communication during the transition process – are introduced. The course concludes with both military and civilian resources that can provide support during and after transition for military personnel and their family members.
- Military Occupational Code Crosswalk demonstrates how to translate military skills, training and experience into civilian credentialing appropriate for civilian jobs. Service members will document their military career experience and skills, translate their military occupation experience to civilian occupations and skills, and identify any gaps in their training and/or experience that need to be filled to meet their career goals.

- Financial Planning for Transition builds on the financial training provided during the military life cycle and helps service members understand how transition will impact their financial situation. Subjects include change in income, taxes, healthcare costs, new expenses and other financial matters. Online tools are used to calculate the military-to-civilian income equivalent and to research the cost of living for at least two geographical locations. Throughout the course, service members have the opportunity to develop or update a spending plan.

#### **4. VA Benefits and Services**

VA Benefits and Services is a one-day interactive briefing that teaches service members about VA benefits and programs based on their needs and where they are in their transition journey. Topics covered include disability benefits and compensation, memorial and burial benefits, education and economic support, housing benefits and health care options, including both physical and emotional health needs.

#### **5. Department of Labor Employment Fundamentals of Career Transition**

The Department of Labor Employment Fundamentals of Career Transition provides an introduction to the tools and resources service members can use to evaluate career options, gain information for civilian employment, and understand the fundamentals of the employment process.

#### **6. Service Member Elected Tracks**

The TAP also includes a service member election of two days of instruction. These include the DOL Employment Track, DOL Vocational Track, DoD Education Track and the Small Business Administration Entrepreneurship Track. Transitioning service members must elect at least one track, but may attend more than one based on their ITP and post-transition goals.

#### **7. Capstone**

The Capstone is the culminating event where commanders verify achievement of career readiness standards and a viable ITP. It must happen no later than 90 days before separation or released from active duty.

TAP schedules can be found here: <https://tapevents.org/>



## VI. ETS-SP Resources

Resources for service members/Veterans, sponsors, ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinators, and others who are interested in ETS-SP, may be found on the library page of our website (<https://etssponsorship.com/library>).

- A. Service Member/Veteran Enrollment Form-Transition Details Section
- B. Smart Goals
- C. Goal Worksheet

## A. Service Member Enrollment Form-Transition Details Section (1 of 2)

Listed below is an excerpt of the transition details section from the service member/Veteran enrollment form. If a service member/Veteran checks any of these items, the ETS-SP transition coordinator will ask follow up questions in the intake phone call. These areas of concern will build the service member/Veteran's Action Plan on the ETS-SP dashboard.

### Employment

Please check any of the applicable topics for assistance:

- Current on active duty, but have job lined up for post-separation
- Need For Immediate Employment
- Resume and Cover Letter Assistance
- Job Fairs, Networking Opportunities, Corporate Veteran Hiring, and Internships
- Workforce Development Resources
- Entrepreneurship
- Apprenticeships
- LinkedIn Page Creation
- Other Employment Assistance

### Education

Please check any of the applicable topics for assistance:

- Using my Active Duty Educational Benefits - GI Bill
- Plan to Go to School and Using other Veteran Educational Benefits
- I am Enrolled in School and Don't Have VA Educational Benefits
- Other Programs and scholarships I would like more information about
- I need to complete my DoD COOL
- College Academic Advisors
- Tutoring and Assistance

### Housing

Please check any of the applicable topics for assistance:

- Stable Housing
- Short Term Housing
- Veteran Friendly Resources
- Adaptive Housing
- VA Home Loan / VA Refinancing
- Homelessness Services
- Other Housing Assistance

## Service Member Enrollment Form-Transition Details Section (2 of 2)

### Family

Please check any of the applicable topics for assistance:

- Transitioning Family Needs (Spouse, Children, Extended Family)
- Child Care / Caregiver Support
- Life Insurance Plan / VGLI
- Exceptional Family Needs /Special Needs Concerns
- Family Activities and Involvement
- Legal Services
- Financial Budgeting Assistance
- Transportation Requirements
- Basic Needs (Food, Clothing, etc.)
- Other Family Needs

### Social and Physical

Please check any of the applicable topics for assistance:

- Classes and Workshops
- Groups that Promote Fitness and Gym Interests
- Volunteer Organizations
- Societies and Networking
- Wellness Retreats and Holistic Options
- Spiritual Opportunities
- Other

### Medical

Please check any of the applicable topics for assistance:

- Need to Register with VA
- Currently Enrolled / Registered at VA
- Disability Health and Condition
- Information on Initiating or Upgrading a VA Disability Rating
- Vet Centers and VSOs
- Health Insurance Concerns
- Health Care Plan
- Disability Rating
- Other Benefits Assistance

## B. Smart Goals

# Smart Goals

SMART is an effective tool that provides the clarity, focus and motivation you need to achieve your goals. It can also improve your ability to reach them by encouraging you to define your objectives and set a completion date. SMART goals are also easy to use by anyone, anywhere, without the need for specialist tools or training.



Specific  
simple  
sensible  
significant

Your goal should be clear and specific, otherwise you won't be able to focus your efforts or feel truly motivated to achieve it.



Measurable  
meaningful  
motivating

It's important to have measurable goals, so that you can track your progress and stay motivated. Assessing progress helps you to stay focused, meet your deadlines, and feel the excitement of getting closer to achieving your goal.



Achievable  
agreed  
attainable

Your goal also needs to be realistic and attainable to be successful. It should stretch your abilities but still remain possible. When you set an achievable goal, you may be able to identify previously overlooked opportunities or resources that can bring you closer to it.



Relevant  
reasonable  
realistic  
resourced  
result based

This step is about ensuring that your goal matters to you, and that it also aligns with other relevant goals. We all need support and assistance in achieving our goals, but it's important to retain control over them.



Time Bound  
time-based,  
time limited  
timely  
time-sensitive

Every goal needs a target date, so that you have a deadline to focus on and something to work toward. This part of the SMART goal criteria helps to prevent everyday tasks from taking priority over your longer-term goals.

## C. Goal Worksheet

This goals worksheet is utilized by sponsors as they partner with their service members/Veterans to develop goals and action plans.

Date:

Domain(s):

Long Term Goal(s):

Short Term Goal #1:

Action Items:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Short Term Goal #2:

Action Items:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

\*Refer to the SMART Goals description to set short- and long-term goals (below).