



Outreach, Transition and Economic Development

Outreach, Transition and Economic Development (OTED) provides a holistic 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 Readiness Pathway (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 and the Office of Personnel Management to carry out the requirements of the Veterans Opportunity to Work 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 and Guidance (PCPG)



Supports 332 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 Service members, survivors, and eligible beneficiaries by increasing awareness of and access to VA benefits and services.

Activities:

153,107 TAP VA Benefits and Services Attendees (in-person and instructor-led virtual)

357,760 TAP VA Touchpoints

119,566 TAP VA Events

193,626 Veterans Contacted by VA Solid Start (VASS)

36,329 Priority Veterans Contacted by VASS

4,358 PCPG (Chap. 36) Participant Program Completions



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Release history

Version & changes	Date
Data as of	09/30/2024

Transition Assistance Program

Transition Assistance Program (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.

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 Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, OTED supported 6,039 in-person and instructor-led virtual VA TAP Benefits and Services courses with 153,107 attendees.
 - 52,898 individuals completed the eLearning online VA Benefits and Services course through the VA Transition Online Learning at tapevents.mil.
- **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 FY 2024, OTED supported 54,002 One-On-One Assistance sessions (combination of in-person, telephone and email) with a total of 57,294 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 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 FY 2024, OTED supported 3,883 in-person and virtual MLC modules with 21,282 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 Participant Assessment (TAPA). TAPA 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. For FY 2024, VA’s cumulative satisfaction score was 96.3%. Satisfaction met or exceeded the goal of 95.0% on all 5 questions.

Transition Assistance Participant Assessment, FY 2024

Questions	Achieved	Goal
Facilitators were knowledgeable	97.0%	95.0%
Facilitators interacted well with participants	96.2%	95.0%
Learning resources (notes, handouts, AV, materials) were useful	96.0%	95.0%
I will use what I learned in module in my transition planning	97.1%	95.0%
The module enhanced my confidence in transition planning	95.0%	95.0%
Overall Satisfaction	96.3%	95.0%

VA Solid Start

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, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) launched the VA Solid Start (VASS) 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.

VASS 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 VASS program has achieved great success. In FY 2024, VASS successfully connected with 193,626 recently separated Veterans, representing a 77.1% successful connection rate, far exceeding the 55% goal.

VASS Services:

- VASS addresses transition-related challenges through proactive outreach to encourage Veterans to access and use earned benefits as tools for success during the first year of separation.
- VASS representatives call 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, Space Force, 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.
- VASS prioritizes calls to Veterans meeting certain risk factors within the last year of their active-duty service, helping to lower the barrier to accessing high quality VA mental health care treatment. In FY 2024, VASS successfully connected with 36,329 priority Veterans, representing a 92.9% successful connection rate.
- VASS 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 FY 2024, VASS successfully connected 6 Veterans in crisis to the VCL for additional care and support.
- VASS utilizes proactive messaging via email prior to each VASS engagement to provide Veterans with information on the program, including links to resources and the VASS 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 VCL and the VBA National Contact Center, that the Veteran may need to access prior to the VASS call.
- VASS 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 FY 2024, 8,636 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. In FY 2021, PCPG enhanced services to include increased resume support and easier access to PCPG resources.

PCPG career and education counseling services include:

- Resume 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 & Employment (VR&E) and Education Service (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 VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) sites.

PCPG expanded 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. In addition, through a robust marketing plan, PCPG expanded engagement at non-VSOC colleges and universities with high numbers of student Veterans and at military installations with a high number of transitioning Service members.



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Quick Reference

Outreach, Transition and Economic Development (OTED) Activities FY 2024

Transition Assistance Program Attendance and Events

TAP Events	Attendance	Events
One-On-One Assistance	57,294	54,002
VA Benefits and Services	206,005	58,937
Installation Engagement	67,475	1,921
Military Life Cycle (MLC)	21,282	3,883
Women's Health Transition Training	143	143
Capstone	5,561	680
Grand Total	357,760	119,566

Figures in this table include instructor-led, virtual instructor-led courses and VA Transition Online Learning at tapevents.mil. Installation Engagements include Yellow Ribbon events.

TAP Attendance for One-On-One Assistance Events, by Region, FY2024

Region	Attendance	Share of Total Attendance
Northeast Region 1	6,757	12%
Southeast Region 2	10,639	19%
Central Region 3	4,954	9%
Midwest Region 4	6,478	11%
Southwest Region 5	6,585	11%
Northwest Region 6	5,393	9%
West Region 7	5,453	10%
Europe Region 8	5,749	10%
Asia Region 9	5,286	9%



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One-On-One Assistance Event Topics Reported, FY2024

Benefit Topic ¹	Number of Events	Percentage
Disability Compensation	18,510	34.3%
Education Benefits	14,809	27.4%
Health Benefits	11,340	21.0%
Veteran Readiness and Employment	5,056	9.4%
Home Loan Guaranty	4,742	8.8%
VA Life Insurance	3,230	6.0%
Personalized Career Planning and Guidance	2,604	4.8%
Vocational Benefits	139	0.3%
Veterans Group Life Insurance	60	0.1%

VA Solid Start Contact

VA Solid Start Eligible Veterans Served

Beneficiary Type	Total
Eligible Veterans	251,265
Number of Eligible Veterans Successfully Contacted	193,626
Eligible Veterans Successful Contact Rate	77.1%

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

¹ Figures add to more than 100% because an assistance session could cover multiple topics.



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VA Solid Start Eligible Priority Veterans Served

Beneficiary Type	Total
Eligible Priority Veterans	39,110
Number of Eligible Priority Veterans Successfully Contacted	36,329
Eligible Priority Veterans Successful Contact Rate	92.9%

PCPG Participant Program Completions

FY 2024 PCPG (Chapter 36) Cases

Case Status	Number
Participant Program Completions	4,358
Average Days to Complete (among Eligible Beneficiaries Counseled) ²	34.6

² Starting with the FY 2024 Annual Benefits Report, Average Days to Complete measures the time it takes PCPG counselors to complete counseling services. Annual Benefits Reports prior to FY 2024 measured the time it took VA to process an application before sending it to PCPG counselors.



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VA TAP Coverage Model



Contact Information

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

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