

Army launches new online Retirement Planning Toolkit!

By Mark E. Overberg, Director, Army Retirement Services

The United States Army, the Department of Defense's leader in military retirement planning, just added another potent weapon to its arsenal of retirement planning tools.

Not satisfied with just the annual U.S. Army Retirement Planning Guide, the quarterly *Change of Mission* retirement planning newsletter, the monthly retirement planning seminars for active duty, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve Soldiers taught by Army-certified retirement services officers, Army Retirement Services recently launched the online [Army Retirement Planning Toolkit](#).

Welcome to the journey to military retirement.

The process of planning for retirement should begin as close as possible to 36 months before your official retirement date. That seems like a long time, but it will be gone before you know it; just ask anyone who has recently retired.

The retirement planning process requires much thought, introspection, research of unfamiliar subjects, and conversation with immediate family members. Remember that you are not alone in this; your family is retiring too.

The Toolkit's menu guides you through your last 36 months in uniform in six-month increments. Each increment lists the major decisions and recommends the subjects you should research and consider. The site provides

- A section for spouses that lists the benefits and specialized websites that will assist them in their transition.
- Links to the key resources that will help you make decisions, such as the MyArmyBenefits website with its personalized retirement calculator and the TRICARE Plan Finder.
- Other links will connect you to the service providers who will advise you in their areas of expertise, such as your retirement services officer and the transition assistance program counselors.

The new [Army Retirement Planning Toolkit](#) is on the Soldier for Life website where you'll also find the [Army Retirement Services homepage](#) with many of the retirement planning resources you'll want to explore when you begin your journey.

Remember that "**Retirement is a process, not an event!**"



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The top 5 things to know as a drilling Army National Guard or Army Reserve Soldier BEFORE you receive your 20-year letter

1. Know who your Retirement Services Officer is. (See the [Soldier for Life website](#))
2. Attend your RSO's retirement planning brief between your 18th and 20th years of service. (It's required; see below.)
3. Check, and double check, your retirement points history statement!
4. Understand your options when you receive your Notification of Eligibility for Retired Pay, commonly called the "20-year letter."
5. Understand the Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan (RCSBP) and the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP). You **MUST** make an RCSBP decision within 90 days of receiving your 20-year letter!



Did you know you **only have 90 days** after receiving your 20-year letter to make your RCSBP decision?

If you don't return the decision form, you'll receive full coverage for all your eligible dependents on the date of the letter . . . **by law**. Read the RCSBP brief and watch the videos now on the [Soldier for Life website](#)!



In case you missed it!

Highlights from January's *Change of Mission*

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- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What courses must I take to prepare for my military retirement? • The Uniformed Services Former Spouse Protection Act and you | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options for your TSP when you retire • The SBP decision consideration series: Col. Andrews • Discovering your next mission through mentorship • The Career Skills Program: a powerful transition resource |
|--|--|

Read it in the [Change of Mission Archives](#)!

Change of Mission is the Army's official newsletter for Soldiers in all three components with 17 or more years of service. *Change of Mission* educates Soldiers about the retirement process, the decisions they and their families will make leading up to and immediately after their retirements, how their benefits will change when they retire, and why the Army wants them to be active Soldiers for Life in retirement.

Change of Mission is published as a quarterly electronic newsletter in accordance with Army Regulation 600-8-7. Past editions are available for free downloading from <https://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement/change-of-mission>.

Inquiries and comments about *Change of Mission* should be sent to Army Retirement Services, Attention: *Change of Mission* Editor, 251 18th Street South, Suite 210, Arlington, VA 22202-3531 or usarmy.pentagon.hqda-dcs-g-1.mbx.change-of-mission@army.mil. Direct all other questions to the retirement services officers listed on the [Army Retirement Services website](#).

Prior to using or reprinting any portion of *Change of Mission*, please contact the [editor](#).

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10 principles for a military retirement



1. Retirement is a process, not an event. If you think of retirement as a ceremony, you're already in trouble. Retirement is also NOT just outprocessing.

2. Start early. Don't underestimate the amount of time and commitment required. Start 36 months before you plan to retire. See Chapter 2 of the [U.S. Army Retirement Planning Guide](#) or the [U.S. Army Retirement Planning Toolkit](#) on the Soldier for Life website for the 36-month timeline.

3. Do your homework. Don't assume you know what to do or when to do it. Put in the time if you want to succeed.

4. Ask for help. From mentors, peers, retirement services officers, retired service members, transition assistance program personnel, benefits specialists, state veterans officials, Department of Veterans Affairs personnel, TRICARE advisors, etc.

5. Don't go it alone at home. Involve your spouse and family in the planning early and often.

6. Make a timeline of required tasks and stick to it. Update it periodically.

7. Make a financial plan. Create a transition account for a possible employment gap, for new clothing, for much higher taxes, for life insurance and SBP.

8. Know the available resources. [U.S. Army Retirement Planning Guide](#), [U.S. Army Retirement Planning Toolkit](#), [U.S. Army Retirement Planning Seminar](#), [Army Retirement Services Officers](#), the [Soldier for Life website](#), the [MyArmyBenefits website and calculators](#), the [Army Transition Assistance Program](#) and counselors, the VA, TRICARE, VSOs, transportation office, etc.

9. Network, network, network. If you plan to work in retirement, begin networking early. When determining what you want to do, what industry you want to do it in, and finding employment there, networking is critical.

10. Expect psycho-social changes. You're leaving a close knit, structured environment that isn't profit-based where you have many friends and people who believe and see the world as you do for something completely different. Find a purpose, not just a job.

The 1405 date and its impact on active duty retired pay calculations

By the MyArmyBenefits Staff

A close estimation of retired pay is an important part of retirement planning. It assists in the creation of a budget for post-retirement life and helps determine the additional income needed to maintain a desired standard of living prior to salary negotiations for post-retirement employment. For Soldiers who are retiring with an active service retirement with 20 or more years, or retiring with a physical disability retirement, an essential data element needed to calculate the best estimate of retired pay is the 1405 date.

What is the 1405 date?

The term "1405 date" comes from Title 10, US Code, Chapter 71 (titled "Computation of Retired Pay"), Section 1405 (titled "Years of Service"). It is the Basic Active Service Date (BASD) plus inactive duty service credit permitted by law. The 1405 date is a moving target based on time spent on active duty and time spent as a traditional drilling Soldier. Many regular Army Soldiers have prior service in the Reserve Components, either in the Army or other branches of service, that can count towards the amount of retired pay. Service credited under 1405 time cannot be used in order to reach 20 years of active federal service. During 1405 time, the Soldier accumulates points for Inactive Duty Training (IDT) – for example participation in drill, annual training, or special circumstances such as military funeral details. Credit for 1405 time is only used to determine the retired pay percentage multiplier after a Soldier reaches 20 years of service.

Where can I get a close estimate of my retired pay?

The [MyArmyBenefits retirement calculator](#) provides a great way to estimate retired pay for both regular and Reserve Component Soldiers. After a Soldier logs in using a CAC

or DS Logon, the calculator uses the Soldier's military and personal data to render a retirement estimate. The process is simple, user friendly, and accurate. The 1405 date is not included in the personal data that populates the calculator from the Integrated Total Army Personnel Database (ITAPDB). This is because the 1405 date determination is not done by personnel specialists until just before retirement and therefore not available in ITAPDB for the calculator to access and pre-populate. For it to apply to the MyArmyBenefits retired pay projection, Soldiers must manually estimate the 1405 date and enter it in the calculator.

What if I don't include a 1405 date in the calculation?

The inclusion of the 1405 date in the retired pay calculation allows for the greatest level of accuracy in the estimate. If the information is not filled in, the calculator assumes there is no 1405 time and performs the retired pay calculation without its inclusion. This will result in a less accurate estimate of retired pay.

How do I estimate my 1405 date?

A Soldier's 1405 time is derived by counting each point for IDT as one day (total cannot exceed the maximum allowable total points for any year) and dividing that number by 360. This will give you the number of years, months, and days of 1405 time. For example, 685 points/days divided by 360 equals 1.90278 (or, 1 year plus some remaining months). To calculate the remaining months, multiply .90278 by 12 months, which equals 10.834 (or 10 months plus some remaining days). Then calculate the remaining days by multiplying .834 by 30 (25 days). Subtract this time from your BASD to get your 1405 date. In the above example, 1 year, 10 months, and 25 days is subtracted to get the adjusted BASD. After estimating your adjusted BASD, enter it in the "1405 date" field in the [MyArmyBenefits retirement calculator](#). Do not enter IDT points. Now you can calculate the estimated retired pay amount.

Remember, to create a useful retired pay estimate in the [MyArmyBenefits calculator](#) be sure to calculate and enter your 1405 time for accuracy. Soldiers will need to provide documentation of Reserve Component points in order to get credit for 1405 time. For NG Soldiers, the Annual Points Statement can be provided by the state retirement services officer. Army Reserve Soldiers should log into their record in the HRC record portal and look for the DA Form 5016. Those that were in the Reserve Component of another branch of service should contact that branch. With the proper documentation, an estimated retired pay calculation that includes 1405 time increases the retired pay amount. Use [MyArmyBenefits](#) as a retirement planning tool and be sure to include 1405 time!



POST SERVICE MISSIONS: WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR THE ARMY

WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN A LOCAL RETIREE COUNCIL WHEN YOU RETIRE FROM THE ARMY



Army leaders need Retired Soldiers. They know this. The leadership challenge is how to listen to all one million Retired Soldiers. That's where the Retired Soldier council program comes in. Army policy for this program is contained in Army Regulation 600-8-7, Retirement Services Program.

Army leaders recognize that Retired Soldiers can be a force multiplier and perform duties where they live that Soldiers in uniform don't have the connections, skills, proximity or time to perform. They also recognize that Retired Soldiers have a different perspective and different needs than currently-serving Soldiers. These retired Soldiers for Life are the Army's largest demographic – its fourth component, so to speak.

If they are still interested in being an active member of the Army team, newly Retired Soldiers should start with the local "retiree council." We use the term "retiree" for these councils because, at the installation level, the councils are "purple." These councils include retirees from all military services even though they advise the local Army leadership, normally one of 53 Army garrison commanders charged with providing services and information to Retired Soldiers in a geographic area defined in the regulation.

The Adjutant General of West Virginia stood up the first Army National Guard-sponsored retiree council in 2020. So far, there are no Army Reserve Readiness Division retiree councils.

The objectives of the Retired Soldier council program are to:

- Provide advice and recommendations regarding vital

issues and concerns of Retired Soldiers, surviving spouses, and their families

- Provide an assessment of how current Army programs and initiatives and proposals for new laws and policies may affect the retired community
- Strengthen communications between the Regular Army, the Army National Guard, the Army Reserve, and the retired community
- Encourage Retired Soldiers to remain active Soldiers for Life, who strive to help veterans find employment, inspire the next generation to join the military, and inspire Americans to trust and support the military

The installation councils:

- Have officer and enlisted co-chairpersons
- May include members of all services
- Are governed by procedures in a charter approved every two years by the commander they advise
- Meet with the local commander they advise at least twice per year to discuss issues of concern to Retired Soldiers and how Retired Soldiers can support the command
- Include subordinate area councils, as needed, in geographically remote areas
- Assist the Retirement Services Officer (RSO) in planning and executing the annual Retiree Appreciation Day
- Assist the RSO with publishing the local annual retiree newsletter
- Nominate issues of concern to be discussed by the Army Chief of Staff's Retired Soldier Council
- Nominate local council members for membership on the Army Chief of Staff's Retired Soldier Council

To find your local retiree council, [contact the RSO for that installation.](#)

Navigate the sunset of your career while there is still light and time



RETIREMENT LESSONS LEARNED

Transitioning during a global pandemic

By Command Sgt. Maj. Wardell Jefferson, U.S. Army, Retired

Transitioning from the Army can be a very challenging and stressful event. After being so accustomed to a certain way of life, you now must find your passion and purpose for the next chapter. In this article, I will share some of the things that helped me as well as some things to look out for.

When I was approaching my transition time, I planned it out so that I would set myself up for success. My plan involved me starting 24 months out from my retirement date. I had heard way too often, that this was crucial to a successful transition. I shared this plan with a couple of people that I worked with just prior to going on leave for Christmas break in 2019.

I went off to enjoy the holiday season with family and friends for the first time in several years. While enjoying this time, I began to reflect on life. I had missed times like this for so many years while serving our great nation, and I didn't want to miss them anymore.

Upon my return to the office after the New Year, I spoke with my boss and the Sergeant Major of the Army and informed them that I planned to retire in 2021 as opposed to 2022. Although they both would have liked to see me stay the additional year, they supported my decision.

At this point, I didn't really realize the self-inflicted stress that I had placed on myself. The perfect plan that I had developed, now had to be accomplished in 12 months' time instead of the 24 that I had planned for.

Besides the condensed timeline, I had to deal with the start of a global pandemic. My stress level was rising, and I was hearing horror stories from service members claiming that there weren't any transition services available. I found this to be a little unrealistic. I mean, how would the Army not adapt and take care of Soldiers and families who were departing the service?

I began to make calls and reach out to people who I knew that worked in the transition space. I found that the transition classes were being conducted virtually, so I signed up and started my journey.

During my transition classes, I received a lot of information and resources. Early on, I realized why we have always been told to start early. There are so many resources, you want to give yourself time to use them and not feel rushed. I recommend you allocate enough time to take transition

classes twice.

Along with the classes, I began to network on LinkedIn and at local networking events. Through this networking, I met several veterans who had traveled this path before me. They became my mentors and remain in my circle today. Transitioning was something that I never had to do, and I needed help.

I was lucky enough to position myself to apply for and be selected for an internship. This led to my first post service employment. Some would say I achieved success and accomplished the mission. Not exactly; I am still figuring things out in the civilian sector as I had only known government for the past 32 years. However, I am blessed to land with an amazing organization and work with some great people.

One thing to keep in mind is that transition is not only about out-processing and finding a job. Transition involves so much more. You must research things such as life insurance, medical insurance, and submitting a VA claim for any medical issues that you may have developed while serving. There is just a plethora of things to think about when transitioning.

After my retirement and landing my first post service job, I decided to relocate. As a result of my decision to relocate, I had to start my job search again. Not that I had to work, but I feel that I am still young and have a lot to offer. This leads me to a piece of advice that I consider very important. Never stop networking. As a result of my networking, an organization reached out to me before I even started my job search. I landed the perfect job, and it aligns perfectly with my plan.

There is a lot of work that must be done in order to have a successful transition. It is not about your rank or position when you take off that uniform. On the job front, it is about what you bring to the table through your knowledge, skills, and abilities. But more importantly, it is about you allowing yourself the proper time to take advantage of all the resources our Army has to offer.

The sooner you start, the better prepared you will be. Make your transition a family affair and include your family in the decision-making process because it affects them as well.

(Continued on page 7)

Army Transition Assistance Program celebrates its 30th anniversary with a name change

FORT KNOX, Ky. — In celebration of the Army Transition Assistance Program's 30th anniversary, the Army's Human Resources Command (HRC) developed and implemented several strategic initiatives, including a name change and a revised program identity.

On Oct. 26, 2020, the Army G-1 approved the name change of the Army's transition assistance program from the Soldier for Life - Transition Assistance Program to the Army Transition Assistance Program (TAP).

The strategic objectives of the name change included raising awareness of TAP's successes; increasing support for and participation in the program; inspiring leaders, clients, and team members through education; and repositioning TAP to differentiate itself from other transition programs.

The Army is the only service that provides a [24/7 Virtual Center](#), staffed with career counselors and certified financial planners, which Soldiers can access via telephone or computer; anyone who is eligible for TAP can utilize this service. These services are especially beneficial for Soldiers who are not located near a brick-and-mortar center. All transition requirements are available through the Virtual Center, and Soldiers can have one-on-one counseling sessions, with no appointment needed. TAP provides Soldiers



with the necessary knowledge, skills, and self-confidence for a successful transition to civilian life.

With more than 30 years of experience, TAP has a high level of credibility with transitioning Soldiers. TAP is, and will remain, a commander's program. Commanders benefit from these changes due to the customized methods which better prepare Soldiers for transition, and allow less time away from mission requirements. Additionally, the early start mandate helps to spread out Soldiers' requirements, thus reducing the impact of their absences. This program allows Soldiers to have greater control over their transition with more time to assess their readiness, identify their goals, and learn what's required to reach them.

HRC rebranded the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) on a foundation that places the well-being and transition of Soldiers above all else. As the program's national director, Walter M. Herd stated, "TAP fulfills a moral obligation to prepare approximately 100,000 Soldiers annually for the transition to civilian life, and assists them in achieving their individual transition goals." TAP has continuously evolved over the past 30 years. We hope to continue to serve those who first served us, for many more years to come.

"Four steps to achievement: Plan purposefully. Prepare prayerfully. Proceed positively. Pursue persistently." – William A. Ward (1921-1994), American motivational writer

(Continued from page 6)

Transitioning can have an emotional toll on everyone involved and it is important to keep open lines of communication.

Your transition will not stop when you land your first job. I have met many veterans who have been out for several years and are still in transition. Remember what you learned as you conduct your transition and pay it forward to those who will come after you. You are a Soldier for Life and there is help to ensure you are successful in your next chapter.

Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret) Wardell Jefferson, served in the U.S. Army for 32 years as a human resources professional. He served in at all levels of leadership before retiring from the Army G-1 as the G-1 SGM for the Army. Upon transitioning to a Soldier For Life, Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret) Jefferson, joined Corporate America where he is currently, a Global Process Manager for a Global leader in the food industry.





MyArmyBenefits

The U.S. Army official benefits website



Ask Joe: Your benefits guru

Dear Joe,

I plan to retire and live in Switzerland. My home of record is New Jersey. Will I have to pay state taxes there?

Constantine in Bayonne

Dear Constantine,

I'll be honest with you: I don't really have the answer to this question because it is just too complex. You need to contact a tax professional for help, but I can give you some general information to get you started. Every state interprets and enforces their tax laws with differing definitions of who qualifies as a resident.

Some states don't have a personal income tax. Other states require you to pay state taxes on income earned worldwide. If you cannot prove that you were a resident in another state or out of the country, you may be required to pay back taxes for the missing tax years plus penalties and interest.

Another option is to establish residency in a state without personal income tax before moving abroad. View the states that do not have personal income tax in this [MyArmyBenefits article](#).

[MyArmyBenefits State Fact Sheets](#) offer some tax information, but it is always a good idea to contact a qualified tax preparer for the state in question as misunderstanding state tax requirements can be costly. Good luck!

Joe

Dear Joe,

I'm an E-7 and have been a member of the Ohio Army National Guard for six years with an additional 12 years of active duty service as an infantryman behind me. My wife and I want to do it right and start planning for our retirement while we're ahead of the game. We both like the outdoors and would like to end up in Alaska, but the cost of living is high there, and I don't know if that makes sense. Joe, can you help us make up our minds?

Walter and Emily in Dayton

Dear Walter and Emily,

It's a good thing you're looking ahead. Like a lot of things in life, poor retirement planning may result in poor outcomes.

The cost of living in Alaska is high for many things, but many people make budget adjustments just to live there. Alaska is a military-friendly state and offers benefits that help take the sting out of the high cost of living. For example, Alaskans pay no state income tax, veterans with 50% or more VA disability get 100% property tax relief, and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources offers resident veterans a once-in-a-lifetime discount of 25% off the price on the purchase of state land. Additionally, the Alaska Permanent Fund pays dividends annually to all legal Alaska residents – \$1,114 per person in 2021. For service members eligible for retirement that have a minimum of five years in the Alaska National Guard, the state will pay \$100 per month for each month of satisfactory Alaska Guard service upon separation. To be eligible, you must have at least 20 years of service combined from National Guard service in any state, active military service, and/or Reserve Component service.

To find out more about these and other benefits check out the [MyArmyBenefits Alaska State Fact Sheet](#) and you may find it makes sense to head there sooner rather than later.

Joe

The Survivor Benefit Plan decision series: Sgt. 1st Class Bailey

By Patty Cruz, Army Survivor Benefit Plan Program Manager

In the previous edition of *Change of Mission*, we discussed that SBP and life insurance are important aspects of your family's financial future. For some, one or the other may be appropriate. For others, both or neither makes more sense. Whatever the decision, you must consider your unique family situation.



We will feature different scenarios in future editions that will highlight some key considerations in making your decision.

 Sgt. 1st Class Bailey	Member: 42 yrs old Location: San Antonio, Texas Expected Household Income: \$115,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Expected salary after retirement: \$80,000- Retired pay w/VA disability comp: \$35,000 Family: Single with 2 children (ages 14, 16) Home: Single family home with a mortgage Expected VA Disability Rating: 30 percent	Near-term Life Events Military Retirement: Current Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work full-time after retirement• Contribute max to personal retirement accounts• 529 plan for each child
Financial Snapshot Expenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mortgage• Car payments• Children's activities Retirement Accounts: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$50,000• Both contributing the yearly max Other Assets: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 529 Plans	The Key Financial Question In the event of Sgt. 1st Class Bailey's death, will the household income and other assets, after the loss of the salary (\$80,000) plus retired pay and VA compensation (\$35,000), be sufficient to cover the expenses for the two children with their new guardian while they are still minors or enough as adults while they are attending school full-time? If not, are the 529s and the retirement account enough to cover the expenses?	
<p style="text-align: center;">Things for Sgt. 1st Class Bailey to consider</p> <p>o Life Insurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shop around. It may be difficult to find a plan with an affordable rate because of physical disabilities• Not inflation protected. May not be as much of a factor if intended to cover expenses in the short term (funeral cost, expenses for 1-5 years) vs long term.• How much is needed? <p>o Dependency and Indemnity Compensation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not guaranteed• Death must be service connected• The amount is inflation protected by COLA increases• No premiums to pay <p>o Retirement Accounts and other Assets</p> <p>Are the other assets enough to cover the annual expenses? If the children inherit the money in the retirement accounts, they will need to draw it within 10 years from age of maturity and pay taxes depending on their income when they draw it.</p> <p>o Survivor Benefit Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The max benefit is 55% of the full retired pay to be divided equally between the two children as long as they are eligible. The annuity will stop for a child when they marry or age out at 18, or 22 if a full-time student. The only exception is that if a child becomes incapacitated while still eligible, they will receive the annuity for life as long as they remain unmarried and incapacitated.• Is it needed?• Is this enough?• If not, what are the options to cover the gap?• Premiums are not influenced by disability and are only paid when there is an eligible child. Premiums for child SBP coverage is relatively low.• Inflation protected – annuity with COLA increases		

These key considerations will start Sgt. 1st Class Bailey's research and drive a conversation about the family's future financial security.

Check out some helpful tools on the [DoD Actuary webpage](#) and speak with a no-fee [Department of Defense Personal Financial Counselor](#) to help you make the best decision for your family.

What you need to know after retirement: your retired pay statements

By the Defense Finance and Accounting Center – Cleveland

You are used to seeing a Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) when it's almost payday. Once you begin receiving retired pay, you will see a Retiree Account Statement (RAS), which is the equivalent of an LES for those receiving military retired pay.

Your Retiree Account Statements will be available to view and download from myPay when your first retired pay is issued and then each month a few days prior to payday.

When your retired pay account is first established and your first payment issued, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) will mail you a welcome letter with a breakdown of your pay and deductions. However, depending on your first pay date, you could see your pay deposited in your bank account before your letter gets there. You may also see your first RAS in myPay before you get your letter in the mail.

After that first RAS, if you set the preferences in your myPay account to receive statements via postal mail, you will only receive a mailed monthly RAS if your pay changes. You will also receive a mailed RAS each January with your tax statement. However, your pay statements are available each month in myPay to view and download.

Changes in your pay may happen for a number of reasons. It might be because of a change in an allotment that alters your net pay, or an annual cost of living adjustment that increases your gross pay.

Retired Pay Paydays

Retired Pay is paid monthly, on the first day of the month, unless that day is a weekend or holiday. In that case, it is paid on the last business day of the prior month. For example, if May 1 is a Sunday, payday will be Friday, April 29.

Tax Statements

After you start receiving retired pay, your annual tax statement will be an IRS 1099-R instead of a W-2. Your annual 1099-R will be available in myPay to view and download, usually in mid-to-late December.

If you have the preferences in your myPay account set to receive statements via postal mail, those statements are mailed no later than January 31 of each year, along with your December RAS.



Add a personal email to myPay now

While you're thinking ahead to retirement, go ahead and put your personal email address in myPay now.

You can use myPay to update many elements of your retired pay account in the future. Your Retiree Account Statements are also available to view, print or download from myPay. Also, DFAS and the Army can send you important news and information via email once you retire if you have a personal email address in myPay.

Remember, when you retire, you will no longer have access to myPay through a common access card (CAC), unless you become a Department of Defense civilian employee. If you have a personal email in myPay and you need a new myPay password, DFAS can send it to you quickly and easily via your personal email.



myPay After Retirement

For Soldiers on active duty who are transitioning with retired pay, you will see a new Retired Soldier myPay account around the same time your first retired pay is deposited. In some cases, your new retired pay myPay account will be available prior to your first deposit, and in some cases, it will not be available until after. When your new Retired Soldier myPay account is activated, you will see it as an additional choice of accounts to view after you log in to myPay. You can use the same username and password to log in to myPay after you retire.

We have great news for Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers who transition into the gray area prior to the age when they can receive retired pay! DFAS created a new kind of myPay account especially for Gray Area Retirees. This account will help you stay connected to important news and updates between the time you transition to the gray area and the date you are eligible to receive retired pay. You can use the same username and password to log in to myPay you use before you transition. Find out more about the [new Gray Area Retiree myPay accounts](#).



Soldiers for Life can grow their business with the Exchange

By Tom Shull, Army & Air Force Exchange Service Director/CEO

Serving takes courage, quick thinking and perseverance—qualities that make Soldiers for Life uniquely suited to entrepreneurship as they transition from active military service.

The Exchange is recruiting small businesses owned by veterans and retirees to help execute its 126-year mission to serve those who serve.

The Exchange is the Department of Defense's largest retailer, serving approximately 33.5 million Soldiers, Airmen, Guardians, retirees, veterans, military family members, and DoD and Coast Guard civilians at military installations worldwide and online at ShopMyExchange.com.

The Exchange can help veteran business owners reach these shoppers and grow their brands, offering a proven environment for testing new products; a welcoming culture for entrepreneurs; and flexible leases, fees and formats. Models offered by the Exchange include mall kiosks, micro markets, storefronts and e-commerce—all strong avenues for maximizing visibility in trusted



PX locations and at ShopMyExchange.com.

Best of all, doing business with the Exchange allows veteran entrepreneurs to stay connected with the military community and play a critical role in the Exchange's enduring mission to enhance the quality of life for Soldiers and military families.

Retail wholesale and non-retail procurement businesses, long- and short-term concessions, and vending and restaurant providers can learn more by visiting the [Exchange website](#). We look forward to helping more veteran entrepreneurs grow their businesses and make military communities better for those who serve.

Soldier For Life!

Tom Shull, a former infantry company commander, served as Military Assistant to Robert C. McFarlane, National Security Advisor to President Reagan. Currently, he is the Army & Air Force Exchange Service's Director/CEO and has served as CEO for retail and consumer packaged goods companies.

JROTC could be your future! There are over 500 instructor vacancies!

A review of the [U.S. Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps](#)' website on April 11 showed there were 505 instructor vacancies in 51 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. Vacancies exist for officers, warrant officers, and noncommissioned officers.

Maybe JROTC could be your next step after retiring. The mission statement for Retired Soldiers is to "Hire & Inspire." Retired Soldiers inspire Americans to understand the military and inspire our youth to join as we did. JROTC's mission is "To Motivate Young People to be Better Citizens."

Check out the [vacancy list](#). Maybe there is a vacancy where you want to retire.



[Instructor Vacancy List](#)

How to set up an individualized or nontraditional CSP

By Col. Joseph Ricker

I am a retiring colonel in the Army Reserve's Active Guard Reserve Program, who is currently participating in the Army Career Skills Program (CSP). I'm finding a new passion.

I commissioned into the Army in May 1992, after graduating with a law enforcement degree from a university in rural Illinois. I was initially assigned to the Army Reserve as a traditional, drilling Army Reservist. I got married and took a few jobs in law enforcement. Finally, a mentor encouraged me to apply for Active Guard Reserve in October 1997.

I am now retiring as a skilled logistics officer, with a few deployments under my belt, who is trying to decide what to do next. I do not want to use my law enforcement degree – that passion is gone. Everyone tells me to go to Amazon or Microsoft because I have IT experience too. But I want a bit more freedom and control these days than corporate America provides.

In 2015, I decided that my passion was probably in farming, maybe producing something for my family and my community. I like the idea of making my own decisions that directly affect the mission being accomplished. Unfortunately, I had no idea how to be a farmer.

I attended a few agriculture workshops near my installation conducted by a non-profit organization called AgrAbility. AgrAbility's mission supports special populations in agriculture, including disabled, African American, Native American, Hispanic, veterans and beginning farmers. After purchasing a house with some land, then moving again with the Army, I reached my mandatory retirement date (MRD). I envisioned returning to my farm.

While attending the Soldier for Life - Transition Assistance Program (now called Army TAP), I learned about the Department of Defense SkillBridge program, and became enamored with non-traditional CSP opportunities.

I reached out to my regional CSP Coordinator, who was outstanding and supportive. She told me "If it was not illegal, immoral or unethical that she would approve it." She added that, "It is an opportunity to explore what you might want to do, and there is no commitment to getting a job. Also, the Army owes you this opportunity after 30 years." She convinced me to investigate farming opportunities. She said the approval process was super simple. I requested the 3-page program document from AgrAbility, got my chain of command's permission, and a legal review by the CSP. The application and approval process was completed in a week. I reached out to AgrAbility, who quickly reviewed and agreed to help me as a retiring veteran with a passion for farming who wants to help retiring veterans who also have a passion for agriculture.

So how is it going?

I have been in the CSP for a little less than two months now. I have reached out and helped over 15 veterans in their

farming endeavors. I provided guidance on using some of the TAP benefits, like the Small Business Administration's [Boots to Business](#), for business plan development and explained veteran preference for some United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs. I've attended several farm shows to support AgrAbility's mission and to gather more ideas about what I want to do when I retire in a few months. Soon, I will train on a farm, at an orchard, and at a beekeeping business. I was surprised to learn that I can return to my own farm on administrative absence during the program.

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Col. Joseph Ricker and Col. (Ret) Cindy Chastain, the Veterans Outreach Coordinator for the National AgrAbility Project

Retiring from Service? Take advantage of your FEDVIP enrollment period

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is proud to welcome retiring members of the uniformed services to the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP).

Sponsored by OPM, FEDVIP is a voluntary, enrollee-pay-all dental and vision insurance program. It replaced the former TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP). In general, retired uniformed service members, their families, and survivors are eligible for FEDVIP dental coverage and, if enrolled in a TRICARE health plan, FEDVIP vision coverage. Please note: Opportunities to enroll outside of open season are limited.

Retiring uniformed service members are considered newly eligible for FEDVIP. This includes Retired Reserve members who are age 60 and older and under age 60 (gray area reservists) not yet receiving retired pay.

If you're retiring from the uniformed services, you have a 91-day enrollment window to enroll in a FEDVIP dental and/or vision plan. You may enroll between 31 days prior to your military retirement date and 60 days following. It's important to remember, enrollment is not automatic. If you choose to enroll in FEDVIP, you must enroll prior to your military retirement date to prevent a gap in dental coverage between your active duty or reserve dental plan and your FEDVIP plan. If you do not enroll within 60 days after your retirement date, you must wait until the next open season.

FEDVIP is popular among the more than 3.5 million people already enrolled in the program, giving the program high marks for quality and value. With 12 dental and 5 vision carriers to choose from, FEDVIP offers great flexibility when selecting the right coverage for you and your family, such as:

- regional dental plans as well as nationwide dental and vision plans with international coverage
- most plans feature both high and standard options
- a choice between three enrollment types: self, self plus one, or self and family



To familiarize yourself with the program, explore BENEFEDS.com/military. BENEFEDS is the secure online portal to enroll in FEDVIP, to research FEDVIP's current list of carriers and plans, and to use the plan comparison tool to view rates, benefits, and coverage information.

Don't miss this opportunity! Consider including the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) in your retirement plan today.

BENEFEDS is administered by Long Term Care Partners, LLC, with oversight by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

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My advice for anyone who is hesitant to do the Career Skills Program in a non-traditional way is to:

#1: Understand that non-traditional CSPs may be where your passion is. Working for a non-profit funded by a grant from USDA is incredibly rewarding and a newly-discovered passion for me.

#2: Realize that your last six months in the Army is the time for the Army to help you take care of yourself and your family. Embrace the process and transition. If you transition well, you'll be a better Army spokesperson.

#3: The Career Skills Program could make your transition easier. I still have some Army in me, so I promoted a friend the other day and I contact my unit weekly. It makes the change to the next mission much more comfortable.

#4: Lingering in the Army waiting on a stop loss or miracle extension of your MRD is not taking care of the next mission for you and your family. The Army will continue its mission when you leave.

Col. Joseph Ricker is a retiring AGR-USAR Logistics Officer participating in an internship with AgrAbility National Program, a USDA/National Institute of Food and Agriculture-funded non-profit organization. Details on AgrAbility and their support for veterans can be found at www.agrability.org/resources/veterans/

Financial well-being and your retirement

By the DOD Office of Financial Readiness

When was the last time you checked in on your financial well-being?

As you move closer to retiring from the Army, analyzing your current state of financial well-being is more important than ever. By taking a cohesive, holistic approach to your financial health now, you can set yourself up to have continued financial well-being into retirement.

What is financial well-being?

Financial well-being is when you are able to meet current and ongoing financial obligations, feel secure in your financial future and have the freedom to make choices that allow for the enjoyment of life. It is a key component of a Soldier's overall well-being.



However, achieving financial well-being is not a one-and-done situation. Instead, it requires consistent, regular evaluation during your Army career and beyond. As you look toward retirement and update your personal and family goals, tailor your plans to achieve them with an eye on maintaining financial well-being throughout life's changes.

Assess the financial well-being of your retirement plans

To understand financial well-being, consider these four questions:

1. Are you currently financially secure?
2. Are you planning for financial security in the future?
3. Can you currently make financial choices that bring enjoyment to your life?
4. Are you on track to meet your future financial goals?

Let's take a look at how the answers to these questions can affect how you approach and plan for your retirement from the Army.

Are you currently financially secure?

In order to answer yes to this question as you settle into your post-retirement life, think about what steps you need to take to ensure you can continue managing your expenses.

- If you intend to settle into a true retirement without pursuing a civilian career, consider how your passive income streams — your pension, retirement savings, disability compensation, any rental property income or Social Security payments, depending on your age — can support you.
- Whether you are fully retiring or pursuing a civilian career, review and adjust your spending plan to account for anticipated changes in your income and expenses. For instance, if you plan to move, don't forget to factor in cost of living in your new location, commuting costs, moving expenses, and housing costs such as renting, buying or selling.

Are you planning for financial security in the future?

It's impossible to know what the future holds, but it is possible to have a financial plan in place for the unexpected.

- If you're fully retiring before age 65, consider how your savings and various income streams could handle the unexpected. Are you in a position to continue saving? If your rate of saving will need to adjust, determine how that affects your ability to meet future goals — whether traveling, taking care of aging parents or buying the home of your dreams.
- If you plan to start a second career, align your new income with your current financial obligations and future goals to adjust your retirement savings plan. Perhaps you plan to start a business in your post-Army life — weighing the potential risks and advantages can help ensure you pursue new opportunities with a clear understanding of your financial capabilities.

Can you currently make financial choices that bring enjoyment to your life?

You earned your retirement and you deserve to enjoy it. However, you'll enjoy it more when you have the financial freedom to do so without compromising your present or future financial security.

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The Soldier for Life Podcast is back!!

After a short hiatus caused by the retirement of the last host and an influx of new staff, the Soldier for Life Office is working on Season 10! Below are the current podcasts. Check back every month on [Libsyn](#) for new podcasts about being a Soldier for Life, especially throughout your retirement transition and into your next career.

The U.S. Army PaYS Program. The U.S. Army Partnership for Youth Success program helps Soldiers prepare for a career after the Army by connecting them with employers who understand the skill, discipline, and work ethic that military service members bring to a business.

March to Service with Maj. Gen Kevin Vereen. The commanding general of U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) joins Soldier for Life to discuss March to Service and calls on all veterans to tell the Army Story. It takes a community to recruit the future of our Army.

The CALIBRE SkillBridge Program. Tune into a Soldier for Life Podcast with CALIBRE, a Department of Defense-approved SkillBridge Program for transitioning Soldiers. CALIBRE training gives you new skills for a purpose-filled career in the automotive industry with classes starting every 15 weeks. Learn how to apply and what to expect.



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- As you craft your retirement plan, don't forget to factor in flexibility and freedom for enjoyment purchases. If your retirement spending plan doesn't include enough discretionary income to support the quality of life you desire, it may be time to adjust your plans.
- Consider how the present financial choices you make impact what you value for your financial future. While a short-term purchase may bring momentary enjoyment, weigh the benefit with whether significant discretionary spending affects your ability to meet your future goals.

Are you on track to meet your future financial goals?

Setting and tracking future financial goals is important to ensuring you can achieve the retirement you want — both from the Army and from working entirely, if those milestones aren't one and the same for you.

- Know what you're working toward. Whether saving for a transition fund to ensure your Army retirement is free from stress or aggressively saving for retirement to ensure you never have to work again, actively setting and mindfully working toward a goal are key to achieving it.
- Consider the future financial goals you have once you are fully retired — then make sure you've set up your retirement saving plan to achieve them. For example, if you want to buy an RV and see the country, you need a cross-country

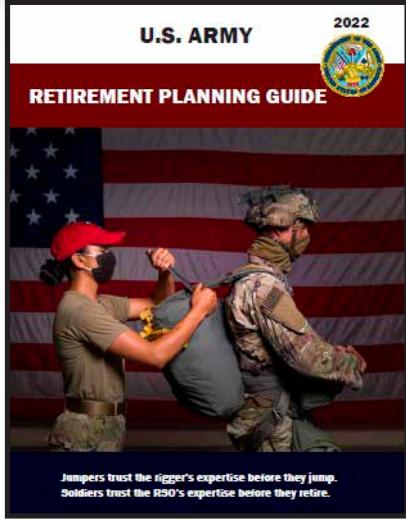
spending plan that allows you to live your dream without sacrificing future financial security.

Retiring with financial well-being

Depending on your answers to the above questions, it might be time to adjust your plans and determine where you can begin making small changes to work toward improved financial well-being. For instance, you could increase your retirement savings rate for your remaining years in the Army to ensure you are as financially prepared as possible for transition to civilian life. Or, you could adjust your spending plan to live further below your means and focus on paying down mortgages, car loans or other outstanding debts to ease the burden of these expenses in retirement.

To understand your options, review resources through the [Army Transition Assistance Program](#). Then, make a no-cost appointment with a [transition counselor](#) and [retirement services officer](#) at your nearest installation to discuss your individual retirement plan. You can also meet with a [personal financial manager](#) or [counselor](#) to identify ways to improve your financial well-being — now and into retirement.

For more information, visit the [Office of Financial Readiness website](#) and follow @DoDFINRED on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#). You'll find additional financial tips to support you throughout your Army career and with each [service-required training](#) you complete.



2022 U.S. Army Retirement Planning Guide

Produced by Army Retirement Services, the 2022 U.S. Army Retirement Planning Guide is available for download as a PDF document from the [Army Retirement Services website](#).



Army Echoes

Produced by Army Retirement Services, Army Echoes is the Army's official newsletter for Retired Soldiers and surviving spouses. It is available on the [Army Retirement Services website](#). After you retire, it will be automatically delivered to your email address in myPay, so be sure to change that to a good commercial email address before you retire.

How do I receive Change of Mission? If you're a Soldier in any Army component with 17+ years of service, just make sure your [myPay](#) account at DFAS has a good email address. That's where we'll send *Change of Mission*. If you're not a Soldier with 17+ years of service, you can still read *Change of Mission* on the [Soldier for Life website](#).

Want to talk to a Retirement Services Officer?

RSO contact information is on the [Army Retirement Services website](#).

Helpful Websites

[Army Echoes](#)

[Army Echoes Blog](#)

[Army Reserve Retirement Services](#)

[Army Retirement Services](#)

[Army Transition Assistance Program](#) (800) 325-4715

[Change of Mission](#)

[Combat-Related Special Compensation](#) (866) 281-3254 opt.4

[Concurrent Retired & Disability Pay](#) (800) 321-1080

[Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

[DFAS](#) (800) 321-1080 (M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST)

[DOD Self Service Logon](#)

[FEDVIP Dental/Vision Plans](#)

[Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program](#)

[GI Bill](#) (888) 442-4551

[HRC Education Incentives Section \(GI Bill\)](#) (888) 276-9472

[HRC Gray Area Retirements Branch](#) (888) 276-9472

[MyArmyBenefits](#) Help Desk (888) 721-2769 (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST M-F)

[myPay](#) (888) 332-7411

[Reserve Component Application for Retired Pay](#)

[Soldier for Life on Facebook](#)

[Soldier for Life on Instagram](#)

[Soldier for Life on Twitter](#)

[Soldier for Life on LinkedIn](#)

[Soldier for Life on YouTube](#)

[Survivor Benefit Plan](#)

[Survivor Benefit Plan vs. Life Insurance \(from DOD Actuary\)](#)

[TRICARE](#)

[TRICARE Beneficiary Counseling & Assistance Coordinator](#)

[TRICARE East](#) (800) 444-5445

[TRICARE West](#) (844) 866-9378

[TRICARE Overseas](#) (888) 678-1207

[TRICARE Retired Reserve](#) Call the appropriate number just above

[TRICARE Young Adult](#) Call the appropriate number just above

[Uniformed Services Former Spouse Protection Act](#)

[US Family Health Plan](#) (800) 748-7347

[VA Benefits and Services](#) (800) 827-1000

[VA Health Care Benefits](#) (877) 222-8387

[VA Insurance](#) SGLI/VGLI: (800) 419-1473