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VA Updates and Improves Assistance Program for Transitioning Service Members

WASHINGTON — As part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) ongoing efforts to help transitioning service members navigate and understand VA's various benefits, the agency recently updated VA's briefing portion of the [Transition Assistance Program \(TAP\)](#) — an interagency initiative authorized as a voluntary program in 1991 under the National Defense Authorization Act and made mandatory under the VOW to Hire Heroes Act in 2011 to help service members adjust to civilian life.

The new VA briefing is designed to be more collaborative and stimulating, helping service members make informed decisions about their health care, employment, housing and other benefits.

"Each year, thousands of military members leave the service and settle in communities around the nation, with the goals of establishing comfortable homes, attaining quality education for themselves and their families, and finding rewarding employment opportunities," said Acting VA Secretary Robert M. Wilkie. "Coming from the Department of Defense, I understand the importance of this great program, and I believe these changes will strengthen it further and provide real-life relevance to those who have given a portion of their lives to serving our nation."

Because no two transitions are the same, the updates deliver elements relevant to service members based on where they are in their career and life. The redesign will encourage whole-health support for service members and their family members, to include relevant information about [Veterans Service Organizations](#) (VSOs) and allow time to identify local VSO representatives.

The updates, released this month, incorporated suggestions made by Veterans, VSOs and post-9/11 Veterans groups, including taking a more holistic view of a service member's new life, as well as the psychosocial aspects of the transition to civilian life.

"In fiscal year 2017, VA provided more than 63,000 events to educate more than 500,000 transitioning service members and family members," said Margarita Devlin, executive director of the [VA Benefits Assistance Service](#). "VA consistently receives high evaluations from service members who attend these benefits briefings, and we have taken the next step by incorporating recommendations by other stakeholders to make the program even better."

VA will now work to fully integrate TAP objectives into the military lifecycle, and as an added benefit, will begin implementing a post-transition Veteran survey. To view VA's updated curriculum, visit <https://www.benefits.va.gov/TAP/>.

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