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# News Release

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## VA makes strides to provide practical resources for transitioning service members

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Veterans Affairs wants to ensure service members exiting the military have appropriate resources needed to transition back into civilian life.

To improve the experience and outcomes of service members transitioning, VA has new initiatives, partnerships and training opportunities.

Launched this September, the [Veteran Sponsor Partnership Network](#) enables regional, non-monetary partnerships with community organizations to help transitioning service members and their families access VA services and community resources such as employment opportunities, education benefits and housing assistance.

The VSPN initiative supports an evidence-based and collaborative approach with community partners that helps VA meet its strategic priorities and deliver the support and services our Veterans deserve.

"This Veterans Health Administration initiative streamlines VA partnerships with community organizations that pair service members with peer sponsors who would provide one-on-one support during the military-to-civilian transition," said VA [National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships](#) Nurse Executive Tracy L. Weistreich, Ph.D. "This resource is similar to the [military sponsorship](#) program within the Department of Defense."

Initiatives like VSPN, along with VHA [partnerships](#) with organizations such as the nonprofit [Expiration Term of Service Sponsorship Program](#), help transitioning service members integrate into the post-military community of their choice. This links them with local sponsors who are trained to help service members find and access local resources, build relationships and resiliency and help them through the transition process.

ETS-SP developed a coordinated and cohesive approach to enable local community partners across the country. Community support for each new Veteran has been shown to be a leading factor in successful transition.

[Research](#) shows engaging in VA health care with community-based interventions and sponsorship programs can help Veterans achieve better outcomes across many [social determinants of health](#), experience less difficulty when transitioning back into civilian communities and reduce risk factors related to Veteran death by suicide.

"A Veteran's first year out of the military is a critical time, and the risk for suicide during this period is increased by nearly 50%," Weistreich added.

It's evident VA's efforts to help transitioning service members is working.

The first of the Veterans Benefits Administration's multi-year [2020 Post-Separation TAP Assessment Outcome Study Report](#) shows most Veterans find the department's Transition Assistance Program [VA Benefits Briefings](#) useful. The study's [Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Surveys](#) is designed to determine the effectiveness of TAP on transitioning service members.

Quite beneficial is the help explaining how to access VA benefits, VA health care and preparing for economic challenges after leaving the military — to include finding employment and affordable and safe housing.

"The VA Benefits Briefings were deemed most useful, receiving approximately 76% positive rating from respondents," said Acting Under Secretary for Benefits Thomas Murphy. "We've also seen an increase in the use of benefits by respondents to the latest survey, including an increase in use of VA health care by more than 20%."

Most respondents said they adjusted well to civilian life after separation (70%) and are making progress toward their post-military goals (73%). Most are employed in full-time, permanent positions (63%). The survey results said many Veterans found transition challenging (68%) with an array of causes, including nostalgia for the camaraderie and teamwork they experienced in the military. The survey results also found 40% of respondents pursued education or training after separation.

Each year, about 200,000 service members transition from the military to civilian life. Through TAP, VA and the Departments of Defense and Labor conduct classes that provide information, resources and tools to help ease the transition.?

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*The VSPN initiative falls under VA's overall strategy to partner with regional and national organizations to assist transitioning service members with accessing VA health and benefit resources. Local, regional, and national organizations interested in partnering with VA should contact the [National Center for Healthcare Advancement and](#)*

Partnerships, which leads this effort in collaboration with VA's Transitioning Servicemember/Veteran And Suicide Prevention Center, VA regional offices and a nationwide network of community partners.

The ETS-SP partnership is led by VA's Post-9/11 Transition and Case Management program and facilitated by the National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships, and supports the reintegration needs of transitioning service members and post-9/11 era Veterans.