

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT &
TRAINING SERVICE**



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**VOLUME X: TRANSITION ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOPS**

PART 2: OVERSEAS

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Overseas Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Employment Workshop Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manual is to assist the Department of Labor (DOL) – Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS) and the Department of Defense (DOD) to execute requirements outlined in Public Law 101-510 (codified at [10 U.S.C. §1144](#)) establishing TAP. To ensure the smooth operation and management of the Overseas TAP Employment Workshops, specific requirements and responsibilities for each agency are outlined within this SOP.

1.2 PHILOSOPHY

VETS is committed to establishing open, ongoing communications with all partners in this multi-agency program necessary to implement the provisions of [10 U.S.C. §1144](#); to maintain cooperative, cordial relationships with participating agencies and personnel; and to negotiate, at the lowest level possible, constructive and mutually agreeable solutions to any problems that affect the quality of services provided to TAP Employment Workshop participants.

1.3 INTENDED AUDIENCE

This SOP manual is primarily intended for the VETS Overseas TAP Lead or Facilitators and DOD Overseas Installation TAP Managers. These personnel hold the lead roles in assuring successful TAP Employment Workshop operations at military installations located outside the United States.

1.4 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Information in this SOP manual was gathered from VETS and DOD personnel who are knowledgeable of Overseas TAP Employment Workshop operations.

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE SOP MANUAL

This SOP manual is organized into sections that reflect the major tasks VETS and its partners must perform to carry out their TAP Employment Workshop responsibilities. The Appendices contain examples of useful operational documents such as the sample format for the Projected TAP Quarterly Employment Workshop Schedule ([Appendix 1b](#)), the VETS TAP Employment Workshop Change Request Form ([Appendix 2](#)), and the TAP Manual Request Form ([Appendix 3](#)).

Chapter 2 Roles & Responsibilities of VETS & DoD

2.1 VETS RESPONSIBILITIES

VETS is responsible for the overall implementation of the Overseas TAP Employment Workshops. VETS sets policy, directs, and monitors TAP Employment Workshops in furthering the mandates of [10 U.S.C. §1144](#). It maintains a dialogue with DOD officials, prepares overall program budgets, analyzes TAP Employment Workshop participant data to determine trends, and provides training and course materials for the program. VETS has the authority to intervene in all aspects of the TAP Employment Workshop Program when attempts to resolve conflicts at the local level have not succeeded or upon a request from partner agencies.

VETS will identify a TAP Lead to assume the principal role of assuring the effectiveness of the Overseas TAP Employment Workshop. The VETS TAP Lead will acquire first hand knowledge of current and past operations at all Overseas TAP installations and will effectively maintain quality Overseas TAP Employment Workshops that comply with [10 U.S.C. §1144](#). The VETS TAP Lead will accomplish his/her responsibilities through careful monitoring, site visits, participation in TAP Steering Committee meetings, and analyses of participant reports received from the VETS Overseas TAP Support Contractor.

VETS will coordinate with DOD and the designated program support Contractor about resources, communications, action plans, and procedures to effectively implement and maintain a quality TAP Employment Workshop Program.

VETS will collect and review all Overseas TAP Employment Workshop participant critique forms to determine if any problems and/or concerns were expressed. Findings will be shared with DOD and services.

VETS is the approving authority for personnel identified to become TAP Employment Workshop facilitators through formal training at the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI).

VETS will process all [TAP Employment Workshop Change Request Forms](#) received from the overseas military installations and will notify requestor when approval is received.

VETS will ensure timely processing and delivery of TAP Workshop Participant Manual [request forms](#) and, where possible, pre-position enough manuals at each location to support the estimated annual or semi-annual participant numbers. At a minimum, these shipments should not be less than a three-month supply.

2.2 DOD RESPONSIBILITIES

DOD will appoint Overseas Installation TAP Managers and provide contact information to VETS.

DOD Overseas Installation TAP Managers will submit Projected TAP Quarterly Employment Workshop Schedules to the respective Services' Program Managers. Once consolidated by each service the schedule will be provided to VETS 45 days prior to the beginning of each quarter ([Appendix 1](#)).

1 st Quarter, FY	Due August 15th
2 nd Quarter, FY	Due November 15th
3 rd Quarter, FY	Due February 13th
4 th Quarter, FY	Due May 15th

DOD Overseas Installation TAP managers will notify and register participants for TAP Employment Workshops and assist VETS staff in assigning priority seating to:

- Service members and their spouses who are closest to their date of separation from active duty (especially those within 90 days or less of separation)
- Service members assigned to remote or isolated sites
- Former service members who are eligible to attend the TAP Employment Workshop on a "space available basis" up to 180 days after their date of separation

DOD Overseas Installation TAP Managers will notify the VETS TAP Lead of any workshop changes as soon as possible, using the TAP Employment Workshop Change Request Form ([Appendix 2](#)). All Service initiated workshop changes (particularly cancellations), must be received at least 10 working days prior to the start date of a TAP Employment Workshop. There are certain situations where this advance notice is not possible for various reasons. Examples may include, but are not limited to: severe weather conditions that cause base closures or last minute military operational commitments that directly impact the number of registered participants.

DOD shall provide VETS information about projected overseas military personnel losses due to separation and known base closures. This information should be provided as soon as possible, but no later than the beginning of each fiscal year.

DOD overseas installations will provide suitable classroom facilities for seating a minimum of 24 participants, on a regularly scheduled basis. Such facilities should include:

- Utilities (adequate lighting, ventilation-heat/cool, etc.)
- Male and female restrooms
- Furniture (tables, chairs, lectern, etc.)
- Handicapped access
- Sufficient parking
- Audiovisual equipment (projection screen, overhead projector, microphone, etc.)
- Janitorial services

DOD will assist VETS staff in identifying Overseas military installations within a region (those military installations within 100 miles of each other) to promote course delivery which will accommodate the recommended minimum workshop size of 24 participants. This should include coordination among military installations, regardless of Service affiliation.

DOD will provide ongoing command level publicity for the TAP Employment Workshops to include, but not limited to, newsletters, installation newspaper articles, flyers, and posters.

DOD will encourage and promote maximum employment workshop participation with support of its Installation and Unit Commanders.

DOD Installation Commanders are encouraged to follow-up with appropriate Unit Commanders to help ensure scheduled personnel are available for TAP Employment Workshops, ensure classroom discipline, and supervise facility logistics.

DOD Overseas Installation TAP Managers should provide at least one potential back-up facilitator, whenever feasible, who has been formally trained to facilitate the TAP Employment Workshop in the case of an unforeseen emergency.

DOD should continuously maintain communication and coordinate with VETS about resources, program communications, action plans, and procedures to effectively implement and maintain the Overseas TAP Employment Workshop Program.

DOD Overseas installations will provide, when available, VETS Overseas TAP support Contractor personnel with use of a computer, fax machine, photocopier,

laptop, and projection system to run PowerPoint presentations during the TAP Employment Workshops.

2.3 VETS OVERSEAS TAP SUPPORT CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Support Contractor will provide NVTI trained and qualified facilitators to present all approved TAP Employment Workshops received from VETS per a specified Delivery Order. Further, the Support Contractor will have an executable back-up plan in the event the scheduled primary facilitator is delayed or is not available.

The Support Contractor will supervise all contracted TAP Employment Workshop Facilitators to ensure satisfactory performance through the following oversight activities: on-site visits and interviews; participant surveys; and/or feedback from VETS staff, local DOD Overseas Installation TAP Managers, and ACAP staff, etc. The Support Contractor also will provide: ongoing training and support to improve performance of facilitators; a designated liaison with DOL and DOD; ongoing communication with all parties to ensure maximum coverage of all Overseas TAP Employment Workshops; ongoing coordination of Overseas TAP Employment Workshop delivery and assistance with implementing TAP Employment Workshops at new sites as requested; and ongoing monitoring of overall program delivery.

The Support Contractor will collect appropriate TAP Employment Workshop participant data as required by VETS.

The Support Contractor will track all Overseas TAP Employment Workshop changes to include additions, deletions, workshop date changes, etc. and will coordinate changes with the assigned installation facilitator, including, but not limited to, providing for a back-up facilitator if needed.

The Support Contractor will ensure that all contracted TAP Employment Workshop Facilitators provide high quality facilitation and instruction.

The Support Contractor will provide the originals of all TAP Participant Surveys to VETS.

Chapter 3 *The Overseas TAP Employment Workshop*

3.1 PURPOSE OF TAP EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOPS

The TAP Employment Workshops are tailored to successfully transition military personnel, and their spouses, who are separating or retiring from active military service into the civilian work force. Participation in the TAP Employment Workshops should enable participants to make and carry out more informed career/employment decisions.

3.2 WHO CONDUCTS TAP EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOPS?

Generally, VETS and/or their designated support contractor conduct TAP Employment workshops overseas.

3.3 WHO MAY ATTEND TAP EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOPS?

Recent changes to the law specify that TAP Employment Workshops will be open to military personnel and their spouses who are within 12 months of separation or within 24 months of retirement. In addition, DOD has authorized attendance for eligible military personnel up to 180 days after discharge, on a space available basis.

3.4 TAP EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP COMPONENTS

VETS TAP Employment Workshops provide job search and employment information over a 2.5 day period. The *TAP Employment Workshop Facilitator Manual* is a key resource component and contains suggested agendas with recommended timeframes for teaching the core competencies of the TAP curriculum. Employment workshop timeframes are flexible and can be tailored to meet the needs of individual site locations. For instance, some facilitators may spend more time on resumes and interviewing techniques, and less time on stress management because separating service members may receive stress training in other parts of their Department of Defense (DOD) out-processing briefings.

3.5 TAP EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP CONTENT

The objectives of the TAP Employment Workshop are to provide information mandated by Public Law 101-510 (codified at [10 U.S.C. §1144](#)) concerning employment and training assistance in the following areas:

- Assessing skills and experience in relation to the civilian labor market

- Use of available labor market information to make career related decisions
- Completion of job applications
- Constructing an appropriate resume and cover letter
- Job interview techniques
- Dressing for Success
- Evaluating and responding to job offers
- Identifying and accessing the benefits available to veterans

Due to the limited amount of time available to present these mandated materials, no other outside sources of information should be added to the workshops. See [Section 4.4](#) for detailed information concerning guest speakers in the VETS TAP Employment Workshops.

Chapter 4 Starting a New Overseas TAP Site

4.1 HOW PROGRAMS ARE INITIATED

VETS and their designated Support Contractor are currently conducting a phased implementation of VETS led Overseas TAP Employment Workshops. VETS has already made this transition at sites within several countries. The approval for VETS to either assume already existing TAP Employment Workshops or to start at a new site or installation is dependent on successfully negotiating the *Status of Forces Agreement* (SOFA) for that country.

4.2 INITIATING CONUS TAP EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOPS

Once a site is designated to transition to the VETS led Overseas TAP Employment Workshops, the VETS TAP Lead and their Support Contractor will need to learn as much as possible about the installation. Sources of this information include: the Overseas TAP Office; the Family Support Center; the Family Service Center; the ACAP Office, etc. The DOD Overseas TAP Manager may be asked to provide such information as:

- Size of the installation and average size of the workshops
- The military services that are represented and the installation chain of command
- Organization responsible for transition services (family support, ACAP, education, etc.)
- Installation official(s) with the authority/responsibility for approving TAP on base
- Current TAP Employment Workshop schedule(s)
- Available logistical support (i.e. PowerPoint, TV/VCR, whiteboard, copying of handouts, etc.)
- Transition services already being offered
- Other services offered that VETS can help promote

4.3 START-UP MEETING/CHECKLIST

It is suggested that if a new Overseas TAP Employment Workshop site is identified to open, or when VETS will assume workshop responsibility at an already existing location, a meeting or teleconference should be scheduled with all concerned parties from the local DOD installation, including VETS TAP

Employment Workshop Lead, the services TAP program manager and the designated Support Contractor staff. NOTE FOR THE AIR FORCE: A representative of the overseas major command headquarters *must* also be included.

During this meeting, copies of the *Transition Assistance Program Employment Workshops Overseas SOP Manual* should be provided to all parties and the contents discussed in detail to ensure that everyone knows their respective responsibilities. Any concerns or disagreements *must* be resolved prior to the start of any new operation.

4.4 AUTHORIZED GUEST SPEAKERS DURING THE VETS TAP EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOPS

The issue of guest speakers has been a concern and many questions have been raised including:

- Who is an authorized speaker during the DOL Employment Workshops?
- What are they allowed to say or not say?
- What types of materials are they allowed to distribute during TAP classes?
- What information may guest speakers obtain from the TAP participants?
- Who is responsible for scheduling these speakers?

This section is intended to answer all these questions and establish the standard policy for using guest speakers during the VETS TAP Employment Workshops. In addition, each military service has specific regulations regarding the conduct of civilian enterprises within military installations, which DOL must also take into consideration. NOTE FOR THE AIR FORCE: In accordance with SAF/MR 05 Jun 03 memorandum, "Educational Programs on Personal Financial Affairs," under no circumstances shall commercial agents, including representatives of loan, finance, insurance, or investment companies be used to provide educational services. Non-profit, tax-exempt organizations under sections 501c(3) or 501c(23) of Title 26, United States Code, may not provide these services unless on a SAF/MRM approved list.

Authorized facilitators/speakers for the TAP Employment Workshops, as outlined in Public Law 101-510 (codified [10 U.S.C. §1144](#)) include personnel from: state employment offices; authorized VETS support Contractors; Veteran Service Organizations; and the partner agencies (DOD). In most all cases, authorized facilitators for the VETS Overseas TAP Employment Workshops will be provided by the VETS Support Contractor. Representatives from

organizations listed within this paragraph are not considered guest speakers, but instead they are active partners in the program.

For the purpose of these workshops, a guest speaker is defined as a subject matter expert for a particular mandated module of the workshop. As an example, when discussing financial management issues, having a representative from a local commercial financial firm to discuss good logic in budget planning, money portfolios, etc., is acceptable. However, all guest speakers *must* talk in generic terms about their respective subjects and not, in any way, market or suggest that his/her company can provide these services. These actions would be considered soliciting business and such practices are prohibited.

Employer panels are also a popular form of “guest speakers” who normally provide an excellent overview of local or national hiring trends and employment issues. This form of “guest speaker” is encouraged, provided they speak in generic terms regarding employment and they do not directly “recruit” or distribute *any* materials representing their own particular companies. This practice is fair and equitable to all panel members.

All authorized TAP facilitators may schedule guest speakers provided they first receive prior approval from the DOD Installation TAP Manager to invite these speakers onto the military installation. In addition, the local DOD Installation TAP Manager(s) may recommend guest speakers, but they must first coordinate with the designated Overseas TAP Employment Workshop Facilitator for the site to ensure that their presentation fits in with the overall flow of the workshop.

Guest speakers may not pass out any materials in the VETS TAP Employment Workshops that have not first been cleared by the DOD Installation TAP Manager. At no time are guest speakers allowed to distribute materials during the workshops where their names/business information is printed and/or attached in any manner. In addition, guest speakers are not authorized to distribute business cards or post their business information anywhere or anytime during the TAP Employment Workshop. Further, guest speakers are prohibited from requesting personal information from the participants in any form (questionnaires, surveys, etc.).

All handout materials provided by the guest speaker(s) must also be generic. As an example, if the guest speaker is discussing the proper dress for job interviews, an acceptable handout would include the “Do’s and Don’ts” of what to wear. This handout cannot have the name and business information from the guest speaker making this presentation or list where these clothing items can be found for purchase.

The use of potential guest speakers should first be discussed with all partners. Consideration must be given to ensure there is sufficient time to present all required subjects before scheduling additional speakers. In addition, when and where these guest speakers will be scheduled *must* be coordinated in order to ensure that the overall flow of the TAP Employment Workshop is not disrupted.

All guest speakers must be advised of and agree to the conditions listed above prior to actually addressing the participants in the workshops. If they do not agree to these terms, they will not be allowed to participate.

The policies described above are in effect to comply with established regulations regarding the conduct of civilian personnel aboard military installations. They also are intended to avoid conflicts of interest and prevent any instances of the promotion of commercial companies during the conduct of the TAP Employment Workshops.

Consideration should be given to conducting job fairs or allowing interested agencies to set up tables outside of the workshops. If participants are interested in receiving additional information from these organizations, they should be allowed the opportunity to do so on their own time. Another approach would be for the installation to add an additional day or half day to the scheduled TAP Employment Workshop itinerary to accommodate the presentation of specific information not covered within the TAP Employment Workshop Program, such as relocation advice and educational assistance, along with specialized speakers versed in these topics, etc.

The proper use of guest speakers enhances the delivery of the Overseas TAP Employment Workshops. These guest speaker policies are not intended to eliminate the use of these outside sources of information. However, they are enforced to protect the integrity of the workshops by making certain that guest speakers adhere to VETS and DOD policies. In addition, everyone involved is responsible for ensuring that the participants of these workshops are not unlawfully solicited or that their legal rights to privacy are not violated in any way.

Chapter 5 Facilitating TAP

5.1 TAP FACILITATORS

Overseas TAP Employment Workshops may be conducted by VETS staff and VETS Support Contractor personnel. All facilitators must attend formal NVTI facilitator training. In emergency situations (when the VETS facilitator is not available), a qualified DOD employee and/or their designated representative may facilitate the workshop rather than canceling a scheduled event. It is understood that in these emergency situations the DOD representative probably will not have completed the required formal NVTI training.

5.2 VETS TAP EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP LEAD

The VETS TAP Lead is responsible for ensuring that Overseas TAP Facilitators are well trained and qualified. The steps taken to fulfill this role will vary with the type of facilitators used.

5.3 SUPPORT CONTRACTOR FACILITATORS

VETS has secured a Support Contractor to provide Overseas TAP Employment Workshop based facilitation, and is thus responsible for ensuring that the designated facilitator at each Overseas military installation is appropriately trained and qualified. The Support Contract is required to provide facilitators with the following qualifications:

- Three years of experience as a trainer;
- A minimum of an AA degree; and/or
- The equivalent of this experience and education.

5.4 NVTI TAP FACILITATOR TRAINING

NVTI provides the formal standard training program for persons identified to become TAP facilitators. This training emphasizes and provides the trainee with both the general information presented within the TAP Employment Workshop and the basic instruction to obtain the skills required to present and to facilitate various workshop segments.

5.5 APPROVAL TO ATTEND TRAINING

VETS is the approving authority for personnel identified to become TAP Employment Workshop facilitators through formal training at NVTI.

Chapter 6 TAP Logistics

6.1 WORKSHOP SCHEDULING

DOD is responsible for scheduling Overseas TAP Employment Workshops based on expected attendance and facilities available. These schedules should be planned as far in advance as possible in order to ensure classroom space is available, authorized guest speakers are lined up, and a sufficient number of *TAP Employment Workshop Participant Manuals* are on-hand. [Projected TAP Quarterly Employment Workshop Schedules](#) are required to be sent to the VETS TAP Lead 45 days prior to the beginning of each quarter (see [Section 2.2](#) for specific dates).

6.2 TAP EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT MANUALS

Each TAP Employment Workshop participant receives a *TAP Employment Workshop Participant Manual* which contains the information and exercises presented during VETS TAP Employment Workshops. *TAP Employment Workshop Participant Manuals* are only to be provided to participants attending the employment workshops.

6.3 VETS TAP LEAD ROLE

TAP Employment Workshop Participant Manual orders will be coordinated with each military Service. Arrangements can be made to provide either an annual, semi-annual or quarterly shipment of manuals, depending on the storage space available at each installation. Due to delayed delivery times for overseas locations, each site should maintain as many manuals as possible to ensure there is a sufficient supply to support planned workshop participant loads.

6.4 ORDERING GUIDELINES

TAP Employment Workshop Participant Manuals can be automatically shipped from VETS based on an agreed upon schedule from each military Service. Contact the VETS TAP Lead to schedule an automatic delivery of TAP Manuals. The following information is required from each military installation when placing orders for TAP manuals:

- Full name of the requesting military installation
- Number of TAP Workshop Participant Manuals needed
- Name/title of person to whom TAP Workshop Participant Manuals should be sent
- Shipping address, including building number, and PO Box numbers

Chapter 7 Providing Technical Assistance

7.1 PURPOSE AND DEFINITION

The purpose of technical assistance is to ensure program success by providing needed information and resources to resolve problems that may hinder performance. Technical assistance generally consists of three broad categories of activity: responding to inquiries, helping to resolve conflicts, and solving resource and other problems.

7.2 ANSWERING INQUIRIES

The VETS TAP Lead will answer all inquiries as quickly as possible. Inquiries should be submitted through the respective military Service and be resolved at the lowest administrative level possible.

7.3 RESOLVING CONFLICTS

Conflicts among participating agencies tend to involve roles or personalities.

Role Conflicts. To help resolve role conflicts (situations where two agencies each say the other is responsible for doing or providing something) this SOP is intended to serve as the definitive guide to operations at Overseas TAP Employment Workshop sites. There will be no local MOUs.

Personality Conflicts In the case of personality conflicts, all efforts are to be made so as there is no impact on the program. It is very important to remember that this is a partnership program and each agency in this partnership is seeking to provide the same thing: *the best service possible for transitioning service members and their spouses.*

Chapter 8 Conducting TAP Site Visits

8.1 PURPOSE OF SITE VISITS

VETS monitors TAP Employment Workshop sites regularly to maintain good communications with all personnel and agencies involved in the program. These site visits ensure that the Overseas TAP Employment Workshop Program is working effectively and is in compliance with the mandates of [10 U.S.C. §1144](#). Overall program monitoring (site visits represent only one critical part of the process) helps to identify, as quickly as possible, potential problems and/or operational concerns. It is a constant process that takes place regularly through telephone calls, e-mails, and other program communications.

8.2 FREQUENCY OF SITE VISITS

VETS is responsible for determining how often Overseas TAP Employment Workshop sites will be visited. VETS recommends at least one site visit per year, except for new sites and sites identified as experiencing problems. These sites should be visited as often as necessary to ensure that the program is running smoothly or that any and all site problems have been resolved. All overseas site visits are determined based on available agency funds. All site visits must first be coordinated in advance with the DOD, the Military Service Installation TAP Manager and the Services Program Managers.

8.3 WHO CONDUCTS SITE VISITS?

The VETS can designate the TAP Lead or other appropriate VETS federal personnel to conduct Overseas TAP site visits.

8.4 INFORMATION GAINED FROM SITE VISITS

Site visits gather critical firsthand program information such as:

- Whether there is sufficient time devoted to instruction on the core components of the TAP Employment Workshop (as specified in the Public Law)
- Whether the regularly used classroom facilities are conducive to learning and adequate materials, supplies, and equipment are available
- Whether the facilitators and guest speakers are adequately trained and performing effectively
- Is the installation promoting the TAP workshop? Do they have concerns about the program?

Chapter 9 Closing an Overseas TAP Site

9.1 WHEN TO CLOSE TAP SITES

VETS Overseas TAP Employment Workshops are normally terminated when the host installation closes or when the number of potential TAP participants becomes too small to support a regular program. In the latter case, the decision to close the TAP site is the responsibility of the VETS TAP Lead, in coordination with other appropriate VETS personnel, the DOD, the Military service and the Installation(s) Commanders.

9.2 VETS TAP LEAD ROLE

The VETS TAP Lead is responsible for scheduling the final TAP Employment Workshop, coordinating the final closing date with the DOD Overseas Installation TAP Manager, and reallocating any VETS property at the TAP site (including redistributing any available *TAP Workshop Participant Manuals*).