



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
THE NCO LEADERSHIP CENTER OF EXCELLENCE  
11291 SGT E. CHURCHILL STREET  
FORT BLISS, TEXAS 79918-8002

ATSS-CD

14 November 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR All Assigned/Attached Personnel, The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence, Fort Bliss, Texas 79918-8002

**SUBJECT: Policy Memorandum # 17, Soldier for Life-Transition Assistance Program Participation**

1. References:

- a. Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act, Public Law 112-56, dated 21 November 2011.
- b. Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Directive Type Memorandum (DTM) 12-007, dated 21 November 2012.
- c. Headquarters, Department of the Army Execution Order 054-12, In Support of Army Transition, dated 29 December 2011.
- d. Army Regulation 600-3, The Army Personnel Development System, dated 26 February 2009.
- e. Army Regulation 600-8-7, Retirement Services Program, dated 28 April 2015.
- f. Army Regulation 600-81, Soldier for Life – Transition Assistance Program, dated 17 May 2016.
- g. Army Regulation 350-1, Army Training and Leader Development, dated 19 August 2014.
- h. Department of Defense Instruction 1332.35, Transition Assistance Program (TAP) for Military Personnel, dated 29 February 2016.
- i. Department of Defense Instruction 1322.29, Job Training, Employment Skills Training, Apprenticeships and Internships (JTEST-AI), dated 24 January 2014
- j. Directive-type Memorandum (DTM) 12-007, "Implementation of Mandatory Transition Assistance Program Participation for Eligible Service Members," 5 May 2015.

2. Purpose: To outline the Soldier for Life-Transition Assistance Program.

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3. Applicability. This policy applies to the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence (NCOLCoE), the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA), Fort Bliss Noncommissioned Officer Academy (NCOA), Soldiers, and their Family members.

4. Policy:

a. SFL-TAP is the Commandant's program. I fully support the SFL-TAP, and expect leaders at every echelon – from platoon level up – to ensure that separating Soldiers successfully complete SFL-TAP requirements IAW AR 600-81. Setting conditions for a Soldiers' successful transition from the Army is leader's business; leaders at all levels will promote and assure participation in SFL-TAP. Commandants and leaders will publish an SFL-TAP command policy letter supporting this program as required by AR 600-81.

b. SFL-TAP is the Army agency charged with directly assisting all commanders with the execution of unit transition programs and ensure compliance with Title 10 U.S.C. 1142-1144; Public Law 112-56, Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act; and AR 600-81.

c. Regardless of a Soldier's personal decision on length of service, **every** Soldier will eventually leave the Army. The Army recognizes this, and directed implementation of the Soldier Life Cycle (SLC). The SLC requires transition planning begin at the first unit of assignment, and continue throughout the course of a Soldier's career. All newly-arrived Soldiers at Fort Bliss will, attend the SFL-TAP New-comers Briefing. First line supervisors will also work directly with Career Counselors, Command Financial Specialist, Unit Focal Point Advisors (UFPA) and SFL-TAP to ensure all components of the SLC are fully engaged with on-going professional growth and developmental counseling actions.

d. The SLC directs the Soldier's steps from the initial entry, until their decision to separate. Prior to separating, Soldiers must complete all requisite Career Readiness Standards (CRS). The CRS is aligned to a specific timeline designed to secure both benefits and employment prior to leaving the military, while retaining command flexibility in support of the unit's operational tempo.

e. Command Teams will direct subordinates on the production and submission of reporting requirements to include: personnel participating in SFL-TAP by name and category (ETS, Retirement, Chapter, etc.) and completion of mandatory requirements to meet Career Readiness Standards (CRS).

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(1) The Focal Point Advisors at the NCOLCoE, USASMA, and NCOA (Transition Service Representatives) will track and report all SFL-TAP unit-level requirements; synchronizes within-unit marketing/information sharing; maintains good order and discipline relative to Career Skills Programs (CSP); and ensure unit SFL programs synch with the United States Army Garrison Fort Bliss programs.

(2) Command Teams are responsible for ensuring Soldiers report to SFL-TAP NLT 365 days prior to program separation date; 24 months prior to Mandatory Retirement Date (MRD); and immediately upon identification for consideration of any un-programmed separation action (MEB/PEB, Chapter, etc.). Command Teams will also ensure first-line leaders conduct initial and annual IDP counseling with all Soldiers as required by AR 600-81 and AR 350-1.

(3) Career Counselors will identify transitioning Soldiers and collaborate with UFPA and SFL-TAP to ensure compliance with AR 600-81 and this policy. Career Counselors and retention personnel will not perform SFL UFPA duties.

f. In support of successful and timely transition, all units will run 18 month loss-rosters. The roster will identify service members' by-name, who are within 18 months of programmed separation, or 24 months from Mandatory Retirement Date (MRD).

(1) Units will direct all Soldiers 13-18 months from programmed separation date to report to SFL-TAP for completion of all statutory counseling requirements. Transition counseling must be completed NLT 365-Days prior to anticipated separation date. All Soldiers must therefore begin the SFL-TAP process NLT 12 months prior to program separation date. **The Soldiers' personal reenlistment intentions have no bearing on participating.** Only upon reenlistment or the unit's stoppage of a separation action (Chapter/medical) may the Soldier dis-enroll.

(2) All Soldiers with a MRD will report to SFL-TAP and begin transition planning NLT 24 months prior to MRD. Soldiers eligible for retirement (18 years of service), but not facing MRD are highly encouraged to begin the SFL-TAP process 24 months from desired retirement date.

(3) All Soldiers, in the Individual Disability Evaluation System (IDES: MEB/PEB) process, those identified for any type of voluntary separation action (REFRAD or pregnancy), or any involuntary separation action (Misconduct/standards), will be directed to SFL-TAP immediately upon notification of pursuit of that action. These Soldiers are at especially high risk of unemployment and unsuccessful transition, and units will not wait on approval of the action before directing Soldiers to SFL-TAP.

g. IAW AR 600-81, Commandants and leaders are required to publish an SFL-TAP Policy Letter and designate a Unit Focal Point Advisor (UFPA) to work with SFL-TAP and synchronize unit/SFL-TAP efforts.

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Commandants will publish a Command SFL-TAP Policy Letter. Commandants will appoint UFPA. This UFPA must be a SGT or above, appointed on orders, and not in transition themselves.

h. Fort Bliss is one of six Army CRS PILOT Sites. As such, Fort Bliss SFL-TAP Staff enter each Soldier's demographics into an Army-level database as part of initial counseling. The database assigns each Soldier an Unemployment Risk Level of 1-3. The specific CRS each Soldier must complete is based on their individually-assigned risk-factor number. However all Soldiers, will be allowed to take any non-required CRS, or additional SFL-TAP course that is beneficial to their transition plan.

i. Regardless of assigned risk level, **ALL** Soldiers in the 18 month from separation, and 24 month from MRD Window will:

(1) Complete Pre-Separation counseling on line NLT 365 days from separation by logging onto [www.SFL-TAP.army.mil](http://www.SFL-TAP.army.mil). Soldiers referred for immediate separation may, by appointment, attend in-person briefs at the SFL-TAP Center.

(2) Within three business days of completion of the on-line pre-separation briefing Soldiers will schedule an Initial Counseling (IC) with a SFL-TAP Counselor, by calling (915) 568-3870, 288-5627 or 568-7996. SFL-TAP Counselors will assist Soldiers with completing his or her mandatory Individual Transition Plan (ITP), and all other requisite CRS as required by individual assigned level of risk.

(3) Not later than nine months prior to separation, regardless of the Soldier's personal intentions towards reenlistment, the Soldier will complete the requisite components of the five-day VOW Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Workshop.

(a) The Five-Day VOW TAP Workshops are the foundational training for Army transition. Given the annual transition population at Fort Bliss (over 10,000), limited number of training weeks/seats, and training hours required each day, this course is place-of-duty for all Soldiers once enrolled.

(b) All Soldiers in the five-day workshop are excused from physical and other unit training/duty. Soldiers in VOW Week will not be released for Thursday Phantom Time (at 1500), nor receive III Corps and Fort Bliss Training Holidays that fall on a Friday. Units will instead grant compensatory time for the missed Training Holiday at such a time as the unit's operational tempo can support.

(c) Soldiers attending the Five-Day VOW TAP Workshop may only be removed from the workshop by the Commandant or Deputy Commandant.

(d) The Five-Day Workshop is an Army Transition Course, focused on training the Soldier to ultimately transition to employment, even if that occurs after college.

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Civilian clothing is therefore highly encouraged. All civilian clothing worn will conform to acceptable standards for participating in a professional job interview. The intent in authorizing civilian clothing for SFL-TAP courses is that Soldiers learn to dress in appropriate interview attire.

i. Men may wear suits, casual slacks, dress shirt, polo or golf-style shirt with collar or sweater, laced or slip-on dress shoes.

ii. Women may wear dress or skirt (knee-length) or casual slacks, high neck or jewel blouse, casual shirt or sweater, heels or dress shoes.

iii. The wearing of the Army PT uniforms, T-shirts, jeans, shorts, sneakers, tennis shoes, or flip flops is strictly prohibited.

iv. Soldiers who do not wish to wear appropriate job interview attire must wear the Army Combat Uniform (ACU).

v. The grooming standards of AR 670-1 apply to all Soldiers during the course, with the exception that female Soldiers in interview attire may wear hair down and adjust makeup and jewelry to the standards taught during the course.

(4) Not later than five months prior to separation, all Soldiers will complete and submit a finalized resume to SFL-TAP for review/approval by an SFL-TAP Counselor.

(5) Soldiers may participate in any counselor-advised, two-day elective, or non-mandated SFL-TAP hosted/endorsed events. However these events may be adjusted or rescheduled by the chain of command, due to duty schedules; or denied in some cases for operational reasons.

(6) Soldiers within 180-days of separation are authorized to request command approval to participate in one of Fort Bliss's Career Skills Program (CSP). These on-duty, industry-sponsored training programs teach Soldiers valuable skills, and result in the high probability of direct employment upon graduation. Program lengths vary from three to 22-weeks, and are the Soldier's place of Duty. Participation is limited to Soldiers separating under honorable conditions, and requires command signature on the requisite MOU for the course.

(7) Not later than three months prior to separation (90 Days), SFL-TAP will prepare eForm (DD Form 2648) for the Soldier's Commander Signature. This form serves as the Army's official record to document level of compliance with federal law and regulation, to which the commander separated that Soldier from active duty. As a CRS PILOT site, Fort Bliss SFL-TAP will document CRS as related to risk-level on this form.

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(8) In order to clear SFL-TAP, Soldiers must have Commander-signed eForm verification of completion of all requirements for their level of risk, and complete all requirements as provided to them at their initial counseling.

(9) All Soldiers slated to deploy, who will redeploy with less than 12 months remaining on active duty, must complete all statutory pre-separation and individual counseling prior to deployment. Soldiers remaining at home-station will report to SFL-TAP immediately. Soldiers forward-deployed may use virtual means to continue to communicate with their Fort Bliss SFL-TAP Counselors. Immediately upon redeployment, the command will schedule Soldiers with 18 months or less from separation/MRD for SFL-TAP brief and counseling as part of the unit reset process.

5. Getting Soldiers to SFL-TAP and encouraging participation demonstrates our commitment to Soldiers and Families. Assisting them in securing post-military employment not only enables them to avoid financial hardship, it also highlights the value of service in the Army to the Nation and saves millions of dollars in unemployment insurance claims.

6. Expiration. This policy remains in effect until superseded or rescinded.

**“Leaders Build Lethality, We Develop Leaders!”**

JIMMY J. SELLERS  
CSM, USA  
Commandant