

Military Options for Veterans Education

Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Extension

MOVE creates new education and career pathways for military veterans and families, decreasing obstacles to college enrollment and success. The Transition Assistance Programs (TAP) within each military branch provide an opportunity for service members to prepare for post-military life. These sessions are vital for post-service success, but there are gaps and inconsistencies in education advising. This is understandable given the complexities of higher education, but it must be addressed to serve military families as promised.

Veterans note four challenges with TAP:

1. Education **services & advising are individualized** by base and by serving officer.
2. **Service members are left to search hundreds of colleges** and programs because colleges and universities do not provide current information to education officers.
3. No veteran reported receiving education on **how to allocate their GI Bill** education benefits and how they fit in a broader financial planning picture.
4. **Implementation of transition programs is not standardized**, costing some families to take on student debt.

To address these issues, MOVE created **TAP Extension** for active duty service members, veterans, and their families.

TAP Extension

Transition Assistance (TAP) Extension augments the social contract between the Veterans' Administration and military families to support their long-term education and career needs. TAP Extension is modeled after State and University Extension programs, known as the applied, in-person, very best of what universities must be. Our country makes a promise to our veterans, and the "extension" of TAP is a natural fit for what MOVE will achieve.

TAP Extension provides service, accessibility, advising, and planning support to bring education and career planning within the reach of all military families. Our military families need new resources that exceed simply offering more degree options. TAP Extension enables the following:

- **Recognized framework.** TAP Extension, like traditional University Ag Extension, takes services *to* military families, while also offering online tools and programs.
- **Funding structure.** TAP Extension will seek sponsorship for specific education & career initiatives that the military, universities, companies, and nonprofits recognize.
- **Service diversification & expansion.** TAP Extension will start with applied education assistance for training and degrees, growing to serve families across a range of lifelong learning needs.
- **Enhance existing VA services.** TAP Extension services support those at the local level, including assisting current Education Officers, base officers, and Guard personnel.

TAP Extension builds on the Ag Extension founding mission, to remove barriers in getting services and information to help them improve lives. We will serve a new audience, taking the best from both military and higher education cultures.

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Extension Services

The TAP Extension team is building a coalition of people and organizations. We assess military family needs and priorities, collaborate with partners to develop options, and implement solutions. Solutions include:

- 1) **Enrollment assistance and planning.** This includes financial planning, admissions planning, and new post-secondary options to address where needs vary for military families.
- 2) **Military BA/BS degree options with partner institutions.** Degree options (online and in person), where partner institutions offer Military BA/BS majors and award 45-60 credit hours for active duty training and education.
- 3) **Military job to career planning and connections.** We work with Veterans Ascend and other partners to help military families plan for and pursue long-term career options.
- 4) **Recruitment & Retention.** TAP Extension will increase active duty retention by strengthening the social support network for military families.
- 5) **21st Century VFW.** VFW organizations are vital connections for veterans across small towns and large cities. TAP Extension offers a new way to engage with veterans, connect them with services, and create multi-generational communities.

Next Steps

TAP Extension is a multi-faceted, outward facing program dedicated to augmenting military education services to benefit all stakeholders. With MOVE's mission to reduce obstacles for education and career planning, we know there are important tasks to complete with our partners.

Coalition partners. Complex problems require collaboration, innovation, and assessment. We are actively seeking partners nationally dedicated to serving our military communities.

Funding. Our team seeks funding for the TAP Extension pilot project, and we are working with individuals, companies, and foundations. MOVE is a 501(c)3, completing registration in South Carolina

Legislation. Work with Congress and federal agencies like the VA allow us to build long-term solutions into the veteran support ecosystem. Partnerships between institutions and legislators affords MOVE insight into priorities and ways to take solutions to new audiences.