

Chapter 5 – Relocation Assistance

Planning your final move is a critical part of your transition from the military. In this section you will be given a great deal of information and counseling to assist you with this planning. Knowing about the basic procedures and your rights is essential to helping you make informed decisions and ensures your last move will be a smooth one.

A. Choosing Where to Live

Think about where you'd like to live and then consider the realities. For example, if you were a ship navigator during your military career, you could have a difficult time finding a similar job in Idaho. On the other hand, if you were an Army nurse, you may find several excellent opportunities in Idaho's many fine hospitals.

Most career placement specialists recommend that job applicants choose the type of job they want first, *then* go where the jobs are. In making a decision to relocate, you might prioritize as follows:

1. **Job potential:** Which community is most likely to offer job opportunities that match your skills, experience, and career goals?
2. **Affordability:** Consider the not so obvious expenses in addition to the cost of living. Compare local, state income, property, and sales taxes. Does the state tax your military retirement pay? Does the location have income and career potential?
3. **Community:** Do you have family or friends there? Can you count on them to help make your transition easier? Do you need to be close to your aging parents for economic or medical reasons? Are you seeking upward mobility with the potential to move, or are you looking for a community to settle for the long term?
4. **Environment:** Would you be happiest living in a city, the suburbs, a small town, or a rural area? Does the climate suit you?

B. Moving Out of the Area

Before moving consult your nearest Family Center, the best source of relocation information and planning assistance. Other useful resources include local chambers of commerce, libraries, bookstores, and the Internet. Use them to find out what you need in order to make informed moving decisions.

Family Centers

Family Centers can refer you to offices, programs, and services that may be of assistance as you prepare to leave the military. Examples include the Relocation Assistance Program (RAP), the Personal Financial Management Program, Information and Referral, Spouse Employment Assistance Program, and the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).

The term "Family Centers" is used here to refer to the following Service-specific entities:

- **Army:** Army Community Service Center
- **Air Force:** Airman & Family Readiness Center
- **Navy:** Fleet and Family Support Center
- **Marine Corps:** Marine and Family Services

See section C to learn about communities where you might like to live; take advantage of the information and referrals available through Relocation Assistance Program.

Chambers of Commerce

Many communities across America have chambers of commerce. Each chamber of commerce promotes its community and is a good source of information about the surrounding area: the local job market, housing costs, local realtors, cost of living, local taxes, climate, schools and availability of recreation or child care. Ask for the chamber's booklet – much like the relocation packet you received about a new installation when you changed stations.

You can find any chamber of commerce office in the nation at <http://www.chamberofcommerce.com>

Libraries and Bookstores

Each of the Service Library Programs provides electronic content through their respective portals (<http://www.nko.mil>; <http://www.army.mil/ako>; <http://www.my.af.mil>). The electronic content provides information on relocating, career opportunities, and educational opportunities.

The reference section of your nearest **installation library**, public library or bookstore may offer atlases, maps, and geographical information that provide useful information. Tour books and guides in the travel section may provide insights into the community you may someday call home. Military libraries and public libraries also have many other free resources. Libraries also offer customer use computers which can help you keep up to date on the latest news in your new community, apply for a job, check your e-mail, or just chat with friends.

Some helpful websites on following topics:

Relocation:

<http://www.rileyguide.com>

<http://www.relo.usa.com>

<http://www.militaryonesource.com>

Education:

<http://www.voled.doded.mil>

<http://www.collegeboard.com>

<http://education.military.com>

Jobs:

<http://www.ajb.dni.us>

<http://www.acinet.org/acinet>

<http://www.careersingovernment.com>

<http://www.khake.com>

<http://www.military.com/spouse>

Make full use of the library databases that are behind Army Knowledge Online (AKO) – Army personnel only. Go to the "My Library" site under self-service on the first page of AKO. It is easy navigation from there to the library reference databases that will help folks find business information on companies (Newsbank), college information (Peterson's), resume preparation (Peterson's), and help in making financial decisions (Morningstar).

C. Relocation Assistance Program Gives You the “RAP”

Your upcoming relocation is not a normal move; it is your final move out of military life. Specialists within the Relocation Assistance Program want to make sure that you are fully prepared for this unique transition.

RAP services include:

- Needs assessment and planning for individuals and families tailored to their personal circumstances and requirements.
- Extensive automated information on military and civilian communities worldwide can be obtained through the Military Installations and Plan My Move features of MilitaryHOMEFRONT (<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil>). These features provide research and information, housing directories and services, employment, education, health and wellness, and family issues available near military installations.
- Help in developing a relocation plan – providing information specifically related to your unique situation, linking you with special programs, and referring you to other offices that can provide assistance.
- Workshops and individual sessions on managing relocation stress for all family members, planning a moving budget, how to buy, sell, and rent smart, settling into a new community, and a variety of other programs tailored to adults and children.
- Special re-entry services and programs if transitioning from an overseas installation.

A visit to your RAP specialist will help you identify exactly what you need so that you can ask the right questions as you navigate through the rest of the relocation process.

As Soon as You Know Your Departure Date...

Visit the Relocation Assistance Program office at your Family Center. RAP staff will make you a “smart consumer.” They will tell you the questions you need to ask so you can get the most out of your move.

D. Authorized Leave/Permissive Temporary Duty (PTDY) and Travel for Job-Hunters

Under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Military Department concerned may authorize administrative absence for any of the purposes outlined below for Service members:

Participation in pre-separation job search and house hunting activities that facilitate relocation of members. The permissive temporary duty (PTDY) authority to facilitate transition into civilian life for house and job hunting for military members being involuntarily separated under honorable conditions or retiring from active duty is extended indefinitely.

The Secretary concerned:

Shall grant members being discharged or released from active service as involuntary separatees under honorable conditions as defined in section 1141 of Title 10 of the United States Code such excess leave for a period not in excess of 30 days, or such transition PTDY not to exceed 10 days, as members require to facilitate relocation, unless to do so would interfere with military missions; and may authorize for members described above and for those being retired:

- An additional 20 days up to a total of 30 days transition PTDY for those members stationed outside the Continental United States (CONUS).
- An additional 10 days up to a total of 20 days transition PTDY for those members stationed in the CONUS.
- An additional 20 days up to a total of 30 days transition PTDY for those members who were domiciliaries before entering active duty and continue to be domiciliaries of States, possessions or territories of the United States located outside the continental United States (CONUS), including domiciliaries of foreign countries, and are stationed at a location other than the State, possession, territory or country of their domicile. Members may be authorized up to a total of 30 days transition PTDY only for house and job-hunting to the State, territory, possession or country of their domicile.

Regulations permit you to use excess leave or permissive temporary duty (PTDY) in accordance with the following guidance:

- **If you are an eligible involuntary separatee or a retiree:** Your spouse may take one round trip on the military aircraft for house and job hunting, on a space-available basis and unaccompanied by a military spouse.
- **If you are attending a Department of Defense-approved transition assistance seminar:** If you are using excess leave, PTDY, or temporary additional duty to attend the seminar, you are authorized to use military air transportation, if available.
- Service members separating at the end of a normal term of service (ETS – Expiration Term of Service) or (EAOS – End of Active Duty Obligated Service) are not eligible for PTDY.

If you are traveling from overseas to CONUS to attend such a seminar, your spouse can accompany you on military air transportation on a space-available basis. Your spouse is *not* authorized to travel within CONUS.

Unless a service member falls into one of the above categories, he/she is not eligible.

E. Transportation to Your New Home

Once you have chosen your new hometown, you should arrange for transportation counseling.

Schedule an appointment with your installation's Transportation Office as soon as you have your orders. This is extremely important, because the availability of movers is limited.

The reimbursement amount is determined by the regulations pertaining to your particular entitlement. Entitlements vary with individual situations. Your exact entitlement and the time limits for its use will be explained to you during your appointment.

For example: If you are overseas, you may be authorized to ship an automobile to the United States. Motorcycles may be shipped as part of your personal property.

Note: Airline tickets must be purchased from the Commercial Travel Office (CTO) under contract to your respective organization.

For more information, please go to: <https://secureapp2.hqda.pentagon.mil.perdiem/>.

F. Housing

The following is important guidance about making the transition from your old housing to your new.

If you live in government quarters: You must arrange a time for a member of the Housing staff to come to your home to perform a pre-inspection and explain the requirements for cleaning and vacating quarters, as well as options available for you to accomplish them.

If you live in government housing, you must make an appointment with the Housing Office as soon as your departure date is established.

If you are moving from a rental property: Notify your landlord as soon as possible. The Housing Office can assist you with any landlord problems you may have in conjunction with your separation – e.g., breaking a lease or early termination of a lease.

G. Shipment and Storage of Household Goods

The following guidance applies to the shipment and storage of household goods:

- **Eligibility Involuntary Separatees and retirees:** You are authorized storage and shipment of household goods for up to one full year. Your items may be shipped to:
 - Any destination within the United States
 - Your home of record outside the United States - Your home of record is the place you lived when you entered the military.
 - The place from which you were initially called to active duty
- **All Others:** You are authorized storage and shipment of household goods up to six months. Your items may be shipped to which ever of the following points for which you collected separation travel pay:
 - Your home of record - Your home of record is the place you lived when you entered the military.
 - The place from which you were initially called to active duty.

“It’s Your Move”

Be sure to download the latest version of the “It’s Your Move” pamphlet (http://www.usapa.army.mil/pdffiles/p55_2.pdf). It will give you the basic information you need to get started planning your household goods shipment.

H. Special-Needs Family Members

Families with special needs members can find information on the services available in your new hometown through the Family Center, the United Way/Community Chest, the community social services office listed in the local telephone directory, or the closest veterans’ hospital. Information is also available through the “Special Needs” website at <http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/>.