

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Monique K. Hilley, Commander, Navy Installations Command Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- The Transition Assistance Management Program (TAMP) provides a wide-array of services and opportunities to service members preparing to transition out of the military.

"TAMP helps Sailors get ready for civilian life," said Margarita Mason, transition manager, Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling Military and Family Support Center. "For many Sailors, the Navy was either their first job or their only career. TAMP helps these Sailors who have no clue how to adjust to the civilian world and acts as a stepping stone to ensure they are well prepared."

TAMP is one of the many programs offered at Commander, Navy Installations Command's (CNIC) Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSC) worldwide.

Although every Sailor must complete DD Form 2648, Preseparation Counseling Checklist for Active Component Service Members, prior to separating, the form is just a small part of the overarching Transition Assistance Management Program.

While completing DD Form 2648 with a command career counselor, service members will be offered the opportunity to elect to receive counseling on a range of services and benefits, including, but not limited to, the transition assistance program (TAP), employment assistance, relocation assistance, education and training, health and life insurance, finances, reserve affiliation, veterans benefits briefing, disabled veterans benefits, post government service employment restrictions, and developing an individual transition plan (ITP).

DD Form 2648 should be completed one year prior to separation or two years prior to retirement. "Many military members think that TAMP and TAP are the same thing, but they're not," said Mason.

"TAP is a U.S. Department of Labor workshop typically held at Fleet and Family Support Centers. FFSC's own TAMP program goes far beyond just TAP and provides Sailors with opportunities to receive one-on-one counseling, as little or as much as they need, whether they come once or every day, so that they are as prepared as possible to depart the military and enter the civilian workforce."

Once the checklist is complete, service members will use the options they have selected to develop an individual transition plan. This plan is not a military form, it is a plan developed by the Sailor, for the Sailor. The ITP can be used to identify educational, training and employment objectives and to develop a plan to help the service member achieve these objectives.

Many times, a large part of that plan should be to visit the local FFSC to obtain counseling and receive assistance with things such as job fairs, resume writing, financial counseling, relocation counseling, questions about veteran's benefits, and educational benefits and opportunities.

Those departing military service should also be sure to keep their spouse, children and extended family aware of each step of the transition process. Talk with your spouse and help your child deal with issues by listening to their concerns and talking about any fears they may have. By letting family actively participate in the process and allowing them to help, the service member can create a more positive experience for everyone involved.

Mason reiterated that whatever the final goals are, the key to a successful transition is to "start early and plan well."

Those who would like to learn more about the Transition Assistance Management Program should visit their local Fleet and Family Support Center or visit www.nffsp.org.

TAMP is one of many transition benefits available to separating Sailors including those affected by the Enlisted Retention Board (ERB). For the latest ERB information, visit the Navy Personnel Command's ERB Web site at www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/boards/ERB/Pages/default2.aspx.

For more news from Commander, Navy Installations Command, visit www.navy.mil/local/cni/.