



Testimony

Before the Committee on Armed
Services and Veterans' Affairs,
U.S. Senate

For Release on Delivery
Expected at 10:00 a.m. ET
Wednesday, October 18, 2023

MILITARY AND VETERAN SUPPORT

Programs to Help Servicemembers and New Veterans Transition to Civilian Life Could Be Enhanced

Statement of John D. Sawyer, Director, Education,
Workforce, and Income Security

Chairmen Reed and Tester, Ranking Members Wicker and Moran, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss issues regarding servicemembers' transition from military to civilian life. Approximately 200,000 servicemembers go through this transition each year. Helping them overcome challenges that can be related to this transition—such as unemployment, homelessness, mental health issues, and disability-related issues—is essential.

Various federal agencies offer programs to facilitate servicemembers' transition. These include Department of Defense (DOD) programs in which servicemembers can participate even before they plan to leave military service. For example, there are DOD programs that allow servicemembers to obtain credentials related to their military training and skills that will translate into civilian occupations. Once servicemembers decide to leave the military, the mandatory Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is designed to help them access veteran benefits and develop post-transition plans and goals, such as choosing a career path, finding employment, starting a business, or deciding which college or vocational school to attend.¹ In fiscal year 2021, DOD and its interagency partners collectively reported obligating over \$160 million to implement TAP. Finally, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the Solid Start program—an outreach program launched in 2019—to support new veterans during their first year after leaving the military, many of whom face significant difficulties reintegrating into civilian life.

My remarks today are based on GAO's recent body of work on servicemembers' transition to civilian life. In particular, this statement summarizes our recent findings in three areas: (1) DOD's credentialing programs;² (2) implementation of TAP counseling pathways,³ including

¹Under 10 U.S.C. § 1144, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security shall require the participation of servicemembers who are being separated from active duty, with limited exceptions.

²GAO, *Military and Veteran Support: DOD Has Taken Steps to Help Servicemembers Transfer Skills to Civilian Employment but Has Limited Evidence to Determine Program Effectiveness*, [GAO-22-105261](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 17, 2022).

³GAO, *Servicemembers Transitioning to Civilian Life: DOD Can Better Leverage Performance Information to Improve Participation in Counseling Pathways*, [GAO-23-104538](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 12, 2022).

TAP implementation at small or remote installations;⁴ and (3) VA's Solid Start program.⁵ Appendix I of this statement also provides information on the status of recommendations from our recent work in these areas.

To conduct our prior work, we analyzed data and documents from DOD, VA, and the Department of Labor; interviewed relevant agency officials and representatives from selected veterans service organizations; conducted site visits to selected military installations to achieve variation across numbers of transitioning servicemembers, military branch of service, and geographic location; and reviewed relevant federal laws and policies. More detailed information on our scope and methodologies can be found in the published reports.

The work upon which this statement is based was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Credentialing Programs Help Servicemembers Transfer Military Skills to Civilian Employment but Evidence on Effectiveness Is Limited

One of the challenges for servicemembers who transition out of the military is getting civilian employers to recognize their military skills and experience. Our February 2022 report found that DOD has taken steps to help servicemembers mitigate challenges related to transferring military

⁴GAO, *Military Personnel: DOD's Transition Assistance Program at Small or Remote Installations*, [GAO-21-104608](#) (Washington, D.C.: July 21, 2021).

⁵GAO, *Veterans Benefits: VA Could Enhance Outreach for Its Solid Start Program by Increasing Collaboration with Veterans Organizations*, [GAO-23-105699](#) (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 5, 2023).

skills to the civilian workforce.⁶ For example, DOD has developed credentialing programs to help servicemembers voluntarily attain credentials.

- **Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL).** This program helps servicemembers obtain occupational credentials related to their military training and skills and translate them to civilian occupations.⁷ The program’s online platform offers servicemembers information on credentialing opportunities that match their military occupations to civilian occupational credentials. The program may also pay for expenses related to obtaining professional certification—such as books, tuition, and exam fees.
- **United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP).** This hands-on training program allows servicemembers to complete civilian apprenticeship requirements while on active duty and can provide more information to employers on servicemembers’ skills. This formal military training program, which is a registered apprenticeship with the Department of Labor, applies to the trade-related military occupations, such as aviation and construction. According to DOD, documented apprenticeships, such as USMAP, can lead to better job prospects and higher wages for transitioning servicemembers.

We found that while DOD standardized its credentialing programs’ performance measures (e.g., program participation and completion) across the DOD service branches, it did not fully assess the effectiveness of the programs, resulting in an evidence gap. We identified two studies that provided some evidence about the effectiveness of COOL and USMAP but found that DOD did not have current evidence of program

⁶[GAO-22-105261](#).

⁷We use the umbrella term “credentials” to encompass (1) certifications, (2) licenses, and (3) certificates of completion of apprenticeships. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), a certification is a time-limited credential awarded by a non-governmental certification body based on an individual demonstrating, through an examination process, that they have acquired the designated knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform a specific job. It does not convey a legal authority to work in an occupation. According to BLS, a license is a time-limited credential awarded by a governmental licensing agency based on pre-determined criteria. The criteria may include some combination of education, assessments, or work experience. It conveys a legal authority to work in an occupation. According to DOL, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship is a credential that conveys that the apprentice has successfully met the requirements of the apprenticeship program.

effectiveness across all services. Federal standards for internal control state that agencies should use quality information to evaluate their programs.⁸ Additionally, in our prior work, we have noted that federal decision makers need evidence about whether federal programs and activities achieve intended results.⁹ Consequently, we recommended that DOD take steps to develop evidence that would allow it to assess the effectiveness of its credentialing programs. This could help DOD build the evidence needed for effective decision-making and meet its goal of helping servicemembers succeed in the civilian workforce after leaving military service. DOD agreed with this recommendation and plans to complete implementation by May 2025.

TAP Counseling Pathways Have Been Implemented but Many Servicemembers Did Not Attend 2-Day Classes or Begin TAP on Time

TAP Implementation

The John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (Fiscal Year 2019 NDAA) included provisions to improve TAP, such as requiring eligible transitioning servicemembers to meet with a TAP counselor to complete a self-assessment and attend revised core TAP classes as well as tailored 2-day classes.¹⁰ In addition, the Fiscal Year 2019 NDAA required the service branches to establish counseling pathways, which the service branches have done by assigning servicemembers to one of three tiers depending on how prepared they

⁸See GAO, Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government, [GAO-14-704G](#) (Washington, D.C.: September 2014).

⁹See GAO, Evidence-Based Policymaking: Selected Agencies Coordinate Activities, but Could Enhance *Collaboration*, [GAO-20-119](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 4, 2019).

¹⁰Pub. L. No. 115-232, div. A, tit. V, § 552, 132 Stat. 1636, 1769-72 (2018).

are to transition and how much transition support they need.¹¹ Our December 2022 report found that all key components of the TAP counseling pathways had been fully implemented by the DOD service branches.¹² Service branch officials, installation staff, and servicemembers we interviewed generally expressed positive feedback about the TAP counseling pathways, including its tailored approach to better meet servicemembers' needs.

Nonetheless, our July 2021 report found that the small or remote installations in our review experienced some challenges implementing TAP because of their location, size, and the COVID-19 pandemic, according to TAP officials.¹³ These officials reported taking steps, when possible, to mitigate these challenges. For example, officials at six of the nine small or remote installations we met with said that employment opportunities around their installation were limited, which can affect the networking opportunities servicemembers have when searching for post-military employment. To mitigate this challenge, some installation officials have built relationships with local employers to provide networking opportunities to servicemembers. Additionally, at the time of our review, the COVID-19 pandemic had caused the military services to shift to virtual TAP delivery for nearly all servicemembers. At six of the nine small or remote installations in our review, servicemembers also had to complete the VA benefits briefing through self-paced virtual learning. To mitigate this challenge, one installation official said the installation was able to provide servicemembers access to VA information sessions with their local VA office to supplement the self-paced virtual briefing.

2-Day Class Attendance

More than 90 percent of DOD active-duty transitioning servicemembers participated in the TAP counseling pathways from April 2021 through March 2022. However, we found that the DOD service branches had waived attendance in a tailored 2-day class for 53 percent (64,106) of

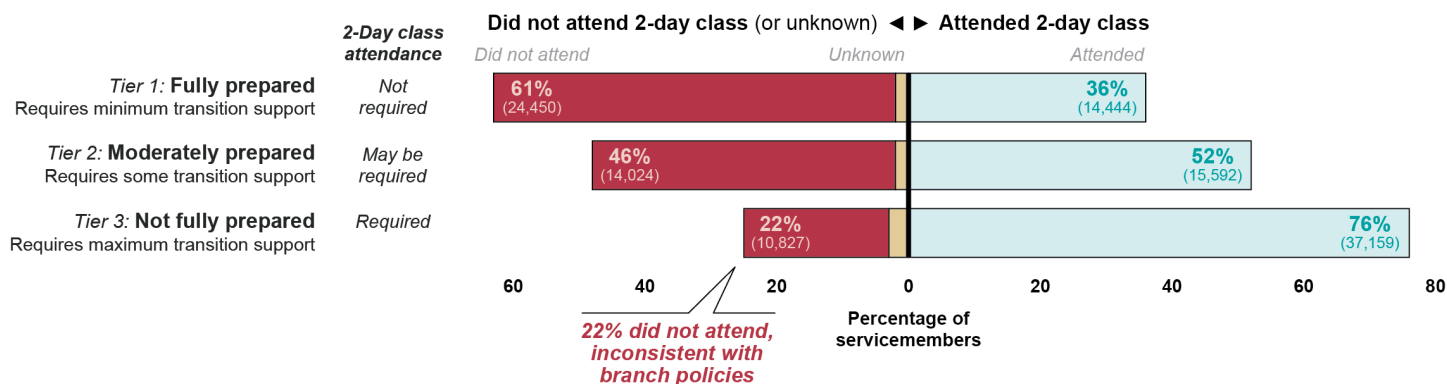
¹¹Servicemembers deemed fully prepared to transition are assigned to tier 1. Those deemed moderately prepared to transition are assigned to tier 2. Finally, servicemembers deemed not fully prepared to transition are assigned to tier 3. Among TAP-eligible servicemembers who left military service between April 1, 2021, and March 31, 2022, the highest proportion (41 percent) were deemed to require maximum transition support and therefore assigned to tier 3.

¹²[GAO-23-104538](#).

¹³[GAO-21-104608](#).

servicemembers who left military service.¹⁴ Service branch TAP policies stipulate that all tier 3 servicemembers—those deemed to require maximum transition support—must attend at least one 2-day class, but we found that nearly 11,000 (22 percent) did not (see fig.1).

Figure 1: 2-Day Class Attendance by Tier, for DOD Active-Duty Servicemembers Who Left Military Service from April 1, 2021, through March 31, 2022



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense (DOD) data. | GAO-24-107083

Note: We considered 2-day class attendance unknown for servicemembers whose eForm (which documents Transition Assistance Program participation data) had not been signed.

Service branch officials cited the following reasons why some tier 3 servicemembers may not have attended a 2-day class as required: the servicemember refused to attend or was unable to attend because of hospitalization; the servicemember was undergoing a medical discharge; the servicemember was deployed immediately before leaving military service; the COVID-19 pandemic affected operations; and levels of command support varied.

Timing of TAP

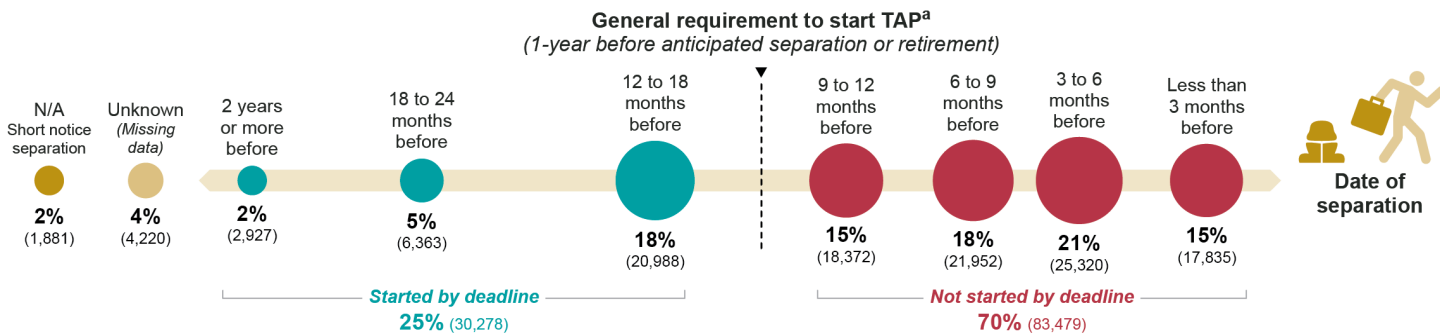
TAP must generally be started at least 1 year before a servicemember leaves military service, but this did not occur for the majority of transitioning servicemembers.¹⁵ Our December 2022 data analysis showed that from April 2021 through March 2022, 25 percent of active-

¹⁴We considered servicemembers' attendance in a 2-day class to have been waived by the Secretary of their military department if: (1) a waiver was documented on the servicemember's eForm or (2) the servicemember was assigned to a tier for which 2-day class attendance is not required under their service branch's policy.

¹⁵Servicemembers facing an unanticipated separation or retirement are to begin TAP as soon as possible within the remaining period of service, according to DOD TAP policy.

duty DOD servicemembers started TAP on time while 70 percent started the program less than 1 year before their anticipated separation or retirement date (see fig. 2).¹⁶ However, the latter group may include some servicemembers not required to meet the 1-year requirement, such as those undergoing unanticipated separations with less than 1 year of service remaining.

Figure 2: Time Frames for Starting the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), for DOD Active-Duty Servicemembers Who Left Military Service from April 1, 2021, through March 31, 2022



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense (DOD) data. | GAO-24-107083

Note: The 1-year time frame does not apply when servicemembers face an unanticipated separation or retirement or, for reserve component members, when demobilization operations make the time frame unfeasible. Therefore, in some cases the requirement may have been met although the servicemember started TAP less than 1 year before separation or retirement. We classified time frames for starting TAP as unknown for servicemembers with unsigned eForms (which document TAP participation data), with anticipated separation dates that preceded their individualized initial counseling dates, or for whom the individualized initial counseling or anticipated separation dates were missing. This figure does not include DOD reserve component servicemembers. The percentages shown for “N/A” and “Unknown” do not add to 5 percent due to rounding.

^aServicemembers start TAP by attending individualized initial counseling.

Service branch officials cited various factors that delay servicemembers’ TAP start dates, including unit mission requirements, unit deployments, servicemembers’ uncertainty about their futures, and lack of awareness of TAP’s requirements among both servicemembers and commanders. In addition, TAP staff we interviewed at the five selected installations in our December 2022 review said timely participation can be challenging when

¹⁶For the remaining servicemembers, the timing of when they started TAP was unknown due to missing data (4 percent) or not applicable because they separated under short notice (2 percent). The percentages for these two categories do not add to 5 percent due to rounding. To analyze how far in advance servicemembers started TAP, we compared the date servicemembers attended individualized initial counseling to their anticipated separation or retirement date as recorded in DOD’s TAP data system. Our analysis should not be used to draw conclusions about the service branches’ legal compliance.

support from servicemembers' immediate command or front-line supervisor is lacking.

Servicemembers who start TAP less than 1 year before separating may face challenges with their transition to civilian life, according to TAP staff we interviewed at the five selected installations for our December 2022 report. For example, TAP staff at one installation said that servicemembers who start TAP late often cannot take advantage of transition resources such as DOD's SkillBridge program that provides on-the-job training opportunities with civilian employers during the last 6 months of military service. Starting TAP late may also hinder servicemembers from applying for disability benefits and obtaining a disability decision before leaving military service, according to some installation TAP officials.¹⁷

While DOD and the service branches collect performance information on 2-day class attendance and timing of TAP participation, we found they had not fully leveraged available data to understand and improve results. This is inconsistent with leading practices for using performance information and with priorities set by the Office of Management and Budget to increase federal agencies' use of data to inform their decision-making.¹⁸ Analyzing TAP attendance and timing performance information could help DOD officials better understand, for example, which tier 3 servicemembers are at greatest risk of not attending a 2-day class or why certain servicemembers start TAP late. Accordingly, we recommended that each of the service branches, in concert with the TAP policy office, better leverage TAP performance information to develop and implement a corrective action plan for improving 2-day class attendance and timeliness of starting TAP. DOD agreed with our recommendations, and

¹⁷Qualifying veterans may be eligible for disability benefit payments for service-connected disabilities. 38 U.S.C. §§ 1101 et seq.

¹⁸GAO has reported that performance information can help decision makers understand and improve results at federal agencies. See GAO, *Evidence-Based Policymaking: Survey Results Suggest Increased Use of Performance Information across the Federal Government*, [GAO-22-103910](#) (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 3, 2021). In that report, GAO identified various actions the executive branch had taken that were intended to improve agencies' use of performance information and other evidence in decision making. For additional information on leading practices for using performance information, see *Managing for Results: Enhancing Agency Use of Performance Information for Management Decision Making*, [GAO-05-927](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 9, 2005).

each service branch has identified planned steps and time frames for implementation ranging from September 2023 to June 2024.

Regarding TAP's effectiveness, DOD and its interagency partners published a TAP evaluation plan in April 2021 that describes ongoing and planned evaluations of TAP's long-term outcomes and effectiveness, according to DOD TAP policy officials.¹⁹ For details on these evaluations, see our December 2022 report.

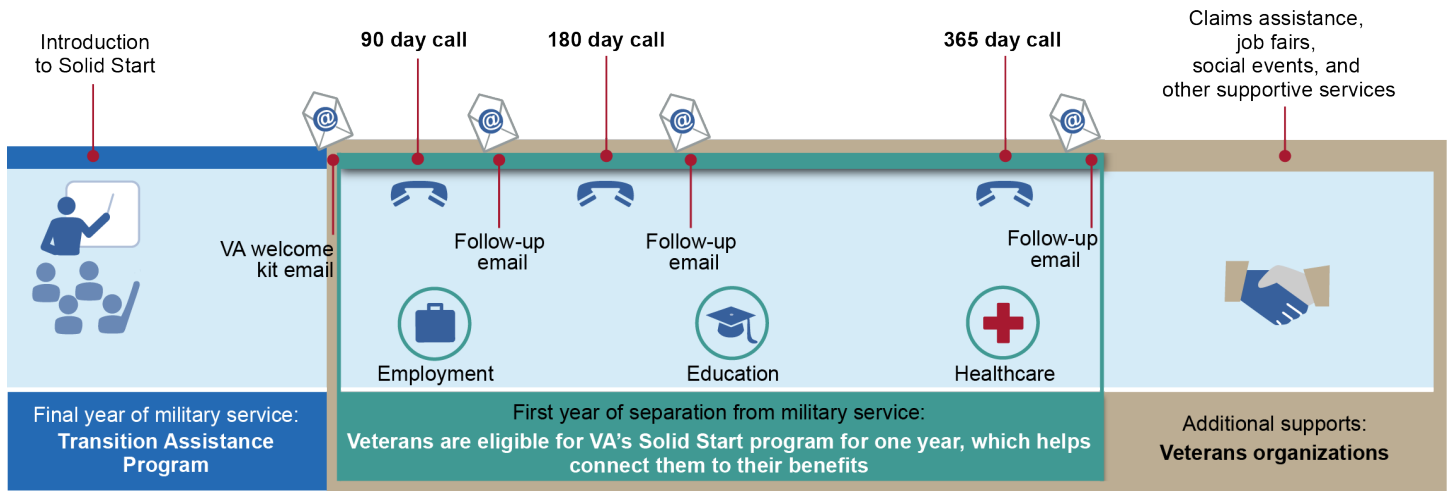
VA Took Steps to Enhance Collaboration with Veterans Organizations for Solid Start

Our January 2023 report found that VA has implemented Solid Start—an outreach program to help support the well-being of new veterans—by proactively phoning all eligible veterans three times during their first year after separation (see fig. 3).²⁰ During phone calls, Solid Start representatives inform veterans of specific VA benefits based on their needs and interests, such as education and employment counseling. Once representatives speak with the veteran, they follow up with a personalized email with more information. If needed, Solid Start representatives may also transfer veterans to specific services during the call, such as the VA Homeless Coordinator and the Veterans Crisis Line—a confidential service for veterans at immediate risk of self-harm.

¹⁹*Transition Assistance Program Interagency Evaluation Plan, Fiscal Year 2021-2025.* Performance Management Work Group officials we interviewed said officials representing the Departments of Defense, Labor, Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security, and Education, the Small Business Administration and Office of Personnel Management serve on the group. The Performance Management Work Group identifies TAP performance measures and collaborates on TAP evaluations, according to these officials.

²⁰[GAO-23-105699](#). Solid Start representatives call and email new veterans with information about their benefits three times: 90, 180, and 365 days after separation.

Figure 3: Examples of Supports for New Veterans, Including Solid Start Communication Milestones



Source: GAO summary of documentation and interviews with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). | GAO-24-107083

Notes: The Transition Assistance Program, with limited exceptions, is a mandatory program that helps separating servicemembers prepare for their transition to civilian life. For the Solid Start program, if VA Solid Start representatives speak with a veteran, they send a personalized follow-up email. Representatives also send general informational emails throughout the year of eligibility. VA continues to offer benefits and resources to veterans after the first year of separation.

Veterans organizations are non-governmental organizations that assist veterans with a range of services.

VA monitors Solid Start's performance by analyzing whether veterans who were successfully contacted used a greater number of benefits than those not contacted. VA data showed that representatives successfully contacted about 71 percent of eligible veterans in 2021, and these veterans used benefits to a greater extent than their peers who did not speak with a Solid Start representative. For example, VA data showed that about 44 percent of veterans who were successfully contacted enrolled in VA health care, compared to about 7 percent of veterans who were not contacted.

Solid Start has had less success, however, reaching certain groups of veterans, such as those under age 23. Additionally, veteran organization representatives said that it might be difficult to contact veterans who are experiencing homelessness, who struggle to use technology, or who underwent traumatic experiences in the military. At the time of our review, VA had not collaborated with veterans organizations to address outreach challenges, even though such organizations are well positioned to connect with hard-to-reach veterans. VA's Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2022 to 2028 states that VA will engage veterans organizations to identify

gaps in service that should be addressed, improve customer service, and build partnerships to leverage shared resources.²¹

In our January 2023 report, we recommended that VA further collaborate with veterans organizations in identifying and addressing outreach gaps, and assessing Solid Start outreach strategies for hard-to-reach groups of veterans. VA has since implemented our recommendation by engaging veterans service organizations and developing a plan to collaborate more regularly. VA also developed additional outreach strategies, including connecting with younger veterans through targeted e-mails and social media. As a result, VA should be able to connect directly with even more veterans and make them aware of their benefits.

In conclusion, servicemembers need support as they transition out of the military. DOD, VA, and other agencies have programs in place to help them. It is crucial that the government ensure that servicemembers are aware of these programs and can take advantage of the services offered. It is also imperative that the government continue to assess program effectiveness and fully analyze the data it collects to understand and improve results. This could enhance servicemembers' ability to benefit from the full range of transition services available to them before leaving military service.

GAO continues to do work in this area. Our ongoing work focuses on several programs aimed at helping servicemembers successfully readjust to civilian life. We plan to issue reports in the next 12 to 18 months on the following studies:

- Mental Health and Suicide Prevention for Transitioning Servicemembers
- TAP Warm Handover Process
- Transition programs for Special Operations Forces

Chairmen Reed and Tester, Ranking Members Wicker and Moran, and Members of the Committees, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

²¹Department of Veterans Affairs, *Fiscal Years 2022-28 Strategic Plan* (Washington, D.C.: April 2022).

GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

If you or your staff have any questions about this testimony, please contact John D. Sawyer at (202) 512-7215 or sawyerj@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this testimony.

In addition to the contact named above, Meeta Engle (Assistant Director), Amy MacDonald (Analyst in Charge), Walker Adams, Yasmine Evans, and Aaron Olszewski made key contributions to this testimony. Also contributing were Holly Dye, James Bennett, Rachael Chamberlin, Kate O'Dea Lamas, and Almeta Spencer.

Appendix I: Status of GAO Recommendations Related to Helping Servicemembers and New Veterans Transition to Civilian Life

Since February 2022, we have made 10 recommendations intended to enhance the transition to civilian life for servicemembers and new veterans (see table 1). VA has fully implemented one of these recommendations. DOD agreed with the other 9 recommendations and has developed a corrective action plan.

Table 1: Status of GAO Recommendations Related to Helping Servicemembers and New Veterans Transition to Civilian Life

No.	GAO report and recommendation number	Recommendation	Recommendation status	Planned or implemented corrective action
1.	GAO-22-105261 February 2022 (Recommendation 1)	The Secretary of Defense should take steps to develop evidence that would allow the Department to assess the effectiveness of its Credentialing Programs.	Open	DOD's target date to implement this recommendation is May 2025, by which time it plans to review, assess, and (if necessary) develop new sources of information to determine the effectiveness of its Credentialing Programs.
2.	GAO-23-104538 December 2022 (Recommendation 1)	The Secretary of the Air Force, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, should better leverage TAP performance information on 2-day class attendance to develop and implement a corrective action plan for improving attendance, as appropriate, particularly for servicemembers deemed to require maximum transition support.	Open	The Air Force's target date to implement this recommendation was September 2023, which includes training TAP counselors and issuing guidance, as appropriate. GAO is in the process of following up on the status of Air Force's actions.
3.	GAO-23-104538 December 2022 (Recommendation 2)	The Secretary of the Army, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, should better leverage TAP performance information on 2-day class attendance to develop and implement a corrective action plan for improving attendance, as appropriate, particularly for servicemembers deemed to require maximum transition support.	Open	The Army's target date to implement this recommendation is June 2024, which includes establishing quarterly reporting of TAP compliance rates and updating current data tracking and reporting tools, as appropriate.

**Appendix I: Status of GAO Recommendations
Related to Helping Servicemembers and New
Veterans Transition to Civilian Life**

No.	GAO report and recommendation number	Recommendation	Recommendation status	Planned or implemented corrective action
4.	GAO-23-104538 December 2022 (Recommendation 3)	The Secretary of the Navy should ensure that the Commandant of the Marine Corps, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, should better leverage TAP performance information on Marine Corps servicemembers' 2-day class attendance to develop and implement a corrective action plan for improving attendance, as appropriate, particularly for servicemembers deemed to require maximum transition support.	Open	The Marine Corps' target date to implement this recommendation is December 2023, which includes reviewing and revising policies, and continued inspections, as appropriate.
5.	GAO-23-104538 December 2022 (Recommendation 4)	The Secretary of the Navy, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, should better leverage TAP performance information on 2-day class attendance to develop and implement a corrective action plan for improving attendance, as appropriate, particularly for servicemembers deemed to require maximum transition support.	Open	The Navy's target date to implement this recommendation was September 2023, which includes exploring options to improve tracking and reporting, and to recommence area site visits and counselor training. GAO is in the process of following up on the status of Navy's actions.
6.	GAO-23-104538 December 2022 (Recommendation 5)	The Secretary of the Air Force, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, should better leverage TAP performance information on when servicemembers begin initial and pre-separation counseling to develop and implement a corrective action plan to improve timeliness.	Open	The Air Force's target date to implement this recommendation is March 2024, which includes developing field communication messages about TAP's timeliness requirement and assessing the feasibility of creating automated notifications of the servicemember's separation date.

**Appendix I: Status of GAO Recommendations
Related to Helping Servicemembers and New
Veterans Transition to Civilian Life**

No.	GAO report and recommendation number	Recommendation	Recommendation status	Planned or implemented corrective action
7.	GAO-23-104538 December 2022 (Recommendation 6)	The Secretary of the Army, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, should better leverage TAP performance information on when servicemembers begin initial and pre-separation counseling to develop and implement a corrective action plan to improve timeliness.	Open	The Army's target date to implement this recommendation is June 2024, which includes establishing quarterly reporting of TAP timeliness rates and updating current data tracking and reporting tools, as appropriate.
8.	GAO-23-104538 December 2022 (Recommendation 7)	The Secretary of the Navy should ensure that the Commandant of the Marine Corps, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, should better leverage TAP performance information on when Marine Corps servicemembers begin initial and pre-separation counseling to develop and implement a corrective action plan to improve timeliness.	Open	The Marine Corps' target date to implement this recommendation is December 2023, which includes reviewing and revising policies, continued inspections, and maximizing strategic communication efforts to improve awareness of timeliness requirements.
9.	GAO-23-104538 December 2022 (Recommendation 8)	The Secretary of the Navy, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, should better leverage TAP performance information on when servicemembers begin initial and pre-separation counseling to develop and implement a corrective action plan to improve timeliness.	Open	The Navy's target date to implement this recommendation was September 2023, which includes analyzing reasons why servicemembers did not meet the timeliness requirement and to re-commence area site visits and counselor training. GAO is in the process of following up on the status of Navy's actions.
10.	GAO-23-105699 January 2023 (Recommendation 1)	The VA's Under Secretary for Benefits should collaborate with veterans organizations, such as VSOs, in identifying and addressing any outreach gaps, and assessing Solid Start outreach strategies for hard-to-reach groups of veterans.	Closed—Implemented	VA implemented an updated VSO engagement plan for more regular and recurring collaboration to ensure VSOs have the necessary training, information, and tools to promote Solid Start. VA also conducted additional outreach to connect with younger veterans through targeted e-mails and social media.

Source: GAO | GAO-24-107083

This is a work of the U.S. government and is not subject to copyright protection in the United States. The published product may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without further permission from GAO. However, because this work may contain copyrighted images or other material, permission from the copyright holder may be necessary if you wish to reproduce this material separately.

GAO's Mission

The Government Accountability Office, the audit, evaluation, and investigative arm of Congress, exists to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the American people. GAO examines the use of public funds; evaluates federal programs and policies; and provides analyses, recommendations, and other assistance to help Congress make informed oversight, policy, and funding decisions. GAO's commitment to good government is reflected in its core values of accountability, integrity, and reliability.

Obtaining Copies of GAO Reports and Testimony

The fastest and easiest way to obtain copies of GAO documents at no cost is through our website. Each weekday afternoon, GAO posts on its [website](#) newly released reports, testimony, and correspondence. You can also [subscribe](#) to GAO's email updates to receive notification of newly posted products.

Order by Phone

The price of each GAO publication reflects GAO's actual cost of production and distribution and depends on the number of pages in the publication and whether the publication is printed in color or black and white. Pricing and ordering information is posted on GAO's website, <https://www.gao.gov/ordering.htm>.

Place orders by calling (202) 512-6000, toll free (866) 801-7077, or TDD (202) 512-2537.

Orders may be paid for using American Express, Discover Card, MasterCard, Visa, check, or money order. Call for additional information.

Connect with GAO

Connect with GAO on [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).
Subscribe to our [RSS Feeds](#) or [Email Updates](#). Listen to our [Podcasts](#).
Visit GAO on the web at <https://www.gao.gov>.

To Report Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in Federal Programs

Contact FraudNet:

Website: <https://www.gao.gov/about/what-gao-does/fraudnet>

Automated answering system: (800) 424-5454 or (202) 512-7700

Congressional Relations

A. Nicole Clowers, Managing Director, ClowersA@gao.gov, (202) 512-4400, U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7125, Washington, DC 20548

Public Affairs

Chuck Young, Managing Director, youngc1@gao.gov, (202) 512-4800
U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7149
Washington, DC 20548

Strategic Planning and External Liaison

Stephen J. Sanford, Managing Director, spel@gao.gov, (202) 512-4707
U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7814,
Washington, DC 20548

