

U.S. Government Customer Experience CAP Goal

April 2019 / version 5.1

Pilot: Cross-Government Journey Map Service Member Transition to Civilian Employment

What is this pilot?

The President's Management Agenda (PMA), Cross Agency Priority (CAP) Goal on Customer Experience and the proposal for a central CX capability in the Reform and Reorganization Plan recognized the need to understand Government-wide journeys navigating Federal services from the user perspective. Whereas Government agencies execute their missions based on their specific authorities and responsibilities, customers tend to experience Government across stovepipes. To model this approach, the CX CAP Goal Team is facilitating interagency collaboration to document journeys of U.S. Government customers.

What should I know about journey maps?

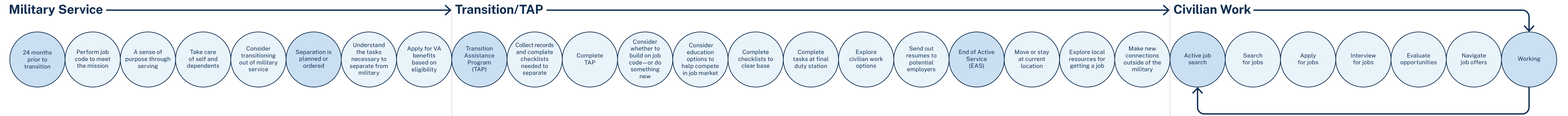
Journey maps are living documents—continually refined and revisited. There is never a "final" version, and these maps are meant to serve as a summary of the voices of actual customers of U.S. Government services. A map may not precisely document the way a Government program is meant to be navigated, accessed, or used. It might not capture every government program or resource available to a customer segment. However, it is the product of a qualitative research approach to gather insights from customers' actual experiences. These findings can help us identify areas for high-impact improvements across delivery channels and organizational silos.

What is this map about?

Veteran employment is a big topic within the national narrative about service members and their transition to the labor force. The design team's research focused on a subset of the veteran population, one that represents a range of people, situations, and experiences. Some people had smooth transitions and some did not. This spectrum represents the employment transition for a subset of service members and highlights several key themes that are dominant and forefront in the personal stories of those whom we interviewed. This map and these findings are a composite of the design team's Human-Centered Design qualitative research.

Citizen Journey

Military service to employment as a civilian.
 ○ Key moments
 ○ Actions (may be non-linear and continuous)



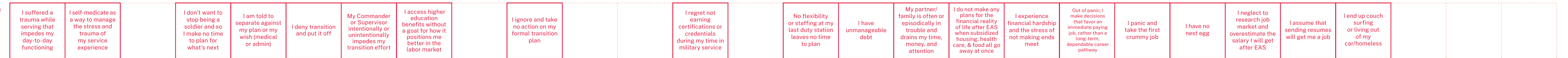
Transition Building Blocks

The boxes to the right represent an aggregation of positive actions we learned of taken by service members who built a smooth pathway for themselves to the labor force.



Transition Barriers

The boxes to the right represent an aggregation of obstructions we learned of faced by service members that affected their ability to smoothly transition to the labor force.



Fed. Agency Supports

Federal programs identified are those that were most consistently mentioned in interviews and/or are core to this journey. Many other programs, services, and informational resources likely exist.
 ED Department of Education plays an advisory role in the TAP transformation initiative



Perspective

Transition Data

Transitioning service members	
2017 total	290,133
- Enlisted	250,000
- Officer	39,865
- Unknown	238
- Active duty only	97,837
- Active duty, Reserve, Nat. Guard	46,695
- Unknown	7,476

Source for National Center for Veteran Analysis & Statistics, Office of Data Governance and Analytics: <https://www.data.gov/dataset/demographic-characteristics-veterans-who-separated-2011-and-2017>

Transitioning service members

VOW Act mandates 100% of service members participate in TAP program, with some exceptions.

In 2016, DOD met its goal of 85% of eligible active duty service members participating in TAP. That year, **159,157** active duty service members transitioned out of the services.

- 85% Participated in TAP (135,208)
- 12% Status unknown—missing data (19,802)
- 3% Did not participate in TAP (4,147)

Source for VOW Act: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2011/01/26/2011-01-26-the-veterans-opportunity-to-work-act>
 Source for TAP Compliance data — November, 2017 GAO Report to Congressional Requesters: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/690/688203.pdf>
 Source for Military and Veteran Support, Detailed Inventory of Federal Programs to Help Service Members Achieve Civilian Employment — January, 2019 GAO Report: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/696499.pdf>

Research Data/Demographics

Qualitative interviews conducted	
Transitioned service members	25
- Branches: Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard	
- Age range at separation: 22-47 / Average age: 32	
- 21 Enlisted and 4 Officers	
- Average years of service: 10	
- Male: 14, female: 11	
- Various races and ethnicities represented	
- Voluntary separation: 19, non-voluntary separation: 6	
- Enlisted rank: E4-E8	

Agency representatives	
	18
- Department of Defense (DOD)	
- Department of Labor (DOL)	
- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)	
- Office of Personnel Management (OPM)	
- Small Business Administration (SBA)	
- Department of Education (ED)	
- Consumer Finance & Protection Bureau (CFPB)	

Subject matter experts	
	10
- Hiring Our Heroes, Chamber of Commerce	
- Source America	
- VA Virginia Advisory Board	
- Former U.S. Chief Technology Officer	
- Nonprofit organizations that hire veterans	
- TAP instructor	
- Veteran advocate	

Findings & Opportunities

Theme 1

Service members are often unfamiliar with the civilian work force. For many, a military career is all they know—so they may require support in learning to align their military skillset to the needs of today's civilian jobs.

“I applied for 48 to 49 jobs. Many interviews reached the second or third level and wouldn't go anywhere. There was a combo of naïveté and hubris. My connections weren't deep enough or focused enough.”
 — Sean, Veteran

I thought I would get out [of the military] and [a defense contractor] would throw a hundred thousand dollar job at me...I ended up stocking shelves at a supermarket.
 — Quinton, Veteran

How Might We: Help service members prepare for a labor force they have had no prior experience with?

Theme 2

Well-designed bridge programs help service members learn the ropes of the civilian workforce in a low-stakes, low-cost way.

“There are many fellowships for transitioning service members — [private companies], Hiring Our Heroes, government, and more. These are great because they introduce you to people who can help you once you get out [of the military].”
 — Mike, Veteran

I work as a mentor to new veterans. I see a lot of veterans who are very, very smart but they just don't have the soft skills.
 — Tahlia, Veteran

How Might We: Make service members aware of and recognize the value of bridge programs as a valuable “first step” towards their civilian career pathway?

Theme 3

Service members who most strongly affiliate their sense of identity and purpose with the military encounter challenges and also opportunities during separation.

“I was in no way ready to hang up my boots... All I ever knew was military.”
 — Joshua, Veteran

[When I was told to separate] I went into meltdown because I planned to serve until retiring.
 — Eli, Veteran

How Might We: Prepare service members who do not want to give up their identity as a warrior for a new role in civilian life?

Theme 4

Accredited certification programs can help service members build their credentials in a certain trade before they transition to the labor force.

“I've helped a lot of my men get Lean Six Sigma and Project Management certifications and I think that will give them an edge once they [get into the labor force]...I wish someone had done the same for me.”
 — Daniel, Retiring Officer

If you don't have the right certification, that knocks you out of the running for about a third of the jobs in our market right now.
 — Staff with American Job Center

How Might We: Make accredited and respected certification programs more readily available to service members early on who might benefit from them once they enter the labor force?

Theme 5

A Commander or Supervisor has an outsized influence on whether the service member is granted the time, space, and acceptance to pursue their personal career transition.

“My Supervisor saw TAP as an inconvenience. Like, ‘Oh god, you are going to be out for a week’...it was like my Supervisor resented me for even going.”
 — Tahlia, Veteran

Sometimes, a service member is just afraid of asking [their commander] whether they can take the time to do transition work.
 — Mike, Veteran

How Might We: Better understand the barriers that prevent Commanders or Supervisors from supporting service members in their transition to civilian careers?

Theme 6

Many enlisted service members have little experience managing a civilian budget that does not include subsidies for food, housing, and health care. Financial hardship may lead them to take the first job offered, which is likely to have ripple effects across their careers.

“[While they are serving]... housing is taken out. [Service members] don't even see the cost. Food, taken out. Health care, taken out. They have no idea about the actual cost of things.”
 — Marie, Veteran

It took me months, after I got out, to figure out how to manage money so that I covered my bills...I didn't know about electricity bill going up in the winter or unexpected medical bills.
 — Cory, Veteran

How Might We: Prepare service members to budget and prepare for life after EAS, where all housing, health care, and food subsidies go away at once and dramatically?

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What is this map about?

Veteran employment is a big topic within the broad domain of service member to civilian transition. The design team’s research focused on a subset of the veteran population, one that represents a range of people, situations, and experiences. Some people had smooth transitions and some did not. This spectrum represents the employment transition for a subset of service members and highlights several key themes that are dominant and forefront in the personal stories of those whom we interviewed. This map and these themes are a composite of the design team’s Human-Centered Design qualitative research.

Journey Line

The service member and veteran journey line spans military service to employment as a civilian. The visual journey line includes key moments and actions taken.

- Moments and actions in the military service phase of the journey
 - 24 months prior to transition
 - Perform job code to meet the mission
 - A sense of purpose through serving
 - Take care of self and dependents
 - Consider transitioning out of military service
 - Separation is planned or ordered
 - Understand the tasks necessary to separate from military
 - Apply for VA benefits based on eligibility
- Moments and actions in the transition and TAP phase of the journey
 - Transition Assistance Program (TAP)
 - Collect records and complete checklists needed to separate
 - Complete TAP
 - Consider whether to build on job code—or do something new
 - Consider education options to help compete in job market
 - Complete checklists to clear base
 - Complete tasks at final duty station
 - Explore civilian work options
 - Send out resumes to potential employers

- End of Active Service (EAS)
- Move or stay at current location
- Explore local resources for getting a job
- Make new connections outside of the military
- Moments and actions in the civilian work phase of the journey
 - Active job search
 - Search for jobs
 - Apply for jobs
 - Interview for jobs
 - Evaluate opportunities
 - Navigate job offers
 - Working

Transition Building Blocks

The statements in this section represent an aggregation of positive actions we learned of taken by service members who built a smooth pathway for themselves to the labor force.

- Building blocks in the military service phase of the journey
 - I identify my career interests and explore pathways to get there
 - I pursue certification or other education credentials that advance my skills *within* my job code
 - I pursue certification or other education credentials that advance my skills *outside* my job code
 - I build a network that will support me during my transition to the labor force and civilian life
 - I prepare financially for the future (nest egg + paying off debt)
 - I accept my coming transition and actively take steps to prepare for it
 - My Commander or Supervisor serves as a trusted & helpful resource for my transition
 - I prepare my GI Bill paperwork to get certification and training after EAS
- Building blocks in the transition and TAP phase of the journey
 - I activate my Individual Transition Plan
 - I take stock of my formal and informal skills gained in service
 - I am clear about my future pathway and I am learning which federal resources help take me there
 - I learn from TAP and pursue the resources shared during TAP
 - I learn where I fit into the civilian job market
 - I attend job fairs
 - I practice communicating my value for a civilian workplace audience
 - I learn and practice civilian workplace culture
 - I have the staffing and flexibility at my last duty station that allow me to plan my transition
 - I attend interviews for opportunities
 - I do an internship, fellowship, or apprenticeship
 - I cultivate a career-related network inside and outside of the military to support my plan
 - I craft a reality-based budget for after separation
 - My partner is doing well and can carry us through some financially tight times
 - I take time off to decompress
 - I go to my American Job Center for help
 - I work with VR&E and American Job Centers to find the right job match
 - I find a trusted and healthy support community, including other veterans
 - I connect with Veteran Service Organizations
- Building blocks in the civilian work phase of the journey
 - I find networks linked to my civilian career interest
 - I use USAJOBS.GOV
 - I use LinkedIn.com, Monster.com, Indeed.com
 - I apply for a job, apprenticeship, fellowship, or internship
 - I attend job interviews
 - I turn down job offers that don’t take me where I want to be and wait to accept the jobs that do take me there
 - I take a job to pay bills while earning education credentials that will help put me on my preferred career pathway
 - I think about the next, better job that I want

Transition Barriers

The in this section represent an aggregation of obstructions we learned of faced by service members that affected their ability to smoothly transition to the labor force.

- Barriers in the military service phase of the journey
 - I suffered a trauma while serving that impedes my day-to-day functioning
 - I self-medicate as a way to manage the stress and trauma of my service experience
 - I don’t want to stop being a soldier and so I make no time to plan for what’s next
 - I am told to separate against my plan or my wish (medical or admin)

- I deny transition and put it off
- My Commander or Supervisor intentionally or unintentionally impedes my transition effort
- I access higher education benefits without a goal for how it positions me better in the labor market
- Barriers in the transition and TAP phase of the journey
 - I ignore and take no action on my formal transition plan
 - I regret not earning certifications or credentials during my time in military service
 - No flexibility or staffing at my last duty station leaves no time to plan
 - I have unmanageable debt
 - My partner or family is often or episodically in trouble and drains my time, money, and attention
 - I do not make any plans for the financial reality of life after EAS when subsidized housing, health care, and food all go away at once
 - I experience financial hardship and the stress of not making ends meet
 - Out of panic, I make decisions that favor an immediate paying job, rather than a long-term, dependable career pathway
 - I panic and take the first crummy job
- Barriers in the civilian work phase of the journey
 - I have no nest egg
 - I neglect to research job market and overestimate the salary I will get after EAS
 - I assume that sending resumes will get me a job
 - I end up couch surfing or living out of my car; homeless

Federal Agency Supports

Federal programs identified are those that were most consistently mentioned in interviews and/or are core to this journey. Many other programs, services, and informational resources likely exist.

- Department of Defense (DOD)
 - Individual Transition Plan
 - Earn a degree or certification(s) while serving
 - COOL: All branches (Credentialing Opportunities Online)
 - Conversations with Commander about civilian transition
 - MOC Crosswalk
 - Pre-Separation Counseling
 - Financial Planning and Resiliency
 - Career Readiness Standards
 - Accessing Higher Education
 - Capstone Event
 - Warm handover for some service members to DOL and VA
- Joint Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Labor (DOL)
 - Skill development outside MOS
 - Visit the Career Center
- Department of Labor (DOL)
 - Employment Workshop
 - Career Exploration & Planning
 - American Job Centers
- Department of Veterans Affairs
 - Military Life Cycle modules are available to service members throughout their career
 - VA Benefits and Services (GI Bill)
 - Individual Assistance
 - VA career and employment resources
- Office of Personnel Management (OPM)
 - Federal Employment Seminar
 - USAJOBS.GOV
- Small Business Administration (SBA)
 - Boots 2 Business
- Department of Education (ED)
 - Agency plays an advisory role in the TAP transformation initiative

Findings & Opportunities

Theme 1

- Service members are often unfamiliar with the civilian work force. For many, a military career is all they know—so they may require support in learning to align their military skillset to the needs of today’s civilian jobs.
- Veteran quotes from the research:
 - “I applied for 48 to 49 jobs. Many interviews reached the second or third level and wouldn’t go anywhere. There was a combo of naiveté and hubris. My connections weren’t deep enough or focused enough.” – *Sean, Veteran*
 - “I thought I would get out [of the military] and [a defense contractor] would throw a hundred thousand dollar job at me....I ended up stocking shelves at a supermarket.” – *Quinton, Veteran*

How might we statement for theme 1

How Might We: Help service members prepare for a labor force they have had no prior experience with?

Theme 2

- Well-designed bridge programs help service members learn the ropes of the civilian workforce in a low-stakes, low-cost way.
- Veteran quotes from the research:
 - “There are many fellowships for transitioning service members — [private companies], Hiring Our Heroes, government, and more. These are great because they introduce you to people who can help you once you get out [of the military].” – *Mike, Veteran*
 - “I work as a mentor to new veterans. I see a lot of veterans who are very, very smart but they just don’t have the soft skills.” – *Tahlia, Veteran*

How might we statement for theme 2

How Might We: Make service members aware of—and recognize the value of—bridge programs as a valuable “first step” towards their civilian career pathway?

Theme 3

- Service members who most strongly affiliate their sense of identity and purpose with the military are more likely to encounter challenges during separation.
- Veteran quotes from the research:
 - “I was in no way ready to hang up my boots....All I ever knew was military.” – *Joshua, Veteran*
 - “[When I was told to separate] I went into meltdown because I planned to serve until retiring.” – *Eli, Veteran*

How might we statement for theme 3

How Might We: Prepare service members who do not want to give up their identity as a warrior for a new role in civilian life?

Theme 4

- Accredited certification programs can help service members build their credentials in a certain trade before they transition to the labor force.
 - Veteran quotes from the research:
 - “I’ve helped a lot of my men get Lean Six Sigma and Project Management certifications and I think that will give them an edge once they [get into the labor force]....I wish someone had one the same for me.” – *Daniel, Retiring Officer*
 - “If you don’t have the right certification, that knocks you out of the running for about a third of the jobs in our market right now.” – *Staff with American Job Center*
- How might we statement for theme 4*
- How Might We:* Make accredited and respected certification programs more readily available to service members early on who might benefit from them once they enter the labor force?

Theme 5

- A Commander or Supervisor has an outsized influence on whether the service member is granted the time, space, and acceptance to pursue their personal career transition.
 - Veteran quotes from the research:
 - “My Supervisor saw TAP as an inconvenience. Like, ‘Oh god, you are going to be out for a week’....it was like my Supervisor resented me for even going.” – *Tahlia, Veteran*
 - “Sometimes, a service member is just afraid of asking [their commander] whether they can take the time to do transition work.” – *Mike, Veteran*
- How might we statement for theme 5*
- How Might We:* Better understand the barriers that prevent commanders or supervisors from supporting service members in their transition to civilian careers?

Theme 6

- Many enlisted service members are novices at managing their own budgets. Financial hardship may lead service members to take the first job available, which has ripple effects across career.
- Veteran quotes from the research:
 - “[While they are serving]... housing is taken out. [Service members] don’t even see the cost. Food, taken out. Health care, taken out. They have no idea about the actual cost of things.” – *Marie, Veteran*
 - “It took me months, after I got out, to figure out how to manage money so that I covered my bills....I didn’t know about electricity bill going up in the winter or unexpected medical bills.” – *Cory, Veteran*

How might we statement for theme 6

How Might We: Prepare service members to budget and prepare for life after EAS, where all housing, health care, and food subsidies go away—at once—and dramatically?

Transition Data

- Transitioning Service Members
 - 290,133 total transitioning service members in 2017
 - 250,000 Enlisted
 - 39,865 Officer
 - 238 Unknown
 - 97,837 Active duty only
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Source for National Center for Veteran Analysis & Statistics, Office of Data Governance and Analytics

- Transitioning service members
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 - In 2016, DOD met its goal of 85% of eligible active duty service members participating in TAP. That year, 159,157 active duty service members transitioned out of the services.
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Research Data & Demographics

Qualitative Interviews Conducted

- We spoke to 25 transitioned service members
 - Branches: Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard
 - Age range at separation is 22-47 years old. Average age of participants is 32 years old
 - 21 Enlisted and 4 Officers
 - Average years of service is 10 years
 - 14 male participants and 11 female participants
 - Various races and ethnicities represented
 - 19 had voluntary separation and 6 had non-voluntary separation
 - Enlisted rank: E4-E8
- We spoke to 18 representatives from federal agencies. Agencies included:
 - Department of Defense (DOD)
 - Department of Labor (DOL)
 - Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
 - Office of Personnel Management (OPM)
 - Small Business Administration (SBA)
 - Department of Education (ED)
 - Consumer Finance & Protection Bureau (CFPB)
- We spoke to 10 subject matter experts, including:
 - Hiring Our Heroes, Chamber of Commerce
 - Source America
 - VA Virginia Advisory Board
 - Former U.S. Chief Technology Officer
 - Nonprofit organizations that hire veterans
 - TAP instructor
 - Veteran advocate