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JOINT SERVICES ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON THE TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP) TRIP REPORT

SITE VISIT: Navy Submarine Base, Kings Bay, GA

DATES: 21-22 January 2010

HOST ORGANIZATION POINTS OF CONTACT:

(b)(6) – Navy Region Southeast Work and Family Life Coordinator
Ms. Debra Lucas, Director – Navy Fleet & Family Support Program, Kings Bay, GA

VISIT OVERVIEW:

Engage in dialog and briefings by representatives of military installations to:

- Determine the degree of engagement and collaboration with joint service providers;
- Obtain a ground assessment of partner agency or VSO initiatives;
- Integration of TAP services with WII and family members;
- Integration of TAP services for demobilizing National Guard, Reserves, and family members;
- Local initiatives to advance hiring of veterans in federal sector employment
- Determine challenges in delivering TAP services

PARTICIPATION:

Staffs from TAP service delivery locations representing the following military installations were present:

- Army ACAP Ft. Stewart, GA
- MCB Camp Lejeune, NC
- NS Mayport, FL
- NAS Jacksonville, FL
- NSB Kings Bay, GA
- Moody AFB, GA

INTERFACE WITH LOCAL LEADERSHIP

- Office call on RADL Tim Alexander, Commander, Navy Region Southeast
- Office call on (b)(6), CO, NSB Kings Bay, GA
- Office call on (b)(6), CO, NAS Jacksonville, FL
- Membership of NSB Kings Bay Ombudsman Advisory Council
 - Consists of CO/XO, senior NCO and Ombudsmen of all commands in Kings Bay, GA (approximately 65 members)



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COMMAND BRIEFS

Ft. Stewart, GA

Provided by [REDACTED] – ACAP Transition Services Manager

- Troop Strength = 26,010 (includes Division, Non-Division and Tennant Units)
- Classroom interaction for entire TAP process last 3 days.
- Loss classroom space (Club) due to funding reduction; now in temporary space
- Impacted by lack of senior NCO understanding of ACAP eligibility
- Soldiers not afforded adequate opportunities to utilize all available services
- Limited to no interface with WII; extremely limited opportunity for service delivery to demobilizing Guard/Reserve
- Limited interface with Recovery Care Program; did not know assigned RCP staff
- Unanticipated losses (chapters) not referred early enough or permitted to participate beyond pre-separation counseling
- Timeline for transition processing reduced from 90 to 60 days and limits Soldier's ability to receive requested ACAP services while still on active duty

MCB Camp Lejeune, NC

Provided by [REDACTED] – Employment Assistance Manager

- Troop Strength = 45,000 – 50,000 (includes Division, Non-Division and Tennant Units)
- Classroom interaction for entire TAP lasts 5 days; consists of 3 core days plus 2 service specific days
- VA Benefits Briefing not consistently delivered IAW National MOU
- DTAP Briefing done by VA at Navy Hospital in conjunction with PEBLO briefings
- Insufficient time allotted for TAP assistance to demobilizing Reserves; service beyond pre-separation extremely rare
- Exporting of TAP workshops to Wounded Warrior Battalion begins Feb 2010
- Collaboration with RCC's established; formulating processes and procedures
- Class size for TAP exceeds classroom capacity
- Limited 1-on-1 assistance provided; lack of childcare cited as primary inhibitor for spouse participation



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Moody AFB, GA

Provided by Mr. Eric Pedersen - Airmen and Family Readiness Center Chief

- Troop Strength = 27,000 (includes Division, Non-Division and Tennant Units); average 156 Reservists assigned
- Approximately 400 Airmen separate/retire annually
- Classroom interaction for entire TAP lasts 3.5 days; additional stand-alone workshops on resume writing and interviewing techniques routinely provided
- Limited to no interaction with WII population; no interaction with Recovery Care Program
- Challenged to identify anticipated TAP customers earlier in career cycle
- Expressed challenges in following up with clients after initial TAP interface

NS MAYPORT, FL

Presented by (b)(6) – Work and Family Life Professional

- Troop Strength = Over 18,000 active duty; 3,900 retirees; 12,254 family members (includes Division, Non-Division and Tennant Units); 3rd largest Navy facility in continental United States
- Classroom interaction for entire TAP lasts 4 days; consists of 3 core days plus 1 service specific day
- Additional stand-alone workshops on resume writing and interviewing techniques routinely provided
- Limited to no interaction with WII population; no interaction with Recovery Care Program (none assigned)
- No ownership of TAP classroom facility
- Requirement for constant mission readiness impacts their ability to support transition needs of their Sailors; competing interests – mission win; Sailors lose
- Ships send Sailors to TAP workshops after standing overnight watches; fatigue and inability to remain awake impacts ability to learn



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NAS JACKSONVILLE, FL

Presented by (b)(6) – Work and Family Life Professional

- Troop Strength = Over 10,683 active duty; over 31,000 family members (includes Division, Non-Division and Tennant Units)
- CY-09 TAP attendees totaled 1,132
- Classroom interaction for entire TAP lasts 4 days; consists of 3 core days plus 1 service specific day
- Additional stand-alone workshops on resume writing and interviewing techniques routinely provided
- Provides targeted audience TAP workshops (E6 and below; retiree; E7-07)
- Challenges include:
 - Commands not allowing participation until last 30 days prior to separation
 - Commands require personnel to work normal shifts or stand watches in addition to attending workshops during the day
 - External appointments during TAP workshops requires frequent absences
- Engagement with WII population not defined
- Routinely provides career development and career change strategies workshops throughout the entire military lifecycle; workshops well attended

NSB KINGS (NSB)

Presented by (b)(6) – Supervisory Work and Family Life Professional

- Troop Strength = Over 5,200 Active duty; 4,194 military retirees. In excess of 48,689 DoD personnel, families, civilians, contractors, and visiting NATO forces
- Classroom interaction for entire TAP lasts 4 days; consists of 3 core days plus 1 service specific day
- Additional stand-alone workshops on resume writing, interviewing techniques, personal financial management provided routinely throughout each month
- Limited to no interaction with WII population; no interaction with Recovery Care Program (none assigned)
- Major challenges with ageing DoL TAP facilitators; many are physically not capable of long-term standing for facilitation. Readdress to Regional DoL staff in Atlanta, GA producing minimal results
- Limited assistance from installation HR staff on federal hiring initiative
- Spouse participation in TAP workshops very minimal despite providing childcare



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NAVY SAFE HARBOR PROGRAM – NAVAL HOSPITAL, JACKSONVILLE, FL
HMCS (b)(6) – Non-Medical Care Manager

- Extremely low population of hospitalized wounded, ill, or injured
- Majority of case load is out-patient status assigned in limited duty status at various shore duty commands on the installation
- Staff not familiar with the content or processes associated with TAP, although referrals routinely made
- Not familiar with requirements of pre-separation counseling or documentation procedures
- Thrust of their efforts centrally focused on advocacy for benefits
- VA staff member and PEBLO jointly delivery DTAP briefing and MEB/PEB processing familiarization brief
- Typical process waits for PEB decision on fitness for retention before engaging TAP; unfit findings leaves little time for TAP prior to release from active duty
- Pre-Separation counseling not an element of PEBLO or medical processing for separation/discharge; risks of violations of federal statute high

TAKE AWAYS:

- Installations have limited marketing resources to promote TAP services; marketing strategy not consistently inclusive of family members
- Marketing skills beyond traditional print media not generally available or utilized with TAP site
- Ability of TAP sites maintain enduring connection with National Guard or Reserve community questionable; extent of proactive engagement could not be determined
- TAP does not appear to be involved in local Yellow Ribbon events
- Primary focus of local TAP effort centered on post-military employment; statutory requirements to provide financial counseling, relocation assistance, education assistance, and coaching on the effects of career change being overlooked
- Communication flow to local TAP service delivery team level remains a struggle
 - Participants had no information on TAP Off-Site, partner agency initiatives, The Square Deal e-Newsletter, or federal hiring initiatives led by OPM
- TAP service delivery staff are not well-versed in the Recovery Care Program; local connectivity with WII personnel and families not readily apparent
- Collaboration on VSO initiatives supporting TAP is not robust. Heroes to Hometown Program unknown.
- All locations have established networking relationships with community leaders, organizations, and employers



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- Navy policy on pre-separation counseling and data collection not standardized practice at local installation level
- Local staff need familiarization on Service established procedures to readdress TAP facilitator performance related issues

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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WWCTP STAFF AND GUESTS ATTENDING:

- David DuBois, Operations Director, Office of Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy