

# **Soldier-For-Life program keeps promise to servicemembers, families**

## **Soldier-For-Life program keeps promise to servicemembers, families**

The Soldier For Life mindset is a holistic approach to the military life cycle career of a Soldier. The Army aims to take care of teammates by ensuring Soldiers start strong, serve strong, and reintegrate strong so they remain Army Strong serving their communities after they leave the Army.

The Chief of Staff of the Army created the Soldier For Life office to enable Army, government and community efforts to facilitate successful reintegration of our Soldiers, veterans, and their families in order to keep them Army Strong and instill their values, ethos and leadership within communities.

Unemployment Compensation for Soldiers leaving the Army during fiscal year 2016 dropped to the lowest amount recorded in 13 years.

The Army ended the year at \$172.8 million, according to the Department of Labor's unemployment compensation report. Army expenditures had peaked in 2011, at \$515 million. This is the first time expenditures dropped below \$200 million since 2003.

In the last four years the Army has saved over \$900 million in cost avoidance for unemployment compensation expenditures through programs like the IMCOM Soldier for Life Transition Assistance Program, which prepares Soldiers for finding employment in the civilian sector when they leave active service.

“The significant reduction in the Army’s bill for unemployment compensation, along with the reduction in the national Veteran unemployment rate, can be attributed to the diligence of the team of teams at IMCOM’s SFL-TAP centers who are selfless, passionate and dedicated to this important mission,” said IMCOM Command Sgt. Major Melissa Judkins.

At Carlisle Barracks this program assists transitioning service members in a variety of ways. One of the most visible are the Soldier For Life-Transition Assistance Programs, a five-day workshop hosted by Jeff Hanks, the Army Community Service Employment Readiness Employment Manager. As part of the workshop there are presentations made by the Department of Veterans Affairs, Pennsylvania Job Service, Veterans Employment Representative and the Career Link.

Due to increased demand, Carlisle Barracks will be offering monthly seminars starting in January. All SFL-TAP classes are held in from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Location of the class is posted on the agenda when you receive your SFL-TAP Welcome letter and Agenda. These services are extended to spouses accompanied by their sponsors but must register also. For more information contact Army Community Service at (717) 245-4357 / 3684 or register at <http://carlislebarracks.carlisle.army.mil/MWR/ACSEventRegistration.cfm>.

This program is for all service members who are retiring or who will be ETS'ing in the next two years. Information on the civilian job market and military career alternatives will be discussed along with following topics:

- Unemployment Compensation
- Stress Management
- Analyzing your Skills
- Preparing the Right Resume
- Interviewing
- V.A. Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation Benefits (to include completion of V.A. Forms)
- State Employment Applications
- Army Community Service Resource Center
- Employer Panel

Also, available as part of the programs for Soldiers is the ACS Employment Readiness Program. The program aims to assist families with the challenges associated with the job search, particularly as they are impacted by the Army's mobile lifestyle. Carlisle Barracks ERP provides a full range of information and referral services and assistance in the areas of employment, training and volunteer opportunities. The services are designed to give all active duty, retired military personnel, DoD employees, and their Family members the competitive edge necessary to secure employment. For more information contact Jeffrey Hanks at 245-3684.

### **What does SFL-TAP do?**

The Soldier For Life - Transition Assistance Program provides transitioning services to Soldiers who have completed at least 180 days of continuous active duty service. SFL-TAP consists of comprehensive three-day workshops at selected IMCOM installations worldwide. Professionally-trained facilitators from state employment service offices, military family support services, the Department of Labor and Department of Veterans Affairs present the workshops.

Soldiers learn about job searches, career decision-making, current occupational and labor market conditions, resume and cover letter preparation, and interviewing techniques.

Participants are also provided with an evaluation of their employability relative to the job market and receive information on the most current Veterans' benefits.

SFL-TAP remains a Commander's program that encourages the idea of going early and often to receive transition services in order to be more prepared for transition. Soldiers are encouraged to start the program 18 months prior to their transition date or 24 months prior for retirees. The earlier a Soldier starts the program, the better prepared they are for transition from active duty to the civilian sector.

U.S. Army War College Archives - News Article - 24 January 2017