

# Fort Benning

## FY18

### Army Family Action Plan Issue Update Book





The Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) provides Soldiers, Civilians, Family members, Survivors, and Retirees a voice in identifying issues and concerns for Army Senior Leadership resolution. AFAP allows the installation's community members to recommend solutions to these concerns that affect not just their community but also the Army at large. Community members submit issues year round at the Army Community Service AFAP office, online at [www.benning.armymwr.com](http://www.benning.armymwr.com) or at Army OneSource ([www.myarmyonesource.com](http://www.myarmyonesource.com)). AFAP is the primary tool to communicate quality of life issues facing Soldiers, Army Civilians, Families, Survivors, and Retirees. Information provided through the AFAP process gives commanders and leaders insight into their community's needs, stressors and expectations.

The Garrison Commander chairs the AFAP Steering Committee that meets quarterly to resolve those submission deemed local issues. The AFAP Program Manager tracks submissions until the Garrison Commander closes each issue as resolved or unattainable.

Each year, Fort Benning hosts an annual AFAP Conference. During this conference, delegates chosen to represent the diverse demographics within our Fort Benning community review the issue submissions from the community that meet the AFAP criteria and prioritize the top three to five for elevation to Installation Management Command (IMCOM) for resolution. At the conclusion of the conference, Delegates brief the issues to the Garrison Commander, who has final approval authority.

Issues submitted to IMCOM for resolution go through a second screening to ensure the issue is truly an Army wide issue before elevating to Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA). Once HQDA receives the issue, another prioritization occurs with virtual delegates from across the Army and provides two issues for HQDA consideration from each of six categories: Employment, Family Support, Military Health System, Retiree and Survivor Support, Soldier Support and Training and Education.

The Fort Benning Issue Update Book provides updates on local issues resolved or pending resolution.

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**Issue #: 18-01**

AFAP Conference Ranking: 9

Issue Title: **Installation/Army Restricted Breed Pet Policy**

Subject Area SME: DES/VOB - CPT Balstad; Stefanie Jenkins

Audience: Soldier

**Issue Intent-Recommendation**

**Scope:** Since 2006 countless Army Families have not been offered post housing due to restricted breed policy. Policy is breed specific and prohibitive without regard to animal's actual temperament. There is no viable option for exemption to policy.

**Recommendation:** Remove breed specific prohibitions that are truly animal racism. Approve a path to allow pets based on vet behavior evaluation or other method.

**Issue Disposition/Status**

Delegates deemed this issue was complicated by the complexities of state and local laws and that breed restrictions in on-post housing are fair due to the similarities in off-post housing and the belief that breed of dog choice made by owner. Local Issue

DES/VOB Response: The Villages of Benning adopted the Pet Policy in place under the Army's RCI Privatization Program in 2009. Per the memorandum, they developed the policy with input from the residents. Restricted breeds: Pit Bulls (American Staffordshire Bull Terriers or English Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Rottweilers, Doberman Pinschers, Chows and Wolf hybrids. Fort Benning Garrison's policy varies. MCOE Regulation 210-5, Chapter 4, Paragraph 4-2, page 6, states that only Pit Bulls and Pit Bull Mixes are prohibited. The purpose of breed restrictions is to limit potential risks. Restricted breed lists are typically determined based on those breeds historically deemed aggressive or potentially aggressive. However, any dog that exhibits aggressive behavior, regardless of breed, is prohibited. Villages of Benning understands that due to limited resources and possibly other reasons, the Vet Clinics will not perform temperament or breed testing.

SEP 2018 a new Pet Policy was signed by COL Cox. **CLOSED**

**Issue #: 18-02**

AFAP Conference Ranking: 3

Issue Title: **Mental Health support in connection with Stress induced Transitioning**

Subject Area SME: SFL-TAP - Eddie Perez

Audience: Soldier

**Issue Intent-Recommendation**

**Scope:** Unit do not allow Soldiers to Transition in a timely manner, which produces Stress in the family due to the unknowns of Transition. Soldiers and their families should understand their; benefits and entitlements earned, what needs to be in place in order to use them, who to see, when to see them, what questions to ask. This will allow the units to understand the time a Soldier needs to transition. Congress requires a Soldier to start transition 12 months out but we all know this is not enough time for a Soldier with a family to make these decisions.

**Recommendation:** Create servant leadership seminars in transition. These seminars focus on the senior leadership first in order for them to understand the stressors associated with Transition and conducted semiannually. This will allow the leadership to train their subordinates on how to reduce (Transition Associated Stress)

**Issue Disposition/Status**

Delegates found through research via SME that support resource already exist and it appears the author of issue is unaware of existing services. Group determined mental health services to be in the purview of MFLC's, Behavioral Health and Chaplains, not SFL-TAP. Local issue.

Response from SFL-TAP: The Army does not currently have a plan to support the SFL-TAP center with mental health professionals. Soldiers and Families have access to services listed above. **CLOSED**

**Issue #: 18-03**

AFAP Conference Ranking: 10

Issue Title: **Military Spouse Employment**

Subject Area SME: CPAC

Audience: Families

**Issue Intent-Recommendation**

**Scope:** The Army has great issues with providing professional job opportunities to military spouses. Spouses are giving up professional development opportunities to follow their soldier. Once the Soldier retires or gets out of the military, the spouse is left trying to support the family with little to no experience gained over the years the soldier has served. Providing lack of opportunities on the installation for spouses also pushes him/her away from serving the community itself.

**Recommendation:** Re-evaluating policies for hiring military spouses, restructuring current CPAC (source of primary issues). There should be professional positions which spouses can have similar to internships that can transfer installation to installation. This provides a more positive transition for military families, provides continuous professional development from the spouse and increase service from spouse to the overall community.

**Issue Disposition/Status**

Delegates deemed a non-issue as written; programs already in place for military spouses with executive order and PPP programs and not enough information provided by submission and no contact information provided by community member. **CLOSED**

**Issue #: 18-04**

AFAP Conference Ranking: 7

Issue Title: **Alternative Work Schedule for All IMCOM Employees**

Subject Area SME: Garrison Command IMCOM

Audience: Civilians

**Issue Intent-Recommendation**

**Scope:** Other IMCOM Directorate employees have the option of AWS/CWS, which allows them a RDO to take care of personal business and appointments. Management advantages are reduction of short-term absences and tardiness, higher employee morale, increased productivity and efficiency and improved customer service.

**Recommendation:** Allow all IMCOM employees to be included regardless if they are a customer service entity. (Ex.) DHR & Logistics are customer service directorates and they have successfully participated for at least the last five years here on Fort Benning.

**Issue Disposition/Status**

Delegates determined that the AWS is available per IMCOM Regulation 690-610 and based on individual installation demographics, OPTEMPO, population, and by supervisor approval. **CLOSED**



**Issue #: 18-05**

AFAP Conference Ranking: 8

Issue Title: **Reserved Parking Spaces for Rank**

Subject Area SME: Garrison Command IMCOM

Audience: Soldier

**Issue Intent-Recommendation**

**Scope:** The only reserved parking spaces on any installation should be handicap parking and unit command teams in their own areas. Maybe Gold Star Spouses. With the limited parking at several installation locations, there is no needs for multiple reserve slots for O5/CSMs or higher. Having rank-based reserved parking that remains most of the time empty seems like wasted effort.

**Recommendation:** Remove the rank-based reserved parking on Army installations.

**Issue Disposition/Status**

Delegates determined that while an issue may be Army wide, impact is not sufficient to warrant elevation. Garrison Commander agreed with recommendation and several rank-based reserved parking spaces converted to additional parking options. **CLOSED**

**Issue #: 18-06**

AFAP Conference Ranking: 5

Issue Title: **Civilians and Retirees in On-Post Housing**

Subject Area SME: VOB - Stefanie Jenkins

Audience: Soldier

**Issue Intent-Recommendation**

**Scope:** The Army has allowed retirees and civilians to move into housing on post, some for only a few months until forced to vacate their homes due to the post receiving new large groups of soldiers/units. This causes a hardship on both parties – those who now have to move out and those who have to wait to get that house. Yes, it is in the contract they sign but it still is a hardship and causes undue stress. If the housing companies want to make sure they are making their money, then go back to enforcing that folks must live on post if there is housing available. Retirees and Civilians may be part of our force but housing on the installation is not one of their entitlements. This will alleviate the empty quarters, loss of revenue for the housing company and will reduce stress on everyone.

**Recommendation:** Mandate Soldiers/Families live on post if housing is available.

**Issue Disposition/Status**

Delegates deemed this a local issue. Response from VOB: Upon the privatization of Fort Benning, Clark/Pinnacle (now Michaels Management Services) in partnership with the Army developed a Community Development & Management Plan (CDMP), which the Department of the Army and Congress approved. Per the CDMP, under section 2.6 General Housing Eligibility Requirements, it states that The Fort Benning Installation leadership will not impose mandatory assignments or usage of the homes or facilities and services provided by the Property Manager (Michaels Management Services) on its military personnel. Currently, based on the CDMP, it is not an option to mandate soldiers or families to live on post as it is now privatized similar to off-post housing. The CDMP also outlines a priority list of permitted tenants in the, which includes retirees, DoD/Federal Agency civilians and public. The CDMP states, in the event the project's occupancy is below proforma limitations for a period of 90 consecutive days during the IDP or the occupancy falls below 95% for a period of 90 consecutive days after the IDP, the Partnership may elect to allow the Property Manager to offer residency to individuals in categories 5,6,7 and 8 of the waterfall as outlined in the priority list of permitted tenants. **CLOSED**

**Issue #: 18-07**

AFAP Conference Ranking: 4

Issue Title: **Long-Term Preparation for Retiring Soldiers**

Subject Area SME: SFL-TAP - Eddie Perez

Audience: Soldier

**Issue Intent-Recommendation**

**Scope:** SFL-TAP provides Soldiers with a 12-month process in which they transition out of the Army. However, the Army does not do a good enough job preparing them before that 12 month period for things that are too late to be deciding by then (i.e. financial planning, preparing for follow on career, for buying a home, for choosing a location for retirement, etc.). This presents a lot of stress on both the Soldier and their family. The Army needs to start earlier than 12 months providing Soldiers with guidance and opportunities for what comes next.

**Recommendation:** Establish a secondary position at SFL-TAP designed to provide mandatory counseling and guidance for Soldiers to access annually after ten years of service.

**Issue Disposition/Status**

Delegates determined through discussion with SME that the Soldier Life Cycle covers the concern. Delegates determined Soldier Life Cycle and SFL-TAP resources impacted by Command compliance and not a lack of availability to the resources. Local Issue.

Response from SFL-TAP: The Army adopted the Transition Soldier Life Cycle in 2014, which consist of 3 Phases, Initial, Service and Transition. During initial Phase 0-1 years, Soldiers are required to upon In-processing achieve the follow supported by these installation agencies (ACS, ACES, VA, and SFL-TAP & Unit LNO), MOS credentialing (Unit/ACES), Financial Readiness (ACS), Develop Budget (ACS), Complete Self-Assessment (Kuder/GAP Analysis) (ACES), Register for VA eBenefits Account (VA), Develop IDP (Unit). During the Service Phase 1 + 10 years, Soldiers are now required to achieve the following at these Touch Points/Annual Review; Promotion (Officers), Reenlistment (MOS Crosswalk/Gap Analysis), Major Life Events (Marriage, Divorce), Update Budget following each promotion, Update IDP. Careerist at mid-career point of 10 years of service; Career Readiness Standards opportunities at SLC, WOSC, and MEL 4 (CGSOC); Develop a resume and references list. However, retirees have 24 months to start their transition process. **CLOSED**

**Issue #: 18-08**

AFAP Conference Ranking: 2

Issue Title: **Army Youth Career Building Paid Internship Program**

Subject Area SME: CYS - Tracy McMillan

Audience: Soldier

**Issue Intent-Recommendation**

**Scope:** Across the Army, there is not a standardized career-building program for youth dependents to gain workplace experience. There are limited employment opportunities for youth dependents due to frequent moves. This makes networking and making connections to find employment challenging without a standardized program. Night and weekend hours are also difficult to obtain. There is no one-stop resource program, or continuity in youth employment services across all installations, making the job search more difficult. Youth dependents are at a disadvantage because there are no standardized resource programs available that provide employment opportunities.

**Recommendation:** Create a standardized career building paid internship program for youth dependents.

**Issue Disposition/Status**

**Prioritized by working group; selected for elevation to IMCOM HQ**

Response from CYS: There is currently no paid teen employment program available Army wide

**Issue #: 18-09**

AFAP Conference Ranking: 6

Issue Title: **TRICARE Registration Default Settings**

Subject Area SME: MACH - Victor Vizcarrando/MAJ Melinda Wallace

Audience: Soldier

**Issue Intent-Recommendation**

**Scope:** When Soldiers are registering family members for TRICARE coverage, the default selection is TRICARE Standard. Most military families would choose PRIME before Standard, or assume they are getting PRIME before Standard, as no one wants automatic out of pocket expenses unless there are extreme circumstances where Families want to see a specific doctor off post for a special reason. However, for the most part, when people think of military healthcare, they were wanting to spend as little out of pocket as possible. If they want to choose Standard, they can – but the default should be for Prime. That way if Soldiers who are not educated initially on the difference and want to make a switch aren't waiting 2-6 weeks and still paying out of pocket until the change is made, versus if they were defaulted to Prime and chose to switch to Standard, they aren't paying out of pocket while they wait for the change to occur.

**Recommendation:** Change the default registration from TRICARE Standard to TRICARE Prime

**Issue Disposition/Status**

Delegates deemed TRICARE insurance policy is a personal preference; not all beneficiaries prefer Prime. Through their discussion with SME, delegates determined that the lapse in time between changing from Standard to Prime does not actually inhibit beneficiary from utilizing their insurance choice. SME briefed Delegates that changes to TRICARE that begin on 1 January 2018 may alleviate this issue. Non-Issue MACH Response: The Defense Health Agency is taking over TRICARE; with this, there will be many changes to include the new addition of TRICARE Select. On January 1 2018, existing TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra beneficiaries convert to TRICARE Select. Along with this change, DHA is condensing the three regions into two regions under a new contract known as the T2017. Once TRICARE Select activates on January 1 2018, we will be able to address this issue if it is still an issue, as I do not know if the default setting will already be one of the changes under DHA and TRICARE.

**CLOSED**

**Issue #: 18-10**

AFAP Conference Ranking: 1

Issue Title: **Continuity of TRICARE Coverage for Beneficiaries of Soldiers Who Share Custody**

Subject Area SME: MACH - Victor Vizcarrando/ MAJ Melinda Wallace

Audience: Soldier

**Issue Intent-Recommendation**

**Scope:** Soldiers who share custody of dependents are unable to maintain continuity of care when transitioning health insurance coverage for visits over 30 days in excess of 100 miles. Soldiers must contact TRICARE to change beneficiaries' region status before leaving and before returning to primary residence. This process occurs several times within a year adding stress to an already fractured family situation. During the process, beneficiaries may lose their PCM and active referrals at the primary residence. Soldiers also incur additional out-of-pocket cost for having to switch to TRICARE Standard. The inability to maintain continuity of care causes undo stress for Soldiers who share custody, which affects Soldier and Family Readiness.

**Recommendation:** Create a coding system to tag shared custody beneficiaries of Soldiers similar to an EFMP identifier to allow continuity of care between regions.

**Issue Disposition/Status****Prioritized by working group; selected for elevation to IMCOM HQ**

Response from MACH: There is no regulation or TRICARE policy that states beneficiaries must change their TRICARE enrollment to their new location if they will be there more than 30 days. Guidance given to beneficiaries in order for the beneficiaries not to accumulate bills from TRICARE. TRICARE goes off the address in DEERS and if that address does not match, where the medical care given and they have already used their two free urgent care visits the beneficiary will receive a bill. This is easily fixed, the beneficiary can call the Military Treatment Facility (MTF) they are assigned and a retro referral can be placed by the BMACH PCM to cover the bill. The beneficiary can also call the Nurse Advice Line and receive authorization prior to any out of area medical visits for their children. The Nurse Advice Line authorization will cover all costs for any bills the patient receive during the summer months. For parents who have special needs children, out-of-area visits can also easily be covered by ensuring communication with the child's PCM and that the AHLTA/CHCS notes reflect child is under joint custody and will be residing in a different state for the specific months of the year. This way the PCM can place referrals, even out of state to cover any medical needs of the child during the summer months. If the parent does change their child's PCM to another state and wants to ensure they are assigned to the previous PCM upon returning to the original state they can request this change through the beneficiary services at BMACH. They cannot request this by calling TRICARE; they must request this at the MTF through a Benefits Counselor.