

TAP Pilot for 2026 NDAA

The geospatial community is one of the high growth workforce sectors in the U.S. economy, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Today, there are over 45,000 professional surveyors in the United States. However, the demand for workers in this area is far outpacing the supply. There is a need to promote workforce development in the geospatial community, including surveying, at the technician and professional levels.

The surveying, mapping, and geospatial profession is facing a critical challenge. The average age of a professional surveyor in the United States is 58. Surveyors are retiring faster than a new generation is entering the profession. Military personnel often gain skill, education, and experience in geospatial and surveying methods that can be easily transferred to civilian employment. A partnership between government and the geospatial community is needed to develop an effective and efficient pathway for these service members to apply their military surveying and geospatial skills to further education and civilian employment in surveying and geospatial firms and organizations. The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) in the Department of Defense should be engaged on this opportunity by implementing a pilot project that will highlight the surveying profession as a career option for those departing the military with relevant skillsets, training, and experience in military surveying, mapping activities.



Future economic growth, home ownership and other important national priorities will be adversely impacted if a new generation of surveyors and mapping professionals are not recruited to enter the workforce. Surveyors and other geospatial professionals play an important part in the U.S. economy. Along with the profession's well-recognized and essential role related to the description and location of public and private land boundaries, every day government and free enterprise relies upon surveying and geospatial data for the management of natural resources; economic development; the management, adjudication, and prevention of future disruptions in the home mortgage system; the development and implementation of a smart energy grid; the deployment of universal broadband; the management of Federal real property assets; emergency preparedness and response; homeland security; measuring, monitoring, verifying, and validating the effects of climatic and environmental phenomena; and the maintenance, rehabilitation, and enhancement of transportation and infrastructure of the United States.

Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) codes are an alphanumeric system that classify specific occupations in each service branch of the Armed Forces. Presently, TAP does not attempt to match military skills with applicable and correspondent civilian careers. A TAP pilot program in the Department of Defense should highlight the surveying and geospatial skills and experience of transitioning service men and women (and their spouses) for targeted civilian employment opportunities, including but not limited to the following MOS codes:

General Engineer - 12A; Technical Engineer - 12T; General Engineering Supervisor - 12X; Geospatial Engineer - 12Y; Field Artillery Surveyor - 13S; Field Artillery Metrological/Surveyor - 13T; Aviation All-Source Intelligence - 15C; Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Operator - 15W; Topographic Surveyor - 21S; Topographic Analyst - 21U; Army Geospatial Engineer - 21Y; Geospatial Intelligence Imagery Analyst - 35D; Geospatial Intelligence Imagery Analyst - 35G; Geospatial Engineering Technician - 125D; Geospatial-Intelligence Imagery Technician - 350G; Engineer Assistant - 1361; Engineering Aid EA; and Engineering Technician/Engineering Assistance - 3E5X1; K10A - Geospatial-Imagery Interpreter; 826G - Expeditionary Force - Unmanned Systems (UAV/USV/USG) Operator; J00A - Meteorological and Oceanographic (METOC) Forecaster.

ACTION REQUESTED:

NSPS respectfully urges Congress to include a provision to the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that would authorize a pilot program in DOD's Transition Assistance Program (TAP) to target members of the Armed Services, with relevant skillsets, training and military surveying, mapping, and geospatial experience to transition into applicable career opportunities available in civilian sector surveying. For more information, contact John "JB" Byrd, NSPS Federal Lobbyist, at jbvrd@mwcapitol.com or 703-383-1330.