



The following established style guidelines reflect the long-standing practices of developers and editors of content for Relocation Assistance. They are consistent with the rules and guidance outlined in The Associated Press Stylebook and reflective of Office of Military Community and Family Policy style and usage preferences.

Content Tips

- Pay attention to the overall organization and flow of an article. Information and ideas should be logically organized, and there should be some sense of continuity or flow from one idea to the next across all relocation content on Military OneSource.
- Avoid redundancy.
- Write in relationship-neutral terms, such as “partner” or “couple.”
- Flesh out and clarify statements and ideas.
- Ensure that subheads reflect the content that follows.
- Focus on the positive side of content as much as possible.
- Keep the wide audience range in mind.
- Use “softening” or “qualifying” words such as “generally,” “may be,” “can be” or “might” to avoid making blanket statements about how people feel, react, etc., in different circumstances. See the examples below:
 - WRONG: Whether you are moving to another state or another country, relocation will be a challenge.
 - BETTER: Whether you are moving to another state or another country, relocation can be a challenge.
- Less is more — be concise.
- Use bulleted formatting for clarity when appropriate.

Things to Avoid

- Making assumptions
- Telling people how they feel
- Telling people what they should/need to/must/ought to/can’t/won’t do
- Telling people what they always/never do



Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation or acronym	Full title
BAH	Basic Allowance for Housing
BAS	Basic Allowance for Subsistence
DLA	Dislocation Allowance
DPS	Defense Personal Property System
DTMO	Defense Travel Management Office
EFMP	Exceptional Family Member Program
eSAT	eSponsorship Application & Training
FSA	Family Separation Allowance
FSSA	Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance
HHG	household goods move
MALT	Monetary Allowance in Lieu of Transportation
MCO	military claims office
MFR	Military Family Readiness
MFRC	Military Family Readiness Council
MFSC	Military and Family Support Center

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Abbreviation or acronym	Full title
MHPI	military housing privatization
MIHA	Move-In Housing Allowance
OHA	Overseas Housing Allowance
PCS	permanent change of station
PPM	personally procured move
PMM	Plan My Move
POV	privately owned vehicle
PPO	personal property office
RAP	Relocation Assistance Program
TLA	Temporary Lodging Allowance
TLE	Temporary Lodging Expense
UB	unaccompanied baggage
UH	unaccompanied housing
UT	unaccompanied tour



Preferred Terms

Acceptable

military life (instead of military lifestyle)

some or many (instead of most or all)

can, may or might (instead of will or are)

often or generally (instead of always)

tend to (instead of usually)

partner, spouse (instead of husband, wife)



Definitions

Term	Definition
allowances and pays	There are various types of pay. Basic pay is received by all service members and is the main component of a service member's salary. Other pays, often referred to as special and incentive pays, are for specific qualifications or events. Allowances are moneys provided for specific needs, such as food or housing. Note: Specific allowances and pays should be capitalized when written out in running text, tables and social media posts. Examples: Basic Allowance for Housing, Temporary Lodging Allowance, Overseas Housing Allowance, etc.
Basic Allowance for Housing	Military pay for service members within the United States not living in government-owned housing. Also known as BAH. Note: Specific allowances and pays should be capitalized when written out in running text, tables and social media posts. Examples: Basic Allowance for Housing, Temporary Lodging Allowance, Overseas Housing Allowance, etc. The Basic Allowance for Housing calculator is also available to service members and their families to estimate BAH based on ZIP code and pay grade.
Basic Allowance for Subsistence	Basic Allowance for Subsistence is a tax-free monthly allowance that helps offset a portion of the cost of meals and food for service members. This allowance is not intended to offset the costs of meals for family members. Also known as BAS. Note: Allowances and pays should be capitalized when written out in running text, tables and social media posts. Examples: Basic Allowance for Housing, Temporary Lodging Allowance, Overseas Housing Allowance, etc.

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Term	Definition
CONUS (continental United States)	Refers to the 48 continental, or contiguous, states and the District of Columbia. It excludes Alaska and Hawaii. It is acceptable to use CONUS on first reference when writing for service members, families, service providers and leaders. If writing for an audience not as likely to be familiar with the term, for example the broad audience of the Friends & Family Connection eNewsletter, write it out fully upon first reference and use the acronym sparingly on subsequent references.
Defense Personal Property System	The Defense Personal Property System is the online system service members use to upload orders and create moving shipment(s) (e.g., household goods, unaccompanied baggage, non-temporary storage, personally procured move, etc.). Also known as DPS.
Defense Travel Management Office	The Defense Travel Management Office website offers current allowance tables, per diem rates and other tools to help service members and families plan a move. Also known as DTMO.
Dislocation Allowance	Allowance intended to help with miscellaneous moving costs and generally paid once per permanent change of station. Also known as DLA. Note: Allowances and pays should be capitalized when written out in running text, tables and social media posts. Examples: Basic Allowance for Housing, Temporary Lodging Allowance, Overseas Housing Allowance, etc.
eSponsorship Application & Training	The eSponsorship Application & Training is an online interactive course available on MilLife Learning that provides military sponsors the tools and resources needed to help guide service members and families arriving at a new duty station. Also known as eSAT.
Exceptional Family Member Program	Part of the Office of Special Needs, the Exceptional Family Member Program ensures that military families with special

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Term	Definition
	needs receive direct services, assignment coordination and ongoing family support. Also known as EFMP.
EFMP & Me	The EFMP & Me tool provides checklists, resources and referrals to help families find support from the Exceptional Family Member Program. Through EFMP & Me, users can also contact an EFMP Family Support provider or can learn more about how the program can help you and your family.
entitlements	When relocating, service members are given a list of the amount and type of items they are allowed to move. This is generally referred to as their entitlements. Included in entitlements is a service member's moving allowance, or the overall weight of the household goods, determined by rank. Specific entitlements include pets and live animals, firearms, household appliances, privately owned vehicles and more.
family member	Individual whose relationship to the military sponsor leads to entitlements, benefits or privileges by the military services.
Family Separation Allowance	An allowance that may be authorized when a service member's family cannot live at or near the permanent duty station. Also known as FSA. Note: Allowances and pays should be capitalized when written out in running text, tables and social media posts. Examples: Basic Allowance for Housing, Temporary Lodging Allowance, Overseas Housing Allowance, etc.
Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance	This War Department program supplements eligible active service members' household income. The allowance is only available for service members who are serving outside the United States, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands or Guam.

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	Eligibility is based on household size and income, and maximum payment is \$1,100 per month. Also known as FSSA. Note: Allowances and pays should be capitalized when written out in running text, tables and social media posts. Examples: Basic Allowance for Housing, Temporary Lodging Allowance, Overseas Housing Allowance, etc.
Federal Voting Assistance Program	The Federal Voting Assistance Program offers steps to vote absentee while living away from a voting residence. Service members and their families who are moving to a new duty station during election season can contact their installation voter assistance office for assistance.
government housing	Housing, owned or leased, operated and maintained by the War Department.
HOMES.mil	An online service designed to connect service members and their families with community housing rental listings near U.S. military bases. It provides contact information for a service member's current or prospective housing office. Service members can also list their own rental properties. HOME.mil's Housing Early Assistance Tool allows service members to get information about on- and off-base family housing and to begin the process of applying for both military and privatized housing.
household goods move	A household goods move is a move completed by a government-furnished moving company. During a household goods move, a moving company is responsible for packing all of a service member's belongings and transporting them to the service member's new location. Also known as HHG.
housing office/government housing	An office on military installations that oversees military housing waitlists and referrals for housing on the installation.

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inconvenience claim	Request for compensation from a moving company for any out-of-pocket expenses incurred as the result of the moving company not picking up or delivering household goods at the contractually specified time, for putting household goods into storage without notifying the service member, or for the moving company not being able to deliver items out of storage within specified times.
loan closet	Installation loan closets provide the opportunity for service members to borrow essential items at their new military installation while they wait for their belongings to arrive. Essentials include dishware, toasters, coffee makers and more. Services vary by location.
Member Connect housing support from Military OneSource	Service members and their families can access Housing and Home Ownership support, tools and resources, including financial calculators that can help determine affordable mortgages, house comparison worksheets, mortgage and foreclosure resources, and more. Service members must log in to access Member Connect resources.
Military and Family Support Center	Facility on a military installation with information, resources and expertise to deliver military family support programs. May be called Army Community Service (Army), Marine and Family Services (Marines), Navy Fleet and Family Support Center (Navy), Military and Family Readiness Center (Air Force), and Workforce and Family Service (Coast Guard).
Military and Family Life Counseling Program	The Military and Family Life Counseling Program provides free, confidential counseling to service members, their families and survivors on or near installations. Use this complete term and capitalize as shown when referring to the program. When referring to the counseling service (as opposed to the overarching program) or the individual counselors, lowercase.

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Term	Definition
military and family life counselor	Military and family life counselors provide confidential counseling to service members, spouses, military couples and non-remarried surviving spouses on or off the installation in person and by phone or video. They also provide group briefings and topic-specific presentations to the military community.
military claims office	Service branch-specific representatives that help service members settle personal property claims resulting from a move. Also known as MCO.
Military Family Readiness System	An integrated system of support operated by the DOW and other federal, state and community-based agencies and organizations to enhance military family readiness and promote military family well-being and resilience. The Military Family Readiness System promotes interagency collaborations, referrals, service delivery and links to informal and formal networks to support service members and their families in navigating the challenges of daily life. The MFRS promotes military recruitment and retention and supports a commander's ability to maintain a mission-ready force.
military housing privatization	Congress passed the Military Housing Privatization Initiative in 1996 to help the military improve the quality of life for service members by improving the condition of their housing. This act allows the War Department to work with the private sector to build, renovate and sustain military housing. Service members living in military privatized housing are entitled to Basic Allowance for Housing. Also known as MHPI.
MilitaryINSTALLATIONS	The War Department online source for comprehensive, up-to-date information for installations worldwide. It provides essential details about programs and services, base and community information, and state resources. Content is

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	certified quarterly by installation relocation assistance providers.
MilLife Learning	MilLife Learning provides self-directed courses for service members and their families, veterans, service providers, civilians and others. Accessible online, 24/7. Formerly My Training Hub.
Monetary Allowance in Lieu of Transportation	An amount paid to a service member for mileage when a service member drives to a new duty station. Also known as MALT. Note: Allowances and pays should be capitalized when written out in running text, tables and social media posts. Examples: Basic Allowance for Housing, Temporary Lodging Allowance, Overseas Housing Allowance, etc.
Move-In Housing Allowance	An allowance paid to help cover miscellaneous moving costs, such as appliances or lease taxes, for an off-installation move made outside the continental United States. Also known as MIHA. Note: Allowances and pays should be capitalized when written out in running text, tables and social media posts. Examples: Basic Allowance for Housing, Temporary Lodging Allowance, Overseas Housing Allowance, etc.
moving allowance	Moving allowance generally refers to the overall weight of a service member's household goods. Moving allowances are determined by rank, dependency status and move type, and generally increase as rank increases.
OCONUS (outside the continental United States)	Refers to any place outside of the 48 continental, or contiguous, states and the District of Columbia. It includes Alaska and Hawaii. When writing and editing Military OneSource content, try to blend uses of OCONUS with "living abroad," where

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Term	Definition
	appropriate, to strike a balance between plain language (living abroad) and better SEO results (OCONUS).
OneOp	A virtual professional development platform geared to service providers working with military families, offering high-quality, research-based, multidisciplinary resources created in collaboration with the War Department and university subject matter experts. OneOp identifies and shares promising practices, research- and evidence-based information, educational materials and programming efforts. Continuing education credits are offered free of charge and span a wide variety of subject areas and credentialing agencies.
Overseas Housing Allowance	A military allowance paid to service members living outside the continental United States to offset the cost of housing when living off installation. Also known as OHA. Note: Allowances and pays should be capitalized when written out in running text, tables and social media posts. Examples: Basic Allowance for Housing, Temporary Lodging Allowance, Overseas Housing Allowance, etc.
PCSMYPOV.com	An online resource for service members moving or storing their privately owned vehicles during a permanent change of station.
per diem	Per diem is a set allowance for lodging, meal and incidental costs incurred while on official government travel. Per Diem Rate Lookup tools are offered on the Defense Travel Management Office website for both CONUS and OCONUS travel.
permanent change of station	Military orders for a permanent transfer from one duty station to another. Also known as PCS. The PCS abbreviation can be used on first reference.

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Term	Definition
permanent change of station lodging	Quality lodging facilities and services to meet the needs of active-duty members and their families who are in a permanent change of station status. Lodging facilities normally include kitchens.
personal property claim	Request for compensation from moving companies for any household goods that are lost, damaged or destroyed during the moving process. Also known as “loss or damage” claims. Personal property/loss or damage claims must be filed in the Defense Personal Property System.
personal property office	An installation office where service members can get moving logistics assistance and information, such as household goods weight allowances, different types of shipments, entitlements, how to file claims and expenses, and more. Also known as PPO. On MilitaryINSTALLATIONS, the personal property office is listed as Household Goods/Transportation Office.
personally procured move	A personally procured move is a do-it-yourself move within the military. Service members are responsible for either packing/unpacking and transporting their belongings to their new location or hiring their own commercial moving company. As an incentive to do a PPM, the government will pay service members 100% of the government’s constructed “best value” cost to hire a moving company. For most service branches, service members can receive an advance payment of up to 60% of the incentive value. Also known as PPM.
Plan My Move	This War Department online application helps service members and families prepare for a move by creating a custom checklist filled with information about relevant tasks and how to complete them. Checklists are tailored to the user’s unique

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	needs and can be downloaded as well as saved for use with future moves.
privately owned vehicle	A privately owned vehicle is any motor vehicle that provides personal transportation and is owned by, or on a long-term lease to (12 or more months), a service member or a service member's dependents. A privately owned vehicle can have four or more wheels, like a car or truck, and must be self-propelled, licensed to travel on public highways, and designed to carry passengers or household goods. Service members may have an entitlement to ship or store one privately owned vehicle at government expense when they receive permanent change of station orders. Policies differ for CONUS and OCONUS moves, so service members are encouraged to check with their local transportation office to confirm eligibility. Also known as POV.
quarters	A term for living area or sleeping accommodations. Use lowercase. Example: bachelor quarters.
quick claim settlement	Request for compensation of minor loss or damage of household goods (not to exceed \$1,500) that service members can work out directly with a moving company without filing a claim in the Defense Personal Property System. Service members who receive quick claim settlements may NOT file a claim in DPS for the same lost or damaged items.
Relocation Assistance Program	A department-wide program that provides information, education and referrals related to destination area preparation and settling-in, with emphasis on moving costs; household goods shipments; loan closets; housing, child care and school options; special needs information; community demographics and resources; newcomer briefings; youth sponsorship; immigration information and referrals; cultural adaption; and financial, employment, personal and family life readiness. Most services are offered through installation Military and Family

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Term	Definition
	Support Centers and Reserve Component Family Program Sites. Military OneSource also offers relocation specialty consultations and online resources such as MilitaryINSTALLATIONS and Plan my Move.
renter's insurance	A form of property insurance for renters. This type of insurance protects a policyholder's belongings.
Reserve Component Family Program sites	Facility or office located on or off a military installation with the resources to deliver reserve component family support programs. May be called Family Assistance Center, Reserve Family Programs site.
school liaisons	School liaisons are located at each installation and are the central point of contact for commanders, military families and local school systems on school-related matters for grades pre-K-12. School liaisons advocate, advise and build alliances to help address education concerns, challenges or issues of the Total Force and offer a network to educate and provide information or referral for both military families and school districts. School liaisons help with transition support before and after a PCS and can connect parents to the Exceptional Family Member Program and their school's special education department, as well as help parents navigate their new school district's special education program. School liaisons can provide information on school districts and boundaries, assist with transfer of credits and class registration, help locate after-school and extracurricular programs, set up tutoring and youth sponsorship referrals, and help with college, career and military readiness.
Sesame Street's Big Moving Adventure app	Aimed at helping young children cope with moving, Sesame Street's Big Moving Adventure app allows young children to create a Muppet friend and then help him or her through the

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Term	Definition
	moving process, including packing, saying goodbye, expressing feelings, traveling and making new friends.
Sesame Street's Breathe, Think, Do app	Sesame Street's Breathe, Think, Do mobile app is designed to help young children learn strategies for problem solving and learning to calm themselves in emotionally challenging situations. Children help a Sesame Street monster friend calm down and solve everyday challenges.
7-Day Spread Window policy	Seven calendar days within which a moving company must pick up a service member's household goods shipment.
sponsorship	The military sponsorship program is different from command sponsorship. The sponsorship program helps service members and families settle in quicker at their new duty station. It is available to all service members and families no matter where you are moving to and can be especially helpful if you are moving to a new country. Units assign sponsors, typically matching service members of similar rank and family status.
spouse relocation and transition consultations	Spouse relocation and transition consultations assist military spouses, via phone, in navigating moving and transition-related challenges and help create an individualized action plan and identify resources that may include information on housing, child care, education, work-life referrals, health and wellness coaching and confidential counseling services to reduce the stress involved during relocations and transitions.
Temporary Lodging Allowance	Financial compensation meant to offset the cost of lodging and meals when a service member relocates either to or from a location outside the continental United States. Also known as TLA. Note: Allowances and pays should be capitalized when written out in running text, tables and social media posts. Examples:

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Term	Definition
	Basic Allowance for Housing, Temporary Lodging Allowance, Overseas Housing Allowance, etc.
Temporary Lodging Expense	Financial compensation meant to offset the cost of meals and lodging when a service member relocates within the continental United States. Also known as TLE. Note: Allowances and pays should be capitalized when written out in running text, tables and social media posts. Examples: Basic Allowance for Housing, Temporary Lodging Allowance, Overseas Housing Allowance, etc.
TSA PreCheck®	TSA PreCheck® is free for War Department civilians and service members, including National Guardsmen, reservists, members of the Coast Guard and students at the U.S. service academies. When booking travel, service members insert their CAC ID number in the Known Traveler Field to automatically qualify for TSA PreCheck®. It applies to official travel, like PCS, and for leisure travel. Dependents ages 12 and under can go through airport security with a participating traveler.
unaccompanied baggage	Personal property shipment sent by air for service members relocating to a location outside the continental United States with items the service member might need immediately. Also known as UB.
unaccompanied housing	Term for barracks, dormitories, bachelor quarters or other housing for single service members or service members not accompanied by family. Also known as UH.
unaccompanied tour	A permanent duty assignment in which the service member's dependents are not command-sponsored. Also known as UT.



Term	Definition
weight allowance	The amount of household goods a service member is allowed to move. The average weight allowances are based on rank, dependency status and move type. Sometimes referred to as moving allowance.

Official Resources

War Department policy

- [Department of Defense Instruction 1342.22, "Military Family Readiness," Aug. 5, 2021](#)
- [DOD Instruction 1315.18, "Procedures for Military Personnel Assignments," May 3, 2025](#)
- [DOD Instruction 4165.63, "DOD Housing," Aug. 31, 2018](#)
- [DOD 4165.63-Manual, "DOD Housing Management," April 1, 2025](#)
- ["The Joint Travel Regulations \(JTR\) Uniformed Service Members and DOD Civilian Employees," Aug. 1, 2025](#)

Legislation or regulations

- [Title 10 United States Code \(USC\) §1056, "Relocation Assistance Programs," Jan. 6, 2025](#)
- [Title 10 USC §1785, "Youth Sponsorship Programs," Jan. 6, 2025](#)

Military OneSource websites

- [Relocation Assistance Program benefit page](#)
- [PCS and Military Moves landing page](#)
- [Military Family Readiness System article](#)
- [Plan Your Next Military PCS MilLife Guide](#)
- [Ways to Settle In to Your New Home and Community MilLife Guide](#)



- [Moving and Family Logistics for OCONUS Moves MilLife Guide](#)
- [Member Connect support services offered through Military OneSource](#)
- [Find Services Faster With the Community Resource Finder](#)

Additional Resources

- [Basic Allowance for Housing Rate Lookup](#)
- [Overseas Housing Allowance Rate Lookup](#)
- [Defense Travel Management Office](#) (includes information on per diem and meal rates, Temporary Lodging Allowances, policy and regulations, programs and more)
- [DOD Lodging](#)
- Military lodging by service:
 - [Army MWR](#)
 - [Marine Corps Community Services](#)
 - [Navy Lodge](#)
 - [Air Force Inns](#)
 - [Coast Guard MWR](#)
- [Defense Personal Property Program](#)
- [Defense Personal Property System landing page](#)
- [Defense Travel Management Office — TSA PreCheck®](#)
- [U.S. Transportation Command Defense Transportation Regulation, Part IV](#) (includes information on allowances, entitlements, shipment and storage responsibilities, and more)
- [Weight Estimator Tool](#)