

## Task Force One Navy Wraps Up - Submits Final Report



A little more than six months ago, Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Mike Gilday stood up Task Force One Navy (TF1N) to help identify inequalities across the force regarding race, ethnicity, gender, age and rank. After compiling and analyzing feedback from hundreds of Sailors through focus groups and surveys, TF1N submitted its final report to the service's Culture of Excellence (COE) Governance Board Jan. 28.

The 142-page report includes analysis and a comprehensive set of nearly 60 recommendations meant to enhance the Navy's overall diversity and ensure that a culture of inclusivity

is evident at every command.

The COE board will closely review the report's findings and make a decision on how to best implement its recommendations. Some recommendations may require further research and review prior to implementation.

"As a Navy - uniform and civilian, active and reserve - we cannot tolerate discrimination of any kind, and must engage in open and honest conversations with each other and take



action. That is why we stood up Task Force One Navy - to identify and remove racial barriers, improve inclusion efforts, create new opportunities for professional development, and eliminate obstacles to enter the Navy," said Gilday.

"We have fallen short in the past by excluding or limiting opportunity for people on the basis of race, sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender or creed," Gilday said. "Our Navy must continue to remove barriers to service, and most importantly, be a shining example of a workforce centered on respect, inclusive of all. Simply put, all Sailors - uniformed and civilian - and applicants for accession to the Navy must be treated with dignity and respect above all else."

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## Navy Shifts the 2021 Fitness Cycle to July

The Navy is shifting the dates of the single, six-month physical fitness assessment cycle during calendar year 2021 to July 1 through December 31, to continue to mitigate COVID-19 impacts to the fleet.

The single 2021 cycle was initially announced in November's NAVADMIN 304/20 and was originally scheduled for March 1 through Sept. 30. That message is now replaced by NAVADMIN 024/21.

"Shifting the PFA cycle to July allows the Navy to execute the PFA after the primary influenza season while allowing time for COVID-19 vaccines to be more widely distributed," Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. John B Nowell, Jr., wrote in the message.

COVID-19 prevention efforts resulted in the cancellation of both of 2020's semi-annual Physical Fitness Assessments. Out of an abundance of caution, the Navy decided to proceed with a single cycle for 2021 as the COVID pandemic is showing no signs of slowing down.

The Department of Defense has long mandated all services conduct

annual fitness testing. That mandate for fitness testing means that no exemptions will be allowed for those who scored excellent or above from the previous 2019 cycle. However, going forward, those who score excellent or outstanding on the 2021 PFA will be exempt from participation in the first PFA cycle of 2022.

A new Physical Readiness Program Guide has been produced outlining how to conduct all testing to mitigate the possibility of spreading the COVID-19 virus. It is now available for download on the Physical Readiness Program website. Twice annual testing cycles are expected to resume as permitted in calendar year 2022.

What's not changing is the cycle's big updates to the Physical Readiness Test (PRT). The rollout of the forearm plank, which will replace the curl-up as a test of core strength, and the introduction of the 2000-meter row as a new optional cardio event, will go on as planned.

The 2021 cycle will also be the first for data entry into the new Physical Readiness Information Management

System 2 (PRIMS 2). The Navy is currently migrating the legacy PRIMS data to the new system's database as part of MyNavy HR transformation efforts. This new system will bring the data management for the PFA into the 21st century making the process easier for Command Fitness Leaders (CFLs).

The migration means that all commands will need to provide up-to-date CFL Certification in the new system. Training for commands on the new system is expected to start in February. All command leaders requiring read-only access will be able to request their access "in the March timeframe," the message said.

More information, including guides for conducting a COVID-19 safe fitness test along with initial performance standards for scoring the forearm plank and 2000-meter row are available to both individuals and command fitness leaders on the Navy Physical Readiness Program website.

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## Navy Strengthens the SAIL Suicide Prevention Program



Suicide prevention is an all-hands effort, requiring a constant focus on taking care of all Sailors. That need is now prompting subtle but important changes to a critical prevention program that's designed to help Sailors during the 90 days after a suicide-related behavior, the period of highest risk.

"As we start the New Year, I would like to acknowledge all the hard work being done to encourage Sailors to seek help and combat destructive behaviors," wrote Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. John B. Nowell, in NAVADMIN 021/21, released on Jan. 25.

"Although the overall suicide rate has started to move in the right direction, we must continue to keep the focus on Sailor support. We are still losing too many Sailors to suicide: 76 in 2020, 80 in 2019, and 79 in 2018."

Key to the Navy's proactive prevention approach towards suicide is the Sailor Assistance and Intercept for

Life (SAIL) program.

To be successful, Nowell wrote, this critical resource needs top-down, unit-level leadership engagement from start to finish.

However, he wrote, SAIL program case managers are having a hard time contacting many Sailors referred to the program, leading to the Sailor acceptance rate for care remaining around 50 percent.

"To close this identified gap, we will implement changes to the SAIL program," Nowell wrote. "SAIL procedures will be modified to require Commanding Officers to instruct and verify that the Sailors who have experienced a suicide-related behavior contact the SAIL case manager at the nearest Fleet and Family Service Center."

Though Nowell called this a "minor change in policy," it is expected to significantly impact contact with Sailors by strengthening the communication link between Sailors and case managers.

Command referral remains mandatory when a Sailor exhibits suicidal behavior or an attempt on their life.

Nowell called on shipmates and leaders to reach out and ACT (Ask, Care, Treat) if they notice a change in a

shipmate's behavior or think a Sailor is having difficulties.

"Numerous life circumstances can produce added pressure to a force already stressed by operational demands," Nowell wrote. "If left unacknowledged and therefore unchecked, this pressure can strain Sailors' psychological and emotional well-being."

Sailors and leaders at every level need to learn, understand, and identify factors that could increase suicide risk. Key to this, Nowell wrote, is knowing how your mission, work schedule, environment and other stressors might contribute to that risk.

"An important part of creating a command climate that encourages help-seeking behavior is intrusive leadership, especially at the deck plate level," Nowell wrote. "Know your Sailors—take actions to get to the left!"

He said that engaged deckplate leaders need to call on their command's existing experts when necessary, including Command Resilience Teams and their Command Resilience Team Human Factors Councils, to identify struggles early, assist Sailors in utilizing resources, support Sailors as they recover from stressors and remain connected with Sailors throughout the entire process. **Continued on pg. 11...**

## Navy Announces 2021 Meritorious Advancement Season One

The Navy has announced the calendar-year 2021 enlisted Meritorious Advancement Program's (MAP) Season One and with it, some new rules that commands need to be aware of.

The program, known as MAP, accounts for 20 percent of all enlisted advancements each calendar year. The program is a way for command triads to advance their most qualified Sailors ahead of each of the semi-annual Navy-wide Advancement (NWA) Cycles.

This year, adjustments were made to the program to ensure closer coordination between MAP and the NWA cycles, as well as special controls for some ratings to prevent overmanning in a particular paygrade. This will allow Sailors to be advanced through MAP, while also preserving advancement opportunity for those competing in the NWA exam cycle.

The season and program changes were announced in NAVADMIN 035/21, released on Feb. 12.

In this cycle, Navy personnel officials

will control the numbers of meritorious advancement approvals for Sailors in five rating and pay grade combinations, known as rates. These are BM3, ABF2, ABF1, ABH3 and ABH2.

"The decision to control these rates was made based on a variety of factors including low NWA advancement opportunity, and a large proportion of the community's total advancements coming from MAP" Vice Adm. John B. Nowell, Jr., the Navy's chief of personnel wrote in the message.

Commands wishing to advance Sailors to any of these rates must request those approvals by routing a request through their Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) and Type Commander (TYCOM) to their Budget Submitting Office (BSO)/echelon II command. The template for packages can be found on the MAP homepage in MyNavy Portal. Details on how this process will work are in the NAVADMIN.

Due to positive Fleet feedback, the 45-day MAP execution window will be

made permanent which has proved to be ample time for commands to request quotas and execute their MAP advancements. The window was reduced last year from 60 days due to the successful automation of the MAP process in the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS).

Once the season starts, MAP quotas by Unit Identification Code (UIC) will be posted on MyNavy Portal. Go to <https://www.mnp.navy.mil/group/advancement-and-promotion/a-enlisted-advancement-resources-and-links>, then select the \*Websites\* tab.

Example forms and frequently asked questions can be downloaded via MyNavy Portal at <https://www.mnp.navy.mil/group/advancement-and-promotion/a-enlisted-advancement-resources-and-links>, then select the \*Websites\* tab. A list of points of contact for each BSO and echelon II command as well as lists of parent and subordinate UICs can also be found on this website.

## Task Force One Navy Wraps Up - Continued from pg. 1



Gilday emphasized that beyond policy changes, the Navy will continuously look at this from a cultural perspective. He asked that Sailors make this a priority.

"While there is still work to be done, I am confident that this report's recommendations will help make our Navy better, and we will move forward together towards meaningful long-lasting change. Make no mistake, I am personally committed to this effort."

Over the past six months, the task force garnered direct feedback from active and reserve Sailors, as well as Navy civilians stationed around the world. A special survey team conducted 285 interviews and focus group sessions across the fleet and reviewed comments and suggestions from 898 Officers and Enlisted Sailors across a variety of demographic groups and ranks.

The task force also reviewed six Navy instructions and nine command-specific instructions to identify language that may be considered offensive, biased, or hampered inclusion.

For example, the Navy's uniform instruction was looked at as well as promotion manuals, specifically in what are called precepts – the marching orders given to selection boards on

selection criteria. Several recruiting instructions were also reviewed.

"The nearly 60 recommendations are a true reflection of the feedback from Sailors and Navy civilians and will make the Navy more equitable and increase our warfighting capability," said Rear Adm. Alvin Holsey, the director of Task Force One Navy. "I look forward to now starting the work of moving these recommendations forward."

The task force was organized around five specific Lines of Effort (LOEs). Each was focused on a waypoint of a Sailor's journey in the Navy. These were Recruiting, Talent Management and Retention, Professional Development, Innovation and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

Each LOE was led by a Flag Officer who will also now oversee the implementation of recommendations based on CNO's concurrence and further guidance.

The nearly 60 recommendations that



came out of this effort reflect a holistic picture of how to make the Navy more inclusive and diverse.

"We are really grateful for the support and feedback from the Fleet," said Force Master Chief Huben Phillips, the top senior enlisted member of the task force. "We really got some candid feedback. I promised every Sailors that we are committed to change. I stand by that commitment and so does everyone who was involved in the task force."

Upon submission of its report, TF1N stood down its efforts and now is a part of the Culture of Excellence. The Navy's COE Governance Board will remain the service's principal leadership forum to discuss Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity efforts across the force.

The complete list of TF1N recommendations can be found at this link: <https://www.navy.mil/Leadership/Chief-of-Naval-Personnel/CNP-Department-Exclusives/>

## GET THE VACCINE, SAVE LIVES

- Will a COVID-19 vaccination protect me from getting sick with COVID-19? **YES**
- If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine? **YES**
- Can a COVID-19 vaccine make me sick with COVID-19? **NO**
- Will a COVID-19 vaccine alter my DNA? **NO**

"I ask that every member of our Navy team strongly consider receiving the vaccine not only for yourself, but for your shipmates, your family, and your fellow citizens."





*Celebrating*  
**BLACK  
HISTORY  
MONTH**

*The Black Family, Representation, Identity, and Diversity*

# NRC Supports TF1N Through Sustained and Relevant Recruitment

The Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) prides itself on its efforts to recruit applicants with diverse backgrounds, life experiences and viewpoints. NRC does this at every level of its organization to not only attract and make the most of a Sailor's ability, but to compete in the national labor market, and defeat global adversaries. While NRC recognizes the American public's general lack of knowledge of the opportunities for education and careers in the military, it aims to bridge the gap so the Navy is a true representation of the diverse nation it serves. NRC is committed to working with TF1N on this effort, with the goal of achieving warfighting excellence.

As the entry point for Sailors into the Navy, NRC is dedicated to continuously evolving accession efforts to attracting high-quality talent that is as diverse as the nation it represents.

To meet this goal, NRC is developing and implementing

measures to improve minority officer program applications, selections, and commissioning to reflect the nation. NRC is also refining recruiting strategies to appeal to all diverse groups equally by delivering research-based marketing and advertising and deliberate, sustained and relevant community outreach within under-represented communities.



While NRC has done well diversifying its enlisted force, there is still some work to be done in the officer communities. NRC had consistent success recruiting diverse enlisted Sailors who also have undergraduate degrees.

Sufficient access to the potential officer recruits within minority communities are established. In order to provide additional commissioning opportunities for qualified Fleet Sailors, NRC is exploring the establishment of an Unrestricted Line in-Service Procurement Program pilot where Commanding Officers are authorized to conduct a board and select applicants who meet officer Program Authorization requirements for a commissioning program based on information already contained in their service record.

Finally, NRC is looking to remove barriers for program participation and deemphasize the use of standardized academic testing. As part of this effort NRC is exploring the idea of eliminating Officer Aptitude Rating test requirements for certain officer communities.

Collectively, these issues have a direct impact on the way NRC recruits (attract and acquire) the enormous talent available across the nation.



## TASK FORCE ONE NAVY

### LINE OF EFFORT #1

#### RECRUITING RECOMMENDATIONS

- IMPLEMENT RESEARCH-BASED MARKETING AND ADVERTISING AND DELIBERATE, SUSTAINED AND RELEVANT COMMUNITY OUTREACH WITHIN UNDER-REPRESENTED COMMUNITIES THAT APPEAL TO GENERATION Z MINORITIES.
- ESTABLISH AN UNRESTRICTED LINE (URL) IN-SERVICE PROCUREMENT PROGRAM (ISPP) - 3-YEAR PILOT.
- EXPLORE THE ELIMINATION OF OFFICER APTITUDE RATING (OAR) TEST REQUIREMENT.

TO READ MORE RECOMMENDATIONS, SEE THE FULL REPORT AT [WWW.NAVY.MIL/LEADERSHIP/CHIEF-OF-NAVAL-PERSONNEL/CNP-DEPARTMENT-EXCLUSIVES/](http://WWW.NAVY.MIL/LEADERSHIP/CHIEF-OF-NAVAL-PERSONNEL/CNP-DEPARTMENT-EXCLUSIVES/)





# TASK FORCE ONE NAVY

## LINE OF EFFORT #2

### TALENT MANAGEMENT / RETENTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- EXPAND THE DIVERSITY DATA SUBMITTED IN SELECTION BOARD RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS (ROP).
- SOURCE A SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE COMMANDER FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION AT CNPC AND SOURCE A BILLET FOR A TRAINED COMMAND CLIMATE SPECIALIST.
- ADD STATISTICS REGARDING DIVERSE BOARD MEMBERSHIP TO INCLUDE SUPPORT PARTICIPANTS.

TO READ MORE RECOMMENDATIONS, SEE THE FULL REPORT AT [WWW.NAVY.MIL/LEADERSHIP/CHIEF-OF-NAVAL-PERSONNEL/CNP-DEPARTMENT-EXCLUSIVES/](http://WWW.NAVY.MIL/LEADERSHIP/CHIEF-OF-NAVAL-PERSONNEL/CNP-DEPARTMENT-EXCLUSIVES/)

## Task Force One Navy - NPC Supports Talent Management Changes

Task Force One Navy (TF1N) was formed with the purpose of identifying and removing barriers of inequality while creating sustainable opportunities to achieve warfighting excellence. Navy Personnel Command (NPC) is directly supporting TF1N in efforts to encourage diversity and inclusion within the fleet. NPC is spear-heading several current initiatives and identified long-term plans to increase diversity and support a more inclusive force.



As part of the recommended initiatives to meet this goal, NPC is developing and implementing measures across a large percentage of talent management programs. NPC is developing and implementing quality assurance practices to

promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. These best practices include diversity amongst detailers, placement coordinators, and board members, continual review of milestone selection processes and career paths, and standardization of talent management. These practices are designed to ensure that the best and most fully-qualified Sailors of all backgrounds continue to be detailed fairly, to high-demand billets.

NPC is also conducting an in-depth review of internal screening requirements across talent management processes to mitigate potential biases and ensure standardization across all communities. Community Managers and community sponsors are reviewing community progression, to identify, understand and remove potential barriers diverse candidates may encounter to allow for upward mobility.

NPC has reviewed the processes to ensure selection boards are fair, unbiased, and reflect diversity of candidates being briefed. Official photographs have been removed from selection boards to ensure

all candidates are evaluated on the strength of their performance. Additionally, diversity among the recorders and assistant recorders who prepare the records for the promotion and advancement boards is regulated in policy similar to the voting membership.

A final focus area is reviewing the talent management programs currently in place. NPC is working on multiple talent management programs that will better enable the Navy to identify, develop and differentiate Sailors throughout their careers. This includes an increased focus on coaching and development programs to provide Sailors across the fleet a way to engage in their careers through coaching partnerships, teaching active listening, empathy, and questioning skills. Looking forward NPC will be implementing a next-generation FITREP/Evaluation system that more accurately measures performance against objective standards and contributes to improved Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity.

# Task Force One Navy - Professional Development

The Navy's mission has always been dynamic and continually evolving. To meet the 21st century challenges our Navy faces, we must attract, recruit and retain diverse talent, promote an inclusive culture across our Active, Reserve, civilian, and contractor workforce, and institutionalize Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity in the Navy.

"The importance of both inclusion and diversity cannot be overstated," said Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. John B Nowell, Jr. "It is imperative we draw on the diverse resources, skills, capabilities, and talents of our people, and that we not think, and act, and look the same. Equally, we must be inclusive – creating a culture where everyone feels they can provide their opinions and is valued for who they are."

Although the Navy is statistically more diverse than the U.S. population, it is still striving to develop a more inclusive organization. To achieve this, the Navy established three goals: (1) institutionalize Inclusion, Equity,

and Diversity across our Navy; (2) attract and recruit the best talent from our diverse nation to cultivate a high performance and innovative workforce; and (3) develop and retain Sailors and civilians by ensuring an inclusive culture.

"To more effectively recruit, develop, manage, reward, and retain the force of tomorrow, aiming to simply avoid doing the wrong thing is too low a bar; we must actively pursue that which is right," said Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday. "When Sailors feel included, respected and empowered, they will be more ready to win wars, deter aggression and maintain freedom of the seas."

The Naval Education and Training Command (NETC) plays an integral role in achieving this mission. As the command that oversees the recruiting and training of our force of tomorrow, NETC is pursuing ways to leverage Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity for the collective advantage of our workforce. These initiatives include:

- Exploring Inclusion, Equity,



and Diversity training that can be incorporated into the curriculum at Recruit Training Command.

- Each NETC learning center or site will tailor its Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity training based on its respective community or rating.

- NETC will integrate Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity core competencies throughout officer, enlisted and civilian leadership training continuums.

- NETC will ensure all Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity policies are enforced throughout the Force Development domain.

- NETC's integrated alignment with Culture of Excellence will contribute to building a Navy that can fight and win.



## TASK FORCE ONE NAVY

### LINE OF EFFORT #3

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- RE-ESTABLISH BROADENED OPPORTUNITY FOR OFFICER SELECTION AND TRAINING (BOOST) 2.0.
- INCREASE SIDE-LOAD SCHOLARSHIPS SPECIFICALLY TARGETING UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES.
- DEVELOP A BIAS MITIGATION TOOL OR SUITE OF TOOLS TO ASSIST LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS WITH CONSIDERING VARIOUS FALLACIES AND FORMS OF BIAS THAT CAN INFLUENCE DECISION.

TO READ MORE RECOMMENDATIONS, SEE THE FULL REPORT AT [WWW.NAVY.MIL/LEADERSHIP/CHIEF-OF-NAVAL-PERSONNEL/CNP-DEPARTMENT-EXCLUSIVES/](http://WWW.NAVY.MIL/LEADERSHIP/CHIEF-OF-NAVAL-PERSONNEL/CNP-DEPARTMENT-EXCLUSIVES/)



# TASK FORCE ONE NAVY

## LINE OF EFFORT #4

### INNOVATION AND STEM RECOMMENDATIONS

- DEVELOP A SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) OUTREACH PROGRAM TO EFFECTIVELY ATTRACT K-12 STUDENTS WITH DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS.
- ESTABLISH GUIDANCE AND CLEAR COMMUNICATION AUTHORIZING AND ENCOURAGING MIL/CIV OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES WITH AFFILIATED PROFESSIONAL GROUPS.
- DETERMINE THE NAVY'S MIL/CIV POPULATION ASSOCIATED WITH MINORITY FRATERNITIES, SORORITIES, AND OTHER AFFINITY GROUPS.

TO READ MORE RECOMMENDATIONS, SEE THE FULL REPORT AT [WWW.NAVY.MIL/LEADERSHIP/CHIEF-OF-NAVAL-PERSONNEL/CNP-DEPARTMENT-EXCLUSIVES/](http://WWW.NAVY.MIL/LEADERSHIP/CHIEF-OF-NAVAL-PERSONNEL/CNP-DEPARTMENT-EXCLUSIVES/)

## Task Force One Navy - STEM Innovations

The Navy's ability to fight and win at sea is directly related to the technology given to our Sailors.

This means the future of the Navy is directly tied to recruiting and retaining those who have developed skills in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering and math -- known today as simply "STEM."

Finding and developing STEM skills is a priority of the Navy's



leadership that is getting a new focus thanks to Task Force One Navy (TF1N).

"The Navy is a STEM service," Master Chief Petty of the Navy (MCPON) Russell L. Smith said in a 2019 speech. "We have to be qualified,

astute technicians -- bringing that [STEM] talent forward is one of our biggest lines of effort."

To accomplish this, the task force recommended building a diverse network among both military and civilians, to increase the awareness of Navy STEM professional opportunities at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

But TF1N also recommended an even deeper approach by recommending that a STEM outreach program for K-12 students be developed to encourage those with diverse backgrounds into these lines of study early in their educational careers.

In parallel, the task force suggests that those already serving could also be encouraged to mentor and inspire underrepresented and underserved students majoring in STEM disciplines at minority serving institutions.

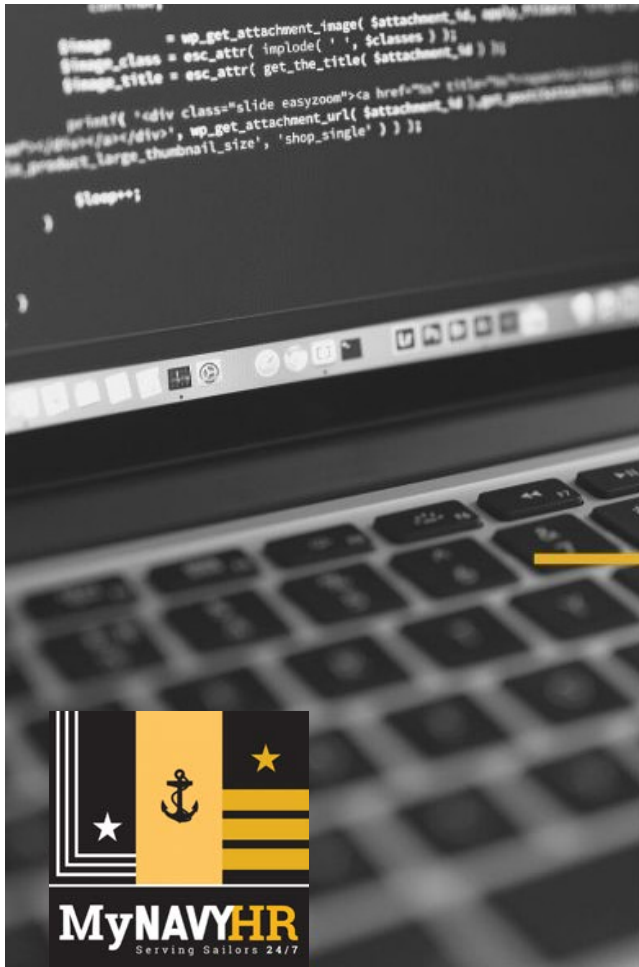
A key enabler of this idea would be to leverage military and civilians already affiliated with minority

fraternities, sororities, and other affinity groups who could be empowered by guidance and clear communication that authorizes and encourages outreach opportunities by these affiliated professional groups.



These efforts could be further enhanced, the task force said, by incentivizing participation through the establishment of recognition programs in the Navy for both military and civilians and by creating a public affairs campaign to increase visibility of the outreach program and any associated memberships within minority affinity groups.





# WE'RE UPDATING, UPGRADING AND MIGRATING.

NPC.Navy.mil is moving to a **new system** with a new URL and an updated look and feel. Beginning **mid-February** you can find us at **www.MyNavyHR.Navy.mil**. Keep up with the latest on our move by **following us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.**

## Service Members Executing Overseas Orders Must Test Negative for COVID-19 Prior to Flying

All Sailors and family members executing travel orders outside the continental United States (OCONUS) are required to have a negative Coronavirus test before traveling, according to NAVADMIN 03/21 released Jan. 7, 2021.

Many countries are now requiring negative COVID test results for servicemembers before their arrival. Testing is the responsibility of the servicemember and they must determine their individual requirements based on their destination by referring to the Foreign Clearance Guide (FCG) and the airline policy.

OCONUS travelers must have a negative viral COVID-19 test (molecular or antigen) within 72-hours of departing. An antigen test may be used for testing before traveling when a molecular test (such as polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or Abbott ID NOW) is not available. However, a molecular test is the preferred test.

If the country you're traveling to requires a specific test, timing, or result format, travelers must follow the stricter requirement.

Once tested, servicemembers must have their test results in hand with time

left before expiration before arrival at the next destination.

Sailors or family members who test positive for COVID-19 while executing OCONUS orders must stop and execute restriction of movement (ROM) procedures. If a test is positive, Sailors should contact the MyNavy Career Center (MNCC) where an agent will take appropriate action to notify the Sailor's detailer and Navy Passenger Transportation Office (NAVPTO). Sailors should communicate with their detailer and the NAVPTO to discuss order modifications and future travel arrangements, if needed.

Travelers with a valid proof of COVID-19 vaccination are currently not exempt from the testing requirement. Vaccinated travelers should only rely on molecular-based tests because they may be at higher risk of a false positive with an antigen test.

Servicemembers and their families can get free testing at a military treatment facility (MTF), but tests must be scheduled before arrival and OCONUS orders are required. Test results will be delivered within 24 hours after testing.

Preferred Military Treatment Facility Locations/Phone Contact/Testing Hours Available (Pacific)

- Camp Pendleton, CA, (760) 685-3537, 24/7 testing available

- Bremerton, WA, (360) 340-5335, testing 9 a.m. – 10 p.m.

- Madigan Army Hospital, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA, (253) 968-4443, testing 6 a.m. – 5 p.m.

(Atlantic)

- Portsmouth, VA, (757) 953-6200, 24/7 testing available

- Jacksonville, FL, (994) 250-6188, 24/7 testing available

- Camp Lejeune, NC, (910) 450-2956, 24/7 testing available

- Fort Belvoir, VA, COVID Clinic (571) 231-0532, testing 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

- Fort Belvoir, VA CDO (571) 585-6066, 24/7 testing available

- Walter Reed, Central Screening, (571) 335-9985, testing 7 a.m. – 4 p.m.

- Walter Reed, CDO, (301) 547-1161, 24/7 testing available

For more information see NAVADMIN 003/21, or contact the MNCC at 1-833-330-6622, email - askmncc@navy.mil.

# Navy Modernizes Tuition Assistance Debt Payments

The Navy has modernized the way Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen can pay back tuition assistance (TA) debts beginning in Jan. 2021.

The new program provides service members with the option to pay their debt on a mobile device or computer using a debit card, electronic funds transfer (EFT) or via a PayPal account. Credit cards will not be accepted through this program, and PayPal can only be used if linked to a debit card or bank account.



Until now, service members were required to repay TA debt using a cashier's check, money order or a payroll transaction, a process that took anywhere from a week to 45 days.

"This is the first time since the beginning of the tuition assistance

program in the mid-nineties that we've done electronic debt payments," said Tim Driggers, Voluntary Education Business Operations division head. "The service members can pay with their bank account using a smartphone as opposed to putting a check in the mail. Since the pilot program began, we've seen a reduction in checks by about 60% by doing e-billing every week."

The new capability not only benefits the accounting system, but the service member as well.

"We saw a debt get paid within two hours of service member notification," said Driggers. "This allows the service member to be in good standing again, so that the TA benefit is available for use immediately."

This streamlined process is simple to use for the service members, according to Fred Morales, the TA Collections branch head.

"Once an indebtedness occurs due to a collectible grade, and the course has been invoiced by an academic institution, the service member will receive an email with instructions directing them to Pay.gov where they

can make the payment electronically," said Morales. "It's very easy to use."

In most cases, debt transactions will be posted to the member's WebTA account by TA Accounting the next business day after the service member pays their TA debt using Pay.gov.

If a debt payment is not made within 45 days, a file will be sent to Defense Finance Accounting Service (DFAS) to cancel the e-bill, and the debt amount will be taken from the service member through payroll deduction.

For more information regarding the repayment of TA debts, please call: 1-877-838-1659, option 4.

As part of the MyNavy HR Force Development team, Naval Education and Training Professional Development Center (NETPDC) provides products and services that enable and enhance education, training, career development and personnel advancement throughout the Navy. Primary elements of the command include the Voluntary Education Department, the Navy Advancement Center and the Resources Management Department.

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Also, the message details how the new plank and 2,000-meter row optional cardio events will fit into the physical testing process, including how they're expected to be accomplished and graded. It's the first major change to the assessment since the Navy introduced fitness tests in the early 1980s.



The change was made as the result of Navy researchers discovering the curl-up was not a true test of abdominal strength and did not prepare Sailors to better accomplish shipboard tasks. In fact, its downsides outweighed any benefit as curl-ups have been linked to an increased risk of creating or aggravating lower back injuries.

The forearm plank, however, is a

functional movement required in 85 percent of regular shipboard tasks, including pushing, pulling, lifting and carrying.

The forearm plank uses isometric contraction to activate key abdominal and trunk muscles, mimicking the main function of the abdominal musculature - to act as stabilizers to resist the spine from moving while strengthening the lower back.

Training for the forearm plank strengthens the body's core, improves posture, and reduces the risk of lower back injuries throughout a Sailor's career.

Because there is overlap in the muscle groups used for the push-up and the forearm plank, the decision was made to conduct the push-up event first, followed by the plank and cardio portions.

This sequence was used in the initial tests. Researchers found it allows for maximum performance on the push-ups while limiting residual fatigue during the forearm plank.

The cardio portion's new addition will be a 2,000-meter row on the "Concept-2

Rower." The other options remain as the 12-min stationary cycle, 500-yd/450-m swim, and 1.5-mile run.

A non-weight bearing, low impact exercise, rowing reduces stress on the legs, while providing a great full-body cardio workout as it works 80 percent of the body's muscles.

A big benefit of the Concept-2 Rower is that it's space saving and thus able to be easily used on any naval vessel as well as at shore installations.

As previously announced, the Navy will give Sailors a one-cycle grace period for the forearm-plank. Though the event will be conducted during the 2021 Cycle, it won't officially count until 2022.

More information, including guides for conducting a COVID-19 safe fitness test along with Initial performance standards for scoring the forearm plank and 2000-meter row are available to both individuals and command fitness leaders on the Navy Physical Readiness Program website at [https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/21st\\_Century\\_Sailor/physical/Pages/default2.aspx](https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/21st_Century_Sailor/physical/Pages/default2.aspx).

## Navy Strengthens the SAIL Suicide Prevention Program - Continued from pg. 2

Extensive research has been conducted and shown a "caring contact" program is effective in the vulnerable days following a suicide-related behavior. SAIL is the Navy's caring contact program. Since the inception of the program, SAIL has helped over 4,000 Sailors during the critical 90-day period after a suicide-related behavior.

Programs that encourage support, provide ongoing caring contacts and help Sailors navigate medical systems following a suicide-related behavior

help ensure that no Sailor falls through the cracks and reduce deaths by suicide. To this end, Nowell encouraged "warm handoffs," which he says, "are critical for at-risk Sailors."

Commands need to be especially attentive during a Sailor's temporary or permanent transition to another command, as well as any other times their normal social network is disrupted.

These handoffs are just as critical once a Sailor completes treatment.

"Reintegration must be done carefully,

ensuring no support gaps between the medical provider and command leadership," Nowell said. "Sailors should receive the continual support needed to carry on in their careers and personal lives."

This constant support is vital to a successful recovery long-term, Nowell wrote, "regardless of whether that Sailor is transitioning back into the workplace, into another job field or into civilian life."

## Make the S.M.A.R.T Choice When it Come to Stress Management

From minor challenges to major crises, stress is part of everyday life. Stress can take a toll on a person's health if the stress becomes overbearing or if it's chronic. Depending on the circumstance, a person can't always control stress but they can control their response to it.

It's important to have strategies to help manage stress. Oftentimes, people have ideas on how to manage stress by what they see or hear from television, social media, or family and friends. However, they are not sure where to start. One way to start is to make your stress management strategies S.M.A.R.T.

**1. Specific** - The stress management strategy should be clearly defined in such a way that anyone could understand what you intend to accomplish. Instead of saying "I want to manage my stress levels," pick one strategy to incorporate

such as, "One way that I will manage my stress level is by meditating for at least ten minutes, five days a week."

**2. Measurable** - Establish how many times a week you can incorporate the strategy into your routine. This will establish a way for assessing progress. Instead of a vague strategy, "I will eat healthy," create a measurable goal, "I will eat breakfast five out of seven days a week."

**3. Attainable** - The stress management strategy must be realistic and should take into account your knowledge, skills and abilities. Otherwise, the strategy becomes unrealistic and will only bring frustration. Instead of a vague unrealistic strategy, "I want to manage my stress 100% of the time in 2021, create an attainable strategy, "I will incorporate two new stress management strategies into my routine during the first quarter

of 2021."

**4. Relevant** - The stress management strategy must have a purpose in your life. Why are you investing your time and energy into this strategy? Is this a priority? For example, if you are trying to limit the time on your electronics before bedtime, ask yourself why this is relevant in your daily routine. It could be because you want to spend time with your family, catch up on other activities, or sleep better at night.

**5. Time-based** - When developing a stress management strategy, make sure you have a target date. For example, "I will write down three things I am grateful for in a journal and then reevaluate this strategy by 15 March 2021." This provides you with the ability to review the strategy on a specific date and determine if you need to continue, revise or stop the strategy completely.

## NRC Expedites Medical Waivers Process

Applicants walk into recruiting stations every day seeking life-changing opportunities. Some go through weeks of training and paperwork to eventually go to a Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS), only to be told by an examiner that they are medically disqualified. Though disheartening, medical disqualification is not always the end of their road to enlistment, and that's where medical waivers come in to play.

A waiver of medical standards can be given to candidates who may not meet established physical qualifications but are projected to be able to serve without posing a danger to themselves or the Navy's mission. The case-by-case nature of this process brings many complications, and as Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) evolves to face modern challenges, so must this aspect of its personnel acquisition.

"One of the main things we've done was make the turnaround for waivers drop from around 23 days to an hour or less depending on the case," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Tristan Reeb, acting division leading chief petty officer and a medical waivers processor for Navy Recruiting Command. "The field can put a request in, and they'll get a response in an hour or less".

Reeb gave praise to their department head Cmdr. Jason A. Gordon, senior medical waiver review authority, for the efficiency and speed of the new process.

"I credit Cmdr. Gordon," said Reeb. "We know his marching orders, and we ask ourselves what Cmdr. Gordon would do because, in the end, the waivers are going to him."

Gordon believes his team deserves credit for their work ethic and dedication to their jobs. Their efforts ensure that medical waiver recipients get the

information they need as quickly as possible.

"I am fortunate to have good people with good work ethics who are willing to put in the hours that are required to get the job done even in a partially autonomous telework environment," said Gordon.

Cmdr. Gordon and the medical waiver processors have gained recognition from their chain of command for their efficiency. In 2019, Vice Adm. John B. Nowell Jr. presented a coin to Gordon as a token of gratitude for his division's efforts.

"It's impressive that they've been able to improve their customer service," said Doug Bernard, the assistant operations officer at Commander, Navy Recruiting Command. "Getting waiver approval is now a same day turnaround, where it used to be days or even weeks for a waiver to be approved."