PERMANENT CHANGE OF STATION SERVICE MEMBER CHECKLIST

Moves can come with unexpected costs, and you may need to cover some expenses upfront. While the military covers many costs, staying proactive with your financial planning can help you manage any out-of-pocket costs along the way.

HANDOUTS

- ✓ Spending Plan Worksheet
- ✓ Financial Planning Worksheet for a PCS Move
- ✓ Estimated Travel Costs for a PCS Move
- ✓ Spouse SCRA Taxation

This checklist, along with the information and referrals provided, highlights key financial considerations during a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) to help you make informed, confident decisions throughout the process. Leverage the in-depth information available at the Department of War's (DoW's) Personal Property Activity (PPA) website, https://www.ppa.mil/, for detailed move information as you use this checklist.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

- ☐ Complete the *Spending Plan Worksheet* and *Financial Planning Worksheet for a PCS Move.* Revise each periodically to account for new income, expenses, debt and contributions to retirement accounts. Apply the various housing and moving allowances as you are eligible.
- ☐ Establish a savings account and regularly set aside money for the future. Identify the appropriate types of savings options for short- and long-term financial goals.
- ☐ Aim to build at least three months of essential expenses in your emergency fund. Setting up automatic transfers to a dedicated savings account can make it easier to build this cushion over time.
- ☐ Visit the following resources to review PCS-related allowance rates and eligibility requirements:
  - Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for CONUS, Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA), Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA) and OCONUS COLA, visit https://www.travel.dod.mil/Allowances/.
  - Lodging Expense (TLE), Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA), Family Separation Allowance (FSA), visit https://militarypay.defense.gov/.
- ☐ Access additional information and estimates on PCS moving allowances and reimbursements, visit your installation's Relocation Assistance Program Office, Finance Office and https://militaryonesource.mil/moving-pcs/plan-to-move/pcs-and-military-moves.
- ☐ Evaluate ability to access healthy and affordable food and use the following resources, if needed: Basic Needs Allowance (BNA) at https://finred.usalearning.gov/Benefits/BNA, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) at https://www.fns.usda.gov/.
- ☐ Understand your responsibilities when using a Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) for your PCS move.
- ☐ Determine if you will require an Advance of Pay Incident to PCS.

CREDIT AND DEBT MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Notify your financial institutions and creditors about your upcoming move. Provide them with your estimated move dates, the states or countries you'll be in during your PCS, and your new mailing address if you have one.

- ☐ Consider setting up automatic bill pay to prevent missed or late payments. If using automatic bill pay, confirm all transactions have cleared your bank or credit union account if you plan to change financial institutions at your next duty station.

- ☐ Obtain free credit reports for you and your spouse (if married) and enroll in free credit monitoring at *https://www.annualcreditreport.com*. Regularly review your report to address errors or signs of identity theft early.

- ☐ Use the Debt Destroyer Online Tool for an actionable plan to save time and money on your debt repayment journey. *https://finred.usalearning.gov/debt-destroyer-calculator/debt-destroyer-calculator.html*

- ☐ Meet with a PFM/PFC and explore Military and Family Support Center classes to prepare your finances for any major purchases. Connect though *https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/ and https://finred.usalearning.gov/pfcMap*.

- ☐ Analyze your transportation needs, including how your housing type and location impacts your transportation decisions. Learn more at *https://finred.usalearning.gov/Money/CarBuyingBasics*.

- ☐ Review consumer protections including the Military Lending Act (MLA) and the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) to see if you and your qualified dependents are eligible for military-specific credit protections. For more information, visit *https://finred.usalearning.gov/Consumer-Protections*.

PCS CONSIDERATIONS

Before Your Move:

- ☐ Review and update legal documents including wills, Powers of Attorney and beneficiary designations. To establish or update these documents, connect with your installation's Legal Assistance office, *https://legalassistance.law.af.mil/*, or legal counsel of your choice.

- ☐ Follow SCRA and MLA guidelines if you need to terminate contracts due to receiving PCS orders.

- ☐ Research your new duty station and connect with local programs, services and resources. Visit *https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/* and *https://planmymove.militaryonesource.mil/*.

- ☐ Analyze your housing needs and consider housing-related decisions such as renting or buying a home off installation. Visit the following resource: *https://finred.usalearning.gov/Money/HomeBuyingBasics*.

- ☐ Update your address (if known) at your local United States Post Office or at *https://www.usps.com*.

- ☐ Update your address in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) section of myPay by visiting *https://mypay.dfas.mil/*.

- ☐ Research child care options and schools in your new area. Many places have enrollment requirements and specific timelines for being placed on waiting lists. For information on military-related child care options, visit *https://public.militarychildcare.csd.disa.mil/mcc-central/mcchome*.

- ☐ Review and complete the *Estimated Travel Costs for a PCS Move* handouts.

During Your Move:

- ☐ Review your shipping and transportation options and requirements, including:
  - Types of moves – Household goods (HHG), Personally Procured Moves (PPM), partial moves
  - Unaccompanied baggage
  - Non-temporary storage
  - Weight limitations – *https://www.militaryonesource.mil/moving-pcs* or your Travel Management Office
  - Vehicles
  - Pets – *https://www.travel.dod.mil/Support/ALL-FAQs/Article/3624131/pet-transportation-allowance/*

- ☐ Understand the various tax implications and reporting requirements associated with a PCS move. For more information, visit *https://www.militaryonesource.mil/financial-legal/taxes/pcs-and-taxes-deducting-military-moving-expenses/* or review IRS Publication 521: Moving Expenses.

After Your Move:

- ☐ Assess your current state tax rules and those at your new duty station, if in another state. You and your spouse (if applicable) may qualify for property tax or vehicle registration exemptions under the Veterans Auto and Education Improvement Act of 2022 (HR 7939). For questions, connect with a free Military OneSource MilTax consultant at *https://www.militaryonesource.mil/financial-legal/taxes/miltax-military-tax-services* or a tax advisor of your choice. For additional tax information and options, visit *https://finred.usalearning.gov/assets/downloads/SCRA-Timeline-of-Changes-FINAL.pdf*.

- ☐ Reassess your insurance policies, including homeowner's, renter's, auto, and property, after your PCS move. Not all policies automatically include coverage for moving and storage. Contact your insurance provider with questions.

- ☐ Research spouse education and career opportunities (if applicable) by visiting MySECO at *https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/*.

- ☐ Review the available health care and dental plans at your new duty station by visiting TRICARE at *https://www.tricare.mil/planfinder*.

- ☐ Assess and enroll in, if appropriate, Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) for Health Care or Dependent Care by visiting *https://fsafeds.gov/* and *https://finred.usalearning.gov/benefits/hcfsa*

- ☐ Reassess your TSP/retirement account contributions as part of reviewing your overall spending plan while adapting to your new location and any changes in income or expenses.

SUMMARY AND RESOURCES

Reviewing and organizing your financial and household documents at each stage of the PCS process can help you make informed personal and financial decisions during your PCS. Here's a list of key actions to take when preparing for a PCS:

- Create a spending plan to anticipate income and expense changes
- Review travel and housing allowances
- Complete address, insurance, and health care updates, if applicable
- Track all expenses and payments related to your PCS

This checklist, the handouts and your installation's PFM or PFC can help you navigate your financial readiness during every personal and professional milestone. Use the following resources for additional information and assistance:

- Road to Financial Readiness Roadmap (*https://finred.usalearning.gov/assets/downloads/FINRED-RTFR-F.pdf*)

- DoW Financial Readiness (FINRED) website (*https://finred.usalearning.gov/*)
- Locate a PFM on your installation (*https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/*)
- Locate a PFC near your installation (*https://finred.usalearning.gov/pfcMap*)
- TSP website (*https://www.tsp.gov/*)
- Find additional resources and information at *https://www.financialfrontline.army.mil*
- Visit your local Army Community Service (ACS) and see a PFM or PFC today

Service member signature / Date

Counselor signature / Date