

# Every Member Counts

**SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD** 



## June 2020 Focus

Mission: Service Member & Family Support enhances and empowers the lives of our customers with consistently exceptional service & support.

**Service Member & Family Support**

**Phone: 1-800-658-3930**

THE FOCUS IS FOR SERVICE MEMBERS & FAMILIES, VETERANS, RETIREES & SURVIVORS

IN THIS ISSUE

### What is State Active Duty?

When National Guard units are not under federal control, the governor is the commander-in-chief of his or her respective state, territory (Guam, Virgin Islands), or commonwealth (Puerto Rico). The President of the United States commands the District of Columbia National Guard, though this command is routinely delegated to the Commanding General of the DC National Guard. Each of the 54 National Guard organizations is supervised by the Adjutant General of the state or territory State Active Duty (SAD).

The Governor can activate National Guard personnel to "State Active Duty" in response to natural or man-made disasters or Homeland Defense missions.

State Active Duty is based on State statute and policy as well as State funds, and the Soldiers and Airmen remain under the command and control of the Governor. A key aspect of this duty status is that the Posse Comitatus Act (PCA) does not apply.

Under state law, the NG provides protection of life and property, and preserves peace, order, and public safety. These missions are accomplished through emergency relief support during natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and forest fires; search and rescue operations; support to civil authorities; maintenance of vital public services; and counterdrug operations.

[More information can be found here.](#)

**MILITARY**  
**ONE**   
**SOURCE**

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## Introduction of Title 5 employees to SMFS

Hello All!!

I want to update you all on the transition to Title 5 (T-5) here in SMFS. As you many of you may have already heard, our the Family Readiness Support Assistance (FRSA) team, and our Family Assistance Center (FAC) team are going to merge into one Family Readiness program and our Citizen Soldier for Life (CSFL) Program is going to sunset. The locations are currently and will continue to be referred to as Family Assistance Centers. The Family Assistance Centers will be staffed by Title 5 technicians. The transition from contractors to T5 will affect our manning. We are going to experience a reduction in manpower, going from 12 team members (six Family Assistance, three Family Readiness and three CSFL) to seven team members. The team will consist of a team lead in Rapid City and six specialists. The team lead and one specialist will be housed in the JFHQ, two specialist will be housed in the Sioux Falls armory and then one specialist in each of the following armories: Mitchell, Brookings and Watertown.

The transition will occur in two iterations. The first iteration will begin roughly 27 April and conclude on 30 June. The Second iteration will occur at the end of August.

### Iteration 1

This iteration will begin with the hiring of a new Family Readiness team lead. We are pleased to announce that Christian Johnson was hired as the team lead April. Christian brings a wealth of full-time knowledge and M-Day experience to the team. Christian has worked as a federal technician for the SDARNG for over 10 years, a contractor for the SDNG for over four years and has been a traditional Soldier for over 18 years.

Next, we worked through the hiring of our Family Readiness Specialist. Earlier this week (8 June) we got to welcome Ruth Ragels to the team as the Mitchell Family Readiness Specialist. Ruth is not new to her community nor to her profession. We are excited to have her continue to be part of the SMFS team.

The week of 23 June, we will have another familiar face to the SDARNG joining our team. Don Kranz will be one of our two Family Readiness Specialist in Sioux Falls. Don has been a technician for quite a while; most recently doing the same type of work he will be doing for us at the VA Hospital in Sioux Falls. We are excited to have Don with his VA knowledge join the team.

In the first week of August, we will have Bill Flippo join our team in Brookings. Bill is not completely new to the Guard either. Bill is the son of a Kansas Guardsman and has over 20 years of active duty Army experience. He most recently served as the NCOIC of the ROTC program in Brookings. We are excited to have Bill and his experience join the team in Brookings.

In the first week of September, we will have Rob Cyrus join the team in Watertown. Rob also spent a career on active duty in the Air Force as a maintainer. After his 24 years of active duty, Rob and his family decided it was time to return home to South Dakota. We are excited to have Rob and his experience join our team.

Unfortunately, by hiring these folks, we have to say good bye to several of our teammates. Wendi Albers, Georgeann Vandelist, Kaylie Sterud, and Tom Sitzler in Rapid City; Corinne Mahlen and Emy Carlson in Watertown; and Tony Grandy, April Schave, and Paul Mausbach in Sioux Falls have all transitioned out of the program by the end of June.

## Iteration 2

This iteration will wrap up the transition. During this iteration, we will see the final two Family Readiness Specialists hired and the last two Family Assistance Specialists, Clyde Smallwood, and Stephanie Goldhorn, exit (unless they are selected to be a T5 specialist).

As SMFS goes through this transition, I want to thank you all up front for your patience. Please note that our number one goal during this transition is to ensure that you, our Service-Members and Families, can continue to use the 800 number (800-658-3930) to request assistance.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not recognize these teams as they transition. This transition is bitter sweet for the SMFS team as a whole. While the programmatic benefits are great, the change in personnel is almost as significant. The Family Assistance team and the Family Readiness team has been the bedrock of SMFS (initially known as family programs)! Many of these team-members have dedicated their professional careers to helping our service-members. They have sacrificed to support our organization and have been the pillar of support for our families (and their Service-Member) during mobilizations and deployments. All of three programs team-members strived to make sure each and every family was prepared and resilient. While this could be a sad time, I think it is more fitting to be resilient and celebrate. Please help me congratulate all of these folks on a job well done!! Each of them has done an amazing job and as you see them over the next several weeks, please join me in congratulating each of them on what they have helped the SDNG accomplish!

QJ

QUENTEN J. JOHNSON

MAJ, MI,

Director, Service Member and Family Support

South Dakota National Guard

## Health and Wellness Coaching: Your Partner in Well Being

**MILITARY**  
**ONESOURCE**

### How can a coach help me?

Your board certified coach can help with:

- Weight management
- Fitness
- Nutrition
- Health management
- Stress management
- Life transitions

### Who is eligible?

Health and wellness coaching is available to service members and their families, including teens.

Survivors are also eligible.

### What does a coach do?

Wellness is not one-size-fits-all. Your coach will work closely with you by phone or video to:

- Help you create an action plan
- Keep you on track
- Cheer your successes

Health and wellness coaches can also connect you with other helpful resources through Military OneSource, like interactive resilience tools, relationship support, education and career counseling and more.

### How do I get started?

Call Military OneSource at 800-342-9647 or visit [www.MilitaryOneSource.mil](http://www.MilitaryOneSource.mil) to schedule your appointment with a health and wellness coach.



# Additional Lifecycle (L) Funds

Beginning July 1, 2020, new Lifecycle (L) Funds will be available to TSP participants. This fact sheet explains the coming changes.

## Background on the L Funds

Each L Fund is made up entirely of the five core funds—G, F, C, S, and I—in different proportions. The L Funds are target date funds, meaning they automatically adjust as you get closer to the time you plan to retire.

When your target date is far in the future, you can take more risk, seeking greater reward, because you have time to recover from any market downturns before you'll need your money. When your target date is close, you may want to be more conservative with your investments. To make that gradual adjustment on your own, you'd have to regularly shift the money in your TSP account from the more aggressive C, S, and I funds to the more conservative G and F Funds. The L Funds do that work for you.

So, for example, the L 2050 Fund today is 82% invested in the C, S, and I Funds and only 18% invested in G and F. That's because its target date, the year 2050, is still 30 years away. But when we get within a year or two of 2050, the percentages will be close to the other way around. It will still be called the L 2050 Fund, but it will have a completely different investment approach, all without your having to make changes on your own.

The current L Funds are L 2050, L 2040, L 2030, L 2020, and L Income. The years in the names are the target dates. The L Income Fund is for people who have already reached the target date. It's always the most conservative of the L Funds.

Many TSP participants, especially those newer to the plan, were invested automatically into the L Fund most appropriate for their age.

## What's Changing

### Target Dates in Five-Year Increments

We're adding more L Funds so that the target dates will be separated by only five years instead of ten. Say you plan to retire within a year or two of 2035. Without these additional options, you'd have to choose between the L 2030 Fund and the L 2040 Fund, or maybe split your account between the two. The new L 2035 Fund will allow you to more precisely target the time when you think you'll need your money.

### Goodbye L 2020 Fund

When an L Fund reaches its target date, as the L 2020 Fund is about to, it becomes identical to the L Income Fund, so it ceases to exist. If you have money in the L 2020 Fund on July 1, don't worry; that money will roll automatically into the L Income Fund. You can always make an interfund transfer into any fund you decide.

### The New L Fund Lineup

Starting July 1, 2020, there will be ten L Funds available: L 2065, L 2060, L 2055, L 2050, L 2045, L 2040, L 2035, L 2030, L 2025, and L Income. See the table on page 2 to decide which one might be right for you.



## CHOOSING AN L FUND

### L Income Fund

Consider investing in this fund if:

- You are already withdrawing from your TSP account or
- You were born before 1958

### L 2025 Fund

Consider investing in this fund if:

- You plan to begin withdrawing from your TSP account between 2021 – 2027 or
- You were born between 1958 – 1964

### L 2030 Fund

Consider investing in this fund if:

- You plan to begin withdrawing from your TSP account between 2028 – 2032 or
- You were born between 1965 – 1969

### L 2035 Fund

Consider investing in this fund if:

- You plan to begin withdrawing from your TSP account between 2033 – 2037 or
- You were born between 1970 – 1974

### L 2040 Fund

Consider investing in this fund if:

- You plan to begin withdrawing from your TSP account between 2038 – 2042 or
- You were born between 1975 – 1979

### L 2045 Fund

Consider investing in this fund if:

- You plan to begin withdrawing from your TSP account between 2043 – 2047 or
- You were born between 1980 – 1984

### L 2050 Fund

Consider investing in this fund if:

- You plan to begin withdrawing from your TSP account between 2048 – 2052 or
- You were born between 1985 – 1989

### L 2055 Fund

Consider investing in this fund if:

- You plan to begin withdrawing from your TSP account between 2053 – 2057 or
- You were born between 1990 – 1994

### L 2060 Fund

Consider investing in this fund if:

- You plan to begin withdrawing from your TSP account between 2058 – 2062 or
- You were born between 1995 – 1999

### L 2065 Fund

Consider investing in this fund if:

- You plan to begin withdrawing from your TSP account after 2062 or
- You were born after 1999

## EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE TIPS FOR GUARD AND RESERVE SERVICE MEMBERS

Many employment challenges can be avoided by being candid with your employer about your obligations as a member of one of the National Guard & Reserve. Don't take your employer's support for granted!

*Here are some tips on how to keep your supervisor informed:*

**Talk to Your Employer:** Tell your employer about your military assignment and skills you have gained in the military. Many people hold military jobs that relate directly to their civilian careers.

**Federal Law:** Know your rights and responsibilities as outlined by Federal law in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). The law guarantees the right to take time off from work to meet your military responsibilities. If you, your supervisor and your personnel office are familiar with USERRA, potential misunderstandings can be minimized. ESGR is a free resource that can help you understand your rights and responsibilities under USERRA, and assist your employer with USERRA compliance.

**Annual Training and Drill Schedules:** Keep your supervisor informed about your Guard & Reserve duties. The earlier you provide your supervisor with drill schedules, annual training plans and any extra time-off requirements, the more smoothly things will go. Remember you must give your employer advance notice of any military service whenever possible; it is recommended that this be done in writing. Giving employers the maximum lead-time enables them to plan for your absence.

**Non-Training Active Duty:** Many Guard & Reserve members perform tours of active duty that are not for training. This can range from short active duty tours and support exercises to years of active duty. Under USERRA, prior notice of military duty must be given to your employer. Military duty in this category is generally subject to a cumulative 5-year time limit under USERRA. After being absent for five years you may no longer have reemployment rights with your employer.

**Emergency/Contingency Duty:** As a Guard & Reserve member, if you are activated involuntarily for war or a national emergency, your period of service will not count against the cumulative 5-year limit established under USERRA. In most cases, voluntary duty is also exempt from the 5-year limit if it is in direct support of a contingency operation.

**Scheduling:** If you miss work while performing military service, your employer is not obligated to reschedule you to make up the time lost. However, if employees who miss work for non-military reasons are afforded opportunities to make up the time lost, you must be treated in the same manner. Further, you cannot be required to find replacement workers for shifts you miss during the performance of military service.

**Vacation and Accrual:** Federal law allows you the option to use earned vacation while performing military service, but you cannot be required to do so. The only case where you could be required to use your vacation would be if your company has a planned shutdown period when everyone must take vacation, and your military service coincides with that period of time. Your employer is not required to provide for vacation accrual while you are absent from work performing military service, unless accrual is permitted for employees on nonmilitary leave of absence of similar length and situation.

**Pay:** Although some private and many government employers provide full or partial civilian pay to employees absent on military duty, the law requires only an unpaid leave of absence be provided by the employer. Federal employees are entitled to time off at full pay for certain types of active or inactive duty in the Guard & Reserve. More information is available from the Office of Personnel Management site at [www.OPM.gov](http://www.OPM.gov).

**Reward Your Supervisor:** Show appreciation for supportive employers by nominating your supervisor for a Patriot Award. It's a free and easy way to say thanks. The Department of Defense will send your supervisor a personally prepared certificate of appreciation if you, the Guard & Reserve member, simply nominate them for the award. Take time to "brag" about your supervisor today! Visit [www.ESGR.mil/PA](http://www.ESGR.mil/PA) to nominate your employer.



ESGR DEVELOPS AND PROMOTES A CULTURE IN  
WHICH ALL AMERICAN EMPLOYERS  
**SUPPORT AND VALUE**  
THE MILITARY SERVICE OF THEIR EMPLOYEES.

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# MilTax

MILITARY  
ONE SOURCE

## Q AND A



**Q: What makes MilTax different from other tax preparation services?**

**A:** MilTax is the only tax preparation and filing software provided by the Department of Defense designed exclusively for our military community. The software was developed specifically to address scenarios that civilians rarely encounter, from combat pay to multiple moves. It's convenient, with trained experts readily available—and it's no cost, regardless of your rank or income. Expertise like this helps you save the most money.

**Q: When and where will the MilTax software be available for 2016 returns?**

**A:** Military OneSource provides free tax preparation and access to filing software starting mid-January through mid-October. Tax consultants can answer questions year-round. Access to the software is available through MilitaryOneSource.mil.

**Q: What happens if I can't finish my online return in one session?**

**A:** You don't have to complete your return all at once. When you're using the software, you can create a secure user identification and password, so you can save your work, close it and return to your filing later.

**Q: What does the 100% accuracy guarantee mean?**

**A:** Calculations are guaranteed to be 100 percent accurate or the tax software vendor will reimburse you up to \$10,000. Terms and conditions apply. In addition, the tax software vendor is by your side if you get audited.

**Q: If I'm trying to file online and I need help, where can I go?**

**A:** If you have any personal tax-related questions, call 800-342-9647 to speak with a Military OneSource tax consultant or schedule an appointment. Remember, these consultations are free. For technical assistance, such as login issues, using the software, printing returns, etc., call 855-897-8639 and follow the prompts.

**Q: How do I reach Military OneSource tax consultants?**

**A:** You can call a trained Military OneSource tax consultant free during tax season (January through April 15) seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. EST or EDT at 800-342-9647. After April 15, trained tax consultants are available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. EDT. You can call anytime to schedule an appointment with a consultant.

**Q: Where can I get face-to-face help?**

**A:** You can visit a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance location near you or your installation's Legal Assistance office. To find VITA locations in the U.S., search "VITA locations map" on MilitaryOneSource.mil. The map page also has a link to a listing of locations outside the U.S.

# WE SERVE THOSE WHO SERVE.

**Military OneSource MilTax:**

- Access FREE, easy-to-use tax preparation and e-filing software designed for the military community
- Call for easy access to trained tax consultants
- Find in-person support with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program
- Get all the tax credits and deductions you qualify for

**MILITARY ONE SOURCE MilTax**

www.MilitaryOneSource.mil | 800-342-9647

## BECAUSE MILSPOUSES SERVE, TOO.

**Military OneSource MilTax:**

- Access FREE, easy-to-use tax preparation and e-filing software designed for the military community
- Call for easy access to trained tax consultants
- Find in-person support with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program
- Get all the tax credits and deductions you qualify for

**MILITARY ONE SOURCE MilTax**

www.MilitaryOneSource.mil | 800-342-9647

**Q: What kind of filing help is available at VITA locations?**

**A:** These locations have several ways to file and access help. You can fill out your return at a self-help kiosk and have trained volunteer tax specialists nearby to assist; or you can make an appointment to work directly with a specialist; or you can leave off your forms and return later to pick them up. Services vary based on location.

**Q: What other tax and financial assistance does Military OneSource offer?**

**A:** Military OneSource accredited financial counselors are also available for unlimited, free in-person, phone and video counseling—to help with financial issues such as money management and debt, as well as maximizing your refund.

The Military OneSource website has lots of helpful articles, information and resources about taxes, preparation for filing and special considerations that can make tax-time easier. You can read more about MilTax features and benefits at MilitaryOneSource.mil.

**Q: Who is eligible for MilTax services?**

- A:** In general, individuals can use MilTax and access support services include:
- Active-duty service members, spouses and dependent children of the eligible service members
  - Members of the National Guard and of the reserve—regardless of activation status
  - Retired and honorably discharged service members within 180 days of their discharge
  - A family member who is taking care of the affairs of an eligible service member when the service member is deployed
  - A designated family member of a severely injured member who is incapable of handling his or her own affairs
  - Eligible survivors of active-duty, National Guard and reserve deceased service members regardless of conflict or activation status
  - Some members of the Department of Defense civilian expeditionary workforce
  - You can find more specific eligibility information at MilitaryOneSource.mil.

Got more questions? Visit [MilitaryOneSource.mil](http://MilitaryOneSource.mil) or call 800-342-9647 to speak to a tax consultant or schedule an appointment. Calling is free and there's no limit to how many times you can call.

Military OneSource provides service members and their families with easy access to a suite of tax services, including access to easy-to-use tax preparation and e-filing software designed to address military-specific situations, and information and resources on a variety of tax-related topics – all 100% free. Call 800-342-9647 or

visit: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/financial-legal/tax-resource-center/tax-services-benefits> .



Call [800-342-9647](tel:800-342-9647) or visit [www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil)



## Joint Services Support for the National Guard



Key information from the JSS website is now on Military OneSource.

### Joint Services Support has moved to Military OneSource.

Military OneSource now features additional information about the resources and programs available to the National Guard and their immediate family at the state and unit level, as well as how to make the most of federal benefits and resources provided for all service members.

Military OneSource is your connection to information, answers and support when MilLife happens. We can help you overcome challenges, reach your goals and thrive.

As a member of our military family, you are eligible to use this Department of Defense-funded program anytime, anywhere. If we can't get you the answers you need, we'll connect you to someone who can.

### National Guard information on Military OneSource includes:

- [Building healthy military communities](#)
- [Joint National Guard Employment Support Program](#)
- [National Guard Family Program](#)
- [Transition Assistance Program](#)
- [Financial Management Awareness Program](#)
- [Joining community forces](#)
- [Psychological health program](#)



### What is Military OneSource

Military OneSource is your free 24/7 connection to information, answers and support to help you reach your goals, overcome challenges and thrive. As a member of our military family, you are eligible to use this Department of Defense-funded program anytime, anywhere. Just ask.

A few of the ways we can help:

[Financial and tax consultations](#)

[Relocation assistance](#)

[Spouse scholarships, education and career benefits](#)

[Affordable housing assistance](#)

[Relationship counseling](#)

[Child care options](#)

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## Did you know?

The **Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA) Program** serves Active and Reserve Component service members of **ALL** branches of the military **AND** Veterans who have dedicated themselves to serving our nation, often at great personal sacrifice. The program's principal role is to provide direction to Reserve Component service members so that they can secure all benefits, entitlements, and services earned through their military service with the compassion of someone who's been there.

You may not need assistance at this time, but you may have a friend or family member that could use some assistance.



Common services provided are:

- Requesting Military Service records
- Enrollment into the VA Healthcare
- Counseling on Education Benefits
- Supporting deploying and returning units
- Employment
- Tricare
- State specific benefits
- Navigating local, state and federal programs

I am a current service member in the SDARNG, an OEF-Afghanistan veteran, former full-time Soldier, education counselor and will put to use my skills and relationships to ensure your needs are met.

Contact your TAA today at 605-737-6669 or [kenneth.d.wheeler.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:kenneth.d.wheeler.ctr@mail.mil)

## June 2020 Focus

Service Member and Family Support  
South Dakota National Guard

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1-800-658-3930



We also recommend that you like and follow us on [Facebook](#) as we continuously update new and exciting information.

Have suggestions of thing you would like to see in a future issue of the focus? Please contact us!

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