

Servicemember Transitional Advanced Rehabilitation (STAR) Program Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main purpose of the STAR program?

The primary purpose of the STAR program is to help Servicemembers with amputations, limb salvage, or other polytrauma injuries transition from their current position and work in the military to new civilian, federal, or military employment. Veterans will receive additional supportive services with the transition to community and employment. The program provides comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration services with a special emphasis on helping Servicemembers and veterans identify and locate meaningful and satisfying work that can lead to a successful career path.

How will I benefit from participating in the STAR program?

The STAR program includes a variety of health professionals including two dedicated Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. This team of professionals will assist each client in the reintegration phase of their rehabilitation. The program offers a very structured and intensive experience focused on providing the opportunity to either smoothly transition out of the military or successfully remain on active-duty in a new role. Veterans who may be experiencing challenges in their community transition will benefit from additional supportive services. At the completion of the program, it is expected that injured Servicemembers and veterans will be ready to transition into the community and will have a rewarding career path which will provide long-term success and satisfaction.

What types of Vocational Rehabilitation opportunities are available in the program?

The program is specifically designed to meet each individual client's work interests and goals. The program will provide a start to a successful career and long-term rewards rather than just a short-term internship opportunity. Almost any career field or interest can be accommodated in the program.

How long will I be in the program?

The program is individualized to each client, but it is anticipated that most individuals will remain in the program for at least 3 months.

Will my family be able to come with me to the program?

The program does allow families of clients to accompany them, while the client is in the STAR program. Family members/caregivers will be able to stay in the Fisher House (located directly across from the STAR program facility) or either the Hospitality House (located 4 miles from the STAR program facility), free of charge. The STAR program

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Social Worker will work with Servicemembers, veterans, and their families prior to their arrival in the program so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

Is there childcare available at the program?

The program does not have a childcare facility on the premises, but through non-profit agencies, respite care and emergency daycare services can be provided on an as needed basis. The STAR Social Worker can provide you more information about how to receive these services.

What are the facilities like at the program?

The program is located in a brand-new building on the campus of the Richmond VA Medical Center. The building is a state-of-the-art facility that includes individual rooms with a private bathroom for each individual participating in the program. The building has several common areas with recreational and leisure opportunities as well as a full-kitchen. The Richmond VA Medical Center is one of 5 national VA Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers and provides a full-spectrum of medical and rehabilitation services. The Richmond VA Medical Center is also one of 7 VA Regional Amputation Centers. These regional VA amputation centers have the highest level of specialized expertise in clinical care and technology capable of providing comprehensive rehabilitation care to the most complex amputation cases.

Is there a gym available for exercising?

You will receive an individualized program of Physical Therapy and independent exercises as part of your participation in the program. The program offers a full spectrum of exercise equipment within the rehabilitation therapy area. With the approval of your treatment team, you will be allowed to use this equipment for independent exercise during the regular business hours of the program. With the approval of your treatment team, you may also have the opportunity to participate in an exercise program at a local community gym facility.

How many other Servicemembers will be in the program with me?

There will be up to 9 other Servicemembers and veterans participating in the program at the same time. The building where the program is located also has an additional 10 bed program for Servicemembers with traumatic brain injuries.

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Who will help me with my prosthetic limbs while I am in the program?

The Richmond VA Medical Center has a full-service Orthotic and Prosthetic Lab and support services available. There are 2 certified Prosthetists at the Richmond VA who are very experienced with the most advanced prosthetic components. The Prosthetists at the Richmond VA work closely with the Prosthetists at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and services can also be provided through the program at Walter Reed if needed.

Will I be able to participate in recreational activities and adaptive sports while I am in the program?

Yes. A variety of recreational activities and adaptive sports are available in the program both through the VA and community partners. Active duty servicemembers may also have the opportunity to participate in the recreational therapy and adaptive sports programs offered through Walter Reed National Military Medical Center as appropriate.

Will I be able to complete my medical board (MEB) while I am in the program?

Yes. You will be able to complete the medical board process while you are participating in the STAR program. The Richmond VA Medical Center and the professional staff in the STAR program are qualified to assist in the completion of your medical program. Appointments and evaluations can take place at the Richmond VA which participates in the combined military and Veterans Affairs evaluation process. This component of your care is closely coordinated with the program at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

Is there any expense for participating in the program?

There is no fee for Servicemembers to participate in the STAR program, as all services will be billed through Tricare. The program will also provide food in the community kitchen and the Servicemember is responsible for purchasing any specific food requests that he/she may desire. Servicemember is also responsible for purchasing personal care products while in the program. Family members staying in the Fisher or Hospitality House will have to provide their own food and personal care items during their stay.

What is the Richmond area like?

Richmond, Virginia is a city full of historical sites, educational museums and beautiful parks. Weekends can be spent whitewater rafting on the James River or taking the kids to the Science Museum of Virginia. There are 10 universities and colleges within an 8 mile radius of center city Richmond. For more information on attractions and upcoming

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events in the city of Richmond, please go to:
<http://www.visitrichmondva.com/Plan/Visitor-Center>

What do I need to bring to the program?

Please refer to the “Items to Bring” list for necessary medical information, identification, personal items including clothing, personal care products, and other items to bring with you to the STAR Program.

What are the rules regarding conduct?

As an active-duty Servicemember, you are expected to conduct yourself in a proper military manner at all times. Conduct will be monitored by the military liaisons on campus.

Will I have to wear a uniform?

The uniform of the day will be required during the regular working day (0730-1630, unless otherwise defined). This may mean wearing PT gear to therapy or business attire to a job site. The military liaison will clarify these expectations on admission to the program.

Am I required to obtain a pass before leaving the grounds?

Passes from program clinicians are not required, military rules apply for travel. You are expected to be ready for the therapy day by 0700. After 1800, or other time as directed, you may leave, but must return and be in the building no later than 2300 each evening.

What is the visitation policy?

Visiting hours are 0800-2100 daily. Visiting hours may be affected by your therapy schedule. Children under the age of 12 must be supervised by an adult at all times. All visitors must sign in and out. Visitors are expected to conduct themselves in a quiet and orderly manner, so as not to interrupt routine operations or disturb other patients. You are responsible for your visitors at all times. Guests are not permitted to stay in your room, but there are various options for family/guests staying overnight. The STAR program Social Worker can provide additional specific information.

Where can I wash my clothes?

Washers and dryers are available in the Polytrauma Transitional Center. Laundry detergent is available at no charge. If you prefer a specific type of detergent, you may purchase your own.

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Am I allowed to smoke or use other tobacco products?

The use of tobacco products is prohibited in the Polytrauma Transitional Center. Smoking is restricted to certain areas outside. There are smoke houses (enclosed areas) close to the main hospital. Please keep in mind that no alcoholic beverages or illegal substances are permitted on campus. Medications prescribed by your physician will be stored in a secured location at the nurses' station.

How will I get my medications?

All medications are kept at the nurses' station in a secured cabinet. Your medications will be in an individual drawer within the cabinet that you will have a key to access. The self-medication policy will be reviewed with you upon admission to the STAR Program.

Can I bring my car?

You must have a valid driver's license, have been cleared by your physician (since the time of your injury), and submit a request to the Medical Director of the STAR Program prior to bringing your vehicle. The request to the Medical Director for the STAR Program can be made during the pre-admission process. Once on campus, any requirements by the VA Police and military liaisons for the operation of a motor vehicle on campus will be reviewed with you.