

## Chapter One: Relocation Assistance Program Overview

### 1.1 Background

Established in 1992, the Marine Corps Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) is an integral component of a comprehensive personal and family support system designed to reduce stress and hardship associated with the mobile military lifestyle. The Marine Corps recognizes that frequent relocations associated with a military career create tremendous challenges for Marines and their family members. Administered out of the Marine & Family Services (M&FS), Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS), the Marine Corps RAP produces programs and services designed to minimize the adverse effects of relocation.

Annually, an average of 105,000 Personal Change of Station (PCS) relocations occur within the Marine Corps community. PCS orders are known to fluctuate pending wartime or a high operational tempo. Relocation support is not exclusive to PCS orders but also includes accession of new Marines, unit training, mobilizations, deployments, spouses temporarily returning home, geographically separated unit deployment programs, and separation from service. Command-sponsored moves are segmented into two classifications.

- *Mandatory* classified moves are indicated under accession (recruits coming into the Marine Corps), separation (separating or retiring and returning to home of record), and organized unit moves.
- *Readiness* classified moves include operational CONUS moves, rotational OCONUS moves, and training or school related moves.

Commanders need organized, coordinated support systems that promote the health and well-being of the Marine, the family member, and the community. RAP personnel are challenged with the responsibility of providing care to this unique population.

## 1.2 Mission, Philosophy and Goals

Per MCO 1700.24B, the purpose of the RAP is to provide standardized and equitable relocation assistance support throughout the Marine Corps. This support is recognized as an essential activity crucial to supporting Marines and their families' mental and physical readiness. For many Marines and their family members, relocation represents both positive and negative effects on their personal, family, and financial well-being. Ultimately, this well-being influences unit morale and unit readiness.

The goal of the RAP is to prevent or reduce the common stressors associated with moving by providing the requisite knowledge and skills needed to successfully navigate the relocation process. By addressing these common military lifestyle challenges, potential problems are prevented from escalating to the point of adversely affecting individual and family readiness. This, in turn, positively supports the mission of the Marine Corps.

Marine Corps leadership has long recognized the connection between quality of life of the individual Marine and operational readiness, as well as long-term retention. In today's all volunteer force which currently operates in an uncertain global environment, the provision of quality of life programs and services to the Marine Corps community is critical. Commanders routinely turn to Marine Corps Community Services to facilitate the delivery of those programs.



### KEY POINT

“The concept of the “mobile military lifestyle” moves away from the narrow focus on relocation as a *single* event that is supported by orientations, welcome packets, and lending closets. Relocation is a major event that requires special support, but the mobile lifestyle goes beyond relocation to create a *continuous* cycle of adjustment and transition that increases the need for quality of life programs.”

Anne Tarzier  
Relocation Program Manager  
Office of the Secretary of Defense

### 1.3 Legislation and Related Policies

#### 1.3.1 History

Congress passed legislation in 1990 that mandated the provision of standardized relocation programs throughout the DoD to help support readiness and retention of service members. Although relocation support had been available through family support centers since 1979, this congressional mandate required the Secretary of Defense to establish formal relocation assistance programs by 1 October 1990. Since that time, the Marine Corps has developed and promulgated guidance that directs the implementation of those mandated services. Today, RAP services are available to the military community world wide, and the program continues to evolve to better meet the emergent needs of the mobile population it serves.

#### 1.3.2 Public Law (101-189)

The congressional legislation that applies to the armed forces is U.S. Code Title 10. Section 1056 of this law specifically addresses the mandates for the provision of relocation services to DoD personnel. This resulted in the National Defense Authorization Act (Fiscal Year 1990 and 1991) which requires the DoD to provide relocation information and services during permanent changes of station or transition to military members and their families. Services include but are not limited to destination area information and preparation, consultation, settling-in services, and home finding.

#### 1.3.3 Policies

Policies governing the RAP are driven by a combination of legislation, DoD requirements, and Marine Corps requirements. In addition to higher headquarters policies, installation commanders may develop base orders and standard operating procedures that provide additional guidance that is specific to that locale.

- DoD 1338.19, Relocation Assistance Programs, establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and prescribes procedures for use of relocation assistance programs.
- SECNAVINST 1754.1A, Relocation Assistance Programs for Department of the Navy Military Personnel, announces policy and assigns responsibility for the implementation of the relocation assistance, and requires the provision of standardized information and services through a coordinated Relocation Assistance Program.
- MCO P1700.24B, Marine Corps Personal Services Manual, addresses relocation issues and requires RAP to provide pre-departure and arrival services.
- MCO P1320.11E, Personnel Sponsorship Program, provides guidance for the Marine Corps sponsorship program.

## 1.4 MCCS Organizational Structure

### 1.4.1 MCCS Board of Directors

The Marine Corps Community Service (MCCS) Board of Directors was created in 1996 to formally involve senior leaders in the oversight and long range planning of quality of life (QOL) issues. The board serves as the decision-making forum for MCCS related issues that have an impact on the Marine Corps above the individual command or base level. The board meets on a quarterly basis and is extremely active in establishing long term goals and objectives for the entire organization.

Four standing committees support the board of directors: Budget Oversight, Construction, Investment Oversight, and Family Readiness. These committees perform detailed analysis of current trends and provide recommendations to the Board at their quarterly meeting. To ensure that each installation has input in shaping the services provided by MCCS, every installation commander is represented on one of the committees. Minutes from both the Board and committee meetings are usually available

on the MCCS web site. The Board is made up of 18 members from every command and base Corps wide.

HQMC Members

Deputy Commandant, Programs and Resources (Chair)

Deputy Commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs

Deputy Commandant, Installations and Logistics

Director, Fiscal Division

Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps

Marine Force Commanders

Commander, Marine Forces Atlantic

Commander, Marine Forces Pacific

Commander, Marine Forces Reserve

Commanding General, Camp Pendleton

Commanding General, Camp Lejeune

Commanding General, MCB Hawaii

Commander, MCAB Western Area

Commander, MCAB Eastern Area

Commanding General, Camp Butler

Commanding General, II MEF

Nonvoting and Ex-officio Members

Counsel for the Commandant

Director, Personal and Family Readiness Division

Board Recorder

**1.4.2 HQMC Organization**

The Personal and Family Readiness Division (MR) under the staff cognizance of the Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs is responsible for providing

policy, plans, resources, and direct support to Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) field activities. Primary roles that MR program managers fulfill are serving as program sponsors in the coordination and development of plans and policies for their specific services and activities and as advocates for budget and resource requirements. MR also serves as the coordinating agency that advocates and promotes the development of equitable program standards and is responsible for the distribution of resources that support those standards. Attachment 1-1 provides an overview of the HQMC organization.

### 1.4.3 MCCS Organization in the Field

Although core programs and service offerings are generally found at the majority of Marine Corps sites, the organization and lines of authority may differ from installation to installation. Commanders have ultimate decision making authority regarding the daily management of all activities aboard their installation to include where an activity or resource may reside and how services are best delivered to their community. Generally, there are five "pillars" of MCCS: Marine and Family Services, Marine Corps Family Team Building, Semper Fit, Business Operations, and General Support. Attachment 1-1 depicts a common alignment of programs at a typical Marine Corps installation.

## 1.5 RAP Customers

### 1.5.1 Authorized Customers

Per Public Law, each military department shall provide relocation assistance programs to members of the armed forces who are ordered to make a change of permanent station.

The USMC Personal Services Manual defines eligibility for services as follows:

- Active duty members of the military services and their legal dependents, including the Coast Guard
- Members of the Reserve Component and their legal dependents while on extended active duty, including the Coast Guard

- Legal dependents of prisoners of war or personnel missing in action from the military services or the Coast Guard
- U.S. civilian employees working in DoD overseas locations, and their legal dependents, for those services not otherwise available in the local community
- Retired military members and Coast Guard personnel and their dependents, and the surviving legal dependents of members who were on active duty or retired at the time of death, on a space available basis
- Members of the Reserve Component and their legal dependents and CONUS Department of Defense Civilians on a space available basis

### 1.5.2 Customer Demographics

Marine Corps RAP personnel are increasingly challenged to serve a diverse and dynamic community that represents a variety of cultures, education levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, values, and beliefs. This population includes single and married Marines, parents, single parents, special needs families, families of deployed personnel, activated Reservists, and dual-service and dual professional couples. Additionally, DoD is transforming its present military capabilities by advancing joint service training, operations and activities. As a result of more joint billets and integrated operations, RAP personnel at any DoD installation can expect to provide services to an increasing number of active duty members other than their primary target population.

The total number of military personnel is over 3.2 million strong with the Marine Corps having the smallest service branch at 177,583 members. Women comprise 15% of the DoD active duty force with the Marine Corps reporting the lowest percentage of women (6%), and approximately one-third of the total force identifies themselves as a minority. Nearly 80% of active duty personnel are 35 years of age or younger. While the average age across the military branches is similar, the Marine Corps is the exception with a slightly younger average age (33.4 for officers, and 24.1 for enlisted).

With regard education, active duty officers have a higher level of formal education than the civilian population with 86% having a bachelor's or graduate degree as compared to 26.7% of the civilian population. Most active duty enlisted personnel have a high school diploma (97.7%), which is also higher when compared to the civilian population (84%).

Overall, the Marine Corps has the lowest rate of marriage (43.5%) when compared to the other military branches (52.3%); however, married Marines are likely to be younger (27.8 years old) than their married DoD counterparts (31 years old). Forty-four percent of officer spouses are in the civilian work force while 44% are neither employed nor looking for employment. Fifty-four percent of enlisted spouses report having employment in the civilian work force, while 32% are not employed, nor are they seeking employment.

The Army, Navy, and Air Force also have a higher proportion of family members than active duty members, while the Marine Corps reports an almost equal proportion of family members and active duty members. The average age of active duty members at the birth of their first child varies only slightly across the branches with the DoD average being 24.5 years of age and the Marine Corps average being 23.4 years of age. Across DoD, half of the 1,221,831 children of active duty members are seven years of age or younger. Within the Marine Corps, over 5,000 members are single parents.



### KEY POINT

The Marine Corps RAP continues to evolve to meet the requirements of the dynamic community it serves. RAP personnel are challenged to support Marine Corps leadership by providing knowledge-based programs designed to teach our Marines the requisite skills needed to successfully navigate the relocation process.