



Strong Start Checklist:

10 Essentials Every New Service Member Should Know

Starting military life is a huge step. *Strong Start* was created to help you handle the parts of service that training doesn't always cover: your money, your relationships, and your resilience. Use this checklist to prepare with confidence.

- ☐ **Understand Your Paycheck:** What's coming in and taken out, and how to make it last.
- ☐ **Create a Budget:** Plan where every dollar goes before you spend it.
- ☐ **Start a Savings Goal:** Set aside \$50–\$100 from each paycheck to build stability.
- ☐ **Avoid Debt Traps:** Don't rush into high-interest credit cards, loans, or big purchases.
- ☐ **Stay Connected:** Make a plan to check in with family/friends regularly.
- ☐ **Set Boundaries:** Learn to balance military life with personal life.
- ☐ **Build Healthy Coping Skills:** Journaling, exercise, prayer, or meditation.
- ☐ **Recognize Stress Signals:** Know when it's time to ask for help.
- ☐ **Use Your Resources:** Seek support on base: chaplains, counselors, financial advisors.
- ☐ **Make a 90-Day Plan:** Write down your goals for the first three months in service.

You don't have to figure everything out the hard way. *Strong Start* provides you with a comprehensive roadmap to thrive from the very start. For more information, sign up for our *Strong Start* program at www.brvhzns.com/programs