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BBB Military Line provides financial literacy and consumer protection resources to members of each branch of service, (including Reservists and National Guard), retirees, and their family members.

	<u>Army</u>	BBB Army Line partners with the Army's Family & Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command (FMWRC). <u>Read more...</u>
	<u>Navy</u>	BBB Navy Line partners with the Navy's Fleet and Family Support Program (FFSP). <u>Read more...</u>
	<u>Air Force</u>	BBB Air Force Line partners with the USAF Airmen and Family Readiness Centers (A&FRCs). <u>Read more...</u>
	<u>Marine Corps</u>	BBB Marine Corps Line partners with the Marine Corps Personal & Family Readiness Division. <u>Read more...</u>
	<u>Coast Guard</u>	BBB is proud to work with the Coast Guard Office of Work-Life to improve the financial readiness of Coast Guardsmen and their families. <u>Read more...</u>

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2012 Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA)

Military.com

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As a servicemember, you can expect to be stationed virtually anywhere in the country. During your career, you are likely to be assigned to a variety of low-, moderate- and high-cost locations. Although private sector pay often reflects the local cost-of-living, military basic pay tables do not vary based on location. To help offset the effects of higher cost areas, military servicemembers may be eligible for a Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA). COLA is designed to compensate for being stationed in certain "high-cost" locations in the continental United States (CONUS).

2012 COLA Update: The 2012 CONUS COLA rates have changed for several Military Housing Areas. COLA has returned to many areas which had no COLA in 2011, while a few areas will no longer receive COLA in 2012.

- [Do you qualify for COLA?](#)
- [Learn important details about your COLA](#)
- [Calculate your 2010 COLA rate](#)
- [Search by Zip Code](#)
- [Overseas "OCONUS" COLA](#)
- [COLA FAQs](#)

COLA Eligibility

You qualify for COLA under any of these conditions:

- You are assigned to a high-cost area in the Continental United States (CONUS). As of this writing, there are less than 30 such locations (military housing areas, or MHAs) in the U.S.
- You are assigned to an unaccompanied tour of duty outside the continental United States if the primary dependent of the member resides in a high cost area in the continental United States.

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- It is determined that your primary dependent must reside in a high cost area in the continental United States due to your duty location or other circumstances.

Important COLA Details

- CONUS COLA is based on the zip code of your duty station, not your home address.
- CONUS COLA is a **taxable** allowance; an amount is added to cover an average income tax rate
- COLA is computed separately for members with and without dependents.

COLA is designed to Compensate for a portion of excess costs for non-housing expenses incurred in areas that exceed the average cost of living by more than 8percent. Qualification for CONUS COLA is based on geographic duty location, i.e., the zip code of duty station not the member's zip code.

The amount of COLA each servicemember receives is based on three main factors.

1. **Servicemember family status.** Servicemembers with dependents are paid a different rate than those without dependents.
2. **Location based COLA indexes.** Indexes are computed for all military housing areas (MHAs), which represent major metropolitan areas and installations throughout CONUS. Non-MHA areas are also considered as eligible for the program based on costs for cities, townships or urban areas in the vicinity.

COLA indexes are adjusted annually based on new cost data as determined by the local market prices, access to and utilization of military commissaries and exchange services.

Note: The utilization data for commissary and exchange facilities is obtained from surveys conducted approximately once every three years by the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee through the Defense Manpower Data Center. This survey is mailed to over 9400 CONUS-based servicemembers randomly selected by pay grade, Service and geographic region.

3. **Pay Grade and Compensation.** COLA payment rates are based on regular military compensation (RMC) and spendable income. RMC includes basic pay, basic allowance for subsistence, an average basic allowance for housing (BAH) and the tax advantage. Spendable income is total income, less Federal income taxes, housing and housing-related expenses, gifts and contributions, life insurance and savings.

Calculate Your 2012 CONUS COLA Payment

To figure out if you qualify for a CONUS COLA payment, follow these five easy steps:

1. Check off whether you have a dependent or not.
2. Select your pay grade.
3. Select your minimum Time in Service.
4. Select your location.

Note: If your location is not listed, you are likely not eligible for a CONUS COLA payment. Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, and other overseas locations are considered OCONUS and are not listed here. Go to the [OCONUS COLA](#) web page for more information.

5. Click "Submit" to find out how much you should be paid.

You can hit the "Reset" button at any time if you make a mistake.

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MILITARY CONSUMER ISSUES & INITIATIVES

Consumer Watch: More Debt Help for Troops

It may seem odd to think about credit counseling as you gear up for holiday shopping. But credit counselors say that's perfect timing. "January is a busy time for us," said Army veteran Mechel Glass, education director for CredAbility, a nationwide nonprofit credit counseling and education agency.

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Best Places to Work After a Military Career

Tinker Air Force Base is just 13 miles from downtown Oklahoma City, which means that veterans in the area have easy access to base shopping that's tax-free and some 25% less than standard retail prices.

[Read More](#)

Prudential to Contribute \$6.2 Million to Support Military veterans and Their Families

Prudential Financial, Inc. (NYSE:PRU - News) will contribute \$6.2 million to 10 nonprofit groups that help U.S. military veterans and their families transition back into civilian life.

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At FTC's Request, Court Orders Debt Collection Operation to Stop Deceiving and Abusing Consumers

At the request of the Federal Trade Commission, a U.S. district court has halted a debt collection operation that allegedly deceived and abused consumers - making bogus threats that consumers had been sued or could be arrested over debts they often did not owe. As part of its continuing crackdown on scams that target consumers in financial distress, the FTC charged two individuals and seven companies in a Corona, California-based debt-collection operation doing business as Rincon Debt Management.

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Military Families Losing Confidence In Ability To Retire Comfortably

The long-term financial confidence of military families is beginning to unravel, reflecting concerns over the economy and a proposed overhaul of the military retirement system.

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