

# The Reserve Officer Career Counseling (ROCC) System



CG PSC-RPM  
AUGUST 2020

- A. PURPOSE. The Reserve Officer Career Counseling (ROCC) is a resource available to provide career management counseling to Reserve Officers with special emphasis on career decisions as they pertain to competitiveness for assignments and promotions.
- B. The ROCC will contribute to the Commandant's Direction by:
1. Guiding officers through careers to make a positive contribution to current and future **readiness**;
  2. Placing emphasis on the growth, professional development and well-being of **Reserve Officers**; and
  3. Reinforcing **stewardship**, public trust, and Coast Guard mission performance by ensuring officers are knowledgeable about the impacts of career decisions.
- C. DESCRIPTION. The ROCC system consists of three lines of effort to effectively communicate accurate career management advice, based on current trends in the Reserve Officer selection board process, to the widest audience possible. These lines of effort are:
1. The ROCC Guide;
  2. Reserve Personnel Management (RPM) outreach efforts; and
  3. Individual Reserve Officer Career Counseling sessions.
- D. ROCC GUIDE. Provides Reserve Officers an easily accessible reference to better understand the assignment and selection processes, to improve competitiveness for assignment and promotion, and to ultimately make informed career decisions.
- E. RPM OUTREACH EFFORTS. Provides units on-site assignment and career development presentations annually. FY funding dependent, presentations are typically provided at no cost to the hosting unit(s) and cover a vast array of topics for the benefit of both Reserve Officers and enlisted members. In lieu of an on-site road show, RPM can coordinate unit-wide tele-conferences. See the latest ALCGRSV message for scheduling information.
- F. INDIVIDUAL ROCC SESSIONS. Interactive discussions with a Reserve Assignment Officer, normally conducted via telephone. These individually tailored sessions include a joint review of the member's Employee Summary Sheet and Electronic Individual Personal Data Record (EI-PDR), a discussion of career paths, a review of the assignment process, and recommendations for future assignments and professional development opportunities to improve competitiveness. See the latest ALCGRSV message for scheduling information.
1. In order to conduct a joint record review, officers should obtain a copy of their EI-PDR via the Personnel Service Center-Business Operations Division prior to the counseling session: [https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Personnel-Service-Center-PSC/BOPS/PSC-BOPS-C/PSC-BOPS-C-MR/PSC-BOPS-C-MR\\_PDR/](https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Personnel-Service-Center-PSC/BOPS/PSC-BOPS-C/PSC-BOPS-C-MR/PSC-BOPS-C-MR_PDR/). Officers are highly encouraged to review their record and have any questions/concerns ready to be discussed during the counseling

session. *\*NOTE – it takes approximately 3 business days for a record to be emailed to the requestor.*

2. Officers requesting an individual ROCC session are required to review the ROCC Guide prior to the session.

# The Reserve Officer Career Counseling (ROCC) Guide



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## **The Reserve Officer Career Counseling (ROCC) Guide**

DESCRIPTION: The ROCC Guide is designed to provide Reserve Officers with an easily accessible reference to better understand the assignment and selection processes, to improve competitiveness for assignment and promotion, and to ultimately make informed career decisions.

Reading the ROCC Guide in its entirety is a prerequisite for requesting an individual ROCC session with a Reserve Assignment Officer.

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## Zone Sizes and Opportunity of Selection (OOS)

The Reserve Officer Corps Management Plan (ROCMP) is the primary means the Coast Guard uses to shape the Reserve Officer workforce. By law, O-4 and above are considered “controlled grades” with a specified end strength cap. To comply with law and maintain rank pyramids, the ROCMP determines the number of officers that will be considered for promotion (zone size) and the percentage that will be selected (OOS). Due to the running mate system, Reserve Officer zone sizes are tied to the Active Duty zone. However, the ROCMP sets a unique OOS to manage the Reserve workforce’s controlled grades.

Knowing when you may come in zone is critical. Once CG-126 develops the ROCMP, RPM releases the annual Promotion Year Inactive Duty Promotion List (IDPL) Selection and Retention Boards message with zone estimates. You can cross reference the projected zone size with your position on the Register of Officers to determine whether or not you are in zone. Ensure your record is up to date and potentially prepare an off cycle Officer Evaluation Report (OER) if you may be in zone.

RPM will release the actual candidate message thirty days prior to each board. It’s important to note that the lists often change due to movement in and out of the IDPL. CG Personnel Service Center Notice 1401 (PSCNOTE 1401) publishes the convening dates for all boards and panels and directs all officers in and above zone to submit OERs without delay.

PSC Note 1401s with updates are found here: <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/psc/psc-opm/OPM%20Reference%20Library/Forms/AllItems.aspx>



Figure 1

## Boards and Panels

Getting selected by a board to the next higher pay grade or selected for assignment, advanced education, or other programs by a panel may seem mysterious. The following section is intended to help demystify the process and give you a greater understanding of how to ensure you and your record are properly prepared. A Reserve Officer’s career requires the successful navigation of the board process and an understanding of how this relates to the assignment process.

Boards and panels are presented with multiple items to assist in making their selection decisions. Just like promotions, assignments are competitive and Assignment Officers use the same tools to make their decisions. These items include:

- The “Board/Panel View” of the candidate’s Employee Summary Sheets (ESS),
- Reserve Point Statement from Direct Access,
- Communications to the board/panel (if applicable), and
- Each candidate’s Electronically Imaged Personnel Data Record (EI-PDR)

*COMDTINST 1410.2 provides a complete list of items viewable by selection boards/panels. These include items such as OERs, educational transcripts, disciplinary documentation, CG-3307s, CG-4082s, and awards.*

Remaining competitive for promotion and assignment requires a complete and accurate record. This includes an up-to-date OER, no missing OERs, an updated ESS, and an accurate Reserve point balance statement. You can get a copy of your EI-PDR to make sure it is accurate. Instructions on how to get a copy of your EI-PDR can be found at [https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Personnel-Service-Center-PSC/BOPS/PSC-BOPS-C/PSC-BOPS-C-MR/PSC-BOPS-C-MR\\_PDR/](https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Personnel-Service-Center-PSC/BOPS/PSC-BOPS-C/PSC-BOPS-C-MR/PSC-BOPS-C-MR_PDR/). It is recommended that Reserve Officers request a copy of their EI-PDR annually. Requesting a copy in the Spring is a best practice since it allows time for the most recent OER to be validated before the board. Even if you do not anticipate going before a board, annual checks ensure your record is solid when you go in zone.

Record Verification Checklist

Officer Evaluation Reports (OER)	Up to date, no gaps, none missing
Employee Summary Sheets (ESS)	Accurate, competencies, OSC’s, Awards, Education
Reserve Point Statement	Accurate, no gaps, qualified years towards retirement
Electronic Individual Personnel Date Record (EI-PDR)	OERs, Awards, Education, CG-4082s

Figure 2

Another way to remain competitive is to know what each board or panel will be targeting. Per COMDTINST M1000.3 (series), Article 6.A.3, boards/panels are directed to use four pillars to establish criteria: **Performance, Professionalism, Leadership and Education.**

Each Spring, the Commandant publishes the “Commandant’s Guidance to Officer Selection Boards and Panels” that provides specific guidance and expectations to board and panel membership. This guidance includes the basic characteristics of successful officers and serves as the foundation that boards/panels use to build selection criteria by which each candidate’s record

will be evaluated. Selection criteria, as determined by the board members under the umbrella of the Commandant’s guidance, are neither published nor disclosed to any person who is not a member of the board or panel. Once the criteria is established to define the pillars, the board will then decide how each will be weighted to build a unique score sheet used to evaluate each record.

*Recommendations for selection can ONLY be made from matters of a candidate’s official record. A selection cannot be made based on rumor, hearsay or an opinion of a candidate. If it’s not in your record, it will not be discussed by the board.*

Whether for retention, promotion, or assignment, selection relies upon a strong record. Ultimately, **“You are what your record says you are.”**

## Promotion Boards

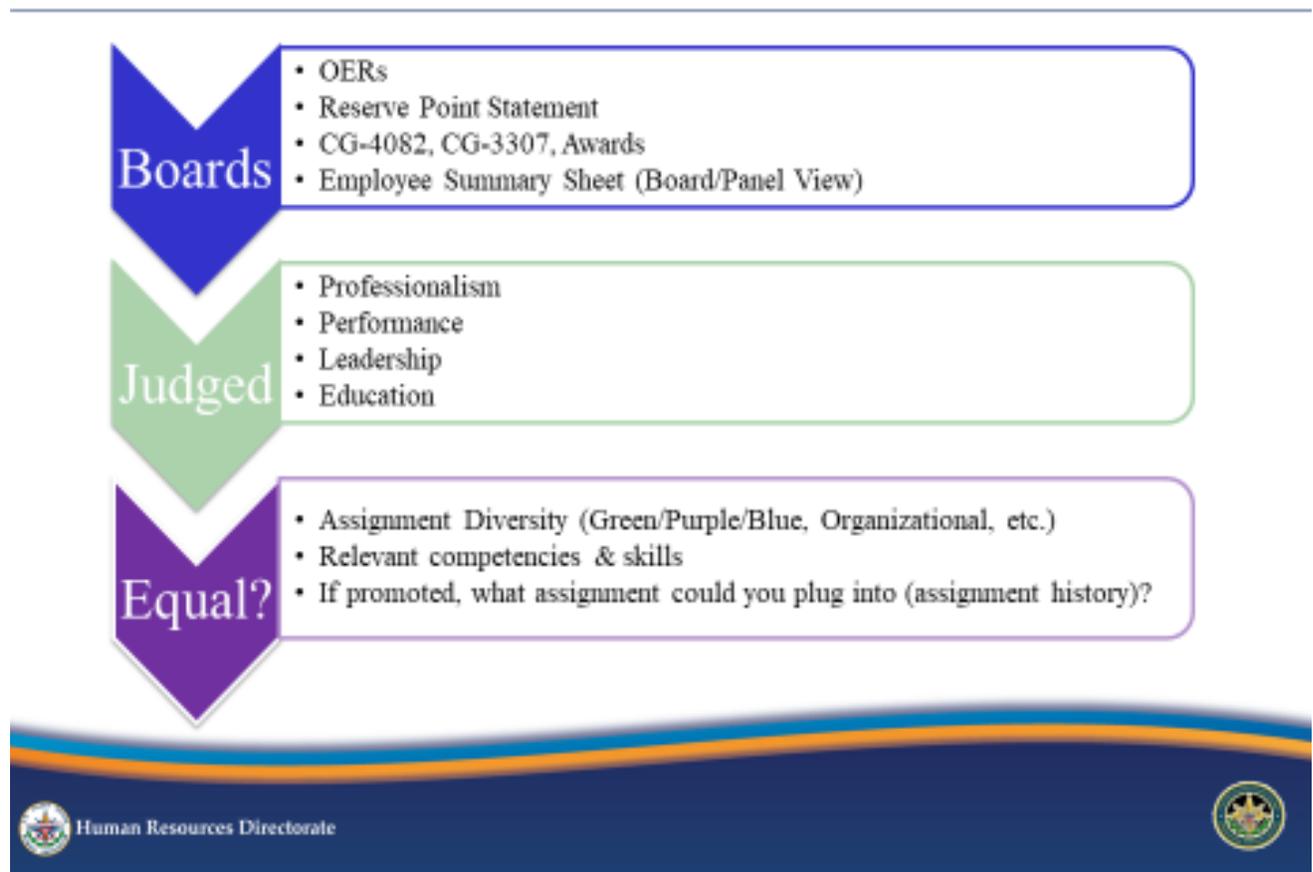


Figure 3

## The Reserve Officer Career Path

Per the Reserve Component Policy Statement, the Reserve Component is a contingency-based workforce trained to meet the Coast Guard's mobilization requirements in the following prioritized mission areas:

- Defense Readiness,
- Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security,
- Incident Management and Response, and
- Mission Support

The Reserve Component is first and foremost a contingency response organization. Officers should strive to develop skill sets (competencies, Officer Specialty Codes, etc.) that demonstrate an organizational contingency response value. When called upon, what skills will you bring to the table? By nature, contingencies are unpredictable so we never know exactly what capabilities the Coast Guard may need. Therefore, Reserve Officers with wide ranging skill sets provide more value to the organization and are typically more successful competing for varied assignments. If you promoted tomorrow, what assignments would you qualify for?

Unlike the ADPL that values a more linear, specialized career path, IDPL boards place a high value on career diversity. Diversity can be defined several different ways. However, recent board results indicate that more successful Reserve officers have experience in two or more of the three "communities" – the traditional Coast Guard (Blue), the Joint/Combatant Command community (Purple), and the Defense Operations community (Green). It is essential that an officer seek assignment diversity early in their careers when more job opportunities are available. As you become more senior, the force pyramid thins and it becomes more difficult to compete for the limited diverse options.

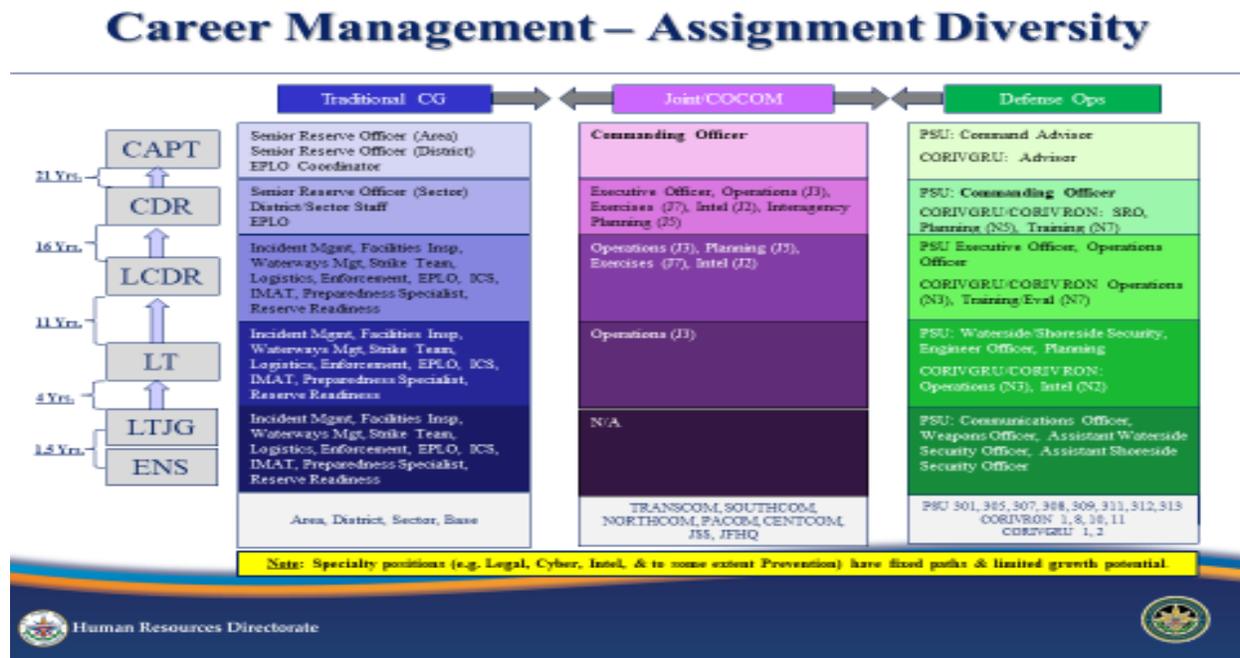


Figure 4

It is still possible to have a long and successful career just within the "Blue Guard," but officers should seek assignment diversity within that community and accrue contingency response related qualifications like advanced ICS competencies to be competitive for future promotions. Assignment diversity is perhaps even more important for officers in more specialized career fields like Cyber, Intel, Legal, and Prevention. These sub-specialties often have fixed paths and limited long-term Reserve growth potential.

Organizational diversity is a topic a board will value as well. Officers should consider positions that allow opportunities to see how the organization is managed and decisions are executed at multiple levels: unit, Sector, District, Area, HQ, etc.

Regardless of the community or level of the organization, Reserve Officers should continually seek increasingly challenging assignments that afford the opportunity to lead people, oversee processes, and manage assets. Recent data indicates that O-5s that have taken on these billets (PSU, CORIVGRU/RON, COCOM, and SRO) fared better for retention and selection than counterparts who did not.

**Assignments determine longevity  
(ultimately – retention & future selection)**

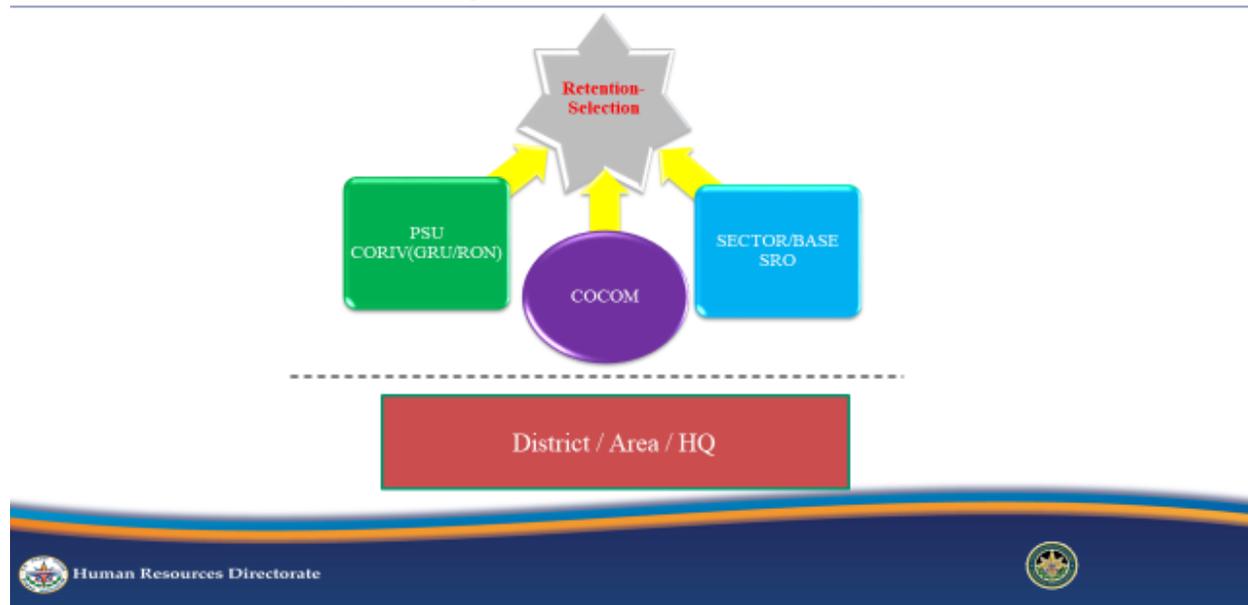


Figure 5

The pinnacle of responsibility for any officer is command. As a Reserve Officer, you have two opportunities: PSU command at O-5 and CGGRU COCOM command at O-6. The chart below is adapted from Enclosure (1) to CG PSCINST 1401.B and shows the current eligibility criteria for command screening. As you can see, there are a variety of ways to become eligible but they all require a significant degree of planning early in one's career to earn a qualifying assignment.

IDPL Officer Commands	Grade	Eligibility Criteria
CGRU COCOM, including CGRU JSS	O-6	Meet any one of the following assignment / education combinations:  (1) PSU Command cadre (CO or XO); Coastal Riverine Squadron (CORIVRON)/Coastal Riverine Group (CORIVGRU) O-5/O-4 assignment, or COCOM/JSS CGRU Executive Officer (2) PSU, CORIVRON/CORVGRU, COCOM/JSS CGRU, or Joint Staff assignment and Joint Professional Military Education (JPME-1) completion (3) Any Area/District/Sector SRO duty and JPME-1 completion.
PSU	O-5	Served in one of the following positions:  (1) PSU Executive Officer, Operations Officer, or Engineering Officer with prior waterside/shoreside/communications division officer assignment. (2) A Coastal Riverine Squadron (CORIVRON O-5/O-4 assignment. (3) Senior Reserve Officer (SRO) at any Coast Guard unit with PSU Insignia or Advanced Boat Forces Insignia. (4) Tactical DSF department head assignment with Advanced Boat Forces Insignia. (5) Joint Staff assignment with a minimum of two years' experience at a CORIVRON, or PSU with prior waterside/shoreside/communications division officer assignment.

Figure 6

While your assignment history, performance in those positions, and progress towards contingency response related competencies may be the most important consideration for retention and promotion, they are not the only factors. You should also consider the importance of how frequently you have mobilized. Officers that involuntarily mobilize under T-10 or T-14 are often looked favorably upon by promotion boards and Assignment Officers. Voluntarily acceptance of excessive Long Term Active Duty for Operational Support (LT-ADOS) or Extended Active Duty (EAD) may not always carry the same weight.

LT-ADOS and EAD offer officers the opportunity to gain valuable skills, experience, and have their performance documented in an OER. However, officers should be judicious when accepting these opportunities. Remember, you are a Reserve Officer. An IDPL board will want to see your impact upon the Reserve Component and its primary mission areas. Some LT-ADOS and EAD opportunities will provide that. Others may not. Officers on EAD should also be aware that they will compete on the ADPL should they come into zone while under contract, competing against ADPL officers.

## Assignment Tips

It is vitally important that you know your rotation date and meet all established Assignment Year (AY) deadlines to remain competitive for assignment. RPM releases AY Kickoff messages annually in August. This message sets each AY's deadlines and announces the candidate pool. Simultaneously, RPM will also post Assignment Guides on its web site with amplifying information. As a leader, you must comply with these directions and ensure that your subordinates do as well.

Managing your career can be a delicate balance. Unfortunately, there are no concrete templates to follow. When crafting an e-resume, you will likely have to choose how to prioritize potential assignments between one that will get you into a new community and one that will offer the opportunity to further develop a career enhancing and organizationally valued competency. Remember that you are not the only one seeking a highly desired assignment. Realistically weigh your odds and have a solid back up plan to increase your value to the organization.

A well-crafted e-resume allows for assignment flexibility and acknowledges possible outcomes. You should submit a reasonably broad e-resume that communicates your preferences in priority order and addresses alternatives based upon your background and experience. Do not list any position that you are not willing to accept. Use the Member Comments section to concisely relay goals, limitations, span of travel, least desired areas, or show-stoppers to your Assignment Officer.

Assigning members to positions within reasonable commuting distance (RCD) remains a priority. However, available positions within RCD become increasingly scarce as you promote. RPM will not involuntarily assign you to a position outside of RCD, but these positions are sometimes the only ones available. If you desire to compete for a career enhancing billet outside of RCD, you may request one. However, these requests are completely voluntary and you should carefully balance such a request with your civilian profession and personal life.

Remember that Assignment Officers use the same information as boards and panels. You must ensure your record is complete and accurate to best position yourself for success prior to competing for assignment.

## Assignment Timeline

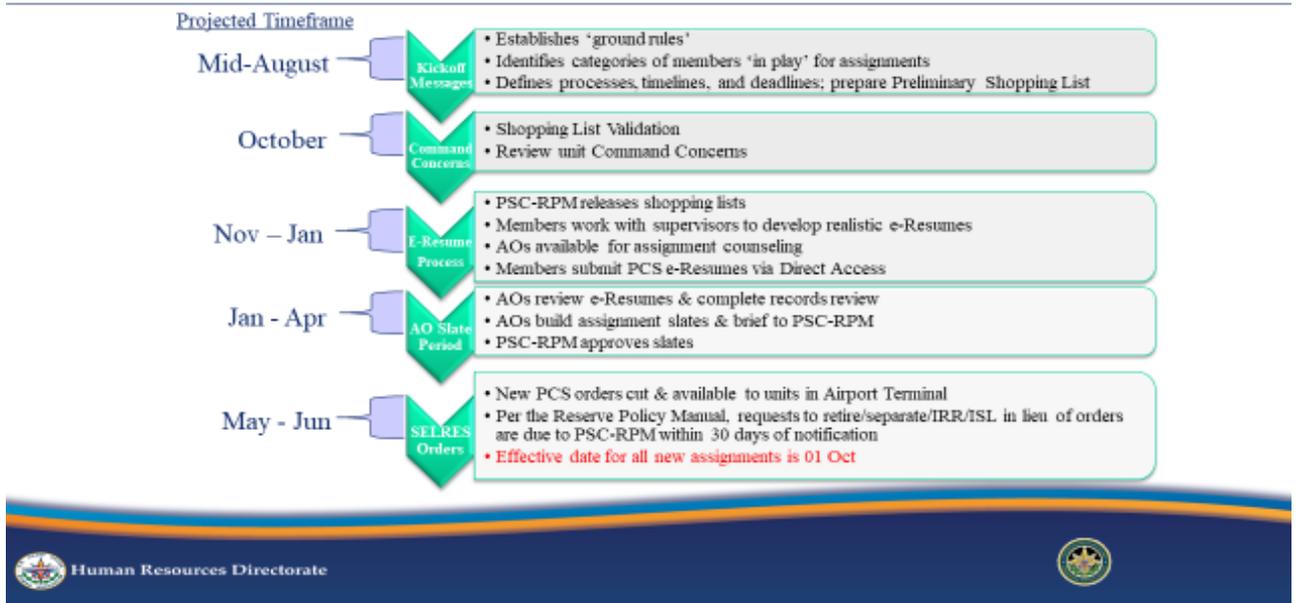


Figure 7

### Individual ROCC Session

Now that you've read the ROCC Guide, you may schedule an Individual ROCC Session with a Reserve Assignment Officer. See the latest ALCGRSV message for additional information, and email [HQS-DG-CGPSC-RPM-ROCC@USCG.MIL](mailto:HQS-DG-CGPSC-RPM-ROCC@USCG.MIL) with tentative dates and times that you are available. RPM will reply and establish a firm appointment.

ROCC sessions include a joint review of your member's ESS and EI-PDR, a discussion of career paths, a review of the assignment process, and recommendations for future assignments and professional development opportunities to improve competitiveness.

Obtain a copy of your EI-PDR via the Personnel Service Center-Business Operations Division prior to the counseling session: [https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Personnel-Service-Center-PSC/BOPS/PSC-BOPS-C/PSC-BOPS-C-MR/PSC-BOPS-C-MR\\_PDR/](https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Personnel-Service-Center-PSC/BOPS/PSC-BOPS-C/PSC-BOPS-C-MR/PSC-BOPS-C-MR_PDR/). Be sure to allow at least three business days to process the request.

Review your record before the session and be ready with any questions or concerns you may have with your record or any of the information presented in the ROCC Guide.