



LOUISIANA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE SALES BOOK



*Always Ready • Always There • Protect What Matters
From Curiosity to Commission — The Complete Recruiter Guide*

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PHASE 1 — AWARENESS | Section 1 | Identity: Who We Are

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SERVE LOUISIANA

Protect your community. Maintain your path. Build your future.



KEY POINTS

- Protect your community — be the difference when disaster strikes
- Maintain your path — keep your job, college, and civilian life
- Serve part-time, close to home, in a Louisiana unit near you
- Choose your own trajectory — the Guard adapts to your life
- Part of something 400 years in the making — America's original military
- Transfer to any state if your career or education takes you elsewhere

★ WHY EMPLOYERS VALUE GUARD SERVICE

- ✓ Leadership credibility — employers actively recruit Guard veterans
- ✓ Professional network across thousands of Louisiana professionals
- ✓ Resume distinction that no civilian career path can replicate

Identity: Who We Are: Detailed Overview

The Louisiana Army National Guard is built on a single idea that has proven true for nearly four centuries: that ordinary citizens, given extraordinary training and a shared sense of purpose, can protect what matters most. That idea — the citizen-soldier — is not a compromise between military and civilian life. It is the deliberate and powerful combination of both.

When you join the LANG, you do not abandon your identity. You expand it. You remain a student, a worker, a parent, a neighbor — and you also become a soldier, a leader, and a professional. The flexibility of Guard service means your civilian life continues without interruption while every dimension of it improves: your discipline, your network, your earnings, and your career trajectory.

Louisiana has one of the most operationally active Guard organizations in the United States. LANG soldiers respond to every major hurricane and flood, deploy to combat theaters globally, and serve in roles ranging from aviation and cybersecurity to combat engineering and medical support. The breadth of capability in this organization means wherever your interests and aptitude lead, the Guard has a place for you.

For employers, Guard service is a credential. The leadership training, technical proficiency, and demonstrated accountability that Guard members develop consistently outperform civilian management training programs. Soldiers who serve effectively distinguish themselves in every career they pursue. That is not coincidence — it is the direct product of an institution that has been building extraordinary citizens for nearly four centuries.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Leadership credibility — employers actively recruit Guard veterans
- Professional network across thousands of Louisiana professionals
- Resume distinction that no civilian career path can replicate

PART-TIME SERVICE. FULL-TIME FUTURE.

One weekend a month — a lifetime of professional returns.



KEY POINTS

- Train 1 weekend each month — Saturday morning through Sunday afternoon
- 2 weeks Annual Training each summer — scheduled well in advance
- Keep your civilian job, attend college, or run your own business
- Serve in your local Louisiana unit — close to home, close to family
- Portable — transfer to a unit in any state if life takes you elsewhere
- Build retirement points from your first day of drilling
- Pay, healthcare, and education benefits begin immediately

★ FINANCIAL & CAREER RETURNS

- ✓ Retirement points accumulate from day one — pension eligible at 20 years
- ✓ Drill pay supplements civilian income every month of service
- ✓ TRICARE healthcare access available from first day of service
- ✓ Predictable schedule enables long-term civilian career planning

The Citizen Soldier Concept: Detailed Overview

The citizen-soldier model is the defining architecture of the National Guard and has been since colonial militias first organized in 1636. It is not a lesser form of military service — it is a deliberate design that creates soldiers who are simultaneously professionals in their civilian fields and fully trained members of the United States Army.

The standard commitment is one weekend per month and two weeks of Annual Training per year — approximately 39 days annually. Drill weekends typically run Saturday morning through Sunday afternoon and are scheduled months in advance, giving soldiers the visibility to plan work schedules, family commitments, and personal obligations around their service. Annual Training, usually in the summer, is similarly predictable.

What makes this structure uniquely powerful is what it does not require. Unlike active-duty service, Guard membership does not require relocation, does not interrupt career or academic continuity, and does not impose an either-or choice between military service and civilian ambition. A student can complete a degree while serving. A professional can build seniority while accumulating military rank and retirement credit. A small business owner can serve without abandoning their enterprise.

The financial logic is immediate and compounding. Even at entry rank, drill pay provides meaningful compensation for weekend service. Retirement points accumulate from the first day of drilling toward a pension that activates at 20 qualifying years of service — meaning a soldier who joins at 18 can earn a military pension before age 40, while still working a full civilian career, and begin drawing that pension by age 62. Combined with education benefits that can eliminate tuition entirely, the citizen-soldier structure represents one of the most efficient professional development investments available anywhere .

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Retirement points accumulate from day one
- Drill pay supplements civilian income every month of service
- TRICARE healthcare access available from first day of service
- Predictable schedule enables long-term civilian career planning

THE RANK STRUCTURE

Every soldier has a grade, a title, and a pay rate. Here's the complete picture.

KEY POINTS

- Enlisted grades E-1 through E-9 are the backbone of every Guard unit
- Warrant Officers (W-1 to W-5) are technical specialists — aviation, cyber, intelligence
- Commissioned Officers (O-1 through O-10) lead through OCS, ROTC, or service academies
- New enlistees enter at E-1 through E-4 depending on education and credentials
- Promotions through E-4 are time-in-grade; E-5 and above require promotion boards
- Officers are commissioned — they do not promote from enlisted grades automatically
- The SMP program allows college students to simultaneously serve enlisted and pursue an officer commission

ENLISTED	TITLE	ABBREV.	NOTES / LANG PATH
E-1	Private	PVT	Entry rank at enlistment
E-2	Private Second Class	PV2	Auto after 6 months; 4 yrs JROTC or referral enlistment
E-3	Private First Class	PFC	Auto after ~1 year; 30 college hours or referral enlistment
E-4	Specialist / Corporal	SPC/CPL	Auto ~18 months; bachelor's degree or referral enlistment
E-5	Sergeant	SGT	Promotion board — first NCO rank; leadership role
E-6	Staff Sergeant	SSG	Promotion board — primary leader of a team/crew
E-7	Sergeant First Class	SFC	Promotion board — senior NCO / platoon sergeant
E-8	Master Sergeant / 1SG	MSG/1SG	Senior leadership — company first sergeant
E-9	Sergeant Major	SGM/CSM	Top enlisted — battalion and above

OFFICERS	TITLE	ABBREV.	NOTES / LANG PATH
W-1-W-5	Warrant Officer	WO1-CW5	Technical specialist; aviation, cyber, intelligence
O-1	Second Lieutenant	2LT	Entry officer rank — OCS or ROTC commission
O-2	First Lieutenant	1LT	Platoon leader
O-3	Captain	CPT	Company commander
O-4	Major	MAJ	Battalion staff / operations
O-5	Lieutenant Colonel	LTC	Battalion commander
O-6	Colonel	COL	Brigade commander
O-7-O-10	General Officers	BG-GEN	State and national Guard leadership

Rank Structure: Detailed Overview

The United States Army — and by extension the Louisiana Army National Guard — organizes its personnel into three broad categories: Enlisted soldiers, Warrant Officers, and Commissioned Officers. Each category has its own entry requirements, promotion path, and pay scale. Understanding where a new enlistee fits within this structure, and where they can go, is essential context for anyone evaluating a Guard commitment.

Enlisted — E-1 Through E-9

Enlisted soldiers make up the majority of the Guard's strength. They are the operators, mechanics, medics, intelligence analysts, cyber technicians, and infantrymen who execute the mission at every level. New enlistees enter between E-1 and E-4 depending on their credentials — education, JROTC completion, or college credits can advance the entry grade as described in Section 41. The transition from junior enlisted (E-1 through E-4) to Non-Commissioned Officer (E-5 and above) is the most significant professional inflection point in an enlisted career. NCOs lead soldiers, manage equipment, and are responsible for the standards of their teams.

Warrant Officers — W-1 Through W-5

Warrant Officers are the Army's technical specialists. They are selected from the enlisted and civilian ranks for demonstrated technical expertise in a specific field — most commonly aviation (pilots), cyber operations, intelligence, or specific engineering disciplines. Warrant Officers are commissioned by the Secretary of the Army and occupy a unique professional space: they are not in the standard enlisted or officer promotion chain, but rather develop deep mastery in their technical specialty throughout their career. Aviation Warrant Officers (including UH-60 and AH-64 pilots) are among the most sought-after Guard members in the civilian aviation industry.

Commissioned Officers — O-1 Through O-10

Commissioned Officers lead Guard formations from the platoon level through state and national headquarters. They are commissioned through Officer Candidate School, the Reserve Officers' Training Corps at universities, or federal service academies. The SMP — Simultaneous Membership Program — allows college students who are already Guard enlisted members to participate in ROTC, earn their commission, and serve simultaneously, drawing drill pay at the E-5 rate during the program. Officers require a minimum of 90 college credit hours for OCS and a bachelor's degree for commissioning. The officer corps represents one of the most direct paths to senior leadership in both the military and civilian worlds.

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES — WE RESPOND

Louisiana's first responder. Always on call. Always first on the ground.



KEY POINTS

- Hurricane response — search, rescue, shelter, and logistics operations
- Flood rescue — boats, vehicles, swift-water teams, civilian evacuation
- Emergency logistics — food, water, fuel, medical supply distribution
- Homeland defense and civil security operations
- Community disaster support — shelter setup, debris removal, recovery
- Mobilized within hours of a Governor's activation order
- Active in every major Louisiana disaster since Hurricane Betsy (1965)

★ SKILLS THAT TRANSFER DIRECTLY

- ✓ Emergency management and large-scale disaster coordination
- ✓ Logistics under pressure — supply chain, distribution, resource management
- ✓ Leadership in high-stakes, time-critical, ambiguous environments

Louisiana State Missions: Detailed Overview

Louisiana occupies one of the most geographically and climatologically demanding positions of any state in the country. The combination of Gulf Coast exposure, below-sea-level urban infrastructure, and major river systems makes Louisiana a perpetual candidate for natural disasters at a scale few other states experience. The Louisiana Army National Guard exists, in part, precisely because of this reality.

The state mission activates under the Governor's authority — not federal command — and Guard units can deploy anywhere in Louisiana within hours. This speed and flexibility is unmatched by any federal response resource. Guard armories are pre-positioned across dozens of Louisiana communities, enabling rapid staging of personnel, vehicles, boats, and equipment wherever the need is greatest.

The historical scope of LANG state missions is extraordinary. Hurricane Katrina in 2005 saw Louisiana Guardsmen conduct the largest domestic military rescue operation in American history — evacuating tens of thousands of residents, establishing field medical stations, and maintaining civil order across a devastated urban environment. Hurricane Ida in 2021 demonstrated the same capability at scale within 24 hours of landfall. These are not isolated events — they are recurring demonstrations of an organization built for this exact purpose.

For soldiers, state mission service carries a direct personal resonance that overseas deployments cannot fully replicate. You are not serving in a foreign country — you are serving your own neighbors, in your own communities, during the most difficult moments those communities will ever face. That proximity to impact is one of the most consistent motivators LANG soldiers cite when asked why they chose to serve and why they continue.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Emergency management and large-scale disaster coordination
- Logistics under pressure — supply chain, distribution, resource management
- Leadership in high-stakes, time-critical, ambiguous environments

READY WHEN AMERICA CALLS

Louisiana soldiers have answered every call since the Revolutionary War.



KEY POINTS

- Overseas deployments — combat, security, and advisory missions
- NATO support across Europe — collective defense and partnership operations
- Counter-terrorism operations in the Middle East and Africa
- Training with allied militaries through the State Partnership Program
- Humanitarian assistance missions globally
- Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) for federal emergencies
- **Deployment frequency:** approximately once every 5–6 years for most Guard units become eligible

★ CAREER VALUE OF DEPLOYMENT

- ✓ Cross-cultural competence and international professional experience
- ✓ Leadership credibility earned under real operational pressure
- ✓ Enhanced GI Bill and expanded VA benefits following federal service
- ✓ Security clearance eligibility — opens federal and defense industry roles

National Missions: Detailed Overview

The National Guard's federal mission activates when the President mobilizes Guard forces under Title 10 authority — the same legal basis under which active-duty Army units deploy. When federalized, Guard soldiers operate alongside active-duty counterparts with identical equipment, standards, pay, and mission parameters. There is no distinction between a Guard soldier and an active-duty soldier in a federal deployment theater.

Louisiana Guardsmen have deployed to every major operational theater since Korea, with the pace increasing significantly after September 11, 2001. LANG soldiers have served in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Qatar, the Horn of Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Pacific — conducting missions ranging from combat operations and intelligence collection to civil affairs, logistics, and security force assistance.

For Guard soldiers, the federal deployment cycle is manageable and predictable. Most line units deploy approximately once every five to six years. When deployed, soldiers receive full active-duty pay including housing allowance, sustenance, combat zone tax exclusions, and applicable bonuses. USERRA — the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act — legally protects civilian employment during the full period of deployment, requiring employers to hold positions and restore seniority upon return.

The career value of deployment experience consistently distinguishes Guard veterans in competitive civilian job markets. Soldiers who have led teams in operational environments, managed resources under pressure, and navigated complex international contexts bring a professional maturity that no civilian management program replicates. Employers across sectors — particularly in government, defense, logistics, and healthcare — actively seek these credentials. Deployment is not a disruption to a Guard soldier's career. For many, it is the most accelerating professional experience of their lives.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Cross-cultural competence and international professional experience
- Leadership credibility earned under real operational pressure
- Enhanced GI Bill and expanded VA benefits following federal service
- Security clearance eligibility — opens federal and defense industry roles



PHASE 2 — EDUCATION

"What do I get for my service?"

Education, credentials, and career advancement — funded by the Guard.

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GRADUATE WITHOUT DEBT

The most comprehensive education benefit package of any part-time employer in America.



KEY POINTS

- **STEP (State Tuition Exemption):** 100% tuition at Louisiana public colleges — bachelor's degree
- **Enhanced STEP:** 100% tuition continues through a master's degree
- **Patriot Scholarship:** All mandatory school fees paid through undergraduate completion
- **Montgomery GI Bill:** \$493/month paid directly to you while enrolled in school
- **GI Bill Kicker:** Additional \$350/month — total \$831/month while in school
- **Federal Tuition Assistance:** \$4,500/year for approved degree and certification programs
- **Student Loan Repayment:** Up to \$50,000 toward existing federal student loans
- **ACE Credits:** Military training earns transferable college credit — MOS determines amount

★ WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

- ✓ Graduate debt-free with a bachelor's or master's degree from a Louisiana public university
- ✓ Earn leadership experience, military credentials, and a civilian degree simultaneously
- ✓ Enter your career with zero student debt — and years of professional experience
- ✓ Combine STEP + Patriot Scholarship + GI Bill for near-zero out-of-pocket education cost

Education: Graduate Without Debt: Detailed Overview

The Louisiana Army National Guard offers what is, without question, the most comprehensive education benefit package available to any part-time employee in the United States. At its core is the State Tuition Exemption Program (STEP), which covers 100 percent of tuition at Louisiana public colleges and universities for eligible Guard members pursuing a bachelor's degree. The Enhanced STEP extends this benefit through a master's degree — a unique provision that distinguishes Louisiana from virtually every other state's Guard education program.

Layered on top of STEP are federal education benefits that collectively eliminate nearly every remaining education cost. The Patriot Scholarship covers mandatory school fees — the charges that STEP doesn't address. The Montgomery GI Bill provides \$493 per month in direct payments while enrolled in school, with an additional \$350 Kicker bringing the total monthly stipend to \$843. Federal Tuition Assistance provides \$4,500 per year for approved courses. And the Student Loan Repayment Program addresses debt already accumulated before joining — up to \$50,000 in federal student loan elimination.

The ACE (American Council on Education) credit evaluation system means that military training itself generates transferable college credit. Every formal military school, MOS training course, and leadership program carries recommended college credit hours that most Louisiana institutions accept. A soldier returning from Basic Training and AIT may enter college with 12 to 30 credit hours already completed — the equivalent of a full semester to a full academic year of tuition savings.

The financial case for combining Guard service and college enrollment is overwhelming. American student loan debt exceeds \$1.7 trillion nationally. Louisiana Guard members who plan their education benefits strategically graduate not only debt-free but with three to six years of professional military experience, a demonstrated leadership record, and a network of professional contacts that their civilian peers will spend decades trying to build. As a Louisiana Army National Guard Soldier, you do not just graduate without debt — you graduate ahead.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Graduate debt-free with a bachelor's or master's degree from a Louisiana public university
- Earn leadership experience, military credentials, and a civilian degree simultaneously
- Enter your career with zero student debt — and years of professional experience
- Combine STEP + Patriot Scholarship + GI Bill for near-zero out-of-pocket education cost

SERVE WHILE ATTENDING COLLEGE

The Guard is designed for students. Drill on weekends, learn all week.



KEY POINTS

- Drill pay every month — direct financial supplement to college income
- Flexible service schedule — Guard schedule around semester calendar
- Earn college credits through military training (ACE-accredited)
- Build leadership experience that sets you apart in the job market
- STEP tuition benefit active from your first day of service
- Health benefits available — TRICARE Select Reserve option
- Graduate with a military service record — the most powerful resume asset available

★ WHAT YOU WALK ACROSS THE STAGE WITH

- ✓ A debt-free degree from a Louisiana public university
- ✓ 3–4 years of documented leadership experience at any rank
- ✓ ACE college credits from MOS training and military coursework
- ✓ An employer-recognized service record that distinguishes you from every peer

College While Serving: Detailed Overview

College and Guard service are not competing priorities — they are complementary ones. The Guard's schedule is designed in a way it accommodates academic calendars. Drill weekend schedule is provided, usually, in July before the October fiscal year begins, enabling students to plan course schedules, exams, and academic commitments around their military service. Annual Training, typically conducted in May or June, fits naturally around semester end dates.

From a financial perspective, the combination is extraordinarily advantageous. A college student serving in the Guard receives drill pay every month, STEP tuition coverage, the Patriot Scholarship for mandatory fees, and the monthly GI Bill stipend — in addition to any civilian financial aid or scholarships they may carry. For most Guard students, the net cost of a Louisiana public university education is zero. Many actually realize a net financial gain from combining their benefits strategically.

The professional development dimension is equally significant. While civilian college students build their resumes through internships and part-time jobs, Guard soldiers are building documented leadership records in a nationally recognized institution. By the time a Guard member graduates, they have led teams, managed equipment, executed missions, and operated under genuine accountability — experiences that translate directly to every professional environment.

Employers understand what Guard service during college represents. It signals discipline, time management, physical fitness, ethical accountability, and the ability to perform under pressure while managing multiple demands simultaneously. These are precisely the attributes that distinguish high-performing employees, and they are nearly impossible to develop or demonstrate through any other path available to a college student. The Guard does not just help you pay for college — it turns your college years into the most professionally productive period of your life.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- A debt-free degree from a Louisiana public university
- 3–4 years of documented leadership experience at any rank
- ACE college credits from MOS training and military coursework
- An employer-recognized service record that distinguishes you from every peer

LEAD IN COLLEGE

Combine Guard service and ROTC — earn E-5 pay, commission as an officer.



KEY POINTS

- Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) — serve in Guard unit while in ROTC
- **Drill pay at E-5 (Sergeant):** significantly higher than standard private pay
- ROTC scholarship — tuition, fees, books, and monthly living stipend
- Build real unit leadership experience while earning your degree
- Commission as a Second Lieutenant upon graduation
- Available to college sophomores and juniors with 2+ years remaining
- The fastest officer commissioning pathway for enrolled college students

★ WHAT AN SMP COMMISSION PRODUCES

- ✓ Second Lieutenant commission + bachelor's degree + zero student debt
- ✓ Unit leadership experience before the first day of officer service
- ✓ Strongest possible officer record from the first day of commission
- ✓ Civilian career trajectory equivalent to an MBA + management fast-track

SMP & ROTC: Lead in College: Detailed Overview

The Simultaneous Membership Program is among the most strategically powerful pathways available to college students in the Louisiana Army National Guard. SMP allows a student to contract simultaneously in Army ROTC at their college and drill monthly with a Guard unit — earning Guard pay at the E-5 (Sergeant) rate, not the entry private rate, from the beginning of participation.

The financial architecture of SMP is exceptional. ROTC scholarships can cover full tuition, mandatory fees, books, and provide a monthly living stipend. The Guard's STEP program eliminates tuition at Louisiana public universities. The monthly SMP drill pay at E-5 supplements all of this. The result is a college student who is being paid, not paying, to attend a Louisiana public university while simultaneously building the most impressive leadership record of anyone in their graduating class.

The professional development value of SMP exceeds any other commissioning pathway for college students. A traditional ROTC graduate commissions with academic leadership training. An SMP graduate commissions having already operated within a military unit, managed real responsibilities, and built working relationships with experienced senior leaders. This real-world context transforms classroom leadership theory into practiced competence — the difference between a new officer who reads about leading soldiers and one who has already done it.

Upon completing both ROTC requirements and their degree, SMP participants commission as Second Lieutenants. They enter officer service with a commission, a degree, zero student debt, and a unit service record that most officers spend years trying to build. For a college student with officer ambitions, SMP is not merely an option — it is the optimal path.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Second Lieutenant commission + bachelor's degree + zero student debt
- Unit leadership experience before the first day of officer service
- Strongest possible officer record from the first day of commission
- Civilian career trajectory equivalent to an MBA + management fast-track

BECOME AN OFFICER

Lead soldiers. Plan missions. Build a career that commands respect.



KEY POINTS

- **Eligibility:** 90 semester hours of college credit required to apply
- Lead soldiers from your first day of commission
- Plan and execute real-world missions — domestic and overseas
- Build professional leadership skills that transfer to any industry
- Advance your military career on the officer track
- **Three formats:** Federal OCS (12 weeks), Accelerated OCS (8 weeks), Traditional OCS (drill weekends)
- All formats produce the identical outcome: Second Lieutenant commission

★ OFFICER LEADERSHIP = CIVILIAN EXECUTIVE TRACK

- ✓ Platoon command — direct leadership of 30–40 soldiers
- ✓ Company and battalion staff — operational planning, resource management
- ✓ Officer career path = civilian C-suite fast-track in every industry
- ✓ Security clearance eligibility — federal and defense career access

Officer Candidate School: Detailed Overview

Officer Candidate School is the Guard's primary mechanism for commissioning soldiers and civilians as officers of the United States Army. Unlike active-duty OCS, which follows a single format, the Guard offers three distinct pathways designed to accommodate different life circumstances — all producing the same outcome: a commission as a Second Lieutenant.

Federal OCS is a 12-week residential program at Fort Moore, Georgia — the fastest route to a commission for applicants who can commit to an uninterrupted training period. Accelerated OCS compresses the same outcomes into an intensive eight-week format. Traditional OCS distributes the training across multiple drill weekends and extended training periods, making it accessible to working professionals and soldiers with family obligations who cannot take extended leave from their civilian careers.

The officer track represents a fundamentally different career trajectory within the Guard. Officers lead platoons, companies, and battalions — managing personnel, planning and executing missions, developing the soldiers beneath them, and interfacing with civilian government agencies, partner military forces, and community organizations. The breadth of responsibility develops a leadership capability that is recognized and actively sought by employers in virtually every professional sector.

Entry requirements for OCS typically include 90 semester hours of college credit, demonstrated physical fitness at or above Army standards, and eligibility for a security clearance. The competitive selection process assesses leadership potential, academic qualification, and professional character. For enlisted soldiers with demonstrated performance, OCS represents the clearest path to expanded responsibility, higher compensation, and long-term career development within the Louisiana Army National Guard.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Platoon command — direct leadership of 30–40 soldiers
- Company and battalion staff — operational planning, resource management
- Officer career path = civilian C-suite fast-track in every industry
- Security clearance eligibility — federal and defense career access

GRADUATE DEBT-FREE

The LANG Two-Program State Tuition Stack

KEY POINTS

- STEP covers 100% of tuition at all Louisiana public colleges and universities (Louisiana R.S. 29:36)
- Patriot Scholarship (eff. Aug 1, 2023) covers all mandatory fees at Louisiana public postsecondary institutions
- Combined: a LANG member pursuing an undergraduate degree at an LA public school pays \$0 for tuition AND fees
- Both programs available immediately upon enlistment — no waiting period
- Can be stacked with Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA), GI Bill, TOPS, and Pell Grant
- Valid for Associate's, Bachelor's, and Master's degrees, plus trades programs at public institutions
- Patriot Scholarship lasts 12 semesters / 16 quarters — not prorated (counts even for part-time enrollment)
- LOSFA applies STEP to tuition first, then Patriot Scholarship to mandatory fees automatically

STEP ELIGIBILITY: Actively drilling LANG member • Louisiana resident • Good standing • Enrolled at LA public institution

PATRIOT ELIGIBILITY: Must be STEP-eligible • Good standing • Not flagged by unit commander • Not on academic probation

THE LANG DEBT-FREE STACK

- STEP + Patriot = \$0 tuition + \$0 mandatory fees at LA public schools (undergraduate)
- Add Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) → up to \$250/semester hour for additional costs
- Add TOPS Kicker, Pell Grant, or GI Bill → covers remaining expenses
- Result: Many LANG soldiers complete bachelor's degrees with zero out-of-pocket cost
- Graduate school: STEP covers tuition only (Patriot does not cover grad fees — verify with ESO)



RECRUITER CAUTIONS

- Patriot Scholarship is NOT prorated — one semester used counts as one full eligibility period even if part-time
- Eligibility lost if flagged by unit commander OR placed on academic probation; regained when resolved
- Patriot covers mandatory fees only — NOT tuition (STEP covers tuition), NOT optional/program-

specific fees

- Second bachelor's degree: Patriot can be used but eligibility ends upon acceptance of first bachelor's degree
- Stacking with GI Bill: Always refer prospect to LANG ESO before committing to ensure wise use of entitlements
- Funds subject to Louisiana legislative appropriation annually — typically stable but confirm with ESO

LANG Education Services Office — Jackson Barracks, 6400 St. Claude Ave., New Orleans

STEP & Patriot / GI Bill Contact: Mr. Leonard Acker | leonard.c.acker.civ@army.mil | (504) 278-8273 / (504) 224-0076

Education Hub: geauxguard.la.gov/education/

Patriot Scholarship (LOSFA): mylosfa.la.gov/students-parents/scholarships-grants/louisiana-national-guard-patriot-scholarship/

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State Tuition Exemption Program (STEP)

STEP is Louisiana's foundational education benefit for Guard members, established under Louisiana Revised Statute 29:36. Every actively drilling LANG member who is a Louisiana resident in good academic standing is entitled to free tuition at any Louisiana public college or university — from LSUS to LSU to Delgado Community College to Tulane's public programs. STEP covers Associate's, Bachelor's, and Master's degree programs as well as certificates and trades programs at Louisiana public postsecondary institutions.

STEP covers tuition only, not mandatory fees. This is where the Patriot Scholarship steps in.

Patriot Scholarship

Passed by the Louisiana Legislature in 2023 and effective August 1, 2023, the Patriot Scholarship was designed as a complement to STEP with a singular goal: help LANG members Graduate Debt Free. While STEP removes tuition costs, the Patriot Scholarship removes mandatory fees — every fee the institution charges to all students simply for attending, regardless of program.

Mandatory fees vary by institution and can range from a few hundred dollars to over \$1,000 per semester. The Patriot Scholarship scales to cover whatever those fees are at the enrolled institution. Combined with STEP, a LANG member at a Louisiana public school pays \$0 for tuition AND mandatory fees for up to 12 semesters (or 16 quarters) — roughly four academic years.

How the Stack Works

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) processes the benefits in a specific order: STEP is applied to the tuition balance first, then the Patriot Scholarship is applied to mandatory fees. After those two are applied, any remaining awards (GI Bill, TOPS, Pell, FTA, other scholarships) are applied per their own rules. This layering means that in many cases, the GI Bill or Pell Grant money that would have gone toward tuition and fees is freed up for living expenses, books, or savings.

Key Rules and Cautions

- **Not Prorated:** One semester of Patriot Scholarship is consumed whether the student is enrolled full-time or for a single credit hour. Recruits considering very light course loads should understand this.
- **Eligibility Loss & Recovery:** Both programs require the soldier to remain in good standing with both their unit (no flag) and their institution (no academic probation). Eligibility is fully restored once the flag or probation is lifted.
- **Graduate Programs:** STEP covers tuition for graduate degrees; the Patriot Scholarship applies to undergraduate enrollment only (though a graduate course accepted as part of an undergraduate program may qualify).
- **Second Degree:** A soldier who already holds a bachelor's degree can still use both STEP and the Patriot Scholarship toward a second undergraduate degree or certificate. Patriot eligibility ends when the first bachelor's is accepted or the 12-semester cap is reached.
- **Trades Programs:** Both programs work at Louisiana public trade schools and technical institutions — a powerful recruiting pitch for non-traditional college-bound prospects.

Stacking With Federal Benefits

FTA can be used concurrently with STEP and Patriot since STEP is a state benefit and FTA is federal — they do not conflict. The GI Bill can also be paired with STEP/Patriot, though the interaction depends on which GI Bill chapter and enrollment status. Always refer prospects to the LANG ESO for a personalized stacking plan. Pell Grants and TOPS can also stack, and in many cases the combination leaves the soldier with net zero out-of-pocket and no debt.

FTA & CREDENTIALING

Up to \$250/SH • 1,800+ Credentials • No Out-of-Pocket

KEY POINTS

- Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) pays up to \$250 per semester hour for tuition — no fees
- Up to 16 semester hours (SH) per fiscal year — FY runs Oct 1 to Sep 30
- Lifetime limits: 130 SH undergraduate • 39 SH graduate
- Covers one degree per level: Associate’s, Bachelor’s, Master’s, plus one certificate
- Credentialing Assistance (CA): up to \$2,000/year for 1,800+ credentials (not required to match MOS)
- FTA and CA can be used together in the same fiscal year
- Requires ArmyIgnitED account (armyignited.cce.af.mil) and CAC
- Must apply at least 8 business days before course start date

Program	Annual Limit	Per Unit Rate	Lifetime Limit
FTA (Tuition)	16 SH / \$4,000	\$250/SH	130 SH undergrad / 39 SH grad
Credentialing Assistance (CA)	\$2,000 / 1 credential	Actual cost	3 per 10 yrs + 3 more after 10 yrs
FTA + CA combined	\$4,500 FTA + \$2,000 CA	Per above	Per above

POPULAR CA CREDENTIALS

- CompTIA A+ • CompTIA Security+CE (cybersecurity track)
- Project Management Professional (PMP)
- Commercial Driver License (CDL)
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- Certified Welder (CW) Commercial
- Lean Six Sigma • Private Pilot Single Engine
- Certified Personal Trainer (CPT)
- Associate Professional in HR (APHR)
- Full list: cool.osd.mil/army — search by MOS or career field

FTA RECOUPMENT TRIGGERS — KNOW BEFORE YOU ENROLL

- Grade below C (undergraduate) or below B (graduate) — course cost recouped from military pay
- Unresolved incomplete ("I") grade after 180 days — recouped
- Dropping a course for personal reasons after course start date — recouped

- Transferring to Inactive National Guard (ING) or IRR before course end date — recouped

FTA & CA Contact: Mr. Darrel Ferdinand | Darrel.c.ferdinand.civ@army.mil | (504) 278-8314

ArmyIgnitED Portal: armyignited.cce.af.mil

Army COOL (Credentials): cool.osd.mil/army

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Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA)

Federal Tuition Assistance is one of the most powerful benefits available to actively drilling LANG members. Managed through the ArmyIgnitED portal, FTA pays up to \$250 per semester hour for tuition at any regionally or nationally accredited college or university that participates in the portal — which includes thousands of schools offering online and in-person programs nationwide.

FTA covers tuition only — not fees. It can be used together with STEP (state tuition waiver) since STEP is a state-funded benefit and FTA is federal, meaning they do not conflict. When FTA and STEP are both in play, FTA is typically applied first, allowing any STEP credit to cover remaining tuition or to free up other funds.

Eligibility Details

- **Basic requirement:** Currently serving LANG member with a valid CAC card. IADT/BOLC completion is no longer required to apply.
- **Officer/WO service obligation:** 4-year Reserve Duty Service Obligation (RDSO) or 2-year Active Duty Service Obligation (ADSO) upon using FTA.
- **Enlisted separation window:** Not eligible for courses starting less than 60 days OR ending less than 14 days before ETS/MRD.
- **GPA requirements:** Must maintain 2.0 GPA for undergraduate and 3.0 for graduate FTA-funded courses.
- **Degree plan requirement:** After completing 2 FTA-funded courses, must have an evaluated degree plan/audit on file in ArmyIgnitED.

Using FTA With GI Bill

FTA and MGIB-SR (Ch. 1606) can be used for the same course simultaneously when attending at least half-time. FTA and Post-9/11 GI Bill (Ch. 33) can also be combined — the school deducts FTA from net tuition before certifying the amount to VA; Ch. 33 then covers the remaining out-of-pocket balance. This stacking can effectively eliminate tuition costs entirely at many institutions.

Credentialing Assistance (CA)

CA funds up to \$2,000 per credential per fiscal year for more than 1,800 credentials listed on Army COOL. Credentials do not have to be related to the soldier's MOS — a 68W combat medic can use CA for a commercial driver's license, a PMP certification, or a private pilot certificate. CA covers training materials, study guides, textbooks, test fees, processing fees, and recertification.

Starting in FY26, soldiers who receive CA funding for training are required to sit for the associated examination. Failed exam costs are recouped. Pearson VUE (pearsonvue.com) and Prometric (prometric.com) are the two major testing center networks for most CA-eligible credentials.

ArmyIgnitED: armyignited.cce.af.mil

LANG FTA Page: geauxguard.la.gov/education/federal-tuition-assistance-fta/

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GI BILL BENEFITS

FY26 Rates • MGIB-SR • Post-9/11 • \$350/mo Kicker

KEY POINTS

- MGIB-SR (Ch. 1606): \$493/month full-time — paid monthly for actively drilling LANG members (FY26 rate, effective Oct 1, 2025)
- Kicker Incentive (FY26): additional \$350/month for eligible critical-skill enlistments/reenlistments — tax-free, up to 36 months
- Post-9/11 GI Bill (Ch. 33): covers up to 100% in-state tuition, BAH (E-5 w/dependents rate), and \$1,000/year books for qualifying active-duty service
- MGIB-AD (Ch. 30): \$2,518/month full-time for veterans with 3+ years AD service (FY26, effective Oct 1, 2025)
- Transfer of Education Benefits (TEB): transfer up to 36 months to spouse/children after 6+ years service + 4-year obligation
- GI Bill can be used for degrees, trade programs, apprenticeships, licensing/certification tests, and flight training
- MGIB-SR + Kicker can be paired with FTA for the same course (half-time or more enrollment required)

GI Bill Program	FY26 Full-Time Rate	Notes
MGIB-SR (Ch. 1606)	\$493/month	Must be actively drilling; benefits end on separation
MGIB-SR + Kicker	\$843/month	\$493 + \$350 kicker; 36-month max; tax-free
Post-9/11 (Ch. 33)	Up to 100% tuition + BAH + \$1,000 books	Based on qualifying active-duty service tier
MGIB-AD (Ch. 30)	\$2,518/month (3+ yrs AD)	10-year delimiting date; resets after mobilization
Online-only MHA (Ch. 33)	\$1,169/month	If attending exclusively online courses

MGIB-SR KICKER — FY26 DETAILS

- Rate: \$350/month added to MGIB-SR base rate (total \$843/month full-time)
- All payments are tax-free; rate locked at contracting — does not change with policy
- A soldier may only contract for a Kicker ONCE in their career
- Eligibility: ASVAB 50+ (Cat I-III A) • Critical Skill/UIC vacancy (Tier 1-7) • 6-year obligation
- Categories: Enlisted Accession (EA) • Re-Enlistment/Extension (RE) • Officer Commissioning (OC)
- OC Kicker: available for OCS, ROTC (SMP), and WOC candidates who have completed IADT + enlisted MOS
- Standard Officer Kicker (SOK): commissioned/WO within 1 year of commissioning — sign same day

as DA 5447-R

- Bump-Up: raise a prior \$100 or \$200 kicker to \$350 upon entry into commissioning program



GI BILL STACKING CAUTIONS

- MGIB-SR eligibility is established ONCE in a career — cannot re-establish after separation
- Electing Post-9/11 GI Bill requires relinquishing MGIB-SR if eligible for both — irreversible
- TEB (transfer to dependents) requires 4-year additional service commitment at time of request
- Dedicated Guard ROTC Scholarship (Title 10 § 2107) TERMINATES MGIB-SR and Kicker
- GRFD Scholarship (Title 10 § 2107a) does NOT affect MGIB-SR or Kicker
- Rates change every October 1 — always verify current rates at va.gov/education/benefit-rates/

GI Bill / Kicker Contact: Mr. Leonard Acker | leonard.c.acker.civ@army.mil | (504) 278-8273

VA GI Bill Rates: va.gov/education/benefit-rates/

LANG GI Bill Page: geauxguard.la.gov/education/gi-bill/

Apply for GI Bill CoE: va.gov

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Montgomery GI Bill — Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR, Ch. 1606)

The MGIB-SR is the primary GI Bill program for actively drilling LANG members. Eligibility requires a 6-year Selected Reserve obligation, completion of IADT or BOLC, a high school diploma or equivalent, and remaining in good standing. The ARNG establishes initial eligibility; the VA pays the monthly benefit directly to the soldier while in school.

Eligibility for MGIB-SR can only be established once in a career. Benefits end on the day a soldier separates from the Selected Reserve, though soldiers with a medical or disability discharge may retain eligibility — contact the LANG ESO for details.

MGIB-SR Training Type	Monthly Rate (FY26, eff. Oct 1, 2025)
Full time	\$493.00
3/4 time	\$369.00
1/2 time	\$246.00
Less than 1/2 time	\$123.25
OJT/Apprenticeship — first 6 months	\$369.75
OJT/Apprenticeship — second 6 months	\$271.15
OJT/Apprenticeship — remaining	\$172.55

Post-9/11 GI Bill (Ch. 33)

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is available to LANG members who have accumulated qualifying active-duty service (mobilizations, AGR, certain Title 32 orders). The benefit tier is based on total qualifying days of service, from 50% at 90 days to 100% at 36 months. At 100%, the VA pays full in-state public tuition, a monthly housing allowance based on the E-5 with-dependents BAH rate for the school's zip code, and up to \$1,000/year in books and supplies.

Qualifying Service	Post-9/11 Payment Tier
36+ months or Purple Heart recipient	100%
30–36 months	90%
24–30 months	80%
18–24 months	70%
6–18 months	60%
90 days–6 months	50%

FY26 Post-9/11 Key Rates (eff. Aug 1, 2025): Private school cap \$29,920.95/year • Online-only MHA \$1,169/month • Books \$41.67/credit hour (max \$1,000/year)

Transfer of Education Benefits (TEB)

Soldiers with 6+ years of qualifying service and a Post-9/11 GI Bill entitlement may transfer up to 36 months to a spouse or dependent children by committing to 4 additional years of service. TEB is NOT an entitlement — it is a retention incentive. Apply at milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil before separating; dependents cannot be added after separation.

TEB Application: milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/

LOAN REPAYMENT & COMMISSIONING

Up to \$50K Student Loan Relief • ROTC • OCS • Chaplain • AMEDD

KEY POINTS

- SLRP: up to \$50,000 lifetime — annual payments of up to \$8,333 (15% of balance or \$1,000, whichever is greater), paid directly to loan servicer over 6 years
- Only Title IV federal student loans eligible — state, private, and PLUS loans are NOT eligible for SLRP
- 09S (OCS) SLRP: same \$50K lifetime cap; PLUS loans ARE eligible when soldier is the borrower
- HPLRP: up to \$250,000 for Medical/Dental/Clinical Psychology AMEDD officers; \$75K for Social Workers; \$60K for PAs/Veterinarians
- Chaplain Loan Repayment (CLRP): \$20,000 per 3-year contract; up to 4 contracts = \$80,000 lifetime
- ROTC Minuteman Scholarship: full tuition + fees OR \$12K room & board/year + \$1,200/year books + \$420/month stipend
- State OCS: 16-18 months • GT 110+ • 90+ semester hours • commission before age 42
- Accelerated OCS: 8 consecutive weeks; summer/winter sessions
- WOCS: 4-week RC program at Fort Novosel, AL; or 5-month state RTI program

Loan / Scholarship Program	Maximum Benefit	Key Requirement
ARNG SLRP (Enlisted)	\$50,000 lifetime	Title IV loans; Critical Skill; 6-yr obligation
09S SLRP (OCS Candidate)	\$50,000 lifetime	AFQT 50+; 90+ SH or bachelor's; 6-yr obligation
HPLRP — Medical/Dental/Psych	\$250,000 lifetime (\$40K/yr)	AMEDD officer; critical wartime shortage list
HPLRP — Social Work	\$75,000 lifetime (\$25K/yr)	AOC 73A; authorized position
HPLRP — PA / Veterinary	\$60,000 lifetime (\$20K/yr)	AOC 65D/64A; authorized position
CLRP — Chaplain	\$80,000 lifetime (\$20K/3-yr contract)	AOC 56A; DAOCQ; Title IV Div. degree
ROTC Minuteman Scholarship	Full tuition+fees or \$12K R&B/yr + \$1,200 books + \$420/mo stipend	SMP; 8-yr MSO upon commissioning



SLRP CRITICAL RULES

- Loans in DEFAULT on contract signature date are NEVER eligible — even if default is later resolved
- Annual payment FORFEITED if DD Form 2475 not submitted within 365 days of entitlement — no exceptions

- GNPS, 09R SMP cadets, and GRFD scholarship recipients are ineligible for standard SLRP
- State and private loans are NEVER eligible — Title IV federal loans only (except PLUS)
- Must not be AWOL, under SFPA (flagged), AGR, or Dual Status MILTECH on contract dates
- Eligibility verification requires NSLDS documents dated within 30 days of contract

COMMISSIONING OPTIONS AT A GLANCE

- State OCS (Traditional): 16-18 months on drill weekends + AT; GT 110+; 90+ SH; commission before 42
- Accelerated OCS: 8 consecutive weeks (summer/winter); same GT and education requirements
- Federal OCS: 14 weeks at Fort Moore, GA; bachelor's required; commission before 34
- ROTC/SMP: simultaneous Guard enlisted + ROTC; Minuteman Scholarship available
- WOCS: 4-week RC program at Fort Novosel, AL; GT 110+; final Secret clearance required; no interim
- ECP (Military Junior College): commission as 2LT after 2-year MJC; then 3-yr contract + EAP bachelor's funding
- Direct Commission: specialty branches (Medical, JAG, Chaplain); chain-of-command nomination required

SLRP Contact: Mr. Stephen Imhoff | stephen.k.imhoff.civ@army.mil

Incentives / Bonus: Mrs. Janette Percin | janette.percin.civ@army.mil

SLRP Info: geauxguard.la.gov/education/student-loan-repayment-program-slrp/

Loan Status Check (NSLDS): nslidsfap.ed.gov

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Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP)

The ARNG SLRP is one of the most compelling financial benefits available to soldiers who enter service with federal student loan debt. The program pays up to \$50,000 lifetime in annual installments — each installment being the greater of \$1,000 or 15% of the eligible principal balance, capped at \$8,333 per year. Payments are made directly to the loan servicer, not to the soldier.

SLRP is available to Non-Prior Service (NPS) and Prior Service (PS) soldiers enlisting into critical-skill positions, and as a retention tool for current soldiers reenlisting/extending. The 09S variant (for OCS candidates) operates similarly but allows PLUS loans — a significant distinction for candidates with undergraduate PLUS loans in their own name.

Critical Eligibility Conditions

- **Loan status at signing:** Loans in default on the contract signature date are permanently ineligible, regardless of subsequent resolution. Recruits must clear any defaulted loans before signing.
- **Annual DD Form 2475:** Each year, the soldier must submit a DD Form 2475 within 365 days of the entitlement date. If missed, that year's payment is permanently forfeited and cannot be recovered in a later year.
- **Eligible loan types:** Title IV federal loans (Direct Subsidized, Direct Unsubsidized, Direct Consolidation) only. State loans, private loans, and PLUS loans are not eligible for standard SLRP (PLUS are eligible for 09S only). NSLDS documents must be dated within 30 days of contract.
- **Grade and service requirements:** E-3 to E-7 for reenlistment; DMOSQ; primary position holder; less than 16 years TIS at current ETS; not flagged (SFPA).

ROTC & Commissioning

The ARNG offers multiple commissioning pathways. The Minuteman Scholarship (4-year Dedicated ARNG scholarship through ROTC) requires SMP participation with a LANG unit and drill monthly at E-5 pay. Upon commissioning, the officer incurs an 8-year MSO. The scholarship covers full tuition and mandatory fees or \$12,000/year room and board, plus \$1,200/year in books and \$420/month stipend. If the cadet is MGIB-SR eligible, an additional \$350/month SMP Kicker is available (scholarship cannot exceed 2 years).

State OCS runs 16-18 months across drill weekends and two Annual Training periods. Candidates need a minimum of 90 semester hours, GT 110+, and must commission before age 42. Accelerated OCS compresses the same material into 8 consecutive weeks in summer or winter sessions. Both paths lead to BOLC, which must be completed within 24 months of commissioning.

Warrant Officer Candidate School (WOCS) is conducted at Fort Novosel, AL over 4 weeks (or 5 months at state Regional Training Institutes). There are no waivers on any universal requirements: US citizenship, GT 110+, high school diploma/GED, final Secret or Top Secret clearance (interim clearances are not sufficient), and a passing 5-event Army Fitness Test.

ROTC Info: goarmy.com/rotc

WOCS Info: recruiting.army.mil/ISO/AWOR/ARMY_FEEDER/

NGB FY26 EDU Handbook: [FY26 ARNG Education Benefits Handbook \(PDF\)](#)

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YOUR MEDICAL DEGREE. THE ARMY PAYS.

AMEDD scholarships fund medical, dental, nursing, and health professions education — with Guard service paths available.



KEY POINTS

- **HPSP:** the Health Professions Scholarship Program — pays 100% of tuition at any accredited U.S. medical, dental, veterinary, optometry, or clinical psychology program for 2, 3, or 4 years
- **Monthly stipend:** \$2,999/month (2025 rate) paid directly to the student — 10.5 months per year — plus books, fees, and equipment reimbursed
- **Accession bonus:** \$20,000 cash bonus available for medical and dental students accepted into HPSP
- **Annual training:** 45 days of active-duty training per year during school — student receives O-1/O-2 pay and benefits during those 45 days
- **Guard-applicable programs:** STRAP (residency stipend), HPLRP (loan repayment up to \$250K), MDSSP (medical/dental student stipend), and OAB (officer accession bonus)
- **Service obligation:** 1 year of service for each year of HPSP scholarship received — minimum 2-year active-duty obligation for physicians
- HPSP school experience: same classes as civilian peers, no uniform required at class, no deployments during school
- Upon graduation: commissioned as Captain (O-3) — immediately eligible for full officer pay, housing allowance, and benefits

★ AMEDD PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE — GUARD-ACCESSIBLE PATHS

→ HPSP: 100% tuition + \$2,999/mo stipend — 2/3/4-year scholarship for medical, dental, nursing, optometry, psychology, veterinary

→ MDSSP: monthly stipend for current medical and dental students — 1-year Guard service per 6

months of stipend received

→ STRAP: monthly stipend for residents in needed specialties — 1-year Guard service per 6 months of STRAP received

→ HPLRP: up to \$40,000/year for up to 6 years (\$250K lifetime cap) — repays loans for Medical and Dental Corps officers

→ OAB: officer accession bonus for physicians, dentists, psychologists, physician assistants, social workers, and veterinarians

→ FAP: \$45,000/year grant + monthly stipend for physicians in residency — Army Reserve/Guard-accessible

AMEDD Scholarships: Detailed Overview

The Army Medical Department — AMEDD — operates one of the most comprehensive sets of education funding programs available in any profession. For students pursuing careers in medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, nursing, psychology, optometry, or other health professions, the AMEDD scholarship portfolio eliminates or significantly reduces the financial burden of a professional education in exchange for a period of military service. Multiple programs are accessible to Army National Guard soldiers and officers, and they can be stacked or sequenced to cover different stages of a healthcare career — from medical school through residency, and into practice.

HPSP — Health Professions Scholarship Program

The HPSP is the flagship AMEDD scholarship. It pays 100% of tuition at any fully accredited U.S. medical school, dental school, veterinary program, optometry school, clinical psychology doctoral program, or specialty nursing program for 2, 3, or 4 years — depending on the scholarship award. During school, the scholarship recipient receives a monthly living stipend of \$2,999 (effective July 1, 2025), paid via direct deposit twice monthly for 10.5 months of the academic year. Required books, equipment, and fees are also reimbursed. Medical and dental students who receive HPSP are eligible for a \$20,000 accession bonus.

During school, HPSP students serve as commissioned officers in the inactive reserve — typically as a Second Lieutenant (O-1). They are required to complete 45 days of active-duty training each year. During those 45 days, they receive full active-duty pay and benefits at officer grade. The school experience itself is not materially different from civilian peers: students attend the same classes, do not wear uniforms to lecture, and are not subject to deployment while enrolled. Upon graduation, students are promoted to Captain (O-3) and begin their service obligation.

The service obligation is generally one year of active duty for each year the scholarship was received, with a minimum of two years for physicians and three years for most other specialties. HPSP is offered by the Army, Navy, and Air Force — benefits are identical across branches. Guard soldiers interested in HPSP coordinate through an AMEDD specialty recruiter; current enlisted Guard members who wish to apply must obtain approval from their commanding officer before applying.

STRAP — Specialized Training Assistance Program

STRAP provides a monthly stipend to physicians and other health professionals who are currently enrolled in an accredited residency program in a specialty the Army identifies as critically needed. The current stipend is approximately \$2,270 per month, adjusted annually — confirm the current rate with the LAARNG AMEDD specialty branch recruiter. For each 6-month period (or partial period) of STRAP stipend received, the participant incurs a 1-year service obligation in the Selected Reserve, served in a Troop Program Unit, the AMEDD Professional Management Command, or as an Individual Mobilization Augmentee. STRAP and HPLRP may be used simultaneously once the physician has completed at least two years of residency.

HPLRP — Health Professions Loan Repayment Program

HPLRP is the AMEDD loan repayment program for commissioned healthcare officers serving in the Selected Reserve — meaning it is directly accessible to Army National Guard officers. For Medical and Dental Corps officers, HPLRP pays up to \$40,000 per year toward qualifying student loans, for up to 6 years, with an additional \$10,000 in year seven — a lifetime cap of \$250,000. Physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and social workers may qualify for up to \$25,000 per year, with a \$60,000 to \$75,000 lifetime cap depending on specialty. Payments are made annually on the anniversary of the HPLRP contract date. Qualifying loans include federal student loans and most private educational loans used to finance a qualifying health profession degree.

MDSSP — Medical and Dental Student Stipend Program

MDSSP provides a monthly stipend to current medical and dental students who agree to a Guard service obligation. The current rate is approximately \$2,270 per month. For each 6-month period of stipend received, the participant incurs a 1-year Guard service obligation, beginning immediately after completion of dental school or after residency (if the student subsequently enters a STRAP-eligible residency). MDSSP is distinct from HPSP — it does not cover tuition, only the monthly living stipend — but it can be a meaningful financial supplement for a student whose tuition is covered through other means, including civilian scholarships or loans they intend to repay with HPLRP.

OAB and FAP — Accession Bonus and Financial Assistance Program

The Officer Accession Bonus is available to physicians, dentists, clinical psychologists, physician assistants, family nurse practitioners, social workers, and veterinarians who commission into the Guard under a 3-year service agreement. Bonus amounts vary by specialty and fiscal year — contact the LAARNG AMEDD specialty branch recruiter for current figures. The Financial Assistance Program provides an annual grant of \$45,000 plus a monthly stipend of over \$2,000 to physicians in residency programs at the PGY-2 level or above. FAP incurs a 2-year active-duty obligation for the first year of participation, plus one additional year for each subsequent year. FAP is an Army Reserve-primary program but may have Guard-applicable paths depending on specialty.

Stipend amounts and bonus figures are adjusted annually and vary by specialty. All figures in this section reflect rates current as of 2025. Contact the LAARNG AMEDD Specialty Branch Recruiter for the current fiscal year's pay plan and available specialties before counseling any prospect on specific dollar amounts.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- HPSP: medical school fully funded — physician, dentist, optometrist, psychologist, or nurse, at zero debt, on a Guard officer path
- HPLRP: \$250,000 lifetime loan repayment for Medical and Dental Corps officers already serving in the LAARNG
- STRAP: Guard service during residency = stipend income + building toward 20-year retirement simultaneously
- Healthcare professions: the Guard is one of the only employers that will pay for the degree AND repay the loans AND provide a retirement path

EARN WHILE YOU LEARN.

Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeships let Guard soldiers use GI Bill benefits on top of a full employer paycheck — no classroom required.



KEY POINTS

- **What it is:** a federally registered, employer-led training program combining paid on-the-job work with structured instruction — resulting in a nationally recognized journeyman credential
- **The dual-income advantage:** Guard soldiers in a registered apprenticeship collect their regular employer wages AND a monthly GI Bill housing allowance (BAH) from the VA simultaneously
- **Post-9/11 GI Bill (Ch. 33):** pays 100% of local E-5 w/dependents BAH rate for first 6 months of training — then scales down as employer wages scale up — plus up to \$1,000/year for books and supplies
- **MGIB-SR (Ch. 1606):** pays \$369.75/month for first 6 months, \$271.15 for next 6, \$172.55 thereafter (FY2025 rates) — can be used while actively drilling in the Guard
- **MOS credit / advanced standing:** Guard soldiers with relevant MOS experience can receive credit toward apprenticeship hours — up to 2 years of credit in some trades — shortening time to journeyman certification
- **26,000+ programs:** the Department of Labor has nearly 26,000 registered apprenticeship programs nationwide — spanning construction, IT, healthcare, logistics, cybersecurity, law enforcement, and more
- Find programs and apply: apprenticeship.gov — use the Apprenticeship Job Finder, searchable by occupation, state, and industry
- Guard soldiers may NOT receive GI Bill apprenticeship benefits and GI Bill school benefits at the same time — one at a time only

INDUSTRY	APPRENTICESHIP EXAMPLES	RELEVANT LANG MOS	TYPICAL DURATION
Skilled Trades	Electrician, Plumber, Pipefitter, HVAC	12 series engineer, 91	4–5 years

	Tech, Ironworker, Carpenter, Welder	<i>series mechanic, 12B, 12C</i>	
IT & Cybersecurity	Cybersecurity Analyst, Network Admin, Software Developer, IT Generalist	<i>25B, 17C, 35 series intel</i>	1–3 years
Healthcare	EMT, Pharmacy Tech, Dental Assistant, Behavioral Health Tech, Medical Assistant	<i>68 series, 68W combat medic</i>	1–2 years
Logistics & Transportation	CDL Driver, Diesel Mechanic, Logistics Tech, Supply Chain Specialist	<i>88M, 92A, 91B</i>	1–2 years
Law Enforcement	Police Officer, Fire Fighter, Corrections Officer, Emergency Dispatcher	<i>31B military police, 11B</i>	1–3 years
Advanced Manufacturing	Machinist, Precision Metal Fabricator, Industrial Maintenance, Boilermaker	<i>91 series, 12 series, 88M</i>	3–4 years

Apprenticeship.gov: Detailed Overview for Guard Soldiers

The Department of Labor's registered apprenticeship program — accessible through [apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov) — is one of the most underused education benefits available to Army National Guard soldiers. Unlike college, it does not require leaving work to attend class. Unlike vocational training, it does not separate the soldier from an employer paycheck. A registered apprenticeship is a structured, employer-led training contract that combines paid on-the-job work with related technical instruction, resulting in a nationally recognized journeyman credential issued by the Department of Labor. Guard soldiers who enroll in a VA-approved registered apprenticeship can receive GI Bill benefits on top of their regular employer wages simultaneously — a financial combination that most veterans are unaware exists.

The Dual-Income Structure: How the Money Works

The core financial advantage of the registered apprenticeship path is straightforward: the employer pays a wage and the VA pays a GI Bill housing allowance — both at the same time. Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33), the VA pays a monthly housing allowance based on the BAH rate for an E-5 with dependents at the zip code where training takes place. In the first six months of training, the VA pays 100% of that BAH rate. The rate scales down every six months as the employer's wage is expected to increase — 80% of BAH in months 7–12, then 60%, 40%, and 20% in subsequent periods. By the end of the apprenticeship, the soldier is near journeyman wages and the GI Bill benefit has tapered to completion.

Under the Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606) — the version available to soldiers who are actively drilling in the Guard without prior active-duty service — the VA pays a flat monthly training stipend: \$369.75 for the first six months, \$271.15 for months 7–12, and \$172.55 for the remainder (FY2025 rates). While lower than the Post-9/11 rates, the MGIB-SR benefit is fully available to M-Day Guard soldiers who meet eligibility, and it adds meaningful income on top of employer wages throughout the training period.

Guard MOS Training as Advanced Standing Credit

One of the most important features of the registered apprenticeship system for Guard soldiers is the Advanced Standing provision. When a soldier enters a registered apprenticeship program, their prior military MOS training and on-the-job experience can be evaluated and credited toward the apprenticeship's required training hours. The National Guard Bureau — in collaboration with the Department of Labor — has certified more than 100 MOSs for apprenticeship credit recognition. A soldier with a 12B combat engineer background entering an ironworker or construction trade apprenticeship, or a 91-series mechanic entering a diesel technician apprenticeship, may receive up to two years of credit toward the total required hours — significantly shortening the time to journeyman certification and accelerating the wage progression.

KEY POINT FOR RECRUITERS: The Guard's Guard Apprenticeship Program Initiative (GAPI) was developed with the DOL specifically to convert MOS training into civilian apprenticeship credit. Soldiers do not start from zero. Their military training counts.

How to Access Apprenticeship.gov

The Department of Labor's [apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov) website is the official federal portal for finding, comparing, and applying to registered apprenticeship programs. The Apprenticeship Job Finder tool allows any user to search for available programs by occupation title, industry, state, and keyword. Each program listing includes the sponsor or employer, the training location, the duration, the wage progression, and contact information for application. Guard soldiers who are ready to enroll apply directly through the employer or program sponsor listed on the site. Once accepted, they apply for their

GI Bill benefit through VA Form 22-1990 (if they have not previously applied for the GI Bill) or VA Form 22-1995 (if they have), and their employer's Certifying Official reports their enrollment to the VA.

GI Bill Eligibility for Apprenticeship — Guard-Specific Requirements

For apprenticeship training to qualify for GI Bill benefits, the program must meet specific criteria: the job must require at least six months of training to become fully qualified; the soldier must be newly hired with less than two years of prior experience in that specific field; training must constitute at least 50% of job duties; the soldier must be a full-time paid employee; and the program must be approved by the VA through the state's approving agency. The soldier's employer — or union, in trade apprenticeships — notifies the VA of enrollment. The process does not require the soldier to apply through a school or university. Guard soldiers with active GI Bill entitlement remaining, including MGIB-SR recipients who have maintained their six-year service agreement, are eligible to apply their benefits to any VA-approved registered apprenticeship in their state.

TRAINING PERIOD	POST-9/11 GI BILL (BAH%)	MGIB-SR MONTHLY	WHAT YOU ALSO RECEIVE
Months 1–6	100% of local E-5 w/ dependents BAH	\$369.75/month	Full apprentice wages from employer
Months 7–12	80% of local E-5 w/ dependents BAH	\$271.15/month	Wages + GI Bill both paid simultaneously
Months 13–18	60% of local E-5 w/ dependents BAH	\$172.55/month	Wages rising as skill level advances
Months 19–24	40% of local E-5 w/ dependents BAH	Rate continues decreasing	Approaching journeyman wages
Months 25+	20% of local E-5 w/ dependents BAH	Remainder of entitlement	Near-journeyman pay; GI Bill winding down

Guard soldiers may NOT receive GI Bill apprenticeship benefits and GI Bill school (college) benefits simultaneously. Only one benefit type may be active at a time. To switch from school to apprenticeship benefits, or vice versa, the soldier must notify the VA and their certifying official. Contact a State Education Services Officer or GI Bill Manager before beginning either program.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Skilled trades: electrician, plumber, pipefitter, HVAC — \$60K–\$100K+ journeyman wages, GI Bill pays housing allowance throughout training
- IT and cybersecurity: DOL-registered programs in network security, cloud ops, software dev — Guard 25B/17C MOS credit may apply
- Guard soldier enters apprenticeship with MOS advanced standing credit — potentially 2 years ahead of a civilian entering the same program
- MGIB-SR eligible soldiers: actively drilling Guard members can use their existing GI Bill benefit on any VA-approved apprenticeship right now

Louisiana Army National Guard | Always Ready • Always There • Protect What Matters

WORK WITH ARMY AVIATION

Fly them. Maintain them. Manage them. Build an aviation career.



KEY POINTS

- **68J – Helicopter Mechanic:** maintain UH-60 Black Hawks, CH-47 Chinooks, AH-64 Apaches
- **15T – Black Hawk Mechanic:** aircraft-specific technical mastery, flight line operations
- **15U – Chinook Mechanic:** heavy-lift helicopter systems, rotor, transmission, engines
- **Flight Operations (15P):** air traffic coordination, flight scheduling, aviation operations
- **Air Rescue Missions:** MEDEVAC, disaster response, search-and-rescue operations
- FAA-aligned training — military aviation maintenance = civilian airframe & powerplant

★ CIVILIAN AVIATION CAREER PATH

- ✓ FAA Airframe & Powerplant (A&P) certification — directly from military training
- ✓ Commercial airline mechanic — starting salary \$60,000–\$90,000+
- ✓ Aviation technician roles at major airlines, cargo carriers, MRO facilities
- ✓ Air Traffic Control — military air traffic experience highly valued by FAA
- ✓ Defense contractor roles — Lockheed, Boeing, Sikorsky aviation support

Louisiana Army National Guard | Always Ready • Always There • Protect What Matters

Aviation Careers: Detailed Overview

Army aviation is one of the most technically demanding and professionally rewarding career tracks in the Louisiana Army National Guard. Aviation soldiers maintain, operate, and support a fleet of military helicopters — UH-60 Black Hawks, CH-47 Chinooks, and AH-64 Apaches — that represent some of the most sophisticated aircraft technology in operation anywhere in the world.

For aviation mechanics, the training pipeline produces a technical mastery that is directly translatable to civilian aviation careers. Military aviation maintenance training is conducted to FAA standards and in many cases satisfies the requirements for civilian Airframe & Powerplant (A&P) certification — a credential that commands starting salaries of \$60,000 to \$90,000 at major airlines, cargo carriers, and MRO (maintenance, repair, and overhaul) facilities. The military aviation maintenance career is one of the clearest examples in the Guard of military training producing a direct, documented civilian certification.

Flight operations soldiers manage the administrative and coordination infrastructure of Army aviation — flight scheduling, air traffic management, mission planning, and coordination with ground forces. This technical background translates directly to air traffic control careers, aviation operations management, and defense contractor roles supporting military aviation programs.

Warrant Officer pilots represent the apex of Guard aviation. Helicopter pilots — designated Chief Warrant Officers — fly operational missions including combat support, MEDEVAC, reconnaissance, and disaster response. Many Guard aviators maintain parallel civilian careers as commercial pilots, helicopter operators, or aviation executives — using the Guard to build flight hours and maintain currency while the civilian career provides financial stability. The dual-career aviation track is one of the most financially productive professional paths available to any Guard soldier.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- FAA Airframe & Powerplant (A&P) certification — directly from military training
- Commercial airline mechanic — starting salary \$60,000–\$90,000+
- Aviation technician roles at major airlines, cargo carriers, MRO facilities
- Air Traffic Control — military air traffic experience highly valued by FAA
- Defense contractor roles — Lockheed, Boeing, Sikorsky aviation support

DEFEND NETWORKS

The Army's fastest-growing field. Build skills that every employer wants.



KEY POINTS

- **25B – IT Specialist:** network management, server administration, system security
- **17C – Cyber Operations:** offensive and defensive cyber warfare, threat analysis
- **25N – Nodal Network:** tactical network architecture, satellite comms, field IT
- **25U – Signal Support:** communications systems, radio, data networks
- **25S – Satellite Communications:** SATCOM systems operations and maintenance
- Army COOL program funds CompTIA, CISSP, CEH, and other civilian certifications

★ CIVILIAN CYBER & IT CAREER PATH

- ✓ CompTIA Security+, Network+, A+ — funded by Army COOL program
- ✓ Cybersecurity analyst — median salary \$120,360 (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- ✓ Network engineer, systems administrator, cloud architect
- ✓ Federal government IT roles — NSA, CISA, DHS, FBI cyber divisions
- ✓ Defense contractor cyber positions — clearance + military experience = premium salary

Cyber & Technology: Detailed Overview

Cyber and technology roles in the Louisiana Army National Guard place soldiers at the intersection of military operations and the fastest-growing sector of the global economy. From network management and IT support to offensive cyber warfare and satellite communications, Guard technology soldiers build skills that are in extraordinary demand across every industry and government agency.

The 17C Cyber Operations Specialist is one of the Army's most strategically critical MOS designations. Cyber Operations soldiers conduct offensive and defensive cyber warfare missions — analyzing threats, responding to intrusions, and executing cyber operations that protect military networks and, increasingly, critical civilian infrastructure. The training pipeline for this MOS is among the most rigorous technical programs in any military branch and produces graduates who are immediately competitive for the highest-level civilian cybersecurity roles.

The Army COOL (Credentialing Opportunities On-Line) program funds civilian certification exams for Guard soldiers in technology roles. CompTIA Security+, Network+, and A+ certifications — which cost hundreds of dollars to obtain independently — are funded by the Army COOL program for soldiers whose MOS aligns with the credential. CISSP, CEH, and other advanced certifications are also available. A Guard technology soldier can exit service with a portfolio of industry-standard certifications that cost nothing out of pocket.

The civilian career trajectory for Guard cyber and IT veterans is among the strongest of any MOS category. Median cybersecurity analyst salaries exceed \$120,360 according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, and demand for qualified professionals continues to outpace supply significantly. Federal government positions at NSA, CISA, DHS, and FBI cyber divisions actively recruit Guard veterans with security clearances and operational cyber experience. Defense contractors offer premium salaries for professionals who combine military experience, clearance, and technical certification — a combination that Guard cyber soldiers are uniquely positioned to provide.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- CompTIA Security+, Network+, A+ — funded by Army COOL program
- Cybersecurity analyst — median salary \$120,360 (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- Network engineer, systems administrator, cloud architect
- Federal government IT roles — NSA, CISA, DHS, FBI cyber divisions
- Defense contractor cyber positions — clearance + military experience = premium salary

BUILD AND REPAIR MILITARY EQUIPMENT

Master mechanical systems the Army depends on. Build skills the civilian market pays for.



KEY POINTS

- **91B – Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic:** HMMWVs, MRAPs, trucks — Army's largest MOS
- **91D – Power Generation:** military generator systems, electrical distribution
- **91L – Construction Equipment:** bulldozers, graders, cranes, heavy equipment
- **Diesel Engine Repair:** military diesel systems, transmissions, drivetrain
- Heavy equipment operation and certification
- Army COOL funds CDL (Commercial Driver's License) and ASE certifications

★ CIVILIAN MECHANICAL CAREER PATH

- ✓ ASE-certified diesel mechanic — starting salary \$55,000–\$80,000
- ✓ Commercial Driver's License (CDL) — Army COOL funded, opens logistics careers
- ✓ Heavy equipment operator — construction, mining, infrastructure sectors
- ✓ Power generation technician — industrial facilities, utilities, data centers
- ✓ Fleet maintenance supervisor — transportation, logistics, municipal government

Mechanical Careers: Detailed Overview

Mechanical MOS designations in the Louisiana Army National Guard produce some of the most directly transferable civilian credentials available in any military branch. The Army's mechanical training pipeline is extensive, technically rigorous, and — through the Army COOL program — directly connected to the civilian certification system that governs professional mechanical careers.

The 91B Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic designation is the Army's largest single MOS by population, a reflection of how central vehicle maintenance is to military capability. 91B soldiers maintain and repair every wheeled vehicle in the Army fleet — from standard HMMWVs and cargo trucks to MRAPs and specialized mission vehicles. The breadth of exposure produces mechanics who understand diesel systems, hydraulics, electrical systems, and drivetrain components across an extraordinarily wide range of platforms.

ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) certifications — the industry standard for civilian automotive and diesel mechanics — are aligned with military mechanical training and funded through the Army COOL program. A 91B soldier who pursues ASE certification during their service exits the Guard with credentials that immediately qualify them for civilian mechanic positions starting at \$55,000 to \$80,000 annually, with experienced diesel mechanics in Louisiana's industrial and petrochemical sectors earning significantly more.

The Commercial Driver's License (CDL) represents another high-value credential available to Guard mechanical and logistics soldiers. CDL holders access the transportation and logistics industry — one of Louisiana's largest economic sectors — at a premium entry point. Truck drivers, fleet supervisors, logistics coordinators, and heavy equipment operators are consistently among the highest-demand occupations in Louisiana's economy, and Guard service provides the fastest, lowest-cost pathway to the credentials that access these careers.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- ASE-certified diesel mechanic — starting salary \$55,000–\$80,000
- Commercial Driver's License (CDL) — Army COOL funded, opens logistics careers
- Heavy equipment operator — construction, mining, infrastructure sectors
- Power generation technician — industrial facilities, utilities, data centers
- Fleet maintenance supervisor — transportation, logistics, municipal government

LEAD ON THE FRONT LINE

The foundation of the Army. The crucible of leaders.



KEY POINTS

- **11B – Infantry:** ground combat operations, small unit tactics, leadership
- **12B – Combat Engineer:** route clearance, breaching, construction under fire
- **13F – Fire Support:** artillery coordination, target acquisition, joint fires
- **19D – Cavalry Scout:** reconnaissance, surveillance, screening operations
- Tactical leadership training — lead teams in the most demanding conditions
- Ranger School, Airborne, Air Assault — elite schools accessible to Guard soldiers

★ COMBAT ARMS → LEADERSHIP CAREERS

- ✓ Law enforcement — police, sheriff's deputy, federal agent — military service preferred
- ✓ Security management — corporate, government facility, executive protection
- ✓ Emergency management — fire service, emergency medical services leadership
- ✓ Federal law enforcement — FBI, DEA, Border Patrol, Secret Service
- ✓ Leadership and management — employers recognize combat arms NCO experience directly

Combat Arms: Detailed Overview

Combat arms is where the Army's fundamental identity lives. Infantry, combat engineering, artillery, and cavalry — these are the soldier trades that have defined military service since the Guard's colonial origins. For Guard soldiers in combat arms designations, the training is demanding, the skills are perishable (requiring continuous practice), and the leadership development is accelerated beyond any other career track.

The 11B Infantry designation is the Army's cornerstone MOS. Infantry soldiers master small unit tactics, weapons systems, land navigation, urban operations, and the leadership principles that govern all ground combat. The discipline, physical fitness, and tactical decision-making developed in infantry training produce leaders who perform at the highest level in any high-pressure environment — military or civilian.

Combat engineering bridges combat and construction. 12B engineers clear routes, breach obstacles, construct field fortifications, and support infantry operations — all while maintaining the technical knowledge of construction materials, demolitions, and military engineering that transfers directly to civilian construction management and infrastructure roles. Combat engineers represent one of the clearest examples in the Army of tactical skills translating to economically valuable civilian credentials.

The civilian career trajectory most strongly associated with combat arms service is law enforcement. Police departments, sheriff's offices, and federal law enforcement agencies at every level actively recruit Guard infantry and combat arms veterans. The tactical training, weapons proficiency, fitness standards, legal accountability, and team leadership experience of combat arms soldiers align almost precisely with law enforcement career requirements. Many Louisiana law enforcement agencies provide preference points for Guard service in their hiring process, recognizing the direct training equivalency.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Law enforcement — police, sheriff's deputy, federal agent — military service preferred
- Security management — corporate, government facility, executive protection
- Emergency management — fire service, emergency medical services leadership
- Federal law enforcement — FBI, DEA, Border Patrol, Secret Service
- Leadership and management — employers recognize combat arms NCO experience directly

BUILD YOUR FUTURE

Military construction skills build civilian careers from the ground up.



KEY POINTS

- **12N – Horizontal Construction Engineer:** bulldozers, graders, scrapers, site preparation
- **12Y – Geospatial Engineer:** surveying, mapping, engineering site analysis
- **12K – Plumber:** field water systems, sanitation, plumbing installation
- **12V – Concrete & Asphalt:** roadways, foundations, structural concrete
- **12W, 12R – Carpentry & Masonry and Electrical :** Construction craft skills
- Construction management fundamentals — project coordination, safety, supervision

★ CIVILIAN CONSTRUCTION CAREER PATH

- ✓ Licensed contractor — construction management, general contracting
- ✓ Heavy equipment operator — construction, oil and gas, infrastructure
- ✓ Journeyman electrician, plumber, or carpenter — apprenticeship credit from military training
- ✓ Construction supervisor or project manager — military NCO experience directly applicable
- ✓ Civil engineering technician — survey, mapping, infrastructure project support

Construction & Engineering: Detailed Overview

Construction and engineering MOS designations in the Louisiana Army National Guard combine hands-on technical training with the project management and leadership fundamentals that define construction careers at every level. Louisiana's construction industry — driven by petrochemical infrastructure, coastal restoration projects, hurricane rebuilding programs, and ongoing residential and commercial development — represents one of the state's most consistently active economic sectors, and Guard construction soldiers enter it with credentials earned through military service.

Horizontal construction engineers operate the heavy equipment that builds military infrastructure — road networks, airfields, vehicle staging areas, and base camp construction in field environments. The equipment — bulldozers, motor graders, scrapers, and compactors — is directly equivalent to civilian heavy equipment, and military operators exit with the demonstrated proficiency that civilian construction employers require. The Army COOL program funds equipment operator certifications that formalize this proficiency for civilian career purposes.

Skilled craft MOS designations — plumbers, electricians, carpenters, concrete specialists — receive training that aligns with the apprenticeship programs that govern civilian trades careers. Guard soldiers in these designations can receive apprenticeship credit toward journeyman status, compressing the civilian credentialing timeline significantly. In Louisiana's active construction economy, journeyman-level skilled tradespeople consistently earn \$45,000 to \$75,000 annually with opportunities for advancement into supervision and contracting.

The supervisory and project management experience that Guard construction soldiers accumulate — managing personnel, coordinating logistics, maintaining safety standards, and executing projects under operational pressure — translates directly to construction management careers at the foreman, superintendent, and project manager levels. Many of Louisiana's most accomplished construction professionals trace the foundations of their management capability to the project execution experience they built during Guard service.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Licensed contractor — construction management, general contracting
- Heavy equipment operator — construction, oil and gas, infrastructure
- Journeyman electrician, plumber, or carpenter — apprenticeship credit from military training
- Construction supervisor or project manager — military NCO experience directly applicable
- Civil engineering technician — survey, mapping, infrastructure project support

LEAD THE SUPPORT STRUCTURE

Every mission depends on the professionals who make it work.



KEY POINTS

- **42A – Human Resources:** personnel management, records, assignments, HR operations
- **92A – Automated Logistician:** supply chain, inventory, property accountability
- **27D – Paralegal:** legal research, documentation, court proceedings support
- **25A – Signal Officer / 25U:** communications systems management
- **Logistics (88M, 92F):** transportation, fuel operations, supply distribution
- Microsoft Office proficiency, database management, organizational systems

★ CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATIVE CAREER PATH

- ✓ Human resources manager — military HR experience directly mirrors corporate HR
- ✓ Logistics coordinator / supply chain analyst — Army logistics = civilian operations management
- ✓ Paralegal — military legal training satisfies paralegal certification prerequisites
- ✓ Office manager / operations director — military admin produces organizational leaders
- ✓ Government contracting and federal civilian employment — preferred for veterans

Administrative & Support: Detailed Overview

Administrative and support MOS designations in the Louisiana Army National Guard are often overlooked in favor of more operationally visible roles — a significant mistake by anyone evaluating career value. The administrative and logistics infrastructure of the Army is where organizational management principles are practiced at scale, under accountability, with measurable outcomes. The professionals who manage it develop capabilities that are directly and immediately applicable to civilian organizational careers.

Human resources in the Army operates under the same fundamental principles as civilian HR — managing personnel records, coordinating assignments, tracking professional development, and maintaining the administrative accuracy that any large organization depends on. The scale of Army HR operations — managing the records of hundreds or thousands of soldiers — produces HR professionals with system management experience that smaller civilian organizations rarely provide at any career stage.

Logistics MOS designations produce supply chain professionals who understand inventory management, distribution logistics, transportation coordination, and property accountability in environments where errors have genuine operational consequences. This accountability-driven logistics experience produces professionals who approach civilian supply chain roles with a precision and reliability that stands apart from candidates whose only experience is academic or low-stakes commercial.

The paralegal track (27D) provides legal research, documentation, and court proceedings support training that directly satisfies civilian paralegal certification requirements in most jurisdictions. Given that Louisiana operates under both civil law and common law traditions, the legal research and documentation skills developed in military paralegal training are broadly applicable across the state's legal industry — in private firms, government offices, and corporate legal departments.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Human resources manager — military HR experience directly mirrors corporate HR
- Logistics coordinator / supply chain analyst — Army logistics = civilian operations management
- Paralegal — military legal training satisfies paralegal certification prerequisites
- Office manager / operations director — military admin produces organizational leaders
- Government contracting and federal civilian employment — preferred for veterans

MAINTAIN THE FORCE

Military medical training opens civilian healthcare careers — and saves lives.



KEY POINTS

- **68W – Combat Medic:** emergency medical care, trauma treatment, field medicine
- **68B – Biomedical Equipment:** repair and maintain medical devices and systems
- **68E – Dental Specialist:** dental hygiene, radiography, patient care support
- **68K – Medical Laboratory:** blood banking, clinical lab, diagnostic analysis
- **91J – Quartermaster:** medical supply chain and distribution
- EMT-Basic certification: embedded in 68W training pipeline

★ CIVILIAN MEDICAL CAREER PATH

- ✓ EMT and paramedic — 68W training satisfies EMT-Basic requirements
- ✓ Registered Nurse — military medical experience accelerates nursing school prerequisites
- ✓ Medical laboratory technician — 68K training aligns with MLT certification programs
- ✓ Dental hygienist — 68E training provides foundational dental clinical skills
- ✓ Healthcare administrator — military medical administration experience is highly transferable

Medical Careers: Detailed Overview

Medical MOS designations in the Louisiana Army National Guard combine intensive clinical training with the high-pressure, resource-constrained medical environment that produces the most capable healthcare professionals. The 68W Combat Medic is the most widely recognized medical MOS — and one of the most valuable civilian credentials the military produces. Every 68W training pipeline includes EMT-Basic certification, meaning Guard combat medics exit service with a nationally recognized emergency medical credential embedded in their military training.

The breadth of medical exposure that combat medics receive — trauma management, pharmacology, patient assessment, and field emergency surgery — produces healthcare professionals who are comfortable in high-acuity environments from their first civilian clinical shift. Hospitals, emergency medical services, and urgent care facilities consistently prefer candidates with military medical backgrounds for precisely this reason: they have already managed real medical emergencies, not just simulated ones.

Biomedical equipment repair (68B) is one of the most financially productive medical MOS options available. Biomedical equipment technicians maintain and repair the diagnostic and treatment devices that healthcare facilities depend on — MRI machines, ventilators, infusion pumps, monitoring systems. The civilian BMET field commands average salaries of \$55,000 to \$80,000 and experiences consistent demand growth as healthcare facilities expand and medical technology becomes increasingly sophisticated.

The connection between military medical training and civilian healthcare careers extends through the entire medical MOS spectrum. Laboratory specialists develop skills that satisfy medical laboratory technician requirements. Dental specialists gain the foundational clinical competencies that dental hygiene programs build upon. Every medical MOS in the Guard represents a leg up on the civilian healthcare credentialing ladder — and Louisiana's healthcare sector, one of the state's largest employers, actively values the clinical experience that Guard medical veterans bring.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- EMT and paramedic — 68W training satisfies EMT-Basic requirements
- Registered Nurse — military medical experience accelerates nursing school prerequisites
- Medical laboratory technician — 68K training aligns with MLT certification programs
- Dental hygienist — 68E training provides foundational dental clinical skills
- Healthcare administrator — military medical administration experience is highly transferable

MILITARY LAW ENFORCEMENT

Military police training is the strongest foundation for a law enforcement career.



KEY POINTS

- **31B – Military Police:** law enforcement, force protection, detainee operations, traffic
- **27D – Paralegal Specialist:** legal research, case documentation, court support
- CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear) detection and response
- Crime scene processing, investigative procedures, report writing
- Use of force training — standard-aligned with civilian law enforcement
- FBI, DEA, and federal agency recruitment preference for military police veterans

★ CIVILIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT CAREER PATH

- ✓ Police officer or sheriff's deputy — military law enforcement = hiring preference in Louisiana
- ✓ Federal law enforcement — FBI, DEA, ATF, Border Patrol, Secret Service
- ✓ Corrections officer — military detention operations experience directly applicable
- ✓ Private security management — executive protection, facility security, investigations
- ✓ Paralegal or legal professional — military legal training satisfies state prerequisites

Law Enforcement: Detailed Overview

Military police training in the Louisiana Army National Guard is the most comprehensive law enforcement preparation available outside of a police academy — and in many respects it exceeds what most police academies provide. 31B Military Police soldiers train in enforcement law, use of force, firearms proficiency, vehicle stops, crime scene procedures, report writing, and detention operations. The military law enforcement environment — which operates under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and applicable civilian law simultaneously — requires a legal competence that challenges civilian law enforcement training.

Louisiana law enforcement agencies at the municipal, parish, and state levels consistently provide hiring preference to applicants with military law enforcement backgrounds. The firearms proficiency, physical fitness standards, ethical accountability, and procedural training that military police soldiers develop align directly with law enforcement hiring requirements — often satisfying prerequisites that civilian applicants must obtain separately at additional cost.

Federal law enforcement represents the apex of career opportunity for military police veterans. The FBI, DEA, ATF, Border Patrol, Secret Service, and U.S. Marshals Service all actively recruit veterans with military law enforcement backgrounds. The combination of security clearance eligibility, physical fitness documentation, weapons proficiency record, and demonstrated ethical conduct that military police service produces is precisely the candidate profile that federal agencies seek.

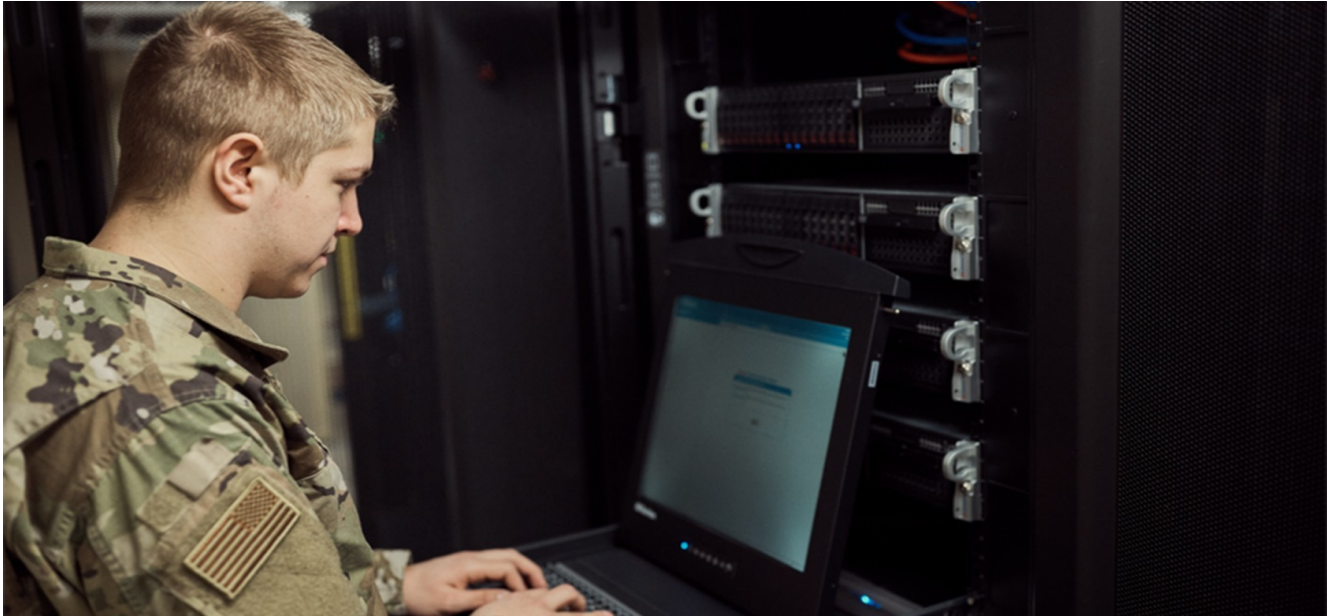
The paralegal track complements law enforcement career preparation in a different direction — toward the legal side of the criminal justice system. 27D Paralegal Specialists develop legal research, case documentation, and court proceedings support skills that satisfy civilian paralegal certification requirements and open careers in criminal defense, prosecution, civil litigation, and corporate legal departments. The combination of law enforcement field experience and legal procedural training produces a uniquely versatile criminal justice professional.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Police officer or sheriff's deputy — military law enforcement = hiring preference in Louisiana
- Federal law enforcement — FBI, DEA, ATF, Border Patrol, Secret Service
- Corrections officer — military detention operations experience directly applicable
- Private security management — executive protection, facility security, investigations
- Paralegal or legal professional — military legal training satisfies state prerequisites

PREPARE FOR THE UNKNOWN

Collect it. Analyze it. Deliver it. Intelligence shapes every decision.



KEY POINTS

- **35F – Intelligence Analyst:** threat assessment, enemy order of battle, intelligence products
- **35M – HUMINT:** human intelligence collection, source operations, interrogation
- **35G – Geospatial Intelligence:** imagery analysis, mapping, geospatial data products
- **35P – Cryptologic Linguist:** foreign language analysis, signals exploitation
- **35L – Counterintelligence:** insider threat, espionage detection, force protection
- Top Secret/SCI security clearance processing included in training pipeline

★ CIVILIAN INTELLIGENCE CAREER PATH

- ✓ Federal intelligence community — CIA, DIA, NSA, NGA career placement
- ✓ FBI intelligence analyst — military intelligence background strongly preferred
- ✓ Business intelligence and competitive analysis — corporate strategy roles
- ✓ Geospatial analyst — defense contractor, oil and gas, urban planning
- ✓ Foreign language specialist — diplomatic corps, international business, translation

Intelligence Careers: Detailed Overview

Intelligence MOS designations represent some of the most intellectually demanding and professionally consequential roles available in the Louisiana Army National Guard. Intelligence soldiers collect, process, analyze, and produce intelligence products that directly shape operational decisions — at the unit, theater, and national level. The analytical framework, research methodology, and critical thinking discipline developed in intelligence training produces professionals who perform at the highest level in any information-intensive environment.

The security clearance dimension of intelligence MOS service creates a career benefit that is difficult to quantify but enormously significant. Top Secret clearance processing is embedded in most intelligence training pipelines. A Guard intelligence soldier who exits service with an active TS/SCI clearance is an extraordinarily competitive candidate for federal agency, defense contractor, and government consulting positions — in which clearance is a hiring prerequisite that can take years and tens of thousands of dollars to obtain independently.

HUMINT (Human Intelligence) collection requires soldiers to develop interpersonal analysis skills, interviewing methodology, and source management techniques that translate directly to civilian careers in investigation, law enforcement, business development, and organizational leadership. The ability to assess human behavior, build rapport with unfamiliar subjects, and extract accurate information under pressure is a skill set that is valuable in virtually every professional environment.

Geospatial intelligence — imagery analysis, mapping, and spatial data management — connects military training to one of the fastest-growing fields in both the public and private sectors. Geospatial data underlies urban planning, infrastructure management, environmental monitoring, agricultural optimization, and a rapidly expanding set of commercial applications. Guard geospatial intelligence soldiers develop technical proficiency that defense contractors, technology companies, and government agencies actively seek, often at premium salary levels.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Federal intelligence community — CIA, DIA, NSA, NGA career placement
- FBI intelligence analyst — military intelligence background strongly preferred
- Business intelligence and competitive analysis — corporate strategy roles
- Geospatial analyst — defense contractor, oil and gas, urban planning
- Foreign language specialist — diplomatic corps, international business, translation



PHASE 3 — CONFIDENCE

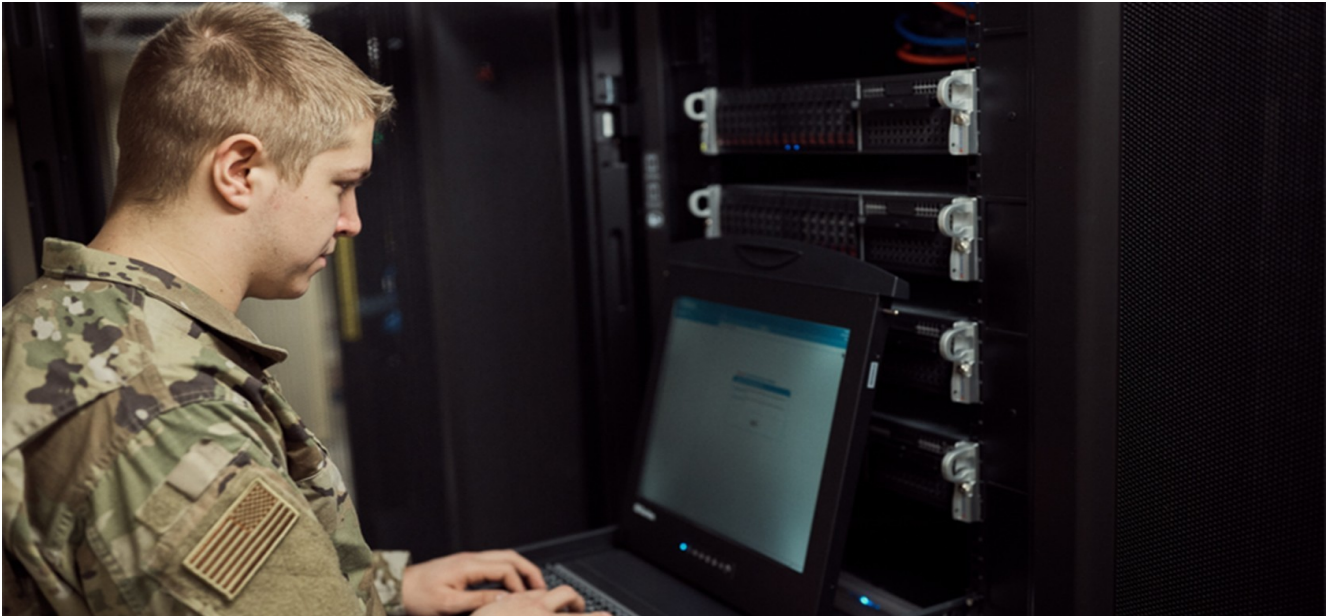
"Is this safe for my future?"

Know exactly what to expect — step by step, from application to graduation.

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A CREDENTIAL THAT OPENS DOORS

A security clearance is one of the most valuable career assets the military provides — and civilians cannot buy it.



KEY POINTS

- **What it is:** government authorization to access classified national security information
- **Confidential:** entry level — basic access, many MOS fields
- **Secret:** mid level — required for intelligence, cyber, aviation, most technical fields
- **Top Secret / SCI:** highest level — special operations, signals intelligence, senior cyber roles
- **Who pays for it:** the Army — the government funds the entire background investigation
- **Civilian value:** cleared professionals earn 10–20% more than non-cleared peers in equivalent roles
- **Federal jobs:** a clearance makes you immediately competitive for DoD, NSA, CIA, DHS, and FBI civilian roles
- Clearances are portable — they transfer between military assignments and civilian employers
- A clearance that lapses can often be reinstated — prior clearance holders are favored in hiring

★ MOS FIELDS THAT REQUIRE AND BUILD CLEARANCES

- 17C / 25D — Cyber Operations / Network Defense (Secret to TS/SCI)
- 35F / 35M — Intelligence Analyst / Human Intelligence (Secret to TS/SCI)
- 09W / 15 series — Aviation Warrant / Crew (Secret)
- 25B / 25U — IT / Signal (Secret)

Security Clearances: Detailed Overview

A security clearance is a federal government determination that an individual is eligible to access classified national security information up to a specified level. It is granted after a thorough background investigation conducted by a federal agency — the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) for most military applicants. The investigation examines finances, personal conduct, foreign contacts, criminal history, drug use, and personal character references. The process can take months, and the government bears the entire cost.

There are three primary clearance levels: Confidential, Secret, and Top Secret. Many MOS fields require at minimum a Secret clearance — particularly in intelligence, cyber operations, signal, and aviation. Top Secret clearances, and the additional Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) access that accompanies some Top Secret clearances, are reserved for the most sensitive national security roles. Soldiers assigned to MOS fields requiring a clearance are submitted for investigation as part of their enlistment processing. The clearance follows the soldier throughout their military career and, critically, into their civilian life.

Why a Clearance Is Valuable Outside the Military

The federal government, defense contractors, technology companies, and intelligence community employers actively seek cleared personnel. A security clearance cannot be purchased, applied for independently, or obtained outside of a government-sponsored context — it requires a military service or federal employment sponsor. This scarcity is precisely what makes it valuable. Professionals with active or recently held Secret and Top Secret clearances regularly earn ten to twenty percent more than non-cleared peers in equivalent technical roles.

Defense contractors — Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, Booz Allen Hamilton, and dozens of others — recruit cleared personnel specifically from the Guard and Reserve because those soldiers maintain clearances while remaining available in the civilian workforce. Federal agencies including NSA, CIA, DHS, and the FBI post civilian positions that require clearances as a hiring prerequisite. A Guard soldier who holds a Secret clearance from their MOS is competitive for those positions from the day they separate — no waiting period, no additional process if the clearance was recently active.

What Can Affect Clearance Eligibility

The background investigation evaluates the whole person, not single disqualifying factors. Financial irresponsibility, foreign contacts, dishonesty on federal forms, and drug use are among the most common reasons clearances are denied or revoked. Prior drug use — particularly marijuana — is evaluated in context: how recent, how frequent, and whether the applicant was honest about it. Criminal history is similarly evaluated in context. The most consistent advice from cleared professionals across all agencies: be completely honest in every form and interview. Adjudicators are far more concerned with dishonesty than with the underlying facts.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Secret clearance: prerequisite for thousands of defense and federal civilian jobs paying \$70,000–\$120,000+
- TS/SCI clearance: among the most valued credentials in the U.S. job market — virtually no civilian path to obtain it
- Clearance portability: follows you from Guard service into any cleared civilian employer

YOUR TRANSFORMATION

From applicant to trained soldier — a step-by-step path.



KEY POINTS

- **Step 1 — Recruiter Meeting:** explore options, ASVAB guidance, MOS selection
- **Step 2 — ASVAB & MEPS:** aptitude test, physical exam, contract signing
- **Step 3 – RSP:** Recruit Sustainment Program — paid monthly drilling before Basic Training
- **Step 4 — Basic Combat Training:** 10 weeks, Fort Jackson or Fort Leonard Wood
- **Step 5 — Advanced Individual Training:** 4–52 weeks, MOS-specific technical school
- **Step 6 — Return to Louisiana:** report to home unit, begin monthly drill schedule
- Split training option: BCT one summer, AIT the next — never interrupt school

★ TRAINING → CAREER LAUNCH

- ✓ Exit pipeline with a paying job, education benefits active, and a professional credential
- ✓ Split option: enter college as a trained soldier with tuition already covered
- ✓ Retirement points accumulate from first RSP drill — career starts before BCT

Training Pipeline Overview: Detailed Overview

The training pipeline from civilian applicant to trained Louisiana Guard soldier is designed with flexibility at every step. Unlike active-duty Army enlistment, which requires an uninterrupted commitment from contract signing through completion of Advanced Individual Training, the Guard's training architecture accommodates academic calendars, family commitments, and civilian career schedules through mechanisms specifically designed to remove barriers to service.

The process begins with a recruiter conversation — not a commitment. The recruiter's role is to help an applicant identify their best MOS fit based on ASVAB scores, interests, physical qualifications, and available openings. There is no obligation until the applicant signs a contract at MEPS (Military Entrance Processing Station), after taking the ASVAB and completing a physical examination.

The Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP) is one of the Guard's most significant quality-of-life features. RSP begins immediately after contract signing and allows future soldiers to drill monthly with their unit while waiting for their training dates. RSP participants are paid for every drill, accumulate retirement points, and begin building unit relationships before ever setting foot in Basic Training. For high school seniors, RSP means graduating with months of Guard service already completed.

The Split Training Option allows high school students and college students to attend Basic Combat Training one summer and Advanced Individual Training the following summer — never interrupting an academic year. A junior in high school can attend BCT in the summer before senior year, return to graduate with their class, then attend AIT the following summer before beginning college. When that student walks onto a Louisiana public university campus, they are a trained soldier with active education benefits, a monthly drill pay supplement, and a professional credential that no civilian classmate carries.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Exit pipeline with a paying job, education benefits active, and a professional credential
- Split option: enter college as a trained soldier with tuition already covered
- Retirement points accumulate from first RSP drill — career starts before BCT

THE ASVAB OPENS DOORS

Not a test to fear — a tool that determines your options. Here's how to score well.



KEY POINTS

- Free to take — no cost, no obligation, no enlistment commitment
- **AFQT score:** the core number — arithmetic, word knowledge, paragraph comprehension, math
- **Minimum to enlist:** score 31 AFQT — most technical MOS fields require 50–65+
- **High scores unlock:** cyber, aviation, intelligence, medical — highest-demand, highest-pay careers
- **Retesting allowed:** retest after 30 days — again after 6 months following a second test
- **Not pass/fail:** score determines options — nearly every applicant qualifies somewhere
- Takes approximately 3 hours — no prior military knowledge required
- Free prep: Khan Academy, official-asvab.com practice tests
- Scores 21–30: FSPC academic track available — average 18.5-point improvement

★ SCORE THRESHOLDS THAT MATTER

- 31+: minimum to enlist — infantry, basic support MOS fields open
- 50+: mid-tier — majority of MOS fields available across all career categories
- 65+: upper tier — cyber, aviation, intelligence, medical specialties open
- 90+: elite tier — all MOS fields available, maximum bonus eligibility

The ASVAB: Detailed Overview

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery — the ASVAB — is consistently misunderstood by recruits before they take it. It is not a military knowledge test. It is not an intelligence test. It is a vocational aptitude battery: a measure of skills built through years of school and everyday experience in math, reading, science, and technical reasoning. No military knowledge is required. No physical fitness is involved. The ASVAB measures what you already know and how well you reason — and those things can be improved with preparation.

The ASVAB consists of ten subtests: Word Knowledge, Paragraph Comprehension, Arithmetic Reasoning, Mathematics Knowledge, General Science, Auto and Shop Information, Mechanical Comprehension, Electronics Information, Assembling Objects, and Verbal Expression. The critical number is the AFQT — Armed Forces Qualification Test score — derived from four of those subtests: Arithmetic Reasoning, Word Knowledge, Paragraph Comprehension, and Mathematics Knowledge. The AFQT is a percentile score from 1 to 99, representing performance relative to the general population. A score of 50 means you outperformed 50% of test-takers nationally.

The minimum AFQT score to enlist in the Army National Guard is 31. That clears the threshold for infantry and basic support MOS fields. However, individual MOS designations carry their own composite line score requirements drawn from combinations of the ten subtests. Cyber operations, intelligence analysis, and aviation maintenance typically require composite line scores in the 65–105 range depending on the specific specialty. The higher a recruit scores, the more options become available — including the MOS fields with the highest civilian salary equivalents and the largest enlistment bonus eligibility.

Recruits who score in the 21–30 range are not disqualified. The Future Soldier Preparatory Course academic track provides structured academic instruction before Basic Training and has produced an average 18.5-point AFQT improvement with a 95% program graduation rate. Recruits who score 50 or higher are eligible to proceed directly to training; the FSPC academic track is specifically for those below that threshold who need additional preparation.

How to Prepare

The most effective preparation strategy focuses on the four AFQT sections: arithmetic reasoning, mathematics knowledge, word knowledge, and paragraph comprehension. Khan Academy provides free instruction in all math content areas directly aligned with the AFQT. Official-asvab.com offers free full-length practice tests that mirror the actual exam format. Most recruits who study consistently for two to four weeks see meaningful score increases — not because the test gets easier, but because the content it covers is learnable. The ASVAB rewards preparation above everything else.

THE TAPAS ASSESSMENT

Not a test you pass or fail. A tool that helps the Army place you where you will succeed.



KEY POINTS

- **What it is:** a personality and motivation assessment — not a knowledge test, not a trick
- **When you take it:** at MEPS, on the same day as your ASVAB — approximately 30 minutes
- **Format:** 120 forced-choice questions — you choose between two statements that describe you
- **Fake resistant:** the test is specifically designed so there is no obvious 'right' answer — be honest
- **Everyone takes it:** all Army enlistees complete TAPAS at MEPS — no exceptions
- **Enlistment impact:** low AFQT scorers (categories near minimum) who score below the 10th percentile on TAPAS cannot enlist
- **MOS impact:** high TAPAS scores can open MOS fields and may offset a borderline ASVAB score
- There is no studying for TAPAS — the only preparation is honest self-reflection
- Scores are used to predict attrition risk, job fit, leadership potential, and training success
- Your TAPAS score follows you — it is part of your permanent military record

WHAT TAPAS ACTUALLY MEASURES

- > Achievement drive — will you push yourself to complete the mission?
- > Dominance — do you step up to lead when the situation calls for it?
- > Conscientiousness — are you reliable, rule-following, and detail-oriented?
- > Teamwork — can you subordinate individual preference for the good of the unit?
- > Tolerance — can you stay calm and functional under stress and frustration?

-> Physical conditioning motivation — are you intrinsically driven to stay fit?

-> Nondelinquency — do you follow rules even when no one is watching?

The TAPAS Assessment: Detailed Overview

Every Army recruit who processes through MEPS takes the TAPAS — the Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System. It has been administered at every Military Entrance Processing Station in the United States since 2009, and it is taken on the same day as the ASVAB, in the same testing session. It takes approximately 30 minutes. Unlike the ASVAB, which measures what you know and how you reason, the TAPAS measures who you are — your personality traits, your motivational tendencies, and the behavioral patterns that predict how you will perform as a soldier.

The TAPAS is a forced-choice assessment. Every question presents two statements, and you choose which one is most like you. There is no obvious right answer — both statements are written to be equally socially desirable, meaning neither one sounds clearly better than the other. You might see: 'I work best when I have a clear set of rules to follow' and 'I work best when I can find my own solutions to problems.' Both sound like positive traits. You still have to choose one. That structure is intentional — it is what makes TAPAS resistant to faking. People who try to game the test by always picking what sounds best produce inconsistent, internally contradictory profiles that the assessment flags.

Why Honesty Is the Only Strategy

The most important thing a recruiter can tell any enlistee about the TAPAS is this: answer honestly. Not strategically. Not with what you think the Army wants to hear. Honestly. The test's design specifically accounts for applicants who try to present themselves favorably — those profiles do not produce better scores, they produce profiles that appear inconsistent and can actually work against the applicant. Soldiers who answer honestly get a profile that accurately reflects their strengths, which allows the Army to assign them to roles where those strengths matter. That is not just in the Army's interest. It is in the soldier's interest.

How TAPAS Affects Enlistment Eligibility

For most recruits, the TAPAS has no direct disqualifying effect. It is used to gather data, inform MOS counseling, and build the Army's understanding of the enlisted force. However, for recruits who score in the lowest AFQT category — those near the minimum enlistment threshold — a TAPAS score below the 10th percentile is a disqualifying condition. The Army's research has demonstrated that applicants who score very low on both cognitive measures and personality/motivation measures carry a significantly higher attrition and disciplinary risk, and the TAPAS score is used as a secondary screen in those cases.

For recruits with borderline ASVAB scores — specifically those in the 45 to 49 AFQT range — a strong TAPAS score can be used to demonstrate that the applicant has the motivation and personality characteristics to succeed at a level above what their AFQT predicts. The Army's research consistently shows that soldiers with higher motivation scores outperform what their AFQT score alone would predict. A recruiter whose applicant has a borderline cognitive score but demonstrates strong motivation, work ethic, and resilience in the TAPAS profile has a legitimate case to make.

The TAPAS Facets — What Is Being Measured

The current TAPAS assesses between 12 and 17 personality facets depending on the version administered. These facets are drawn from established personality science and are specifically validated against Army performance outcomes. The table below shows the facets most relevant to Guard recruiting and what each one predicts for a soldier's career.

TAPAS FACET	WHAT IT MEASURES	WHY IT MATTERS FOR YOUR CAREER
Achievement	Drive to set goals and work hard to accomplish them	Strong performer, promotion potential, mission completion

Dominance	Tendency to take charge, lead, and direct others	Leadership pipeline, NCO/officer track, team leader roles
Conscientiousness	Reliability, rule-following, attention to detail	Critical for technical MOS, security clearance, logistics
Attention to Detail	Precision and thoroughness in completing tasks	Intelligence, cyber, aviation maintenance, medical
Teamwork	Preference for collaborative work over individual effort	Unit cohesion, combat arms, any team-based MOS
Tolerance	Ability to remain calm under stress and frustration	Combat roles, emergency response, high-pressure MOS
Physical Conditioning	Intrinsic motivation to stay physically fit	BCT performance, physical readiness, long-term retention
Nondelinquency	Law-abiding behavior and avoidance of rule violations	Security clearance, criminal waiver risk reduction
Sociability	Comfort in social settings and working with others	Recruiter, civil affairs, administrative, public-facing MOS
Intellectual Efficiency	Ability to learn new information quickly	AIT performance, reclassification, technical MOS success

What to Tell Recruits Before TAPAS

There is no preparation material for TAPAS. No study guide. No practice test that will change the score. The best preparation is knowing what to expect: 120 questions, about 30 minutes, two choices per question, choose the one that is most like you. Do not overthink it. Do not try to guess what answer makes you sound like a better soldier. Just answer honestly about how you actually behave, what you actually value, and what you actually tend to do. The test is measuring who you already are — and the Army needs that honest picture to place you in the right role.

Recruiter note: if a recruit asks 'what is the right answer' — that is the signal to have the honesty conversation directly. The TAPAS has no right answer. The only wrong answer is an inconsistent one that flags the profile as faked.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- > High achievement and conscientiousness scores: directly predictive of promotion rate and civilian career advancement
- > Leadership and dominance facets: NCO pipeline indicators — the Army tracks these longitudinally
- > Your TAPAS profile is part of your service record — it follows you and is accessible for future assignments

Louisiana Army National Guard | Always Ready Always There Protect What Matters

PHASE 4 — COMMITMENT | Section 29 | What to Expect at MEPS

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WHAT HAPPENS AT MEPS

The Military Entrance Processing Station — your gateway from recruit to soldier.



KEY POINTS

- **MEPS location:** New Orleans — the only Army MEPS facility serving Louisiana
- **Typical timeline:** arrive evening Day 1, process all day Day 2, home by evening
- **Your recruiter arranges:** travel, hotel, and all logistics — you just show up
- **Medical exam:** height/weight, vision, hearing, blood draw, drug screen, physician physical
- **MOS selection:** counselor matches your ASVAB scores to available MOS openings — you choose
- **Oath of Enlistment:** the moment you officially become a soldier — family may attend
- Honesty throughout MEPS is non-negotiable — omissions are worse than disclosures
- Medical disqualifications can often be waived — your recruiter will advise
- Bring ID, Social Security card, birth certificate, and any medical records your recruiter requests

YOUR MEPS DAY — STATION BY STATION

TIME	STATION	WHAT HAPPENS	NOTES
DAY 1 — EVENING	Arrive at MEPS hotel	Your recruiter arranges travel. Arrive, check in, rest. No testing tonight.	
DAY 2 — 0430	Wake up / report to MEPS	Early start — shuttle from hotel to MEPS facility by 0500.	▶ No alcohol 24 hrs prior
DAY 2 — MORNING	Medical processing	Height/weight, vision, hearing, blood draw, urinalysis (drug screen), physical exam by MEPS physician.	▶ Bring glasses/contacts if needed
DAY 2 — MIDDAY	ASVAB testing	If not previously tested — takes approximately 3 hours at computer terminal.	✓ Skip if pre-tested
DAY 2 — AFTERNOON	MOS selection	Counselor reviews scores and available MOS openings. You select your job and training dates.	▶ Know your top 3 choices
DAY 2 — LATE AFTERNOON	Security clearance interview	Background questions for initial clearance determination. Honesty is critical.	▶ Disclose everything — omission is worse than disclosure
DAY 2 — LATE AFTERNOON	Oath of Enlistment	You raise your right hand and swear in. Official enlistment. You are now a soldier.	✓ Family may attend — ask recruiter

DAY 2 — EVENING

Return home

Processing complete. Ship date confirmed. Future Soldier status begins.

What to Expect at MEPS: Detailed Overview

The Military Entrance Processing Station — MEPS — is the federal facility where every soldier's enlistment becomes official. It is where medical qualification is confirmed, ASVAB scores are locked in, MOS is selected, and the Oath of Enlistment is administered. For most recruits, MEPS is a one-night, one-day process. Your recruiter coordinates all travel and logistics. Your job is to show up prepared, be honest, and follow instructions.

Louisiana's MEPS is located in New Orleans. Most recruits arrive the evening before processing, stay at a contracted hotel arranged by the recruiting battalion, and report to the MEPS facility early the following morning — typically by 0500. The early start is not negotiable. MEPS processes a large number of applicants from multiple branches and the schedule runs tightly from the moment the facility opens.

Medical Processing

The medical evaluation is the most consequential part of MEPS for most recruits. It begins with basic measurements — height, weight, and body fat assessment — followed by vision and hearing tests, a blood draw, and a urinalysis drug screen. A MEPS physician then conducts a full physical examination covering orthopedic range of motion, cardiovascular health, and medical history review.

Recruits with prior medical conditions — surgeries, injuries, mental health history, prescription medications — should not attempt to conceal them. MEPS physicians are specifically trained to identify undisclosed conditions, and an applicant caught concealing a medical history can be permanently disqualified. Many conditions that recruits assume are disqualifying are in fact waiverable. Your recruiter can advise on specific conditions before MEPS. Disclosure, not concealment, is always the right answer.

▮ **No alcohol for 24 hours before MEPS. Drug screen is immediate disqualification if positive. Prescription medications must be disclosed — bring documentation from your physician.**

ASVAB Testing

If a recruit has not yet taken the ASVAB or is retesting, the exam is administered at MEPS on a computer terminal. The test takes approximately three hours. Scores are available the same day and are used immediately in MOS counseling. Recruits who took a pre-enlistment ASVAB at a testing site will have those scores on file and typically do not retest at MEPS unless attempting to improve their score for a specific MOS.

MOS Selection

After medical processing and ASVAB scores are confirmed, a MEPS counselor reviews available MOS openings against the recruit's qualifications and preferences. This is the conversation where the contract takes shape. Recruits should arrive at MEPS knowing their top three MOS preferences — not just one — because availability fluctuates. A high-demand MOS may have a waitlist; a secondary choice may ship sooner. Your recruiter will have helped you prepare for this conversation, but the final selection happens in the MEPS counseling room.

Ship date — the date you depart for Basic Combat Training — is confirmed during MOS selection. Some recruits ship within weeks; others are placed in the Delayed Entry Program and ship months later. Your ship date anchors your training timeline, your RSP obligations, and your education planning. Take it seriously.

The Oath of Enlistment

The Oath of Enlistment is the formal moment a recruit becomes a soldier. It is administered in a group ceremony at the end of MEPS processing by a commissioned officer. Family members are permitted to attend — your recruiter can coordinate this in advance. The oath is brief but binding. From that moment

forward, you are a member of the Louisiana Army National Guard with all the rights, responsibilities, and protections that accompany that status.

After the oath, you receive your military ID card and dog tags. Keep both with you at all times from that day forward — your first drill weekend begins with accountability, and accountability begins with ID.

What to Bring to MEPS

- Government-issued photo ID (state driver's license or passport)
- Original Social Security card — not a photocopy
- Original birth certificate — not a photocopy
- High school diploma or college transcripts
- Eyeglasses or contact lenses if you use them — and bring your prescription
- Any medical records your recruiter specifically requests
- Comfortable clothing — you will change into a hospital gown for parts of the physical
- No jewelry beyond a watch — leave valuables at home

Your recruiter will give you a specific document checklist before your MEPS date. Follow it exactly. Missing documentation on the day of MEPS can delay your processing and push your ship date.

Louisiana Army National Guard | Always Ready • Always There • Protect What Matters

PHASE 3 — CONFIDENCE | Section 30 | ASVAB Preparation Program

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UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL

If your ASVAB score isn't there yet, the Army built a program to get you there.



KEY POINTS

- Future Soldier Preparatory Course (FSPC) — free Army-run academic and fitness prep before Basic Training

- Academic track: 95% graduation rate — most trainees improve their ASVAB score within the first three weeks
- Average ASVAB improvement of 18.5 points — enough to unlock new MOS categories
- Scores 21–30 (CAT IV): up to 90 days of academic instruction at Fort Jackson or Fort Moore, Georgia
- Improve your test category — renegotiate your contract for your new, higher score

★ WHAT A HIGHER ASVAB SCORE UNLOCKS

- ✓ More MOS options — higher scores access cyber, intelligence, aviation, and medical specialties
- ✓ Priority MOS selection — qualify for shortage specialties and receive the opportunity to choose them

ASVAB Preparation Program: Detailed Overview

The Future Soldier Preparatory Course (FSPC) is the Army's official program for helping recruits overcome academic and fitness barriers to service. Launched as a pilot at Fort Jackson, South Carolina in August 2022 and expanded nationally based on its initial success, the FSPC exists for one reason: the Army recognizes that a qualifying ASVAB score does not always reflect a recruit's true potential, and it has invested in a structured program to help motivated individuals reach the standard.

The results are documented and verified across thousands of graduates. The program carries a 95% graduation rate overall, with most trainees improving their ASVAB score within the first three weeks. The average score improvement across the academic track is 18.5 points — a gain large enough to shift a recruit from ineligible to qualifying for a broad range of MOS options. These are not projections; they are outcomes from a program that has produced tens of thousands of soldiers now serving across the Army, Guard, and Reserve.

The academic track is available to recruits who score in the 21–30 range on the ASVAB and operates at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and Fort Moore, Georgia. The initial phase runs 21 days; recruits who need additional time have up to 90 days total to meet the Army's accession standard. Civilian instructors deliver personalized instruction in math and English, with trainees receiving Wi-Fi-enabled tablets loaded with study materials, practice exams aligned to the ASVAB, and a 500-word vocabulary bank. The curriculum covers all ASVAB subjects — Arithmetic Reasoning, Mathematics Knowledge, Word Knowledge, Paragraph Comprehension, and all line score categories — to both qualify recruits for service and expand their MOS options.

The Army's commitment to the FSPC is a direct statement about how it views its recruits. As Gen. Gary Brito, commanding general of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, stated: "These programs are providing recruits an opportunity to serve and are preparing them not just for the rigors of basic training, but for a life through Army service." The Louisiana Army National Guard recruiter can connect you with FSPC resources, diagnostic assessments, and preparation materials at no cost. Your ASVAB score is not a ceiling — it is a starting point.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Verified results: 95% of FSPC academic track students raised at least one test category
- Average 18.5-point ASVAB improvement — opens cyber, intelligence, aviation, and medical MOS fields
- Contract renegotiation: improve your test category, improve your MOS options

Louisiana Army National Guard | Always Ready • Always There • Protect What Matters

LEARN FITNESS AND NUTRITION

Exceed the standard before you arrive. The Army invests in your fitness from day one.



KEY POINTS

- ARMS 2.0 — Assessment of Recruit Motivation and Strength: the Army's talent management pilot for fitness-focused enlistment
- Score 100 or higher on the WR section of the TAPAS — ARMS 2.0 rewards both cognitive and physical strength equally
- Pass the Occupational Physical Assessment Test (OPAT) at the “heavy” (black) level to qualify
- Select a high physical demand MOS — ARMS 2.0 opens the Army's most physically demanding career fields
- Meet Army body fat composition standards within 12 months — the Army invests in your transformation
- RAND-confirmed: ARMS soldiers complete service at the same rate as standard enlistees — zero attrition difference

★ WHAT ARMS 2.0 QUALIFIES YOU FOR

- ✓ Cognitive + physical standard: TAPAS WR 100+ required — ARMS is for the qualified, not the marginal
- ✓ Proven retention: RAND study confirmed ARMS soldiers complete service at the same rate as standard enlistees
- ✓ Army People Strategy investment — the Guard commits to your 12-month body composition transformation

ARMS: Fitness & Nutrition: Detailed Overview

The Assessment of Recruit Motivation and Strength Program 2.0 (ARMS 2.0) is an official U.S. Army talent management pilot that allows qualified applicants to enlist in the Regular Army, Army National Guard, or Army Reserve even if they slightly exceed body fat composition standards — provided they meet or exceed all other enlistment criteria. ARMS 2.0 is the Army’s formal recognition that fitness potential, cognitive strength, and physical performance are more accurate predictors of soldier success than body composition alone.

The qualifications for ARMS 2.0 are deliberately demanding. Applicants must score 100 or higher on the TAPAS WR — a threshold that confirms cognitive readiness. They must pass the Occupational Physical Assessment Test (OPAT) at the “heavy” or black level, the Army’s most rigorous physical demand category. They must select a military occupational specialty in the high physical demands category. And they must meet standard Army body fat composition requirements within 12 months of enlistment. These requirements make ARMS 2.0 a pathway for the highly qualified, not a lowered bar.

A RAND Corporation study of the original ARMS Pilot concluded it was an extremely cost-effective method of increasing Army accessions without lowering enlistee aptitude scores or other qualifying criteria, and had no measurable effect on overall attrition rates. Soldiers who enlisted under the original ARMS Pilot completed their terms of service at the same rate as soldiers who met standard height and weight requirements from day one. The evidence is clear: ARMS soldiers succeed.

ARMS 2.0 reflects the Army’s People Strategy: expanding the pool of eligible men and women who can serve without sacrificing the quality of the force. Individual soldier fitness, health, and whole-person development are central to military readiness. For applicants who are physically strong, mentally sharp, and service-minded — but whose body composition falls slightly outside standard — ARMS 2.0 is the Army’s commitment to invest in their transformation. Talk to your Louisiana Army National Guard recruiter to determine if ARMS 2.0 is your pathway to service.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- RAND-confirmed: ARMS soldiers complete service at the same rate as standard enlistees
- High-demand MOS access: OPAT heavy-level qualification opens the Army’s most sought-after careers
- Cognitive standard maintained: TAPAS W R 100+ required — ARMS 2.0 is for the qualified, not the marginal
- Army People Strategy: the Guard commits to your 12-month body composition transformation

BASIC PREPARATION

Start your Guard career — and your pay — before Basic Training begins.



KEY POINTS

- Paid monthly drilling — earn Guard pay from your first RSP weekend
- Physical and academic preparation for Basic Combat Training
- Meet other recruits — build friendships before BCT even starts
- Meet recent BCT graduates — learn what to expect, build confidence
- Retirement points begin accumulating immediately
- Unit integration begins — meet your chain of command before training
- Drill with equipment — weapons familiarization, physical fitness, land navigation

★ RSP CAREER LAUNCH

- ✓ Begin building your service record — RSP time counts toward Guard longevity
- ✓ Start earning retirement points months before BCT — compound the advantage
- ✓ Network with unit members who will be professional contacts for decades

Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP): Detailed Overview

The Recruit Sustainment Program bridges the gap between contract signing and Basic Combat Training — a period that can range from a few weeks to several months depending on training seat availability and the soldier's requested timeline. Rather than waiting passively, RSP participants drill monthly with their unit, earning Guard pay, accumulating retirement points, and beginning the professional integration that will define their Guard career.

RSP drilling provides a structured preparation environment that directly improves BCT performance. Physical fitness training, weapons familiarization, basic drill and ceremony, and land navigation fundamentals are all covered in RSP — meaning participants arrive at BCT with skills and physical conditioning that unprepared recruits spend their first weeks developing. RSP graduates consistently demonstrate faster BCT progression and higher performance evaluations than non-RSP entrants.

The social dimension of RSP is significant and often overlooked. Military service is fundamentally a team endeavor, and the relationships built during RSP — with fellow recruits, with NCOs and officers in the unit, and with recently returned BCT graduates who serve as mentors — create the professional network that will be the most durable asset of a Guard career. Soldiers who enter BCT knowing other members of their future unit report dramatically lower stress and dramatically higher confidence in the BCT environment.

From a financial perspective, RSP represents the earliest possible start to the retirement point accumulation and earnings clock. Every RSP drill weekend counts. For a soldier who participates in RSP for six months before BCT, those six months of retirement points and drill pay represent a genuine head start — one that compounds over the 20-year timeline required for pension eligibility. The Guard's retirement system rewards every year of service, and RSP ensures that career clock starts at the earliest possible moment.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Begin building your service record — RSP time counts toward Guard longevity
- Start earning retirement points months before BCT — compound the advantage
- Network with unit members who will be professional contacts for decades

BECOME A SOLDIER

10 weeks. Three phases. One transformation.



KEY POINTS

- **Red Phase — Weeks 1–3:** discipline, teamwork, physical conditioning, drill and ceremony
- **White Phase — Weeks 4–6:** weapons qualification, land navigation, first aid, tactical skills
- **Blue Phase — Weeks 7–10:** leadership, field operations, culminating exercise, graduation
- Graduation — family invited — marks the beginning of your career as a soldier
- Fort Jackson (SC), Fort Leonard Wood (MO), Fort Benning (GA), Fort Sill (OK)
- Same standards as active-duty Army — no separate Guard training track
- Drill Sergeants — the most formative professional mentors most soldiers will ever have

★ WHAT BCT BUILDS FOR YOUR CAREER

- ✓ Physical fitness baseline that outperforms most civilian peers for life
- ✓ Mental toughness — demonstrated ability to perform under sustained pressure
- ✓ Team leadership fundamentals — applied in the most challenging environment possible
- ✓ Ethical accountability — military standards produce civilian professional standards

Basic Combat Training: Detailed Overview

Basic Combat Training is where civilians become soldiers. The 10-week program is structured around three progressive phases, each building on the last in physical demand, technical complexity, and leadership expectation. The same program, conducted at the same standards, produces the same outcomes for Guard soldiers and active-duty soldiers alike — there is no distinction in the BCT environment between a future Guard soldier and a future active-duty Army soldier.

Red Phase focuses on the foundational disciplines of military service: following instructions precisely, maintaining personal accountability, developing physical conditioning, and learning the drill and ceremony that builds the unit cohesion all military operations depend on. Red Phase is deliberately stressful — it is designed to assess how new soldiers respond to pressure, identify leadership potential, and establish the baseline standards that every subsequent phase builds upon.

White Phase introduces the technical skills that define a soldier's operational capability: weapons qualification, land navigation, first aid, tactical movement, and the field craft that enables soldiers to operate effectively in any environment. These skills are not symbolic — they are tested to military standards, documented in official records, and form the foundation of every MOS-specific skill built during Advanced Individual Training.

Blue Phase shifts the emphasis to leadership and collective performance. Recruits are expected to lead peers, make decisions under pressure, and demonstrate the integration of physical fitness, technical skill, and ethical judgment that BCT was designed to produce. The culminating field exercise — typically a multi-day operation that synthesizes all BCT training — is followed by graduation, a ceremony that marks the transition from recruit to soldier and that families travel from across Louisiana to attend.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Physical fitness baseline that outperforms most civilian peers for life
- Mental toughness — demonstrated ability to perform under sustained pressure
- Team leadership fundamentals — applied in the most challenging environment possible
- Ethical accountability — military standards produce civilian professional standards

SERVE WITHOUT MISSING A SEMESTER

BCT one summer. AIT the next. Your diploma — and your future — fully protected.



KEY POINTS

- **What STO is:** you split BCT and AIT across two summers — no school missed, ever
- **High school juniors:** guaranteed STO — enlist junior year, BCT summer after junior year, AIT summer after graduation
- **High school seniors:** require a meritorious reason — any scholarship, special program such as 3×3 Law, or documented academic distinction qualifies
- **College students:** same as seniors — meritorious reason required — scholarship or special academic program qualifies
- **Ship windows:** typically May and June — ship to BCT after the school year ends
- **After AIT:** report to your unit and begin drilling — full pay and benefits active
- During BCT and AIT summers you earn full active-duty pay — not drill pay
- STEP tuition benefit active as soon as you enlist — no waiting for AIT completion
- RSP drills continue during the school year between BCT and AIT summers

★ THE STO TIMELINE — HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR EXAMPLE

- Junior year, fall: enlist, begin RSP, STEP covers tuition when college begins
- Junior year, spring: finish school, prepare to ship
- May/June after junior year: ship to BCT — 10 weeks, active-duty pay
- Senior year: return home, drill with unit monthly, graduate high school

→ May/June after graduation: ship to AIT — 4 to 52 weeks depending on MOS

→ After AIT: join your unit as a fully trained soldier — career begins

Split Training Option: Detailed Overview

The Split Training Option is the Louisiana Army National Guard's answer to the most common objection from high school students and their families: 'I don't want to miss any school.' Under the STO, Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training — the two primary components of initial military training — are completed during consecutive summers, with the academic year between them completely uninterrupted. A student enlists, ships to BCT after one school year ends, returns home for the following school year, then ships to AIT the following summer. No semester is missed. No academic progress is delayed. The school year is fully protected.

Who Qualifies

High school juniors who enlist during their junior year are guaranteed the Split Training Option. This is the strongest position for any student considering Guard service — enlist junior year, ship to BCT the following summer, return for senior year, then complete AIT the summer after graduation. By the time a junior-year enlistee arrives at college in the fall after AIT, they are a fully trained soldier with STEP tuition already active, drill pay coming monthly, and a service record that distinguishes them in every application and interview they will ever complete.

High school seniors and college students also have access to STO, but require a meritorious reason for the split. A meritorious reason is broadly defined and includes any level of scholarship — academic, athletic, or need-based — as well as enrollment in specialized academic programs. The 3×3 Law Program, which allows students to earn both a bachelor's degree and a law degree in a combined six-year curriculum, qualifies. Any documented academic distinction or program that demonstrates a legitimate need to protect academic continuity will be considered. Your recruiter will advise on your specific situation.

Ship Windows and Pay

The LANG's standard STO ship windows are May and June, immediately following the end of the school year. This timing is designed to maximize the training window available during summer break while ensuring soldiers are back home before the fall semester begins. BCT is 10 weeks; most soldiers return from BCT with several weeks to spare before fall classes start.

During BCT and AIT, soldiers receive full active-duty pay — not drill pay. For a private first class at E-3, that means full daily military pay plus housing and subsistence allowances for the duration of training. Both training summers are paid military service. Between BCT and AIT, during the school year, soldiers drill monthly with their unit and receive standard drill pay. The STEP tuition benefit activates upon enlistment — not upon completion of AIT — meaning the education benefit is available from the first semester of college enrollment.

RSP — the Recruit Sustainment Program — continues during the school year between BCT and AIT summers. Monthly RSP drills keep the soldier connected to their unit, building familiarity with their chain of command and unit culture before they ship for AIT.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- STO allows full Guard enlistment with zero academic interruption
- Enlist junior year: the earliest and most advantaged STO entry point
- Both BCT and AIT summers are paid at full active-duty rates — not drill pay

PROFICIENCY

Master your MOS. Earn your trade. Build your civilian career foundation.



KEY POINTS

- MOS-specific technical training — directly following BCT completion
- **Duration varies:** 4 weeks (combat engineer) to 52 weeks (intelligence, medical specialties)
- Training conducted at specialized Army schools across the country
- Every AIT course is accredited by ACE — college credit awarded upon completion
- Professional technical skills developed to Army standards = civilian certifications
- Graduates return to Louisiana unit as the technical expert in their MOS

★ AIT → CIVILIAN CAREER CERTIFICATION

- ✓ ACE college credits: 12–30 hours for most AIT programs — enter college advanced
- ✓ MOS aligns with civilian certifications: A&P (aviation), ASE (mechanical), EMT (medical)
- ✓ Technical school equivalent — Army AIT quality matches and often exceeds civilian programs
- ✓ Credentialing Assistance: Army COOL funds certification exams during and after AIT

Advanced Individual Training: Detailed Overview

Advanced Individual Training is where the career begins. While BCT produces soldiers, AIT produces specialists — individuals with documented technical mastery in one of the Army's 150-plus MOS designations. The length and complexity of AIT varies dramatically based on the MOS: combat engineer soldiers complete a combined BCT/AIT pipeline of approximately 14 weeks, while intelligence analysts, medical specialists, and technology soldiers may train for 30 to 52 weeks in highly specialized technical programs.

Every AIT program is evaluated and accredited by the American Council on Education (ACE), which recommends college credit hours for each course based on the academic content and technical rigor of the training. Most AIT programs generate 12 to 30 hours of recommended college credit — equivalent to one semester to one full academic year of academic coursework at Louisiana public universities. Students who arrive at college after AIT are not starting from zero: they arrive with professional credentials and, often, significant academic credit already earned.

The technical proficiency developed during AIT corresponds directly to civilian professional certifications across nearly every MOS category. Aviation mechanics earn equivalency credit toward FAA A&P certification. Combat medics complete EMT-Basic embedded in their training pipeline. Mechanical specialists align with ASE certification categories. Technology soldiers develop skills that map directly to CompTIA, CISSP, and other industry-standard certifications funded by the Army COOL program. The investment in AIT produces civilian career credentials as a direct byproduct of military qualification.

Soldiers returning from AIT to their Louisiana Guard unit arrive as the technical authority in their MOS within their section or platoon. This immediate professional standing — being the expert in the room within weeks of completing formal training — is one of the most confidence-building experiences a young professional can have. It establishes the pattern of competence, authority, and accountability that defines high-performing Guard soldiers and, ultimately, high-performing civilian professionals.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- ACE college credits: 12–30 hours for most AIT programs — enter college advanced
- MOS aligns with civilian certifications: A&P (aviation), ASE (mechanical), EMT (medical)
- Technical school equivalent — Army AIT quality matches and often exceeds civilian programs
- Credentialing Assistance: Army COOL funds certification exams during and after AIT

YOUR NEW TEAM

Where the Guard becomes real — and the career begins in earnest.



KEY POINTS

- Report to your unit — receive equipment, assignment, and immediate responsibility
- Monthly drill schedule — set months in advance, predictable and plannable
- Advanced training opportunities — schools, courses, qualifications beyond BCT/AIT
- Practice your trade — apply MOS skills in a real operational environment
- Rescue operations and disaster response — real-world missions, real-world impact
- Physical fitness, weapons qualification, and leadership evaluations each year

★ UNIT SERVICE = PROFESSIONAL RETURNS

- ✓ Professional network — Guard unit relationships last a lifetime and span every industry
- ✓ Leadership references — NCO and officer evaluations are among the strongest available
- ✓ Job placement — Guard networks actively connect members to civilian employment opportunities
- ✓ Continuing education — Army schools and courses accumulate ACE credit throughout career

Drilling at Your Unit: Detailed Overview

Drilling at a unit is where the transition from trainee to soldier is completed. The unit environment is fundamentally different from BCT and AIT — it is a professional community of full-time and part-time soldiers who have real jobs, real families, and real expertise, who come together monthly to maintain the readiness that Guard service requires. Walking into a unit for the first time after AIT is not the end of training — it is the beginning of a professional life.

The monthly drill schedule is the heartbeat of Guard service. Most units drill on the same weekend each month, predictably and consistently enough to allow soldiers to plan their civilian work and family schedules around it. The structure of a drill weekend varies by unit mission and training requirements, but typically includes physical training, weapons maintenance, MOS skill sustainment, leadership development, and mission-specific exercises that keep the unit prepared for activation.

Advanced training opportunities accumulate throughout a Guard career. Air Assault School, Airborne School, Ranger School, language courses, leadership schools, and technical qualification courses are all accessible to Guard soldiers who demonstrate the performance and fitness standards required for selection. Each school attended, each additional qualification earned, and each leadership position held builds the professional record that defines a Guard career and distinguishes a veteran in the civilian job market.

The professional network built during Guard service — through units, schools, deployments, and shared experiences across years of service — is one of the most underestimated long-term benefits of Guard membership. Guard unit rosters include professionals from every industry, academic background, and career stage. The relationships built during monthly drilling, Annual Training, and shared operational experiences create professional connections that span decades and contribute measurably to civilian career success in ways that are difficult to attribute but impossible to ignore.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Professional network — Guard unit relationships last a lifetime and span every industry
- Leadership references — NCO and officer evaluations are among the strongest available
- Job placement — Guard networks actively connect members to civilian employment opportunities
- Continuing education — Army schools and courses accumulate ACE credit throughout career



PHASE 4 — COMMITMENT

"Could this actually be me?"

Real people. Real stories. Real decisions. The path is clear — take the first step.

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YOUR FIRST DRILL WEEKEND

No surprises. Here's exactly what happens — Friday night through Sunday afternoon.



KEY POINTS

- **Friday evening:** report to armory — sign in, receive schedule, meet your chain of command
- **Saturday 0600:** physical training — formation run or unit PT program
- **Saturday morning:** MOS training, weapons, tactics, or leader development
- **Saturday afternoon:** continued training, maintenance, or readiness tasks
- **Saturday evening:** released or overnight at armory depending on training requirements
- **Sunday morning:** training continuation, range qualifications, or assessments
- **Sunday midday:** closeout formation — accountability, equipment turn-in, dismissed
- Meals provided during drill — no cost to soldier
- Arrive in uniform — ACU/OCP issued before your first drill
- Most soldiers are home by early Sunday afternoon

★ WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR FIRST DRILL

- Military ID card — issued at MEPS after contract signing
- Dog tags — issued during initial processing
- Uniform and boots — clean, serviceable, correctly worn
- Personal hygiene items if overnight is required
- No military experience required — your chain of command was new once too

What to Expect at Drill: Detailed Overview

A new soldier's first drill weekend is almost always different from what they imagined — more structured than expected, more professional than feared, and less intimidating than anticipated. Guard drill weekends follow a consistent rhythm defined by the unit's mission and training calendar, but the framework is predictable: accountability, physical readiness, professional training, and maintenance. Each element serves unit readiness and individual soldier development.

Most units run a Friday evening through Sunday midday schedule. Friday evening is the soft start — soldiers arrive at the armory, sign in on the unit accountability roster, draw any required equipment, and receive the training schedule for the weekend. This is often where new soldiers meet their immediate chain of command in person for the first time outside of RSP. The tone is professional but direct. You are joining a team that has been operating together, and your arrival is expected.

Saturday begins with physical training, typically a unit formation run or structured PT program. PT is not optional in the Guard. Drill weekends are where soldiers maintain the fitness standards that Basic Combat Training established. After PT, the morning shifts to professional training — MOS-specific tasks, individual weapons qualification, tactical exercises, or leader development depending on the unit's annual training requirements. The weekend's training agenda is set by the unit's Master Gunner, First Sergeant, or training officer, and every drill contributes to the unit's collective readiness.

Meals are provided during drill weekends at no cost to the soldier — either through the armory dining facility or field rations depending on training location. Soldiers do not pay for food during drill and are not expected to bring meals. Personal equipment requirements are straightforward: a clean, correctly worn uniform, polished boots, and personal hygiene items if an overnight stay is required by the training schedule.

Sunday morning continues the training program. Closeout formation — the official end of the drill weekend — typically happens between midday and early afternoon. Most soldiers are home by 2 or 3 PM on Sunday. That schedule is by design. The Guard's model is built around the reality that its soldiers have civilian lives, families, jobs, and classes waiting. Drill ends, soldiers return to their lives, and the mission continues.

RSP soldiers attending their first drill before BCT: your chain of command knows you are still in training. You are not expected to perform at the level of a soldier who has completed AIT. You are expected to show up on time, follow instructions, and ask questions when you need to.

SUPPORT FOR YOUR FAMILY

The Guard takes care of those who take care of our soldiers.



KEY POINTS

- **TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS):** comprehensive health insurance for soldier and eligible family members
- **TRICARE Dental:** dental coverage available for soldiers and families
- **Family Assistance Center:** support coordination during deployments and activations
- **Yellow Ribbon Program:** family reintegration support before, during, and after deployment
- **Education programs:** MyCAA scholarship for military spouses pursuing education
- **Life insurance:** SGLI coverage up to \$500,000 at low premium rates
- Career stability — Guard service built around civilian career continuity

★ FAMILY FINANCIAL SECURITY

- ✓ TRICARE health coverage provides healthcare security at affordable premiums
- ✓ SGLI life insurance — \$500,000 coverage at rates civilian insurance cannot match
- ✓ Retirement pension — 20 qualifying years = pension + healthcare in retirement
- ✓ Survivor Benefit Plan — ensures pension continues for surviving spouse

Family Support Programs: Detailed Overview

Guard service is a family decision as much as an individual one. The Louisiana Army National Guard recognizes this reality with a comprehensive family support structure designed to ensure that soldiers can serve effectively while their families remain supported, informed, and connected to resources that address the real challenges of Guard life.

TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) is the Guard's health insurance option for part-time soldiers and their eligible family members. Unlike the full TRICARE coverage available to active-duty families, Select Reserve is a premium-based program that provides comprehensive healthcare coverage at rates significantly below civilian health insurance market rates. For a Guard soldier whose civilian employer does not provide health insurance, or whose employer-provided insurance is expensive, TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) represents a substantial financial benefit.

The Family Assistance Center (FAC) network is the Guard's primary support coordination infrastructure during deployments and extended state activations. FAC coordinators help families navigate military administrative systems, access benefits, connect with support organizations, and address practical challenges that arise when a soldier is absent from home. The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program extends this support through the pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment cycle, with programming specifically designed for the reintegration challenges that follow extended activation.

Military spousal career support — through the MyCAA (My Career Advancement Account) scholarship program — provides up to \$4,000 in education and training funding for eligible military spouses pursuing portable careers. This recognition that Guard service affects the entire family's economic picture reflects the Guard's institutional understanding that retaining quality soldiers requires supporting quality families. The combination of TRICARE, SGLI life insurance at below-market rates, FAC support, and educational resources makes Guard service a family benefit, not merely an individual one.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- TRICARE health coverage provides healthcare security at affordable premiums
- SGLI life insurance — \$500,000 coverage at rates civilian insurance cannot match
- Retirement pension — 20 qualifying years = pension + healthcare in retirement
- Survivor Benefit Plan — ensures pension continues for surviving spouse

FOR PARENTS & FAMILIES

The questions you're asking are the right ones. Here are honest answers.



KEY POINTS

- **On deployment:** most units deploy approximately once every 5–6 years — not constant service
- **On the political environment:** Guard soldiers serve the Constitution — not any individual or administration
- **On school:** the Guard is designed for students — STEP covers tuition, schedule is predictable
- **On employment:** USERRA federal law prohibits any employer retaliation for military service
- **On family support:** Family Assistance Centers, Yellow Ribbon Program, and chain of command available
- **On life insurance:** SGLI provides \$500,000 coverage at low military premium rates
- Your soldier will come home more disciplined, more focused, and more employable
- Guard service does not compete with college — it funds it

★ WHAT THE GUARD GIVES YOUR FAMILY

- Zero tuition at Louisiana public universities — your family's investment protected
- TRICARE Reserve Select — healthcare coverage for soldier and eligible dependents
- SGLI life insurance: \$500,000 coverage at low military premium rates
- Yellow Ribbon Reintegration — pre, during, and post-deployment family support
- Family Assistance Centers — coordinators available during any activation

Parents & Families: Honest Answers to Hard Questions

"I don't want my son or daughter to deploy."

This is the most common concern families raise, and it deserves a direct answer. Deployment is possible. The Louisiana Army National Guard has deployed in support of federal missions — to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, and the Horn of Africa — and it will continue to respond when the nation calls. Any recruiter who tells a parent that deployment will never happen is not giving an honest answer, and that is not the foundation the LANG wants with its soldiers' families.

What is accurate: most Guard units deploy approximately once every five to six years. Between deployments, soldiers are home — drilling one weekend a month in their Louisiana community, working their civilian job, attending school, building their life. Deployment is not the default state of Guard service. When deployment does occur, soldiers receive full active-duty pay, USERRA employment protection, and comprehensive family support through the Guard's Family Assistance Center network and the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.

"I don't want to serve under this president" / "I don't support the current administration."

Guard soldiers take an oath to the Constitution of the United States — not to any individual, party, or administration. That oath is the same regardless of who holds the presidency or who serves as Governor of Louisiana. The Guard's state mission is defined by Louisiana's needs: hurricane response, flood rescue, disaster logistics, and community support. Those missions are not directed by political leadership — they are activated by operational necessity and authorized by constitutional authority.

The Louisiana Army National Guard has served continuously under presidents of both parties for over a century. Its mission has not changed with any election. Federal deployments are congressionally authorized military operations, not personal directives of any executive. Soldiers who join the Guard commit to that mission and to their fellow soldiers. Their service is in defense of the rights and institutions that make elections meaningful in the first place.

"I don't want my child to miss any school."

The Guard's training structure is built around academic calendars. Drill weekends are scheduled months in advance — typically the same weekend each month, every month of the year — giving students full visibility to plan around them. Annual Training occurs in the summer, between semesters. The Split Training Option allows students to attend Basic Combat Training one summer and Advanced Individual Training the following summer, without interrupting a single semester of classes.

More precisely: the Guard does not take students away from school. It pays for school. STEP covers 100% of tuition at Louisiana public colleges and universities. The Patriot Scholarship covers mandatory fees. The Montgomery GI Bill adds monthly payments directly to the student while enrolled. A Louisiana student who enlists enters college with tuition fully paid, monthly income from drill pay, and a service record that distinguishes them before they write their first resume. The families who worried most about school being disrupted are often the ones who, four years later, say the Guard made it possible.

Family Assistance Centers are staffed by LANG coordinators available to military families during any state or federal activation. Families are not navigating the system alone — there is a chain of command that knows your soldier by name.

SERVE WITHOUT LEAVING HOME

Same Army. Same training. Same standards. Different life.



KEY POINTS

- ACTIVE DUTY: Full-time military, frequent relocations, all benefits included
- NATIONAL GUARD: Part-time service, stay in Louisiana, keep civilian career
- Both serve under identical Army standards — no distinction in training quality
- Guard soldiers deploy on the same missions as active duty when federalized
- Guard offers state education benefits not available to active-duty soldiers
- Guard soldiers build two careers simultaneously: military and civilian
- Active duty offers full-time salary and on-base housing — Guard offers flexibility

★ GUARD ADVANTAGE FOR CAREER BUILDERS

- ✓ Build two careers simultaneously — civilian income plus military service
- ✓ Louisiana education benefits exclusive to Guard — not available to active duty
- ✓ Community roots maintained — no relocation orders, no forced moves
- ✓ Maximum retirement value — civilian pension + military pension + Social Security

Guard vs. Active Duty: Detailed Overview

The choice between National Guard and active-duty service is one of the most significant decisions a prospective soldier makes, and it deserves an honest comparison that avoids oversimplification in either direction. Both paths serve the nation. Both require genuine commitment. Both produce capable, credentialed soldiers. The differences are primarily about lifestyle, career structure, and the tradeoffs that individual circumstances make more or less significant.

Active-duty service provides full-time military employment with commensurate full-time pay, housing allowance, and comprehensive benefits for the entire family. It also requires full-time availability to the Army — including relocation to any installation in the country or world as the Army's needs dictate, deployment on the Army's schedule, and the organization of personal and family life around military assignments. For individuals who want immersive military careers, active duty is the optimal path.

Guard service provides part-time military service with part-time pay and benefits, enabling the simultaneous development of a civilian career that runs parallel to and independent of military rank and trajectory. The Guard soldier who achieves professional success in engineering, healthcare, law, or business while simultaneously advancing to Staff Sergeant or Captain carries a credential set that no active-duty peer can replicate — because no active-duty soldier has had the time or opportunity to build that civilian career simultaneously.

The financial comparison over a full career consistently favors Guard service for individuals with strong civilian career prospects. A Guard soldier who retires at 20 years of service with a military pension, while simultaneously reaching the height of a civilian career — with the education benefits, credentialing, and leadership development that Guard service provided — typically outperforms the financial outcome of an active-duty career followed by a mid-career civilian entry. The Guard is not the less-committed option. It is the strategically optimized path for individuals who want to serve without sacrificing the civilian career and community roots they have built.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Build two careers simultaneously — civilian income plus military service
- Louisiana education benefits exclusive to Guard — not available to active duty
- Community roots maintained — no relocation orders, no forced moves
- Maximum retirement value — civilian pension + military pension + Social Security

WHY THE GUARD IS DIFFERENT

Both serve. The Guard serves Louisiana first.



KEY POINTS

- ARMY RESERVE: Federal missions only — no state emergency activation authority
- NATIONAL GUARD: State + federal dual mission — serves Louisiana AND America
- Louisiana education benefits (STEP, ESTEP, Patriot Scholarship) are Guard-exclusive
- Guard units are stationed in Louisiana communities — close to home, serving neighbors
- Both follow identical federal training and deployment standards when federalized
- Guard can be activated by the Governor for hurricanes, floods, civil emergencies
- Guard soldiers serve Louisiana in every crisis — Reserve soldiers only deploy federally

★ GUARD ADVANTAGE OVER RESERVE

- ✓ Louisiana education benefits exclusive to Guard — STEP covers 100% tuition
- ✓ State activation opportunities — domestic operations resume, leadership experience
- ✓ Community presence — Guard armories are in Louisiana communities, not remote bases
- ✓ Both paths produce the same federal benefits — Guard adds Louisiana state benefits on top

Guard vs. Army Reserve: Detailed Overview

The Army Reserve and National Guard serve the United States military in overlapping but distinctly different roles. Understanding the distinction is essential for any prospective soldier evaluating which part-time service path best matches their personal, professional, and civic goals.

The Army Reserve is a federal military component. Reserve soldiers train to the same Army standards as their active-duty and Guard counterparts, deploy on federal missions, and receive the same federal benefits during periods of federal service. What the Reserve does not have is a state mission. Reserve soldiers cannot be activated by a state governor for disaster response, flood rescue, or civil emergency operations. When Louisiana faces a hurricane, Reserve soldiers do not respond unless federalized by the President — a process that takes days, not hours.

The National Guard's dual mission authority — serving both the state and the federal government — is its most distinctive structural characteristic. Guard soldiers can be activated overnight by the Louisiana Governor for state emergencies, operating under state law and command. They can also be federalized by the President for national defense purposes, at which point they serve under the same authority as active-duty soldiers. No other military component provides this dual availability.

For Louisiana residents specifically, the Guard's state education benefits are the most financially significant point of differentiation. STEP tuition coverage, Enhanced STEP for graduate degrees, and the Patriot Scholarship for mandatory fees are Louisiana state benefits — not federal ones. Army Reserve soldiers are not eligible for these benefits. A Louisiana resident who chooses the Reserve over the Guard for any reason other than specific federal MOS availability is forgoing a benefit package worth, in educational value alone, tens of thousands of dollars over the course of a degree program.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Louisiana education benefits exclusive to Guard — STEP covers 100% tuition
- State activation opportunities — domestic operations resume, leadership experience
- Community presence — Guard armories are in Louisiana communities, not remote bases
- Both paths produce the same federal benefits — Guard adds Louisiana state benefits on top

WHAT THE GUARD BUILDS IN YOU

The credentials are real. The transformation is personal.



KEY POINTS

- **Discipline:** the ability to perform at standard, every time, regardless of circumstances
- **Integrity:** military accountability develops an ethical standard that governs every decision
- **Resilience:** perform under pressure, recover from setbacks, adapt and continue
- **Leadership:** the practiced ability to guide others through uncertainty toward a defined goal
- **Camaraderie:** the bond of shared hardship that produces relationships nothing else replicates
- **Purpose:** the clarity that comes from knowing your service matters beyond yourself
- **Identity:** a professional self-definition that strengthens every role you will ever hold

★ INTANGIBLES IN THE CIVILIAN MARKETPLACE

- ✓ Employers consistently rank discipline and accountability as top hiring criteria
- ✓ Leadership experience at 22 that peers won't develop until their 30s
- ✓ Resilience under pressure — visible, demonstrated, and verifiable through service record
- ✓ Professional reputation — Guard service signals character that no resume bullet replaces

Intangible Qualities of Guard Service: Detailed Overview

The quantifiable benefits of Louisiana Army National Guard service — education funding, retirement points, credentialing, deployment pay — are compelling and easily demonstrated. But the most significant returns of Guard service are the ones that resist quantification: the qualities of character, resilience, leadership, and professional identity that the Guard develops in every soldier who serves with commitment.

Discipline is the first and most durable of these qualities. Military discipline is not the narrow concept of following orders — it is the broad capacity to perform to a defined standard, consistently, under conditions ranging from routine to extreme. Guard soldiers who develop genuine military discipline carry it into every professional context they enter. The ability to show up, perform, and deliver on commitments regardless of circumstances is the single most differentiated professional quality a person can carry — and it is one that the Guard develops through sustained, accountable, evaluated practice.

Integrity in the military context means operating to a consistent ethical standard under conditions where no one may be watching and the consequences of cutting corners may not be immediately apparent. Military accountability systems — weapons inventories, maintenance records, readiness reports — are designed to make ethical lapses visible and consequential. Soldiers who operate within this system for years develop an internalized ethical standard that governs professional behavior long after they separate from service. The civilians who worked with them notice. Their employers notice. Their families notice.

Camaraderie — the bond formed through shared hardship, mutual dependence, and genuine vulnerability in difficult circumstances — is perhaps the most personally meaningful intangible product of Guard service. The relationships built in BCT, AIT, and years of unit service connect people across lines of age, background, industry, and political opinion in ways that civilian professional networks rarely achieve. Guard veterans who are asked, decades after their service, what they value most about having served will most often mention the people — the team, the unit, the shared experience of doing something genuinely difficult alongside people they came to trust completely. That is not a benefit that can be measured. But it is real, and it is lasting, and it is one of the most compelling reasons to serve.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Employers consistently rank discipline and accountability as top hiring criteria
- Leadership experience at 22 that peers won't develop until their 30s
- Resilience under pressure — visible, demonstrated, and verifiable through service record
- Professional reputation — Guard service signals character that no resume bullet replaces

BEYOND THE BASICS

Healthcare, full-time service, and tour opportunities that amplify your Guard career.



KEY POINTS

- **TRICARE Select Reserve:** health insurance for part-time soldiers and families at low premiums
- **TRICARE Dental & Vision:** optional coverage for soldier and family members
- **AGR (Active Guard Reserve):** full-time Guard position — active-duty pay and benefits while serving Louisiana
- **ADOS (Active Duty Operational Support):** temporary active-duty orders — fill missions, earn active-duty pay
- **Tour of Duty:** volunteer platform for temporary assignments in Louisiana and nationally
- **State Partnership Program:** international assignments with partner nations — short-term, competitive
- GS (General Schedule) federal civilian positions available to Guard veterans

★ FULL-TIME OPTIONS BUILD FINANCIAL SECURITY

- ✓ AGR full-time positions: military career with civilian flexibility — the best of both
- ✓ ADOS assignments: supplement civilian income with periodic active-duty pay and benefits
- ✓ Tour of Duty: build career experience and pay without full-time commitment
- ✓ Federal civilian employment: veteran preference + clearance = premium hiring access

Additional Benefits, TRICARE & Full-Time Options: Detailed Overview

The part-time structure of Guard service is the default — but it is not the only option. The Louisiana Army National Guard offers multiple full-time and enhanced-commitment pathways for soldiers who want to increase their military engagement without transitioning to active duty. These pathways range from temporary active-duty assignments that can span days to months, to permanent full-time positions that provide active-duty pay and benefits while remaining under Guard command.

TRICARE Select Reserve is the Guard's primary healthcare program for part-time soldiers. Unlike the full TRICARE Prime coverage available to active-duty families, Select Reserve is a premium-based program — meaning soldiers pay a monthly premium for coverage. However, TRICARE Select Reserve premiums are significantly below civilian health insurance market rates, and the coverage quality is comparable to the best civilian plans available. For soldiers whose civilian employers do not provide health insurance, or whose employer plans carry high costs, TRICARE Select Reserve represents a meaningful financial benefit.

Active Guard Reserve (AGR) positions represent the Guard's full-time employment track. AGR soldiers serve on active duty within the Guard structure — drawing active-duty pay, full TRICARE coverage, BAH, and all active-duty benefits — while remaining under the National Guard chain of command and mission. AGR positions are competitive and typically require demonstrated performance as a part-time Guard soldier before selection. They represent the convergence point of military career ambition and civilian life flexibility: a full military career conducted within Louisiana, without the relocation requirements of active-duty service.

Active Duty Operational Support (ADOS) and Tour of Duty assignments provide temporary active-duty activation opportunities for part-time Guard soldiers. ADOS orders can range from a few weeks to a year, filling specific mission requirements with Guard soldiers who volunteer for the assignment. During the ADOS period, soldiers receive full active-duty pay, benefits, and retirement credit. Tour of Duty is a voluntary assignment platform that posts available short-term military assignments — domestic and international — that Guard soldiers can apply for based on their qualifications and availability. Both programs allow part-time Guard soldiers to periodically increase their military engagement, supplement their civilian income with active-duty pay, and build a more robust service record without making a full-time military commitment.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- AGR full-time positions: military career with civilian flexibility — the best of both
- ADOS assignments: supplement civilian income with periodic active-duty pay and benefits
- Tour of Duty: build career experience and pay without full-time commitment
- Federal civilian employment: veteran preference + clearance = premium hiring access

YOUR SERVICE IS A CREDENTIAL HERE

Louisiana's largest employers actively recruit, hire, and retain Guard members.



KEY POINTS

- **Louisiana civil service:** 5-point veteran hiring preference on all state exams — 10 points for service-connected disabled veterans
- **Louisiana State Police:** GI Bill active during LSP Academy training — additional \$400/month for Guard/Reserve cadets
- **ExxonMobil Baton Rouge:** one of Louisiana's two largest private employers — 6,000+ jobs, actively recruits military personnel
- **Dow — Plaquemine:** formal Military Degree Equivalency program — E-5+ military experience treated as associate's or bachelor's degree
- **Petrochemical industry:** military safety culture directly transfers to refinery and chemical plant operations
- **Federal employment:** veterans' preference on all federal civil service positions — 5 or 10 points added to exam scores
- **USERRA:** every Louisiana employer is federally required to restore your position after any military activation
- Guard members who disclose service status are federally protected — employers cannot penalize Guard membership

★ WHERE GUARD TRAINING TRANSLATES DIRECTLY

- Petrochemical / refinery operations: safety culture, emergency response, team discipline
- Law enforcement (LSP, sheriff's offices, municipal PD): leadership, firearms, decision-making under

pressure

→ Healthcare and EMS: 68W combat medics — EMT-Basic qualification, clinical skills

→ Information technology: 17C/25B cyber and IT — certifications, clearances, technical proficiency

→ Construction and engineering: 12 series engineers — heavy equipment, project management, logistics

Louisiana Employers Who Value Guard Service: Detailed Overview

Louisiana's economy is built on industries that have historically valued and actively recruited military veterans and Guard members: petrochemical manufacturing, law enforcement, healthcare, construction, and state government. This is not coincidence — these industries share the same foundational requirements that military service develops: adherence to safety protocols, performance under pressure, team accountability, and technical competence in demanding environments. Guard service is not just a benefit to the soldier — it is a credential that Louisiana's largest employers are actively looking for.

Louisiana State Government — Civil Service Preference

Louisiana law provides a five-point hiring preference on all state civil service competitive examinations to honorably discharged veterans. Service-connected disabled veterans receive a ten-point preference. This preference is applied after an applicant achieves a passing score and directly improves their position on the hiring register. For Guard members who have been activated for state or federal service, the veteran preference applies upon discharge or completion of active orders. State agencies — from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to the Department of Transportation and Development — are required to apply this preference in their hiring process.

Louisiana State Police

The Louisiana State Police specifically accommodates Guard and Reserve members during their training academy. Cadets who are Guard or Reserve members and who are eligible for the GI Bill receive an additional \$400 per month during their LSP Academy training — directly from their GI Bill benefit. The LSP also accepts veteran preference documentation and has a history of hiring from the military community. Starting cadet pay is \$56,000 annually, with increases to \$59,410 upon completion of Field Training and \$61,193 after one year of service. Law enforcement and military service share enough cultural and professional DNA that the transition is consistently smooth.

ExxonMobil — Baton Rouge

ExxonMobil's Baton Rouge complex is among the largest integrated refining and petrochemical operations in the world, employing more than 6,000 workers across nine interconnected plants. It is one of Louisiana's two largest private employers. ExxonMobil's safety culture — built around disciplined operating procedures, chain-of-command accountability, and zero tolerance for procedural shortcuts — mirrors the military environment directly. Veterans and Guard members are consistently competitive applicants for process technician, maintenance, and supervisory roles where the discipline and safety consciousness developed in military service is directly applicable.

Dow — Plaquemine

Dow's Plaquemine, Louisiana facility is one of the company's major Gulf Coast production sites and participates in Dow's formal Military Degree Equivalency program. Under this program, soldiers at E-5 rank or above with six or more years of military experience are treated as holding an associate's degree equivalent for applicable job postings. Soldiers with more extensive service are treated as holding a bachelor's degree equivalent. Dow has publicly committed to veteran and Guard hiring and has implemented internal veterans employee resource groups that specifically support soldiers who continue to serve in the Guard or Reserve while employed at Dow. The company also explicitly provides military leave in accordance with USERRA.

The Petrochemical Corridor

Beyond ExxonMobil and Dow, the Mississippi River corridor between Baton Rouge and New Orleans — often called Cancer Alley in environmental contexts, but home to one of the highest concentrations of industrial employment in the southeastern United States — includes facilities operated by Shell, BASF, Huntsman, Honeywell, and dozens of other major chemical and energy companies. These employers consistently cite military experience as a differentiating factor in hiring decisions, particularly for operations, maintenance, safety, and supervisory roles. A Guard soldier with a relevant MOS — particularly 12 series engineers, 91 series mechanics, or 68 series medical — is a genuinely strong candidate at virtually any facility along that corridor.

Veterans' preference on federal civil service exams adds 5 points (or 10 for disabled veterans) to a passing exam score. For federal jobs in Louisiana — at Fort Polk/Johnson, Barksdale AFB, the Port of New Orleans, or any federal agency — this preference is automatic and significant.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Louisiana state civil service: 5-point preference opens hundreds of state agency positions
- LSP: GI Bill active during training + military culture alignment = high hire rate from Guard
- ExxonMobil and Dow: military discipline = direct qualification for process and operations roles
- Federal preference: applies to every federal position in Louisiana — from GS-5 entry to GS-13 technical

PEOPLE LIKE YOU

The Guard is built by ordinary people who chose to do extraordinary things.



KEY POINTS

- Students — college and high school students serving and studying simultaneously
- Mechanics and tradespeople — building careers in the civilian market and the Guard
- Healthcare professionals — nurses, EMTs, and medical techs serving their communities
- Teachers and educators — leaders in the classroom and in the unit
- Business owners and entrepreneurs — running companies and leading soldiers
- Recent graduates — launching careers with military credentials already established
- Community leaders — sheriffs, city officials, coaches who serve in the Guard

★ YOUR PROFILE IN THE GUARD

- ✓ Every background. Every career stage. Every education level. All welcome.
- ✓ The Guard meets you where you are and builds you into something more
- ✓ Your civilian expertise makes the Guard stronger — and the Guard makes your career stronger

Real Soldiers: People Like You: Detailed Overview

The Louisiana Army National Guard is not composed of a single type of person. Walk into any Guard armory in Louisiana on a drill weekend and you will find an emergency room nurse standing next to a diesel mechanic, a high school senior next to a 45-year-old civil engineer, a college sophomore next to a retired law enforcement officer who decided to serve again. The Guard is demographically, professionally, and experientially diverse in a way that few institutions in American life can claim.

This diversity is not incidental — it is the product of the citizen-soldier model. Because Guard service does not require leaving a civilian career, it remains accessible to professionals at every stage of their working lives. A 30-year-old accountant with three years of experience can join and apply financial management skills to military logistics. A 19-year-old aspiring to a nursing career can enlist as a 68W and begin building clinical experience years before nursing school admission. A 25-year-old construction worker can join as a 12N and see the parallel between military horizontal construction and the civilian projects they work on every week.

The common thread that runs through every Guard soldier — regardless of age, career, or background — is a decision. A decision that the service matters, that the benefits are worth the commitment, and that who they will become through Guard experience is more valuable than who they are without it. That decision looks different for everyone. For a high school junior, it might be the Split Training Option and a path to college that costs nothing. For a working adult, it might be the Student Loan Repayment Program and credentialing that makes a career change possible. For a professional in their 30s, it might simply be the desire to serve something larger than a professional ambition.

Whatever the specific motivation, the outcome consistently affirms the decision. Guard soldiers report higher job satisfaction, higher earnings, stronger professional networks, and more durable personal relationships than comparable non-serving peers. They describe the Guard as the best professional development investment they made — not despite its demands, but because of them. The Guard does not promise an easy path. It promises a better one.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Every background. Every career stage. Every education level. All welcome.
- The Guard meets you where you are and builds you into something more
- Your civilian expertise makes the Guard stronger — and the Guard makes your career stronger

YOU MAY STILL QUALIFY

Most disqualifiers have a waiver. Don't count yourself out before talking to a recruiter.



KEY POINTS

- **Talk to a recruiter first:** many applicants self-disqualify before they're actually disqualified — don't guess
- **Your recruiter processes all waivers:** no separate office, no outside agency — one point of contact
- **Medical waivers:** most conditions are reviewable — MEPS physician makes final determination
- **ADD / ADHD:** waiverable — requires prescription history, physician statements, medical records, 4-year GPA, and documentation showing no IEP
- **Criminal history:** minor offenses are frequently waived — disclose everything, omit nothing
- **Tattoos:** none above the collarbone or below the wrist — waivers for within-policy violations typically approved within 5 days
- **Weight:** over-standard applicants may qualify through ARMS 2.0 fitness program before BCT
- **Drug use:** prior marijuana use is reviewable — current use or positive drug screen at MEPS is disqualifying
- **Honesty at every step** protects your ability to serve — omission or falsification is permanent disqualification

★ COMMON WAIVERS — FREQUENTLY APPROVED

- ADD/ADHD with no active prescription and stable academic history
- Minor criminal offenses (misdemeanors, juvenile records) — case by case
- Tattoos below the collarbone and above the wrist — within Army policy

→ Prior marijuana use — honest disclosure, no recent use, negative drug screen

→ Weight over standard — ARMS 2.0 fitness track available before BCT

Disqualifiers & Waivers: Detailed Overview

One of the most common and costly mistakes in the recruiting process is self-disqualification — an applicant who assumes they cannot serve because of a medical condition, a past mistake, a tattoo, or a physical standard, and never speaks to a recruiter to find out. The Louisiana Army National Guard's consistent position is simple: talk to a recruiter first. Many conditions that recruits assume are hard disqualifiers are in fact waiverable, and the waiver process is handled directly by your recruiter — not by a separate office, not by the state, not by NGB. Your recruiter is your single point of contact for every waiver.

Medical Waivers — ADD / ADHD

Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder are among the most commonly waived medical conditions in Guard recruiting. A diagnosis alone does not disqualify an applicant. What the waiver process evaluates is current status: is the applicant currently on prescription medication for the condition, and does the academic and behavioral record support a finding that the condition is managed and does not impair the ability to serve?

The ADD/ADHD waiver package requires the following: complete prescription history documenting any medication prescribed; physician statements regarding diagnosis and current status; full medical records related to the diagnosis; a Grade Point Average covering the four most recent years of academic enrollment; and documentation from the school confirming that no Individualized Education Program (IEP) was in place. An IEP indicates that the educational institution determined the condition required specialized accommodation — which is a higher bar for waiver approval. Applicants who completed school without an IEP and are not currently prescribed medication are in the strongest waiver position.

Criminal History

A prior arrest or conviction does not automatically disqualify an applicant. The Army evaluates criminal history on a case-by-case basis, with significant attention to the nature of the offense, the applicant's age at the time, time elapsed since the offense, and evidence of subsequent conduct. Minor misdemeanors and juvenile records are frequently waived. Felony convictions carry a higher bar but are not automatically permanent disqualifiers for all categories. The consistent rule is full disclosure — every arrest, citation, charge, or conviction must be reported, regardless of whether it was expunged, dismissed, or otherwise resolved. Omitting a criminal record that subsequently surfaces in a background check is treated as fraudulent enlistment, which is a permanent disqualifier with no waiver path.

Tattoos

The Army's tattoo policy prohibits tattoos above the collarbone, below the wrist, and on the hands, face, neck, or head. Tattoos that are extremist, indecent, or otherwise offensive in content are prohibited regardless of location. Applicants with tattoos that fall within policy parameters — meaning on the body between the collarbone and wrist — do not require a waiver and are fully eligible. For applicants whose tattoos marginally exceed the location standard, waivers are reviewed and are typically approved within five days. Applicants with hand or facial tattoos should speak directly with a recruiter — the outcome depends on the specific tattoo and its content.

Weight and Body Composition

Applicants who do not meet Army height and weight standards at the time of enlistment may still have a path to service through the ARMS 2.0 fitness track at the Future Soldier Preparatory Course. Applicants who are within six percent of the Army body fat standard may be eligible for the ARMS 2.0 program, which provides structured nutrition and fitness instruction before BCT. Completion of the program and

meeting the standard is required before shipping to Basic Combat Training. Your recruiter will assess your specific situation and advise on eligibility.

▮ **The single most important rule in the waiver process: disclose everything. A condition, conviction, or history that is discoverable — and most are — that you chose not to report is treated as intentional falsification. There is no waiver for that.**

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

→ Guard service is open to more applicants than most people assume — the waiver process exists specifically to evaluate individual circumstances

→ Every waiver is processed by your recruiter — one conversation can determine whether you qualify

KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SIGNING

Transparent terms. No surprises. Your commitment in plain language.



KEY POINTS

- **Contract options:** 3-year, 5-year, or 6-year initial enlistment — you choose based on your goals
- **8-year Military Service Obligation:** federal law — total time served in active drilling + ING
- **Inactive National Guard (ING):** LANG places soldiers in ING by default when contract ends with remaining MSO
- **ING is LANG's default: soldiers whose drilling contract ends with remaining MSO are placed in ING automatically** — re-enlistment is what requires YOUR action, not ING placement
- **ING status means:** no drill, no pay, not deployable — non-participating status
- **Most soldiers reenlist:** complete initial contract, reenlist, and continue serving
- Missing 1 drill = chain of command counseling + required makeup drill
- Missing 2 drills without makeup = education benefits suspended until makeup complete
- USERRA: federal law protects civilian employment during any ordered military activation

★ YOUR 8-YEAR MSO IN PLAIN LANGUAGE

- Sign 6-year contract → 6 years drilling + 2 years ING = 8 total MSO
- Sign 5-year contract → 5 years drilling + 3 years ING = 8 total MSO
- Sign 3-year contract → 3 years drilling + 5 years ING = 8 total MSO
- ING = LANG default (automatic placement when contract ends); no drill, no pay, not deployable
- Reenlistment before contract end removes ING requirement entirely

Your Contract Explained: Detailed Overview

Every soldier who enlists in the Louisiana Army National Guard signs a contract specifying the terms of their service: MOS, unit assignment, training timeline, any applicable enlistment bonus, and the length of the initial enlistment obligation. The LANG currently offers three contract length options — 3 years, 5 years, and 6 years. The right choice depends on the individual. Longer contracts typically qualify for higher bonus amounts. Shorter contracts offer flexibility to evaluate Guard service firsthand before committing to a longer term.

Federal law requires all military members to fulfill an 8-year Military Service Obligation, or MSO. For a soldier signing a 6-year contract, the remaining 2 years of the 8-year MSO are served in the Inactive National Guard. A soldier on a 5-year contract would have 3 years of ING remaining after completing the drilling obligation. A 3-year contract leaves 5 years of ING remaining.

The Inactive National Guard — How It Actually Works

The Louisiana Army National Guard's default policy places soldiers in ING status — Inactive National Guard — when their active drilling contract ends and remaining 8-year MSO time exists. This is a critical LANG-specific distinction from the federal IRR (Individual Ready Reserve): reenlistment requires the soldier's affirmative action; ING placement is the default. The ING is a non-participating status: ING soldiers do not attend drill, do not earn pay, and

Critically, the Louisiana Army National Guard's standing policy is to place soldiers in ING status by default when their active drilling contract ends and remaining MSO exists. Reenlistment requires the soldier's affirmative action — not ING placement. Most soldiers who complete their initial drilling contract choose to reenlist — simply extending their active service. For soldiers who do not reenlist, ING placement fulfills the federal 8-year MSO without continued active obligations.

Drill Attendance — The Real Obligation

The Guard's attendance policy is clear and consistently applied. Missing a single scheduled drill results in a formal counseling from your chain of command and a requirement to complete a makeup drill. This is a documented event in your service record. Missing a second drill without completing the required makeup drill results in the suspension of education benefits — STEP, GI Bill, and associated benefits — until the makeup is fully completed. Benefits are not permanently lost, but the suspension can affect academic planning and tuition payment timelines.

The policy reflects the Guard's readiness requirements. Every soldier's attendance contributes to unit training continuity. Recruits who anticipate recurring scheduling conflicts should discuss them openly with their recruiter before signing — not after. The Guard's schedule is designed to accommodate students and working professionals, but it is a real military commitment.

USERRA — the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act — is federal law. Your civilian employer cannot fire you, demote you, or reduce your seniority for any ordered military service, including drill weekends or activation. If your employer violates USERRA, your chain of command can connect you to legal resources.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- 3-year contract: maximum flexibility — evaluate, then decide on reenlistment
- 6-year contract: maximum bonus eligibility — best for committed candidates
- ING: clean fulfillment of federal MSO with no active obligations
- Consistent attendance: the single most important factor in benefit continuity

GET PAID FROM DAY ONE

Real money every drill weekend — same federal pay tables as active-duty Army.



KEY POINTS

- **Pay authority:** federal DFAS pay tables — same rates as active-duty Army at your rank
- **First drill weekend:** you earn pay for 4 drill periods — 2 Saturday, 2 Sunday
- **E-1 first weekend:** \$467.58 — deposited directly to your account
- **Promotion raises pay:** each rank increase raises your drill rate immediately
- **Activation orders:** full active-duty pay replaces drill pay — major increase
- **Combat zone pay:** fully tax-free while deployed to a designated combat area
- Current pay tables: [dfas.mil](https://www.dfas.mil) — confirm exact rate with your recruiter at signing

2025 DRILL PAY REFERENCE — ENLISTED GRADES

RANK	1-DAY DRILL	FULL WEEKEND	NOTES
E-1 Private	\$233.79	\$467.58	Entry rank — first enlistment
E-2 Private 2nd Class	\$262.35	\$524.70	After ~6 months TIS
E-3 Private 1st Class	\$276.00	\$552.00	After ~1 year TIS
E-4 Specialist / CPL	\$305.76	\$611.52	After ~18 months TIS
E-5 Sergeant	\$333.90	\$667.80	Promotion board, ~3 years
E-6 Staff Sergeant	\$365.28	\$730.56	Promotion board, ~5 years

CURRENT LANG ENLISTMENT BONUSSES

MOS	CAREER FIELD	BONUS	NOTES
11B Infantry	Combat Arms	\$10,000	Paid in installments over contract term
11C Indirect Fire Infantryman (Mortar)	Combat Arms	\$20,000	Highest current LANG bonus — mortar specialist

★ WHAT YOUR FIRST YEAR LOOKS LIKE AT E-3

- 12 drill weekends × \$552.00 = \$6,624 annual drill pay
- 2-week Annual Training at full active-duty E-3 rate ≈ \$1,100+
- 11B or 11C bonus paid on top — in addition to all drill pay
- STEP + Patriot Scholarship cover tuition and fees — not traded for pay

Drill Pay & Enlistment Bonuses: Detailed Overview

Guard soldiers are paid under the same federal pay tables that govern the entire United States Army. Pay is calculated per drill period — one drill period equals approximately four hours of duty. A standard drill weekend consists of four drill periods: two on Saturday, two on Sunday. Every drill weekend, a soldier earns the equivalent of two days of base pay at their current rank. That first weekend check is real money, deposited directly to your account.

Pay rates follow the federal military pay scale and increase automatically with rank and time in service. An E-1 entering the Guard earns \$233.79 per drill day. By E-4 — typically reached within 18 months — that rate is \$305.76. At E-5 Sergeant, the rate is \$333.90. These are not estimates or approximations — they are published federal figures, confirmed at dfas.mil, and your paycheck will reflect exactly what the table shows for your rank and time in service.

When a soldier is placed on state or federal activation orders, drill pay is replaced by full active-duty pay — a substantially higher rate that also includes housing allowance, subsistence allowance, and any applicable special pays. Soldiers deployed to congressionally designated combat zones receive all pay tax-free for the duration of that deployment.

Enlistment Bonuses

The Louisiana Army National Guard currently offers enlistment bonuses for two Combat Arms MOS designations: 11B Infantry (\$10,000) and 11C Indirect Fire Infantryman, commonly called a mortar soldier, at \$20,000. These bonuses reflect LANG's current manning priorities and represent the highest incentives the organization offers at this time.

Bonuses are not paid as a single lump sum. They are distributed in installments over the contract term, with payments typically tied to training milestones — completion of AIT, continued satisfactory drill attendance, and contract anniversary dates. Your recruiter will provide the exact payment schedule for your specific contract and MOS at time of signing.

Bonus availability, eligible MOS designations, and dollar amounts are subject to change based on current unit manning levels and available recruiting funds. The figures above reflect current LANG guidance. Recruits interested in a bonus MOS should confirm eligibility and current amounts with their recruiter at the time of enlistment — not based on information that may have been current at a different time.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Drill pay at E-3 with Annual Training: approximately \$7,700+ per year
- 11B bonus: \$10,000 over contract — direct supplement to civilian income
- 11C bonus: \$20,000 over contract — highest current LANG incentive
- All pay is in addition to education benefits — not instead of them

RANK HAS A ROADMAP

Know where you start, how you advance, and what it pays when you get there.



KEY POINTS

- **Referral enlistment:** soldiers who refer a recruit who enlists are promoted one rank — up to E-4 maximum
- **4 years JROTC:** enlist as E-2 — skip E-1 entirely from day one
- **30 college semester hours:** enlist as E-2
- **60 college semester hours:** enlist as E-3
- **Bachelor's degree:** enlist as E-4 Specialist — maximum enlisted entry rank
- **E-1 to E-4:** time-in-grade progression — promotion is essentially automatic with satisfactory service
- **E-5 Sergeant:** requires promotion board — first leadership rank, biggest career inflection point
- Each promotion increases drill pay immediately — pay tables are rank-based, not seniority-based
- E-5 board evaluates: NCOER performance rating, PT score, weapons qualification, military education

★ ENLISTMENT RANK — WHAT YOU BRING TO THE TABLE

- No prior credit: enlist as E-1 — standard starting point
- JROTC (4 years) or 30 college semester hours: enlist as E-2 — \$524.70/weekend
- 60 college semester hours: enlist as E-3 — \$552.00/weekend from day one
- Bachelor's degree: enlist as E-4 — \$611.52/weekend — maximum entry rank
- Refer a friend who enlists: you promote one rank — up to E-4 cap

Promotions: Detailed Overview

Every soldier's career in the Louisiana Army National Guard follows a rank structure that is transparent, well-defined, and directly tied to compensation. Understanding where you enter that structure and how you advance through it is one of the most practical conversations a recruiter can have with any enlistment candidate. Rank determines pay. Pay is determined by published federal tables. And the path from E-1 to E-5 and beyond is predictable — not a mystery.

Entering Above E-1 — What Qualifies

Several credentials allow a recruit to enter the Guard at a rank above E-1, which means higher drill pay from the very first weekend. Four years of completed JROTC participation allows enlistment as E-2. Thirty college semester hours — roughly one full academic year of coursework — also qualifies for E-2 entry. Sixty semester hours — approximately two full academic years — qualifies for E-3 entry. A completed bachelor's degree qualifies for E-4 entry, which is the maximum enlisted entry rank available to any recruit regardless of additional credentials.

The referral promotion is a separate and uniquely Guard-specific incentive: any soldier who refers a recruit who successfully enlists — completes MEPS, signs a contract, and ships — is promoted one rank, up to a maximum of E-4. A soldier currently at E-3 who refers two successful enlistments promotes to E-4. A soldier at E-4 receives no further promotion credit from referrals, as E-4 is the cap for this program. The referral promotion is not contingent on the referred recruit completing BCT — enlistment and contract signing is the qualifying event.

E-1 Through E-4 — Time in Grade Progression

Promotion from E-1 through E-4 is primarily time-in-grade driven. Soldiers who maintain satisfactory performance — attending drill, meeting physical fitness standards, completing required training — advance through these grades on schedule. E-1 to E-2 typically occurs at six months. E-2 to E-3 at approximately one year. E-3 to E-4 at approximately 18 months to two years of total service. These timelines assume satisfactory performance and are not competitive — there is no board, no quota, and no ranking against peers.

E-5 Sergeant — The First Board

Promotion to Sergeant is the most significant career event for an enlisted soldier. E-5 is the first Non-Commissioned Officer rank, and it comes with genuine leadership responsibility — squad leadership, mentorship of junior soldiers, and accountability for equipment and mission readiness. Unlike E-1 through E-4, promotion to E-5 requires appearance before a promotion board, which evaluates the whole soldier: physical fitness test scores, weapons qualification record, military education completion, and the NCO Evaluation Report — the Army's formal assessment of a soldier's performance and potential.

LANG convenes promotion boards periodically throughout the year. Soldiers who are eligible based on time in grade and who meet the physical and training requirements are recommended by their chain of command for board appearance. Preparation matters — soldiers who are physically fit, fully qualified on their assigned weapon, and who have completed available military education courses are the strongest board candidates. The jump in pay from E-4 to E-5 is meaningful: from \$611.52 per weekend to \$667.80, plus the leadership responsibilities that open doors at the E-6, E-7, and above levels.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Entering as E-4 with a bachelor's degree: \$611.52/weekend from day one — maximum entry pay
- E-5 promotion: the credential that most consistently distinguishes Guard veterans in civilian hiring

→ Officer path: soldiers with degrees can pursue OCS — commission as O-1, separate pay scale entirely

WHAT IF I WANT TO CHANGE?

Your MOS and unit are not permanent. Here's how reclassification and transfers work.



KEY POINTS

- **MOS reclassification:** soldier-initiated request through your chain of command — not automatic
- **Requirements:** satisfactory performance record, completion of initial enlistment, available MOS opening
- **Process:** request goes through chain of command to G1 — reviewed against unit manning and MOS availability
- **AIT required:** reclassification to a new MOS requires completing AIT for that specialty
- **Unit transfer:** same process — request through chain of command, reviewed against gaining unit manning
- **Transfers for education:** soldiers relocating for school can typically transfer to a unit near their college
- **State-to-state transfer:** possible — requires coordination between losing and gaining state's G1 offices
- Your recruiter selects your MOS carefully — most soldiers who are matched well do not want to reclassify
- Speak up before you sign: the best time to address MOS concerns is before the contract is signed at MEPS

★ BEFORE YOU THINK ABOUT CHANGING — ASK THESE QUESTIONS

- Have I completed AIT and actually worked in this MOS at a unit?
- Is there a specific other MOS I want — or do I just want a change?
- Does my unit have the MOS I want available, or would I need to transfer units?

MOS & Unit Changes: Detailed Overview

The MOS a soldier selects at MEPS is not a permanent assignment from which there is no exit. Reclassification — the formal process of changing MOS — is available to soldiers who have completed their initial service obligation, maintain a satisfactory performance record, and can identify an available opening in the MOS they want to move into. It is not a common occurrence, largely because the Guard's MOS counseling process at MEPS is designed to match soldiers to specialties that align with their aptitude, interests, and civilian career goals. Most soldiers who are well-matched to their MOS at enlistment do not seek to reclassify.

For soldiers who do want to change, the process begins with a soldier-initiated request through their immediate chain of command — their squad leader, platoon sergeant, or first sergeant. The request is reviewed at the unit level and forwarded to the battalion and then to the state G1 office, which manages personnel assignments across the LANG. Approval depends on three factors: the soldier's performance record, MOS availability in the unit or a nearby unit, and whether AIT seats are available for the desired specialty. Reclassification to a new MOS always requires completing AIT for that specialty — there is no waiver of training requirements for reclassification.

Unit Transfers

Soldiers who need to transfer to a different unit — whether because of a relocation for school, a job change, or a desire to serve in a different unit type — follow a similar process. The request is initiated through the chain of command at the losing unit and coordinated with the gaining unit to confirm an available position. The most common legitimate reason for a unit transfer is educational relocation — a soldier attending a university in a different part of the state transfers to a unit near campus. The LANG actively accommodates these transfers because keeping soldiers drilling is always preferable to losing them to separation.

State-to-State Transfers

Guard soldiers who relocate permanently to another state can transfer their enlistment to that state's National Guard. The process involves coordination between the losing state's G1 (LANG) and the gaining state's G1, and requires that the gaining state has an available unit position in a compatible MOS. State-to-state transfers preserve the soldier's service record, accumulated retirement points, and enlistment benefits. The portability of Guard service is one of its genuinely distinctive features — the commitment does not require the soldier to remain in Louisiana.

The best time to address any MOS or unit concerns is before signing at MEPS. Your recruiter has visibility into available MOS options and unit assignments and can often accommodate a soldier's top preferences at the time of enlistment if openings exist.

ALREADY SERVED? YOU HAVE OPTIONS.

Active duty, Reserve, or another branch — your service counts. Here's how to transfer it.



KEY POINTS

- **Prior service defined:** any individual with prior active duty, Reserve, or Guard service from any branch
- **Rank preserved:** prior service soldiers typically retain their rank from previous service
- **BCT waiver:** soldiers who completed BCT do not repeat it — AIT may or may not be required depending on MOS
- **MOS credit:** lateral entry into the same or equivalent MOS may waive AIT requirement
- **Bonuses:** prior service soldiers may qualify for separate prior-service enlistment incentives — ask your recruiter
- **Clearance retention:** active clearances from prior service transfer — no new investigation required if within scope
- Soldiers with prior honorable service are among the most valuable recruiting targets — units actively want experienced personnel
- LAARNG accepts prior service from all branches: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force

★ WHAT PRIOR SERVICE SOLDIERS BRING TO LANG UNITS

- Completed BCT — no repeat of initial training required
- Established rank — enter at the grade earned in previous service
- Military occupational experience — potentially waive AIT for equivalent MOS

→ Active or recently held security clearances — immediately mission-ready

→ Leadership experience — eligible for NCO and leadership roles faster than new enlistees

Prior Service & Lateral Entry: Detailed Overview

Louisiana Army National Guard units actively recruit prior service personnel — men and women who have completed service in any branch of the United States military and who are either transitioning out of active duty, separating from a Reserve component, or who have been out of military service and wish to affiliate with a Guard unit. Prior service soldiers bring demonstrated capability, established rank, and completed training that make them immediately more valuable to a unit than a first-time enlistee at the same grade level.

What Prior Service Means for Your Enlistment

The most significant advantages of prior service enlistment are rank retention and training credit. Prior service soldiers who enlist in the LANG typically enter at the rank they held at separation from their previous service, provided that rank is consistent with LANG's current Table of Organization and the soldier meets applicable standards. A sergeant who separated from active Army at E-5 and enlists in the LANG enters as an E-5 — not as an E-1. The pay, the leadership role, and the institutional standing that go with that rank are immediate.

Prior service soldiers who completed Basic Combat Training in any branch do not repeat BCT. The completion of initial entry training is a one-time requirement across all components of the U.S. military. AIT is evaluated separately — a soldier whose previous MOS is the same as or equivalent to their LANG assignment may receive credit or a waiver for AIT as well. Soldiers choosing a completely different MOS from their previous service will typically complete AIT for the new specialty, but will do so as a more experienced soldier with a significantly different baseline than a first-time enlistee.

Transitioning from Active Duty to the LANG

Active duty soldiers approaching the end of their service obligation who want to maintain military affiliation, benefits, and retirement point accumulation while returning to civilian life are a specific and significant prior service population. The LANG offers them continuity — the same service branch, familiar culture and structure, continued retirement point accumulation toward a 20-year pension, maintained healthcare access through TRICARE Reserve Select, and the ability to remain in Louisiana rather than following active-duty assignment patterns. For a soldier who has spent years assigned wherever the Army sent them, the Guard's local-unit model is a genuinely attractive alternative.

SkillBridge — Transitioning While Still on Active Orders

Active duty soldiers within 180 days of separation may be eligible for the DoD SkillBridge program, which allows them to train and work with civilian employers — including Louisiana-based companies — while still receiving active-duty pay and benefits. SkillBridge participants who simultaneously affiliate with the LANG can use the transition period to establish their Guard connection before their active orders end, creating a seamless transition from full-time service to the citizen-soldier model.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Prior service E-5+: eligible for Dow's Military Degree Equivalency program — bachelor's degree credit for civilian hiring
- Active clearance holders: immediately competitive for defense contractor and federal civilian roles in Louisiana
- SkillBridge + LANG affiliation: dual-track transition that maintains income and builds civilian career simultaneously

ENLIST TODAY. HIRED TOMORROW.

PaYS locks in a guaranteed job interview with top employers — selected at enlistment, honored after service.



KEY POINTS

- **What PaYS is:** a federal program connecting Guard soldiers with 1,000+ employers who guarantee a personal job interview after service — at no cost, no obligation
- **Who qualifies:** all Army National Guard enlistees — as well as current soldiers who can now register any time at armypays.com
- **Scale:** 1,000+ private companies, corporations, and public-sector agencies as of 2024 — including 91 Fortune 500 companies and 150+ government agencies
- **The guarantee:** up to 5 partner companies selected by the soldier — each guarantees a personal interview provided the soldier meets job qualifications
- **Louisiana-specific:** Louisiana State Police and the Louisiana State Fire Marshal's Office have both signed PaYS agreements with LAARNG — Guard service creates a direct pipeline to both
- **Important to note:** PaYS guarantees the interview, not the hire — the Statement of Understanding (SOU) is not a legally binding employment contract
- Partners include: Boeing, Amazon, Tesla, Ford, Delta Airlines, Wells Fargo, Southwest Airlines, Bombardier, Union Pacific Railroad, T-Mobile
- Since 2023: any soldier can register at any time — not only at enlistment. Register now at armypays.com.

STEP	WHAT HAPPENS
1	Recruiter uses the Future Soldier Reservation System (FSR2S) to match the soldier's MOS with available partner job openings during the enlistment appointment.
2	Soldier selects up to 5 PaYS partner companies. A Statement of Understanding (SOU) is signed — the soldier keeps a copy with partner contact details.

3	Soldier completes BCT and AIT. The SOU remains active throughout the entire service obligation.
4	When ready to transition, soldier contacts selected partners using SOU information. Guard/Reserve soldiers: contact partner within 30 days of completing IET.
5	Partner provides a guaranteed personal interview — not a resume screening — for any qualified position, provided a vacancy exists.

Army PaYS: Detailed Overview

The Army Partnership for Your Success — PaYS — is a federal program that converts Guard service into a guaranteed civilian job interview. It is not a placement agency, staffing firm, or scholarship. It is a structured commitment by participating employers that when a soldier is ready to use it, they will receive a personal interview — not a resume submission, not a web application form, but a direct conversation with the hiring organization's human resources leadership — for any position they are qualified to fill. As of 2024, more than 1,000 companies, federal and state agencies, and public-sector organizations are enrolled as PaYS partners, representing over two million jobs in the PaYS database. Since the program was founded in 2000, it has facilitated more than 3.9 million veteran job opportunities.

How PaYS Works at Enlistment

During the enlistment appointment, the recruiter uses the Future Soldier Reservation System to identify partner companies with open positions matched to the soldier's selected MOS. The soldier chooses up to five partners and signs a Statement of Understanding that identifies the specific position, the point of contact at the partner, and the qualifications required. The SOU is not a legally binding contract. It does not obligate the soldier to accept a job and does not guarantee a salary. It guarantees one specific thing: the interview. Since 2023, PaYS registration is no longer limited to the enlistment window — any soldier already serving can register or update partner selections at any point in their career at armypays.com. The Army's own guidance on this is direct: register now, regardless of how far separation may be, so selections are ready when needed.

Louisiana PaYS Partners — LAARNG-Specific

The Louisiana Army National Guard actively cultivated PaYS partnerships with state employers. In August 2023, Adjutant General Keith Waddell signed Memoranda of Agreement with the Louisiana State Police and the Louisiana State Fire Marshal's Office, formally enrolling both agencies as PaYS partners for LAARNG soldiers. A Guard soldier enlisting in Louisiana can now select the LSP or the Fire Marshal's Office as PaYS partners at enlistment, creating a direct, employer-committed pipeline into two of the state's most stable and respected public safety careers. At the signing ceremony, LSP Superintendent Col. Lamar Davis — himself a Guard veteran — stated that his agency already knew what a Louisiana Guard soldier brings: the expertise, the foundation, and the professionalism his department would be waiting to receive.

RECRUITER TIP: For prospects interested in law enforcement or public safety careers, the LAARNG-LSP and LAARNG-Fire Marshal PaYS partnerships are a direct, concrete close. Guard enlistment plus a guaranteed LSP interview is a combination no other path to law enforcement offers.

National Partner Landscape by Industry

INDUSTRY / SECTOR	PARTNER EXAMPLES	RELEVANT MOS
Law Enforcement & Public Safety	Louisiana State Police, Louisiana Fire Marshal, city and county agencies nationwide	31B, 11B, 68W, all MOS
Aerospace & Defense	Boeing, Bombardier, General Dynamics, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon	15T/15U aviation, 25B/17C cyber, 12 series
Logistics & Transportation	Amazon, FedEx, UPS, Union Pacific Railroad, CSX Transportation	88M, 92A, 25U, 91 series
Technology	AT&T, T-Mobile, Leidos, SAIC, Booz Allen Hamilton	25B, 17C, 35 series, 91 series

Finance & Insurance	Wells Fargo, USAA, Armed Forces Bank	36B, 35 series, all MOS
Automotive & Manufacturing	Ford, Tesla, Mercedes-Benz US International, Caterpillar	91 series, 12 series, 88M
Healthcare	VA Medical Centers, hospital systems, EMS agencies	68 series, 91 series, 68W combat medic
Government & Public Sector	Federal agencies, state governments, 150+ municipal agencies	All MOS — federal veterans' preference applies separately

What the Guaranteed Interview Actually Means

Civilian job seekers submit resumes that are routinely filtered before a human ever reads them. A PaYS soldier bypasses that process entirely. The interview guarantee means a direct conversation with the hiring organization's senior HR personnel for a specific, identified position. In competitive markets, this distinction is significant. The PaYS program manager has stated publicly that in some cases a PaYS soldier holds a measurable advantage over other applicants — because the guaranteed interview establishes a direct relationship between the soldier and the organization's decision-makers, a relationship most candidates never get the opportunity to build.

The PaYS Statement of Understanding is not a legally binding contract. A soldier who decides not to pursue employment with a selected partner faces no penalty. If the partner has no vacancy at the time of contact, the interview obligation is deferred — not eliminated. The guarantee covers the interview, not the hire.

PaYS and the Guard Civilian Career Model

National Guard soldiers are uniquely positioned to maximize PaYS. Because Guard service does not require separation from civilian life, a soldier can be actively building a civilian career while simultaneously accumulating military credentials — MOS training, security clearances, leadership experience — that make PaYS partner interviews increasingly competitive over time. A soldier who selects a defense contractor as a PaYS partner at enlistment, completes an MOS that earns a security clearance, and serves for six years has presented themselves to that employer as a trained, cleared, experienced professional — not an entry-level applicant. PaYS locks in the interview at enlistment. Guard service builds the resume that wins it.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Louisiana State Police & Fire Marshal: LAARNG PaYS partners — Guard enlistment creates a direct, employer-committed pipeline into both agencies
- Boeing, Amazon, Tesla, Ford, Delta, FedEx: 1,000+ national partners guarantee an interview the civilian job market never offers without connections
- Security clearance + defense partner: Guard MOS training + active clearance = a candidate defense contractors actively compete to hire
- Register at armypays.com any time — partner selections can grow and update as the soldier's MOS experience and credentials develop

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National Employers: Largest Veteran Hiring Programs in America

The following companies represent the most documented, most measurable, and most consistently military-friendly employers in the United States. Each has either a dedicated veteran hiring program, a military skills translation tool, a SkillBridge authorization, or a specific metric — number of veteran hires, percentage of veteran workforce, or dollar investment — that establishes their commitment as verifiable fact rather than marketing language. Guard soldiers can access most of these programs today, while still drilling, without waiting until separation.

COMPANY	SECTOR	VETERAN HIRING PROGRAM	FLAGSHIP TOOL / RECOGNITION	GUARD SOLDIER RELEVANCE
Amazon	Logistics / Tech / Cloud	Pledged 100,000 vet hires by 2024 — surpassed goal early; 45,000+ veterans and mil. spouses employed	Warriors at Amazon ERG (600+ global chapters); every veteran interview includes a fellow veteran	Operations, IT (AWS), logistics, management — all major MOS fields have a direct match; Shreveport and Baton Rouge distribution centers
Boeing	Aerospace / Defense / Mfg.	15% of 130,000+ workforce are veterans; 20,000+ vet employees; \$30M+ annually in vet organizations	Military Skills Translator; 30+ Veteran Engagement Teams; SkillBridge approved; USO Pathfinder partner	15 series (aviation MOS) direct pipeline; 91 series, 25 series, 12 series also competitive; security clearance holders prioritized
Lockheed Martin	Defense / Aerospace / Cyber	~20% of 114,000 workforce are veterans; 170+ veteran hiring events per year	Military Skills Translator; Hiring Our Heroes Corporate Fellowship; SkillBridge approved	25B/17C (cyber), 35 series (intel), 15 series (aviation), 91 series — all major defense MOS fields supported
Northrop Grumman	Defense / Cyber / Space	~25% veteran workforce; dedicated military career tools and hiring events	Military career matcher; SkillBridge authorized; Veteran Jobs Mission member	Cyber, intelligence, space systems — premium match for 17C, 35 series, 25B Guard soldiers
Raytheon / RTX	Defense / Missiles / Cyber	~25% veteran workforce; major defense contractor for sensors, missiles, cybersecurity	SkillBridge approved; 100+ veteran hiring events annually; security clearance fast-track	Signal, cyber, intelligence, avionics, and maintenance MOS all have strong Raytheon equivalencies
JPMorgan Chase	Financial Services	20,000+ veteran hires since 2011; co-founded Veteran Jobs Mission (250+ companies, 1M+ hires)	Military Pathways Development Program (targets E-4 to E-7); Office of Military & Veterans Affairs	Finance, operations, IT, cybersecurity — Guard soldiers with any MOS who are interested in banking/finance have a dedicated pipeline
USAA	Financial / Insurance	30%+ military community hiring goal (veterans + mil. spouses) — one of the highest commitments in Fortune 500	VetsLeaD 1-year leadership development program for new hires; VetNet ERG	Guard soldiers treated the same as active-duty veterans — USAA is one of the few employers that explicitly values current part-time service
Microsoft	Technology	MSSA — 17-week full-time cloud and software training program for Guard, Reserve, and veterans	Microsoft Software & Systems Academy (MSSA); AWS cloud pathway; SkillBridge approved; interview pathway at Microsoft + 100 partners	25B, 17C, 35 series Guard soldiers: MSSA is a direct tech-career launchpad requiring no prior coding experience
AT&T	Telecom / Technology	Veteran Jobs Mission founding partner (2011); 8,000-member Veterans ERG in 39 chapters nationwide	Military pay differential for Guard deployments; tuition assistance stackable with GI Bill; att.jobs/veterans	25U/25L/25B (signal/comms), 17C (cyber) — strongest match; 5G fiber network expansion across Louisiana creates direct local openings

Chevron	Energy / Oil & Gas	#1 NextOp Louisiana employer partner — 85+ vet job offers; Forbes 2024 Best Employer for Diversity	Military Skills Translator at careers.chevron.com/military ; Veterans Employee Network	Louisiana-specific: offshore Gulf and onshore operations; 91 series, 12 series, emergency response, logistics MOS map directly to process/maintenance roles
Walmart	Retail / Logistics / Tech	Veterans Welcome Home Commitment — 250,000+ vet hires pledged; nationwide presence	Store mgmt. fast-track; supply chain and tech roles; zero degree requirement for many positions	Nationwide coverage = useful for any LANG soldier; logistics/supply MOS (92 series, 88 series) have strong Walmart warehouse/distribution match
Federal Government	All Sectors	5–10 point veterans' preference added to every competitive federal application score (on top of exam score)	USAJOBS.gov veterans' preference; VRA appointment; Schedule A (disabled vets); USAJOBS "Vet Search" filter	Any honorably discharged LANG soldier with active-duty service qualifies; security clearance dramatically accelerates hiring and opens GS-13+ positions

DoD SkillBridge: Any active-duty soldier in their final 180 days can participate in a full-time civilian internship at an approved SkillBridge employer — including Amazon, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, AT&T, and hundreds of others — while still receiving full military pay and benefits. Search opportunities at skillbridge.osd.mil. Guard soldiers transitioning off of active-duty orders may be eligible. Confirm eligibility with your unit commander and S1.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Sign up for NextOp or Work for Warriors Louisiana today — both accept Guard soldiers while still drilling, no separation required
- Contact The Boot (theboot.la) to schedule a 4-day Louisiana immersion trip for soldiers approaching end of service — the program is specifically designed to keep veterans in Louisiana
- Soldiers with 25B, 17C, or signal MOS: point them to [AT&T att.jobs/veterans](https://atandt.jobs/veterans) and Microsoft MSSA — both are designed for exactly their background
- Soldiers with 91 series, 12 series, or any maintenance MOS: Chevron, ExxonMobil, Shell, and Turner Industries all have documented, active Louisiana veteran hiring pipelines
- Entergy is the most decorated military-friendly employer headquartered in Louisiana — 7 consecutive years of federal HIRE Vets recognition and explicit Guard/Reserve pay differential support
- Every LANG soldier with any active-duty service qualifies for federal veterans' preference — 5 to 10 extra points on every USAJOBS competitive score, plus expedited VRA appointment authority

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PHASE 4 — COMMITMENT | Section 54 | Enlistment Process: How to Join

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HOW TO JOIN

Straightforward. Transparent. Guided by a recruiter at every step.



KEY POINTS

- **Step 1 — Meet with Your Recruiter:** explore options, no commitment required
- **Step 2 — Take the ASVAB:** free aptitude test that opens your MOS options
- **Step 3 — Choose Your Career Field:** select MOS based on aptitude, interest, and openings
- **Step 4 — Physical at MEPS:** one-day medical and background screening in New Orleans
- **Step 5 — Sign Your Contract:** MOS, unit, training dates, and bonuses locked in writing
- **Step 6 — Begin RSP:** start drilling, earning, and building toward BCT
- Entire process: typically 2–6 weeks from first meeting to swearing in

★ WHAT YOU WALK AWAY WITH AT EACH STEP

- ✓ After ASVAB: clear picture of your MOS options and potential bonuses
- ✓ After MEPS: a signed, documented commitment with specific career terms
- ✓ After RSP: pay, retirement points, unit integration — career launched
- ✓ After BCT/AIT: trained soldier with active education benefits and civilian credentials

Enlistment Process: How to Join: Detailed Overview

The enlistment process is designed to be transparent, guided, and free of obligation until the moment a recruit chooses to commit. Every step from the first recruiter conversation to the contract signature at MEPS has a clear purpose, a predictable outcome, and an exit option if the applicant decides the Guard is not the right choice. The recruiter's role is not to pressure — it is to inform, guide, and help the applicant identify the best available option.

The ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) is a free aptitude test that determines MOS eligibility. It covers arithmetic reasoning, word knowledge, paragraph comprehension, mathematics knowledge, general science, electronics, auto and shop, mechanical comprehension, and assembling objects. The test is not a pass-fail threshold — every score produces a set of MOS options. A higher score expands those options into more technical and higher-demand fields. Recruiters provide free preparation resources, and retesting is available for applicants who want to improve their scores before selecting an MOS.

MEPS (Military Entrance Processing Station) is a one-day — sometimes two-day — process at a federal processing facility. It includes a physical examination, drug screening, background investigation review, and — if all qualifications are met — MOS selection and contract signing. The contract specifies the MOS, training dates, assigned unit, and any enlistment bonuses. Signing the contract is a genuine legal commitment — the recruiter will ensure the applicant understands every term before the signature.

From the contract signature, the RSP activation is typically immediate. Within days of signing, the new soldier is attending their first RSP drill, beginning to earn Guard pay, and accumulating the retirement points that start the career clock. For most recruits, the process from first meeting to first drill takes between two and six weeks — a remarkably short timeline from initial curiosity to active military service. The Guard's goal is to make this process as fast, transparent, and supportive as possible — because the faster a qualified recruit can begin service, the sooner they begin accessing the benefits and professional development that Guard membership provides.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- After ASVAB: clear picture of your MOS options and potential bonuses
- After MEPS: a signed, documented commitment with specific career terms
- After RSP: pay, retirement points, unit integration — career launched
- After BCT/AIT: trained soldier with active education benefits and civilian credentials

JOIN THE LOUISIANA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Serve your community. Build your future. Become part of something bigger.



KEY POINTS

- Serve your community — be there when Louisiana needs you most
- Build your future — education benefits, credentials, and career development
- Earn what you deserve — drill pay, retirement, and bonuses from day one
- Become part of something bigger — 400 years of citizen-soldier heritage
- Graduate without debt — STEP, Patriot Scholarship, and GI Bill combined
- Lead from the front — the Guard builds the leaders Louisiana needs
- Always Ready. Always There. Protect What Matters.

★ YOUR DECISION STARTS HERE

- ✓ Take the ASVAB — free, no obligation, opens your options
- ✓ See your unit — visit a drill weekend, meet the team before you commit

Join the Louisiana Army National Guard: Detailed Overview

The decision to join the Louisiana Army National Guard is a decision about the kind of professional and personal life you want to build — not just a decision about military service. It is a decision to serve your community, develop your career, and invest in your future simultaneously, on a schedule that fits your life. It is a decision that generations of Louisiana men and women have made before you, and that will benefit you in ways you cannot yet fully anticipate.

Every Guard soldier's story is different. The student who joins for the education benefits and discovers a leadership identity they never expected. The mechanic who enlists for the technical training and finds a professional network that transforms their career. The professional who joins late and discovers that the discipline and purpose of Guard service provides something no civilian career has ever delivered. The common thread is not the reason they joined — it is the recognition, years later, that the decision was among the best they made.

The Louisiana Army National Guard needs people who want more from their professional lives. More challenge, more purpose, more community, more capability, and more return on the years they invest in their careers. If that description fits you — if you are reading this and recognizing that the Guard offers something your current path does not — the next step is a conversation with a recruiter. No commitment. No pressure. Just an honest discussion about what your options are, what the Guard offers you specifically, and whether this is the right time.

Always Ready. Always There. Protect What Matters. These are not marketing phrases — they are the operational mandate of the Louisiana Army National Guard and the personal commitment of every soldier who serves under that standard. If you are ready to carry that standard, the Guard is ready for you.

CIVILIAN CAREER BRIDGE

- Take the ASVAB — free, no obligation, opens your options
- See your unit — visit a drill weekend, meet the team before you commit

Louisiana Army National Guard | Always Ready • Always There • Protect What Matters

GLOSSARY

Every term used in this book — defined in plain language for recruits, students, and their families.

This glossary covers every program, acronym, and military term used throughout this Sales Book. If a term appears in any section and you're unsure what it means — it's defined here. Terms are listed alphabetically.

ACE Credits

Academic credit awarded by the American Council on Education for military training and MOS experience. Guard soldiers typically earn 12–30 college credit hours through ACE — credits that most Louisiana colleges accept toward a degree.

AFQT

Armed Forces Qualification Test. The core score derived from the ASVAB. Ranges from 1–99 and determines basic enlistment eligibility. Minimum score to enlist in the Army

	National Guard is 31.
AGR	Active Guard Reserve. A full-time military employment status within the Guard. AGR soldiers serve on active-duty orders supporting the Guard's full-time mission — not the same as active-duty Army.
AIT	Advanced Individual Training. The job-specific school that follows Basic Combat Training. AIT duration ranges from 4 to 52 weeks depending on MOS. Where a soldier learns the actual skills of their military specialty.
Annual Training (AT)	The 2-week training period, typically in the summer, that all Guard soldiers complete each year in addition to monthly drill weekends. AT is paid at full active-duty rates.
ARMS 2.0	Army Readiness and Movement System. The fitness and nutrition track at the Future Soldier Preparatory Course for recruits who are within 6% of the Army body fat standard. Provides structured preparation before Basic Combat Training.
ASVAB	Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery. The test used to determine enlistment eligibility and MOS qualification. Consists of 10 subtests covering math, reading, science, and technical knowledge. No military experience required.
BCT	Basic Combat Training. The initial training all soldiers complete before AIT. 10 weeks long, conducted at an Army installation. Covers physical fitness, weapons, tactics, and Army values. Sometimes called 'Basic' or 'Boot Camp.'
Civilian Career Bridge	A term used throughout this document to describe how military skills, training, and credentials translate directly into civilian employment advantages. The Guard is designed to build civilian careers, not interrupt them.
DFAS	Defense Finance and Accounting Service. The federal agency that processes military pay. All Guard drill pay is calculated and distributed by DFAS under published pay tables available at dfas.mil .
Drill Weekend	The monthly training weekend that Guard soldiers attend at their local armory. Typically runs Friday evening through Sunday midday. Soldiers earn two full days of base pay per drill weekend.
E-1 through E-9	Enlisted pay grades. E-1 is the entry-level Private; E-9 is Sergeant Major. Pay, rank, and responsibility increase with each grade. The E-5 Sergeant grade is the first Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) level.
FSPC	Future Soldier Preparatory Course. A pre-BCT program at Fort Jackson, SC. Has two tracks: Academic (for recruits scoring 21–30 on AFQT) and ARMS 2.0 (for recruits over body fat standard). Up to 90 days duration.
GI Bill	A federal education benefit for military service members. The Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve version pays a monthly stipend directly to the soldier while enrolled in school. Current rate: approximately \$493/month.
IEP	Individualized Education Program. A document created by a school for students who receive special education services. Required for the ADD/ADHD waiver review — applicants without an IEP are in a stronger waiver position.
ING	Inactive National Guard. The non-participating status used by the LANG for soldiers who have completed their active drilling obligation but have remaining time on their 8-year Military Service Obligation. ING soldiers do not drill, are not paid, and cannot be deployed. Under LANG policy, soldiers whose active drilling contract ends with remaining MSO are placed in ING by default. Reenlistment requires affirmative action, not ING status.
IRR	Individual Ready Reserve. A non-participating reserve status used by federal Reserve components (Army Reserve, etc.). The LANG uses ING instead of IRR — an important LANG-specific distinction.

JROTC	Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps. A high school program that provides military education and leadership training. Four years of JROTC completion qualifies a Guard enlistee to enter at E-2 instead of E-1.
Line of Duty (LOD)	A determination made by the military as to whether an injury or illness occurred in the performance of military duty. LOD determinations affect medical care coverage and disability eligibility. Handled through the LANG State Surgeon's office.
MEPS	Military Entrance Processing Station. The federal facility where enlistment is finalized. All recruits complete medical processing, ASVAB testing, MOS selection, and the Oath of Enlistment at MEPS. Louisiana's MEPS is in New Orleans.
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty. Your military job. The Army has over 150 MOS designations covering every career field from infantry to cybersecurity to aviation maintenance. Your MOS is selected at MEPS based on ASVAB scores and available openings.
MSO	Military Service Obligation. Federal law requires all military members to serve a total of 8 years. The MSO is fulfilled through a combination of active drilling service and ING status. A 6-year LANG contract leaves 2 years of ING to complete the 8-year MSO.
MyCAA	My Career Advancement Account. A scholarship program providing up to \$4,000 in education benefits to eligible military spouses for portable career credentials, licenses, and certifications.
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer. Enlisted soldiers at the E-5 Sergeant grade and above. NCOs are the Army's backbone leadership — responsible for training, discipline, and welfare of junior soldiers. Promotion to E-5 requires a promotion board.
O-1 through O-10	Commissioned officer pay grades. O-1 is Second Lieutenant (entry officer); O-10 is General. Officers are commissioned through OCS, ROTC, or service academies and require at least a bachelor's degree.
OCS	Officer Candidate School. The program through which civilians and enlisted soldiers earn a commission as a Second Lieutenant. Federal OCS is located at Fort Benning, Georgia and is 14 weeks long. Requires 90 semester hours minimum (traditional track).
OPAT	Occupational Physical Assessment Test. A pre-enlistment physical test that assesses a recruit's physical capability for their selected MOS. Different MOS fields have different OPAT requirements.
Patriot Scholarship	A Louisiana Guard-specific benefit that covers all mandatory school fees at Louisiana public colleges — fees that STEP tuition exemption does not cover. Effective August 1, 2023.
PT / Physical Training	Exercise and fitness training conducted during drill weekends and BCT. The Army uses the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) to assess physical readiness. PT is a consistent part of every Guard soldier's service.
RSP	Recruit Sustainment Program. The unit-based program that supports Future Soldiers — recruits who have enlisted and are waiting to ship to BCT. RSP drills monthly and helps recruits prepare physically and administratively for training.
SGLI	Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance. Automatic life insurance coverage for Guard soldiers up to \$500,000 at low military premium rates. Coverage begins at enlistment.
SLRP	Student Loan Repayment Program. A Guard benefit that repays qualifying federal student loans up to \$50,000 over the service contract. An additional financial benefit on top of education and pay benefits.
SMP	Simultaneous Membership Program. Allows college students who are Guard enlisted members to simultaneously participate in ROTC, earning a commission upon graduation. SMP participants receive drill pay at the E-5 rate regardless of actual

	enlisted grade.
SPP	State Partnership Program. A National Guard program that pairs each state's Guard with a partner nation's military for training and cooperation. Louisiana's partner nation is Belize — a 29-year relationship since 1996.
STEP	State Tuition Exemption Program. Louisiana's flagship Guard education benefit. Covers 100% of tuition at any Louisiana public college or university, from community college through master's degree. Available to all drilling Guard members 17 and older.
STO	Split Training Option. Allows a recruit to complete BCT one summer and AIT the following summer, with the academic year in between completely uninterrupted. Guaranteed for high school juniors; requires meritorious reason for seniors and college students.
TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS)	Healthcare coverage available to Guard soldiers and eligible family members. A premium-based program — soldiers pay a monthly premium to access TRICARE's network of providers. Not free, but significantly more affordable than most civilian plans.
USERRA	Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. Federal law protecting civilian employment for all military service members. Employers cannot fire, demote, or reduce the seniority of an employee because of Guard service or activation orders.
W-1 through W-5	Warrant Officer pay grades. Warrant Officers are technical specialists — primarily aviation pilots, cyber operators, and intelligence professionals. They are neither standard enlisted nor commissioned officers, but occupy a specialized technical leadership role.
Yellow Ribbon Program	A federally-funded program providing supplemental education funding and support services to Guard soldiers and their families during and after deployments. Supplements GI Bill benefits that may not fully cover tuition at private institutions.

REFERENCE SOURCES

Verified Sources for All Information in This Document

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NGB FY26 ARNG Education Benefits Handbook — https://contentstaging.nationalguard.com/sites/default/files/FY26ARNGEDUBenefitsHandbook_20251001.pdf
nationalguard.com Education — <https://www.nationalguard.com/education>
ArmyIgnitED (FTA/CA Portal) — <https://armyignited.cce.af.mil/student/account/login>
Army COOL (Credentialing) — <https://www.cool.osd.mil/army/index.html>
Army PaYS Program — <https://armypays.com/>
Army ROTC Information — <https://www.goarmy.com/rotc.html>
WOCS / WO Recruiting — https://recruiting.army.mil/ISO/AWOR/ARMY_FEEDER/
Army Careers — <https://www.goarmy.com/>

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VA GI Bill Rates — <https://www.va.gov/education/benefit-rates/>
VA Education Benefits — <https://www.va.gov/education/>
GI Bill Comparison Tool — <https://www.va.gov/gi-bill-comparison-tool>
Transfer of Education Benefits (TEB) — <https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/>
Fry Scholarship — <https://www.va.gov/education/survivor-dependent-benefits/fry-scholarship/>
Yellow Ribbon Program — <https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/post-9-11/yellow-ribbon-program/>

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DoD SkillBridge Program — <https://skillbridge.osd.mil>
DANTES (Testing & Aid) — <https://www.dantes.mil/>
DoD STEM Opportunities — <https://www.dodstem.us/>
DOL Apprenticeship Finder — <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/apprenticeship-job-finder>
ESGR (USERRA) — <https://www.esgr.mil/>

EDUCATION & FINANCIAL AID

Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) — <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/afsa>
NSLDS (Loan Verification) — https://nslsdfap.ed.gov/nslsds_SA/
LOSFA Patriot Scholarship — <https://mylosfa.la.gov/students-parents/scholarships-grants/louisiana-national-guard-patriot-scholarship/>
College Scorecard — <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>
My Next Move (MOS Translator) — <https://www.mynextmove.org/vets/>

[Joint Services Transcript \(JST\) — https://jst.doded.mil/](https://jst.doded.mil/)
[Pearson VUE \(Testing\) — https://www.pearsonvue.com](https://www.pearsonvue.com)
[Prometric \(Testing\) — https://www.prometric.com](https://www.prometric.com)

LOUISIANA VETERAN EMPLOYMENT

[Work for Warriors Louisiana — https://w4wla.org/](https://w4wla.org/)
[NextOp Veterans — https://nextopvets.org/](https://nextopvets.org/)
[The Boot Louisiana — https://theboot.la/](https://theboot.la/)
[Hiring Our Heroes — https://www.hiringourheroes.org/](https://www.hiringourheroes.org/)
[Hire Heroes USA — https://www.hireheroesusa.org/](https://www.hireheroesusa.org/)
[Onward to Opportunity \(O2O\) — https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/programs/career-training/](https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/programs/career-training/)
[USAJOBS \(Federal Employment\) — https://www.usajobs.gov/](https://www.usajobs.gov/)

SCHOLARSHIPS

[EANGUS Scholarships — https://eangus.org/we-care-for-america/scholarship-information/](https://eangus.org/we-care-for-america/scholarship-information/)
[NGAUS Scholarships — https://www.ngaus.org/membership/member-benefits/scholarships](https://www.ngaus.org/membership/member-benefits/scholarships)
[Folds of Honor — https://foldsofhonor.org/scholarships/](https://foldsofhonor.org/scholarships/)
[Pat Tillman Foundation — https://pattillmanfoundation.org/apply/](https://pattillmanfoundation.org/apply/)
[MyCAA Spouse Scholarship — https://mycaa.militaryonesource.mil/mycaa/](https://mycaa.militaryonesource.mil/mycaa/)
[DoD SMART Scholarship — https://www.smartscholarship.org/](https://www.smartscholarship.org/)
[Student Veterans of America — https://studentveterans.org/](https://studentveterans.org/)
[Army Scholarship Foundation — https://armyscholarshipfoundation.org/scholarships/](https://armyscholarshipfoundation.org/scholarships/)

OCCUPATIONAL & BENEFITS INFORMATION

[Bureau of Labor Statistics — OOH — https://www.bls.gov/ooh/](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/)
[O*NET Online — https://www.onetonline.org/](https://www.onetonline.org/)
[myArmyBenefits — https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/](https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/)
[Military OneSource — https://www.militaryonesource.mil/](https://www.militaryonesource.mil/)
[TRICARE Reserve Select — https://www.tricare.mil/Plans/HealthPlans/TRS](https://www.tricare.mil/Plans/HealthPlans/TRS)
[Armed Forces Tax Guide \(IRS Pub 3\) — https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p3.pdf](https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p3.pdf)

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