

STARS  AND STRIPES[®] FORT DETRICK | Fall 2020

Servicemember's Guide to

EDUCATION and TRANSITION



**HOW TO USE
THE MILITARY
TUITION
ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM**

Everything you need to know

**5 STEPS
TO PREPARE FOR
HIGHER EDUCATION**
Because you need a game plan



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERYTHING THE FORT DETRICK EDUCATION CENTER HAS TO OFFER.

Photo courtesy of army.mil

Army Continuing Education System, located in the Community Support Center, 1520A Freedman Dr., Suite 109, serves as a one-stop center for the training and education needs of the Fort Detrick community. Services include:

EDUCATION SERVICE SPECIALIST

Counseling sessions may be conducted with Active Duty Reserve, National Guard Soldiers, Family members, Veterans and DoD Civilians within the Fort Detrick area in person, by phone or by email. Services provided below include but are not limited to...

- Tuition assistance usage and guidance
- GoArmyEd: program and course enrollment, navigation tips and holds
- College degrees and degree plan counseling available to Soldiers, such as College of the American Soldier or Army Career Degree Program
- Transfer of college credit and academic residency requirements.
- Evaluation of military and experience for college credit.
- Testing for college credit and military tests
- Army commissioning programs

- Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits
- Financial aid, grants, loans and scholarships; state tuition, when appropriate

ARMY PERSONNEL TESTING CENTER

The Army Personnel Testing (APT) program encompasses standardized test to determine eligibility for specialized training, to include language proficiency testing.

- Armed Forces Classification Test (AFCT/ASVAB)
- Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB)
- Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT)
- Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)
- Selection Instrument for Flight Training (SIFT)
- SAT, LSAT, DSST, etc.

Other Educational Resources

- Joint Service Transcripts
- Multi-use Learning Facility
- Career NCO Degree Program
- Classroom Facility

FAST PROGRAM

The Functional Academic Skills Training (FAST) Program is designed to assist soldiers who:

- Want to raise their GT score to 110 or higher

- Wish to improve their basic math and English skills
- Want to improve their work performance through stronger academic skills
- Desire tutoring in specific academic

At the end of the FAST program, you will take the Armed Forces Classification Test (AFCT). It was called the ASVAB when you took it as a new recruit.

Please call 301-619-2854 for more information and access to the online learning portal.



Online Academic Skills Course College Placement Skills Training

- Improve basic skills
- Prepare for military career advancement
- Prepare for academic success



FORT DETRICK ARMY CONTINUING EDUCATION SYSTEM (ACES)

1520A Freedman Drive, Suite 109
Fort Detrick, MD 21702-5046
301-619-2854 FAX: 301-619-2884

CALL: 301-619-2854 | **EMAIL:** usarmy.detrick.usag.mbx.dhr-aces@mail.mil

FIND US ON TWITTER AND FACEBOOK

www.facebook.com/FTDetrickACES | www.twitter.com/FortDetrickACES

HOURS OF OPERATION

ARMY CONTINUING EDUCATION SYSTEM/ LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER (LRC):

Monday—Thursday: 0830 – 1630
Friday: 0830 - 1600

FUNCTIONAL ACADEMIC SKILLS TRAINING (FAST):

Monday: 0830 – 1530
Tuesday: 0830 – 1630
Testing by Appointment Only



Photo courtesy of army.mil

MISSION

To deliver a World Class Transition Program for America's Army that empowers Members to make informed career decisions that enhances lives, communities and our Nation.

SFL-TAP PROGRAM

Soldier for Life-Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP) is a program that provides transition and job assistance services on major installations. While Public Law was the foundation of the Transition Assistance Program initiative, the Army decided to go beyond the basic requirements set by Congress and establish the Soldier for Life-Transition Assistance Program.

The SFL-TAP goals are targeted on its human resource needs and are worthy of every leader's support. First, as an employer, the Army spends more than \$500 Million dollars a year on Unemployment Compensation payments made to recently separated Soldiers. Each Soldier who meets the eligibility criteria is entitled by law to up to 26 weeks of unemployment compensation, and the Army must pay for it. While we are required to inform transitioning Soldiers of their eligibility for unemployment compensation, SFL-TAP helps transitioners to understand the negative impact of unemployment on the attainment of their career goals. SFL-TAP also provides transitioners the detailed job assistance training, counseling and resources they need to quickly find a job — often before they leave active duty. An Army Research Institute (ARI) study demonstrated that the full use of all SFL-TAP services reduces the time it takes for a transitioner to find a job and increases the amount of money they earn.

THE SFL-TAP PROCESS

Soldier for Life-Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP) process works best when initiated early. Retiring Service Members may begin the process two years before their retirement date and separating Service Members should begin NLT 18-12 months out. At Fort Detrick, the process begins when you attend the 5 day SFL-TAP class. Pre-separation/initial counseling is completed the first morning of the 5 day class and you will receive the pre-separation checklist, DD2648. During the 5 days, you will also complete other mandatory requirements. You will not be able to clear without a copy of your DD2648. There is no need to complete the form online if you will be attending the class.

SFL-TAP COURSES

Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Employment Workshops are conducted by the SFL-TAP Mobile Training Team, VA representatives, and TAP facilitators. The courses last five days and provide attendees the knowledge, information and skills they need to achieve their post-transition occupational or educational goals.

Includes completion of mandatory Pre-separation Counseling Checklist, DD Form 2648; scheduling appointments for applicable transition services, administering intake for Individual Transition Planning, information on how to apply for disability benefits, intensive training in job searching skills and facing issues of transition and career assessments. Includes mock interviews, resume writing, networking, salary negotiations, and the electronic job search.

— Courtesy of the Fort Detrick Education Center

TAP EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP

How to Register:

E-mail us, subject line: TAP. Include the following information in your email:

- Name
- Grade
- Branch of Service
- Unit
- Phone
- E-mail Address
- Class Date you wish to attend and if your spouse is attending

If you have questions, please call (301) 619-9678.

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Photo courtesy of army.mil

THE ARMY CREDENTIALING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



ARMY CREDENTIALING
ASSISTANCE

What is the Credentialing Assistance Program?

- The Army Credentialing Assistance (CA) program provides funding for voluntary off-duty courses and/or exams leading to an industry-recognized academic or vocational credential listed in Army COOL (www.cool.osd.mil/army/index.htm). *(A credential is an occupational license or certification obtained from an organization that assesses and confirms a credential seeker is competent and qualified to work in that field)*
- The program directly contributes to supporting Soldier's professional development, retaining quality Soldiers, and preparing Soldiers for meaningful employment upon transition from military service.

What Do I Get?

- Soldiers may use both Tuition Assistance (TA) and CA; however, the combined amount cannot exceed \$4000 per fiscal year.
- CA pays for classroom, online/blended and

hands-on learning/training plus associated exams, materials and all required fees (i.e., manuals, books, supplies, study guides, and recertification of credentials).

How Do I Apply?

- Visit the Education Center for eligibility determination
 - Soldiers must meet basic TA eligibility
 - Course/Exam completion must occur prior to Date of Separation
- If eligible, locate vendor for information on desired training and/or exam
- Complete CA Request and submit via GoArmyEd Helpdesk case at least 30 business days before the class/exam start date.
- Activate GoArmyEd account at www.goarmyed.com (if not currently active)
 - Select "Credentialing School" and "Credentialing Pathway" degree program to pursue a credential program
- Monitor GoArmyEd account

– Courtesy of Fort Detrick Education Center

Visit your local Education Counselor to apply!

Be sure to activate your GoArmyEd account (if not currently active)

Credentialing Assistance Website:

<https://home.army.mil/imcom/index.php/customers/credentialing-assistance>



BEGIN TODAY, PREPARE FOR TOMORROW CREDENTIAL YOUR CAREER

Enhance your education, increase promotion opportunities and prepare for the future!

The opportunity is **HERE** to earn an **Industry Recognized Credential**

Receive up to **\$4000 per fiscal year**

Training available **online or face-to-face**

Call your Fort Detrick Education Center now!

301-619-2854

usarmy.detrack.usag.mbx.dhr-aces@mail.mil



Photo courtesy of army.mil

MCDANIEL COLLEGE, MOUNT SAINT MARYS UNIVERSITY, HOOD COLLEGE



“GREEN TERROR BATTALION”

(410) 857-2723

RFAMILETTI@MCDANIEL.EDU

ARMY ROTC

IT'S HOW STUDENTS BECOME LEADERS

Army ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) is one of the best leadership courses in the country and can be a part of your college curriculum. Being a student at McDaniel College, Mount Saint Mary's University, or Hood College and learning to become a leader will make your college experience even richer and prepare you for the future.

What is ROTC?

Army ROTC provides individuals with the tools, training, and experiences they need to become Officers in the U.S. Army.

Benefits

Check out all the benefits you can receive by joining Army ROTC. From scholarships to leadership development, there's something for everyone, and the benefits last a lifetime.

Cadet Life

ROTC makes the student experience even richer. See what it's like to be a Cadet in the McDaniel College, Mount Saint Mary's University, or Hood College ROTC Battalion, plus all the activities and training that are available to you.

- Lifestyle
- Training and Curriculum
- Events and Activities

Becoming an Officer

Learn what it's like to become an Officer through Army ROTC and how it can get you started on a challenging, rewarding career.

About the Battalion

Learn more about the history of the McDaniel College, Mount Saint Mary's University, or Hood College ROTC Battalion call. (410) 857-2723

– Courtesy of Fort Detrick Education Center

The GRADUATE SCHOOL

at Hood College



- Military scholarship for active-duty soldiers
- Academic excellence plus practical application for military personnel
- Top-tier faculty with scholarly and real-world experience who understand the needs of returning soldiers
- Small classes, personal attention
- Evening and weekend classes
- Convenient location near Ft. Detrick

Ready to go further?

Full-tuition military scholarship for active-duty soldiers.

Master's Degrees

- Bioinformatics
- Biomedical Science
- Business Administration
- Ceramic Arts
- Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- Computer Science
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Cybersecurity
- Education, Multidisciplinary Studies
- Educational Leadership
- Environmental Biology
- Humanities
- Information Technology
- Interdisciplinary Studies in Human Behavior
- Management Information Systems
- Mathematics Education
- Mathematics Instructional Leadership
- Reading Specialization
- School Counseling

Certificates

- Accounting
- Bioinformatics
- Ceramic Arts
- Cybersecurity
- Educational Leadership
- Elementary STEM
- Financial Management
- Geographic Information Systems
- Organizational Management
- Secondary Mathematics Education
- Thanatology



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INCREASE YOUR SKILLS AND EDUCATION FROM HOME DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Make the most of the unexpected time you have at home because of the coronavirus disease 2019. Explore the wide range of education resources the Department of Defense offers for service members and their families. They include:

- Programs, resources and services are available to help servicemembers, their spouses and children work toward college degrees, certifications and other educational and employment opportunities.
- The TA DECIDE tool from the Department of Defense lets servicemembers compare schools, tuition and fees, programs, assistance options and more.
- Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support, or DANTES, provides service members with a variety of no-cost education and career-planning programs and services including:
 - o Kuder Journey
 - o Academic skills training
 - o Joint Services Transcript, which converts
- military experience into civilian college credit to save time and money on education
 - o A variety of reimbursable exams for college readiness and credit.
- MilLife Learning offers self-directed courses to help service members and their families lead their best MilLife. Topics include developing a spending plan, and eSponsorship Application and Training.
- The Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO) program connects military spouses with tools and resources including education and training help, career coaching and exploration, career connections and more. It has a wealth of information and services — such as Onward to Opportunity — for increasing your professional skills.
 - o SECO also offers more general resources for:
 - Building a resume
 - Searching for scholarships
 - Assessing values and skills.
- The Morale, Welfare and Recreation Digital

Library provides a wide range of educational resources for family members of all ages. Choose from audiobooks, eBooks, award-winning documentaries, historical U.S. military records, personalized brain exercises and much more.

If you need help navigating opportunities that are available to you, Military OneSource education consultants can help. They can answer questions about financial aid, scholarships, tutoring and college information. Call 800-342-9647. Understanding of COVID-19 is rapidly changing. For updates and information specific to your location, visit your installation's official website. You can also follow your installation's Facebook, Twitter or Instagram platforms.

– Courtesy of Military OneSource



Photo courtesy of army.mil

FINDING THE MOTIVATION FOR SCHOOL

Have you been thinking about getting your degree, but just haven't gotten around to it yet? Why not? In most cases, procrastination is caused by one of five FACTORS. These barriers are:

1. Confusion
2. Money
3. Time
4. Fear
5. Motivation

These five factors can block you from achieving your potential, but you can remove these barriers when you learn the terms, tricks, and tips that have helped thousands of other servicemembers and veterans get their education.

It's time to address the last of these factors and get you on the way to achieving your goals and reaching your full potential.

Turn Academic Fear into Motivation

Fear is not an unusual reaction when getting started on any challenging worthwhile adventure in life. Do you remember how you felt when you decided to join the military? The thought of taking on any large commitment, like achieving your educational goals, can be just as intimidating.

Look at it this way, in your military career you experienced pain & suffering, put in long hard hours, made huge sacrifices, endured separation from your family, and maybe even had to live on MREs (meal, ready-to-eat). Face it, you have what it takes. Besides, with the possible exception of rocket science, the type of college courses you'll likely be taking are not that difficult.

Both Veteran Affairs and the Department of Defense (DoD) have education counselors and the DoD offers online tools to help you prepare for the rigors of college-level course work.

Remember: a college degree is less of a measure of intelligence and more of a measure of commitment, and tenacity.

Motivation

Instead of letting fear stop you, let fear motivate you! The following are examples of what you should really be afraid of:

- Unemployment
- Missed Promotion/Advancement Opportunities
- Missed Benefits

Unemployment

If you are currently on active-duty, you enjoy relatively good wages and job security, but someday you will have to leave the military. If you haven't completed your education by the time

you get out, you could be looking at lower wages or unemployment. As a rule, the higher your level of education and training, the more salary you are likely to earn. Your level of education can also directly affect your ability to get or keep a job.

Be aware: Although it is true higher education increases your opportunities, no college or university can guarantee you will get a job or earn a higher salary.

Missed Promotion/ Advancement Opportunities

Whether you are a servicemember, veteran, or civilian, having your college degree can be the difference between being promoted or getting passed over. In some branches of the military, a college degree is a requirement for officer promotions and senior enlisted advancement. It comes down to this: you need to be prepared when the doors of opportunity open, and the best way to do that is to continually improve your level of training, education and certification.

Missed Benefits

At \$4,500 a year Tuition Assistance (TA) is at a historic high, but like many government-funded programs, the future of this benefit is not guaranteed, and may not last much longer. Your

other educational benefits also have limitations. For example, when you separate from the military you lose your eligibility for most DANTES, SOC, and Tuition Assistance programs, and if you are veteran you only have 10 to 15 years from your last day of active-duty to use all of your GI Bill benefits. After that, your benefits are gone and based on today's payment rates that could mean a loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Simply put, you need to "use it, or you'll lose it".

So, if you have finally decided that you are ready to increase your earning potential, get that promotion, and use the benefits you have earned before it is too late, then you have turned your fear into motivation.

Choosing your career path and degree program should be your next step in pursuing your education goals. Part of that process is reaching out to colleges and universities to learn more about their education processes and degree programs.

Remember, there is no obligation to enroll, be sure to ask the right questions and seek counseling before you make your final selection.

– Courtesy of Military.com



DO YOU NEED A DEGREE? CORPORATE AMERICA THINKS SO

The way employers value education is changing. Twenty years ago it was possible for job seekers with a high school diploma and job experience to get a good job. Ten years ago, job seekers needed a bachelor's to get a great job with opportunities for advancement. Today, most employers want their upper-level executives and managers to have a master's degree.

What's more, the earning potential for degree-holders is much more than those without a college degree. For example, the Commerce Department's Census Bureau reports that adults (18- to 25-year-old) with bachelors' degrees earn an average of \$45,327. Adults, in the same age range, with only a high school diploma, earned an average of \$30,000. Additionally, adults with advanced degrees earn an average of \$53,000 a year compared to those without a high-school diploma that only make \$20,241 a year.

Obtaining a degree is vital in order to stay competitive in today's workforce.

Back to School

Most Americans would like to go back to school to get a degree. But, for people with families, young children or full-time jobs, going back to school is a time commitment they just can't afford. Fortunately, there are many opportunities to obtain an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree away from campus. Online courses and degree programs provide flexible schedules that will accommodate a full-time job or family needs.

Choosing the Right Program for You

Before you begin any online program, you need to research which one is best for you, your education and career goals. Additionally, the program has to fit your schedule. Here five questions you should ask before entering a degree program:

- How is the course delivered? There are many ways that an instructor can lecture: online using text, with accompanying slides, with or without student interaction, video, teleconferencing, etc. Course content

is more easily understood if it's presented in a dynamic engaging manner that involves an interaction between the students, the instructor, and the material. When you choose a program you should make sure that your online school utilizes many different methods to convey information.

- How do I interact with the instructor and other students? Some standard options for online student interaction include chat rooms, instant messaging, teleconferencing, and video conferencing. Finding a program that facilitates, and even requires, student interaction is an important aspect of choosing an online program. How the online community functions should be very important to both the instructor and the institution.
- How will I be evaluated? Will you actually be required to work in order to earn your degree. If students aren't evaluated appropriately and degrees are handed out with little or no verification that the students have actually learned anything, the program is not likely worthwhile and even less

likely to be accepted by employers.

- What kind of library and research materials are available? Ensure that the school you are interested in has a good system for providing reference materials and texts—they should be accessible from anywhere. The school's online references should be up-to-date and available at any time.
- Is the school Regionally or Nationally accredited? Ask about the school's credentials and the degrees the instructors hold. Many unaccredited online schools will eagerly grant you a degree, however, these degrees from unaccredited schools are worthless. A diploma mill or unaccredited school should be avoided.

Get Disciplined

Once you find the online program that fits your goals and schedule, it's important for you to become disciplined and do the work. An online course gives you the flexibility and time to get a degree.

– Courtesy of Military.com



HOW TO USE THE MILITARY TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Photo courtesy of army.mil

If you've thought about going to college, but didn't know if you could afford it, then the Military Tuition Assistance (TA) program may be just the benefit you need. The program is available to active-duty, National Guard and Reserve Component servicemembers. While the decision to pursue a degree may be a difficult one personally, TA can lessen your financial concerns considerably, since it now pays up to 100 percent of tuition expenses for semester hours costing \$250 or less.

Courses and degree programs may be academic or technical and can be taken from two- or four-year institutions on-installation, off-installation or by distance learning. An accrediting body recognized by the Department of Education must accredit the institution. Your service branch pays your tuition directly to the school. Servicemembers need to first check with an education counselor for the specifics involving TA by visiting their local installation education office or by going online to a virtual education center. Tuition assistance may be used for the following programs:

- Vocational/technical programs
- Undergraduate programs
- Graduate programs
- Independent study
- Distance-learning programs

Eligibility

All four service branches and the U.S. Coast Guard offer financial assistance for voluntary, off-duty education programs in support of servicemembers' personal and professional goals. The program is open to officers, warrant officers and enlisted active-duty service personnel. In addition, members of the National Guard and Reserve Components may be eligible for TA based on their service eligibility. To be eligible for TA, an enlisted servicemember must have enough time remaining in service to complete the course for which he or she has applied. After the completion of a course, an officer using

TA must fulfill a service obligation that runs parallel with - not in addition to - any existing service obligation.

Coverage amounts and monetary limits

The Tuition Assistance Program will fund up to 100 percent of your college tuition and certain fees with the following limits:

- Not to exceed \$250 per semester credit hour or \$166 per quarter credit hour
- Not to exceed \$4,500 per fiscal year, October 1 through September 30

Tuition assistance versus the Department of Veterans Affairs education benefits

While the TA program is offered by the services, the Department of Veterans Affairs administers a variety of education benefit programs. Some of the VA programs, such as the Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2008, also known as the Post-9/11 GI Bill®, can work well with the TA program, as it can supplement fees not covered by TA. In addition, the Post-9/11 GI Bill® funds are available to you for up to 15 years after you leave the military. The TA program is a benefit that is available only while you're in the service.

Tuition assistance benefits and restrictions

Tuition assistance will cover the following expenses:

- Tuition
- Course-specific fees such as laboratory fee or online course fee

NOTE: All fees must directly relate to the specific course enrollment of the servicemember.

Tuition assistance will not cover the following expenses:

- Books and course materials
- Flight training fees
- Taking the same course twice
- Continuing education units, or CEUs

Keep in mind that TA will not fund your

college courses, and you will have to reimburse any funds already paid if any of the following situations occur:

- Leaving the service before the course ends
- Quitting the course for reasons other than personal illness, military transfer or mission requirements
- Failing the course

Application process

Each military branch has its own TA application form and procedures. To find out how to get started, visit your local installation education center, go online to a virtual education center or click on the following links for each service branch:

- Army
- Marine Corps
- Navy
- Air Force

Prior to your course enrollment, you may be required to develop an education plan or complete TA orientation. Be sure to keep the following important information in mind when you apply:

- Military tuition assistance may only be used to pursue degree programs at colleges and universities in the United States that are regionally or nationally accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. A quick way to check the accreditation of a school is by visiting the Department of Education.
- Your service's education center must approve your military tuition assistance before you enroll in a course.

Top-up program

The Top-up program allows funds from the Montgomery GI Bill® - Active Duty or the Post-9/11 GI Bill - to be used for tuition and fees for high-cost courses that are not fully covered by TA funds.

- **Eligibility.** To use Top-up, your service branch must approve you for TA. You also must be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill® or the Montgomery GI Bill® - Active-Duty.
- **Application.** First apply for TA in accordance with the procedures of your service branch. After you have applied for TA, you will need to complete VA Form 22-1990 to apply for Department of Veterans Affairs education benefits. The form is available online from the VA. Make sure you specify "Top-up" on the application and mail it to one of the education processing offices listed on the form.

Other supplemental funding possibilities

Aside from using the MGIB-AD or Post-9/11 GI Bill for items such as tuition and fees not covered by TA, there are other funding opportunities available to servicemembers including the following:

- **Federal and state financial aid.** The federal government provides \$150 billion per year in grants, work-study programs and federal loans to college students. The aid comes in several forms, including need-based programs such as Pell grants, subsidized Stafford Loans, Supplemental Educational Opportunity grants and federal work/study programs. You can also get low-interest loans through the federal government. Visit Federal Student Aid to find out more or complete an online application for FAFSA at no cost to you.

— Courtesy of Military OneSource

AN EXPLANATION OF EDUCATION ADVANCEMENT EXAMS



Photo courtesy of army.mil

You've been tested before and have the determination it takes to study hard and be prepared. Doing so on education advancement exams, which assess your skills, can help you earn your degree faster. Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support, or DANTES, offers free or discounted tests for military members. By learning which tests to tackle and how best to prepare, you'll be ready to master exam time and be one step closer to your higher education goals.

Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support exams

Completing particular DANTES-sponsored exams allows you to earn credits toward a college degree so you may be able to get your degree faster. Here are the basics on these tests.

- **ACT.** The ACT is designed to assess general educational development and measure performance of intellectual tasks required of a college student. The ACT is composed of four academic tests that measure academic development in English, mathematics, reading and science. Funding eligibility for service members varies based on type of testing location.
- **College-Level Examination Program.** The CLEP exam allows you to test

out of 33 test titles in subjects where you may have gained knowledge such as from work, education or military experience. Administration and examination fees are DANTES-funded for eligible service members for the first attempt on all titles only.

- **DSST, formerly known as the DANTES Subject Standardized Tests.** Prometric's DSST test is a form of prior-learning assessment offered via 38 college-subject exams. This nationally recognized credit-by-exam program grants college credit for learning outside of the classroom like on-the-job training, military experience or independent study. DANTES funds fees for the first attempt on all DSST titles only, for eligible service members.
- **General Education Development Tests.** The GED test consists of four content areas designed to measure the high school level of adult learners who are not high school graduates. The content areas are math, science, social studies and language arts. DANTES reimburses the test fee one time for eligible service members.
- **Graduate Management Admission Test.** The GMAT is available through some college and university test centers. This computer-adaptive test includes verbal, quantitative and analytical writing questions. The

GMAT is reimbursable (one time) for eligible service members.

- **Graduate Record Examinations.** The GRE is a computer-based test available through select college and university test centers. DANTES will pay for one GRE General and one GRE Subject exam per lifetime for eligible service members.
- **PRAXIS I and II.** The PRAXIS I is a Pre-Professional Skills Test, or PPST, with three separate subject-area tests in reading, math and writing. Some states require students to pass the PPST before starting a teacher education program, or as a teacher-licensing exam. The PRAXIS II is a timed subject assessment focused on principles of learning and teaching. The exam offers more than 100 test subjects. Some states require you to pass this exam before teaching certain subject areas. Both PRAXIS exams are reimbursable one time for eligible service members.
- **SAT.** The SAT is an entrance exam used by most colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. The SAT assesses critical thinking skills needed for success in college and future career success. The test is based on knowledge developed through coursework in the following areas: reading, writing, language and math. Funding eligibility for service

members varies based on type of testing location.

Test prep scams

Protect yourself as you prepare and sign up for these exams. Be careful to avoid scams that could potentially waste your time and money. Keep an eye out for any test prep program that attempts to:

- Pressure you to buy test prep materials for exams you don't plan to take
- Give you purchasing credit with a third-party vendor
- Contact you at home with direct sales
- Promise college credit without enrolling in a college or university
- Include dictionaries or encyclopedias on book lists.

Before you spend your hard-earned money on any test prep materials, contact your education services specialist. A specialist may be able to guide you to no-cost or low-cost materials through the education center, installation library or local college bookstores. Your education is a worthwhile investment of both time and money. Save a little of both by taking advantage of the available DANTES-sponsored exams. Get more information on these exams at www.dantes.doded.mil.

– Courtesy of Military OneSource

THIS NEW CAREER FIELD IS SO HOT TO HIRE VETS, THEY'LL HELP YOU GET STARTED

By Blake Stilwell, Courtesy of Military.com



If every job came with a basic training period and the reasonable expectation of upward mobility in an emerging career field, veteran unemployment -- and perhaps all unemployment -- could be a thing of the past.

Instead, separating veterans often find themselves starting over in a new career field filled with entrenched experts, and, depending on the industry, no clear way to advance their careers.

Clean energy is an emerging area where that could all change, and the solar industry wants hard-working, knowledgeable veterans to fill its ranks. In fact, it wants veterans so badly, the industry has set up a 12-week training program to get them in the door.

Renewable energy is the fastest-growing energy sector in the United States and the size of the renewable energy workforce tripled between 2000 and 2018. Solar Power produces more than 11% of America's energy, according to the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, but by 2050, it's projected to create almost half the power needed in the United States.

And they're going to need good people to generate that power.

The Solar Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing solar energy worldwide, has created a pipeline program for veterans called the Solar Ready Vets Network. Funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office, the program uses a two-pronged approach to fill the jobs

of tomorrow with today's soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines.

Solar Ready Vets is the first prong in the initiative. It's a fellowship program that selects military members to place in a 12-week, on-the-job training program that not only helps them learn the industry, but helps transition them to civilian life.

Those troops will be pulled from bases in areas with high solar energy demands and placed into a pipeline of training designed by the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners and the Solar Energy Industries Association.

The second prong is the Solar Opportunities and Readiness Initiative, which focuses on veterans who are no longer in the military, but are interested in solar careers. This is a program that not only seeks to train veterans but also helps get them credentials for later. All you have to do to get started is fill out the form on the foundation's Solar Ready Vets page.

Working within the U.S. government means the SOAR program could lead to a nationwide apprenticeship program, fast-track certain certifications for veterans, create a network of veterans in solar power and expand the GI Bill to cover certification costs.

While these are initiatives planned for the future, the program is a part of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes effort to help provide veterans and their spouses with meaningful jobs. Hiring Our Heroes places veterans in civilian jobs through

fellowships and events meant to break down the barriers that might keep a veteran from entering a new industry.

Jobs in solar power aren't just technicians installing panels or repairing solar batteries. The renewable energy industry needs managers, executives, researchers and other skilled professionals to fill out its ranks -- and veterans know a little something about rank.

Like most first-time jobs after leaving the U.S. military, veterans new to the field might have to work their way back up from the bottom once more, but there is a wide range of companies and specializations available to those interested in a renewable energy career.

Officials with the Solar Foundation said when it comes to training and hiring veterans they are for leaders. "Veterans are leaders and can help inspire confidence in the industry and navigate our most pressing challenges," Abigail Ross Hopper, president and CEO of the Solar Energy Industries Association said in a statement. "We're thrilled to work with solar companies to make even more employment opportunities available to Americans that have sacrificed the most."

Veterans who want to learn more and businesses that want the dedication and talent of veterans in these two initiatives should check out the Solar Foundation website to learn more.



5 STEPS TO PREPARE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Photo courtesy of army.mil

Perhaps you've decided to pick up some valuable knowledge. Maybe you're leaving the service and need to re-create yourself. No matter why you're pursuing higher education, you need a game plan — a course of action to get you from today to that moment you walk across the stage holding your diploma in hand. Here are some practical steps to take.

Step one: Contact the Voluntary Education Program

Before you get buried in college brochures, speak with an education professional through the Voluntary Education Program. An education professional can help guide you through the planning and paying for your education, as well as eligibility requirements. Find the right contact information below depending on your service:

- Army Continuing Education or 888-276-9472
- Marine Corps Voluntary Education Program or 703-784-9550
- Navy College Program or 877-838-1659
- Air Force Education Programs or 240-612-4016
- Coast Guard Institute or 405-954-1028
- Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support

Step two: Choose a college

Deciding which college to attend is much easier when you have the right information. As a servicemember, you have access to useful resources such as the College Navigator, a free online tool from the National Center for Education Statistics. The College Navigator provides information on more than 7,000 postsecondary education institutions, so you can compare schools' tuition, financial aid, accreditation information, graduation and retention rates and more.

TA DECIDE is another helpful tool for comparing schools and programs. Designed for participants of the Department of Defense Military Tuition Assistance (TA) Program, it provides education costs and outcomes, as well as information about other military students who are participating in the tuition assistance program.

Step three: Take your college admission exams

Get ready for some studying even before college begins. Most colleges and universities require admission exams with your application, such as the SAT Reasoning Test, the SAT Subject Tests, the American College Testing (ACT) Readiness Assessment, Graduate Record Examinations (GRE), Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) and the General Education Development Test.

The Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support, or DANTES, can help you prepare for enrollment and cover the cost of some academic tests. DANTES also offers college prep resources that can help you prepare for these admission exams, sharpen study skills, and identify your interests and aptitudes in choosing an area of study or career path. Visit DANTES to learn more or to contact a counselor.

Step four: Convert your military experience to college credit

The tests you endured in combat can count just as much as quizzes in a classroom. The Joint Services Transcript (JST) converts your military experience into civilian college credit, providing documented evidence to colleges and universities of professional military education, training and occupation experiences. The Joint Services Transcript is a collaborative transcript program that replaces previous transcript programs, making it easier for colleges to read and recommend credits.

Step five: Understand your financing options

As a servicemember, you have several options that can help fund your schooling — so that you can concentrate on studying, not paying the bills. The education consultants at

Military OneSource can help you identify grants and other kinds of assistance for which you are eligible. Here is a sampling of programs and loans available:

- Military tuition assistance — provided by each service branch, offering up to \$4,500 of assistance per fiscal year
- Montgomery GI Bill® and MGIB Tuition Top-Up Programs — funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Tax credits and deductions — such as the American Opportunity Tax Credit and the Lifetime Learning Credit
- Federal grants and loans — such as the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Perkins Loans, Stafford Loans and Federal Supplemental Education Opportunities Grant.

You're just a few steps away from achieving your education goals. Remember to reach out to your network of support, including Military OneSource education consultants. You may also want to contact an education professional through your service's Voluntary Education Program.

— Courtesy of Military OneSource



FINDING HOME SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

Home-schooling may appeal to some military families who are concerned that frequent moves and new school systems might disrupt their children's education. If you're thinking about educating your child at home, or have already made the decision, the information here will help guide you to support and resources.

Installation resources

Home-schooling means that you, as parents, assume responsibility for directing your child's education and use your home as the base for that education instead of a traditional public or independent school. You'll find these resources on your installation:

School liaison officer. A school liaison officer can fill you in on state and local home-schooling requirements and connect you with nearby home school groups.

Child, youth and teen programs. Youth programs offer enrichment classes and may open their facilities during the school day to children who usually receive home education.

Department of Defense Education Activity. Military children may be able to enroll in enrichment classes, access academic resources and

participate in extracurricular activities at your installation's Department of Defense Education Activity school. The Department of Defense Education Activity also offers a fully accredited online high school that grants diplomas.

Other military resources

Branch-specific and other military resources include:

The Non-Department of Defense Schools Program. The Non-Department of Defense Schools Program provides support and funding if you're stationed overseas and want to home-school your child.

Military support services. Each service branch sponsors information and support programs for servicemembers and their families and can help you regardless of your service affiliation. If you aren't near an installation, look up your closest National Guard Family Assistance Center on the National Guard Family Program website.

Military OneSource. This service is available at no cost to all active-duty servicemembers, National Guard and reserves (regardless of activation status) and their families. Counselors provide information and make referrals

on a wide range of issues, including parenting, education and home schooling programs. Learn more at Military OneSource or call 800-342-9647.

Community resources

Check out your local area for more resources and help with home-schooling with a few of these ideas:

Public libraries. Chat up your local librarian to learn about programs, services and information for home-schoolers, such as reading programs and no-cost museum passes.

Community centers and YMCAs. Many community centers and YMCAs offer classes to home-schooled students, including some designed just for them.

Museums and arts organizations. You may find education programs for children at museums, orchestras, and theater or dance groups. Also check out zoos, wildlife centers and nature preserves for children's programs.

Community colleges and vocational training programs. Teenagers may be able to take vocational training or courses at a four-year or community college. These may be a good option for older kids who want to explore an area

that you don't feel qualified to teach.

Home schooling groups

Doing activities with other home-schooled students can give children a strong sense of camaraderie. Ask around and do online searches for the following in your area:

Umbrella schools. Also called "cover schools," these organizations supervise the education of home-schooled children and build ties among families based on similar interests.

Home schooling networks and support groups. Many communities have networks or organizations for home schooling families. They provide a broad range of support on home schooling issues and offer opportunities to meet other home-schooling parents.

Home-schooling your child may be a big commitment, but with local and military resources, you and your student will have plenty of support. For more helpful hints and tips, visit militaryonesource.mil.

– Courtesy of Military OneSource



Photo courtesy of army.mil

WHAT CAN YOU USE YOUR **GI BILL** FOR?

When most people think of the GI Bill they think of college. That is because most people do use their GI Bill benefits to go to a traditional college. Over the years the GI Bill has expanded greatly and it's not just for college anymore, Veteran Affairs (VA) realizes that many people do not want to go to college, and they have developed programs that pay for many different types of training besides college. You can use your GI Bill for many different types of training including:

- College degree programs including Associate, Bachelor, and advanced degree programs
- Vocational/Technical Training including non-college degree programs
- On-the-job/Apprenticeship Training
- Licensing & Certification Reimbursement
- National Testing Programs such as SAT, CLEP, AP, etc
- Flight Training
- Correspondence Training
- Work-study programs
- Tuition Assistance Top-Up
- Tutorial Assistance

– Courtesy of Military.com



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