

# STRENGTHENING OUR NATION'S Workforce

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Employer and Labor Services (OATELS)  
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**Registered  
Apprenticeship  
Trends in the  
MILITARY**



# Registered Apprenticeship in the Military



**R**egistered Apprenticeship training plays an important role in developing skilled workers. With the combination of on-the-job learning, related instruction, mentoring, and incremental wage increases, the apprenticeship model can be an effective system for addressing human resource issues and skill shortages that many industries/businesses face. Registered Apprenticeship can provide the expertise and knowledge individuals need to do their jobs effectively and advance in their careers.

Twenty-first century apprenticeship allows for a flexible competency-based training strategy that enables apprentices to move through a program at her/his own pace, benchmark the achievement of each set of core competencies and build a portfolio of skills and interim credentials that validate the acquired skill levels. Additionally, the related instruction is articulated with many two- and four-year colleges, allowing apprentices to work toward a degree. This is good news for the military industry because it meets many of their human resources and skills training needs.

The National Guard—and the military—face some difficult challenges: they need to recruit and retain soldiers, have a skilled workforce for both military and civilian work, and a cost-effective training model. The

Indiana National Guard has developed an apprenticeship program that addresses these challenges and more for 18 occupations. The program is helping the Guard train a workforce for military duty and successfully help that same workforce transition into skilled civilian jobs.

The Registered Apprenticeship model has proven its ability to address these and other issues in industries and should become part of the human resources and training strategy for the military. It offers employers a highly-qualified workforce with good work ethics to get the job done. The model offers an efficient, flexible training system that is responsive to new technology to keep soldiers/workers up-to-date on skills they need to do their jobs.

“Advancing the Apprenticeship System” is one of the department’s key initiatives, with investments of more than \$12 million to fund apprenticeship programs in new industries through the President’s High Growth Jobs Training Initiative. They include:

- Health Care
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Information Technology
- Maritime Trades - Transportation
- Military - Indiana National Guard
- Geospatial Technology

The following case study looks at early results of marketing efforts in the military’s National Guard. Even though the project is young, there are promising trends that point to the value of apprenticeship:

## Benefits to the Military and Employers

- Greater competence of soldiers/employees
- Greater retention
- Lower investment in recruitment
- Higher productivity
- Improved quality of products and services
- More diverse workforce

## Benefits to Apprentices

- Nationally recognized and portable certificates
- Improved skills and competencies
- Increased wages as a result of mastered competencies
- Ability to advance in career
- Higher self-esteem based on enhanced skills and certifications

## Industry:

# MILITARY: INDIANA NATIONAL GUARD

Members of the Indiana National Guard augment the Army and Air Force during wartime and in times of national or international emergencies. Totalling about 14,000 today, Hoosier Guard members have served the nation in every major conflict since the Civil War of the 1860s. In fall 2004, about 3,000 Army and Air Guard members were serving in Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries in support of the War on Terrorism.

Over the years the governor has called the Guard into state service for assistance in disaster relief or to help maintain law and order: during tornadoes, flooding, blizzard conditions, failure of city and town utilities, aircraft crashes, domestic violence, and other emergencies.

Major units of the Indiana Guard include:

### Army Component

- 81st Troop Command
- 38th Infantry Division
- 219th Area Support Group
- 76th Infantry Brigade (Separate)
- 138th Regiment (RTI)
- Joint Forces Headquarters

### Air Force Component

- 181st Fighter Wing
- 122nd Fighter Wing

The Indiana Army National Guard maintains 79 armories and is present in 69 communities. The Guard is headquartered in Indianapolis at Stout Field, an airfield built during World War II.

# Valuable Career Preparation for the Military and Beyond

## Project Overview

The Indiana National Guard and OATELS have worked closely together since 2001 to establish and expand the Indiana Military Apprenticeship Program (INMAP), which provides apprenticeship training and certification to both Army and Air Force Guard members.

OATELS serves as the registration agency. In addition to civilian employers that sponsor part-time Guard apprentices, the Guard itself sponsors full-time members. The Indiana Veterans Office oversees disbursement of education funds for training of apprentices who are part-time Guard members and veterans.

As of October 2004, 103 Guard personnel who were mostly full-time Guard members had completed an apprenticeship and were serving as journey-level workers. In addition, 68 other Guard members were registered as apprentices in fall 2004. In January 2005 Guard officials announced they were in the process of recruiting and registering an additional 500 Guard members as apprentices. Many of the Guard members were returning to the state after being mobilized and deployed in support of the War on Terrorism.

The apprenticeship coordinator and other Guard staff as well as the Indiana OATELS staff contact and recruit civilian employers to sponsor apprentices. They identify employers who need workers with skills similar to military specialties. These skills include, for example, diesel mechanic, electronics technician, purchasing agent, counselor, machinist, sheet metal worker, truck







driver, fireman, security, welder, upholsterer, ordnance specialist, and auto/truck body repairer.

Although initially limited to full-time Guard members and civilian employees, the Guard also has started to extend Registered Apprenticeship to part-time Army and Air Guard members, who typically serve one weekend a month and attend two weeks of active duty for training. As Guard members demobilize from active duty, they are encouraged to become Registered Apprentices and take advantage of available educational opportunities. Guard officials believe that apprenticeship is an important, proactive approach that not only helps Guard members leaving active duty readjust to civilian life, but also helps meet the state's emerging workforce needs, especially construction and trucking.

About one-third of Guard members who are to be released from active duty in early 2005 were either unemployed or working in jobs with low pay prior to their deployment, according to Guard officials. Other Guard members who will be returning to civilian life will be adversely affected because of layoffs and business failures that have occurred since they were mobilized and deployed. They will need retraining and help finding employment. They will also be encouraged to become apprentices.

Eventually the Guard plans to implement a school-to-work, pre-apprenticeship program for high school students who have been recruited into the Guard. After enlistment, and prior to completion of military skills training, they can become apprentices and enter the civilian workforce.

### **Role of Registered Apprenticeship**

The Indiana Military Apprenticeship Program (INMAP) is a training system in which Guard members earn certification for skills they learn through documented work experience (on-the-job training) and related technical instruction. INMAP leads toward a nationally recognized DOL certificate that indicates a worker has achieved journey-level status.

Guard officials believe that INMAP is an essential and appropriate program to recognize and help Guard members for their service to our nation. Registered Apprenticeship offers the members an opportunity to turn military training into a

### **Workforce Challenges:**

The war on terrorism has slowed the momentum and diverted some attention from the implementation of the Indiana Guard's Registered Apprenticeship program within the full-time Guard staff. This has especially been the case with the Army Guard, which now is pressed to meet the immediate needs of the commanders in the field.

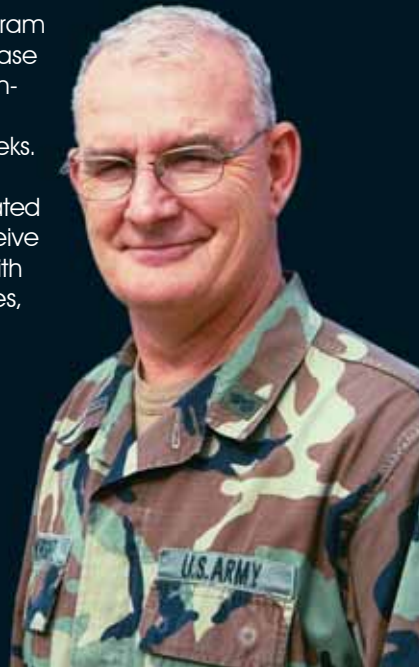
Another challenge has been aligning the military's job classifications, especially Air Force specialties, with those recognized within the Registered Apprenticeship system. Although many military jobs are similar, their descriptions and classifications often do not match exactly with occupational standards used by OATELS.



## INMAP Ensures Career Path

Indiana's Military Apprenticeship program has several unique features that are designed to help ensure that Guard members receive well-paying jobs with career progression as their job proficiency increases:

- Apprentices may participate in a degree-granting program concurrently that may lead to an associate's degree in applied science.
- Apprentices may participate in a student guild, which is a student group formed by program participants to foster relationships with employers who are sponsors.
- Training may be funded entirely through special Workforce Investment Act grants and tuition assistance that is provided to veterans.
- In addition to Guard members, the apprenticeship is available to the spouses and other immediate family members of Guard personnel who are unemployed or working in unskilled jobs that pay low wages.
- Depending upon the trade program selected, the related training phase (related instruction) of the apprenticeship program may be completed in as little as four weeks.
- Upon completion of the initial related instruction, apprentices may receive an employment commitment with one of the sponsoring companies, unions, or trade associations.



civilian credential that can be earned while completing a military obligation—in many instances at little or no cost to service members or employers.

Employers who sponsor apprentices, for example, incur no cost for related instruction that apprentices receive. Instead, the cost of training is paid for through the G.I. Bill and other tuition assistance programs that are available to Guard members, who increasingly are veterans of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq.



The Guard's Registered Apprenticeship program documents service members' training and skills learned while performing their regular military jobs, which also qualifies them for employment in many recognized civilian trades. The apprenticeship also can help lead to military career advancement as Guard members acquire and demonstrate increased skills and proficiency.

## Role of Educational and Training Organizations

Time spent in training as an apprentice can translate into college credit, often at little or no cost to Guard members. The Guard has established articulation agreements with several universities and colleges, including:

- The Community College of the Air Force, which grants college credit for courses taken through military schools and affiliated civilian schools and colleges to enlisted members of the Air Force and Air National Guard

## Profile - Guard Apprenticeship Coordinator

Indiana's Military Apprenticeship Program began with a meeting in 2001 called by top officials from the Guard and the Indiana State Veterans Office. Wondering why the state's Guard members were not using their educational benefits, the officials wanted to establish an apprenticeship program to provide training and certification for them.

Soon after the meeting, Ed Mesterharm, a retired Guard sergeant first class, was asked to lead the effort to establish a Registered Apprenticeship for both Army and Air Guard members. As the Guard's military apprenticeship coordinator, Mr. Mesterharm has worked closely with the Indiana OATELS staff who happened to have a military background.

As a result of their efforts, about 250 Guard members have completed apprenticeships and more than 500 members are currently enrolled in the program. Indiana's apprenticeship program so impressed the chief of the Air Guard that in January 2005 he



**Ed Mesterharm**  
Apprenticeship Coordinator  
Indiana National Guard  
Indianapolis, IN

ordered that the Indiana model be implemented in Guard units throughout the nation. The Army Guard also is considering whether and how to adopt the Indiana model.

Mr. Mesterharm said he has received great satisfaction watching the Guard's apprenticeship program grow and mature. "How many chances in your lifetime do you get to affect thousands in a positive way?" he asked.

"It's now a question of 'how big will it get' and not 'has it succeeded.' It (the apprenticeship program) already has succeeded and taken on a life of its own."

## Participating Employer Sponsors:

- Transport America, Eagan, MN, a large truck-load carrier that provides transportation services throughout the United States and Canada. Transport America has signed a partnership agreement with the Indiana Guard and Vincennes University for the two-year Driver Training Apprenticeship Program.
- Associated General Contractors of Indiana, Inc., whose members build large structures throughout the state
- Indiana Constructors, Inc., whose members build highways, bridges, pipelines and other parts of the state's infrastructure

## More Than 90 Military Specialties Are Apprenticeable, Including:

- Truck driver, mechanic, public affairs, airfield management, operations intelligence, aerospace propulsion jet engine mechanic, aircraft metals technology, education and training, financial management, historian, information and word processing, and personnel systems management.



- Ivy Tech State College, a statewide community college system with 23 campuses, which offers associate's degrees and technical certificates
- Vincennes University, a public, two-year, comprehensive, community college that features a full-service student residential environment

In addition, the Guard coordinator is making arrangements with other schools and colleges across the nation to provide training programs for specific job specialties. Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, for example, provides training for air traffic controllers at several campuses throughout the United States as well as through on-line instruction.

### **Role of Workforce Development System**

As part of the effort to build and expand the apprenticeship program, the Guard has partnered with the Veterans Employment and Training Service, and the Indiana Department of WorkForce Development, which includes the state's One-stop delivery system. Employers who are interested in sponsoring apprentices may contact either the training service or the workforce development department.

The state's workforce system also is cooperating with the Guard to bundle services in support of the apprenticeship for Guard members. For example:

- Workforce Investment Act funds are available through the One-Stop delivery system for use throughout the state to help retrain returning service members and returning war veterans.
- Helmets to Hardhats, a union-sponsored initiative funded by the workforce system, provides referral and job preparation services to Guard members and helps them arrange job interviews with employers who might serve as apprenticeship sponsors.





# Preliminary Observations

As a training model, Registered Apprenticeship and the military's training system are extremely compatible. Skills learned through military schools, which are often similar to civilian skills, can serve as the first step toward completion of a Registered Apprenticeship program.

## **Recruitment and Retention:**

Interviews with Guard supervisors and recruiters indicate that Registered Apprenticeship will serve as an important retention tool for the Indiana Guard. Recruiting and retention staff believe that skills training provided by the military, and the possibility of receiving a journey worker's card upon successful completion of an apprenticeship, will be "a great tool" to help convince Guard members to stay in the Guard. This possibly will mean a lower turnover rate among Guard members, which will ease the costly task of having to recruit and train large numbers of new Guard members.

## **Turning military skills to civilian skills:**

Registered Apprenticeship is an important program to recognize and help Guard members for their service to our nation, Guard officials believe. It offers an opportunity to turn military training into a civilian credential that can be earned while completing a military obligation. Time spent in training can translate into college credit, often at little or no cost to Guard members. Articulation agreements between the Guard and several universities and colleges, including the

Community College of the Air Force, provide college credit for military training, depending on the nature and length of the military schooling that a service member receives. The benefits are especially important to Guard members and their families who have lost jobs or are working in low-paying jobs.

## **Good source of dedicated workers:**

Military training and service builds self-esteem, dedication, and pride among service members. These are important attributes that most employers seek in their workers. When they hire Guard members, employers can be assured that they will get qualified, motivated, and disciplined workers, according to Guard officials.



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