

How Do I Join?

The first step to joining the Army National Guard is to contact an Army National Guard recruiter. You can do this by calling 1-800-GO-GUARD to find a recruiter in your local area, or ask your high school guidance counselor for help. Soon after you contact a recruiter, you will be scheduled to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) to see if you are qualified. Your ASVAB score will also determine which job, known as a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), you are qualified for. In addition, the Army National Guard has physical, academic, and legal qualifications that you must pass to join. You must be in good health and have no major physical handicaps. Seventeen is the minimum age to join the Army National Guard. If you are under age 18, you must receive consent from a parent or legal guardian. Your recruiter will provide you with more exact information and discuss your qualification status.



Basic Non-Prior Service Enlistment Criteria

- **Meet U.S. citizenship requirements**
- **Be between the ages of 17 and 42**
- **Have either a high school diploma or GED or be a high school junior or senior who is at least 17 years old**

If you have never served in any branch of the military, there are several enlistment options. All initial enlistment contracts are for eight years—that is you will have an eight year military service obligation. However, all eight years do not have to be served in an Army National Guard unit. Soldiers can serve for as little as three years in a unit where there is a requirement to participate a minimum of one weekend each month and two weeks for annual training, with the remaining five years spent in an inactive status. Some benefits, however, are based upon the length of your initial commitment to serving in a unit.

Initially, all members are required to attend basic training and advanced individual training, which can usually be scheduled to meet school requirements. Basic training lasts for approximately nine weeks and the length of advanced individual training varies according to career specialty. Your recruiter will provide you specific information for the Military Occupational Specialty you select.

Those who have previously served in any branch of the military have additional options available to them including a “Try One” program that allows a prior servicemember to serve for only one year before committing to a longer enlistment. See an Army National Guard Recruiter or call 1-800-GO-GUARD for more details on opportunities available for prior servicemembers.

Army National Guard members are generally required to attend one drill weekend each month and one annual training period each year. Weekend drills are usually scheduled over one weekend—a Saturday and Sunday each month, but may occasionally include reporting for duty on Friday night. In addition, units have a two-week annual training period every year that is usually scheduled during the summer. Your initial training will be broken into two parts. First you’ll get basic instruction on how to be a Soldier, like how to salute, march and shoot an M-16 rifle. Second you will learn a special, individual occupational skill. These two parts can be split so you can do the first part one summer and the second part the next summer. This means that high school juniors who attend basic training in the summer can earn pay all through their senior year. During the summers of your initial training, you receive full active duty pay and benefits.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Following are some frequently asked questions about the Army National Guard.

When do my education benefits begin?

Some benefits begin as soon as you enlist in the Army National Guard. This includes free SAT and GRE testing, CLEP exams, and Federal Tuition Assistance. You will be eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill and Montgomery GI Bill Kicker (a supplement to the Montgomery GI Bill) upon completion of your initial active duty for training (basic and advanced individual training).

Will I be able to go to college while I’m in the Army National Guard?

Absolutely! Thousands of Army National Guard members are successfully pursuing college studies and/or full-time jobs while earning pay and benefits in the Army National Guard. Your basic Army National Guard duty commitment is generally one weekend per month and two weeks during the summer. You can go straight to college, full or part-time, and complete most of your military obligation by the time you graduate from college.

Where will I be required to perform duty while in college and after graduation?

The Army National Guard is in every state and territory. There are more than 3,200 units located in more than 2,000 communities across the nation. Each state has a unique force structure with varying numbers of units, personnel, armories, and training sites. Wherever you go to school, there is probably an Army National Guard unit nearby.

