

ARNG Guard Support Center (GSC)

What is it? The Army National Guard Support Center (GSC) is located at the Professional Education Center (PEC) in Arkansas. The GSC provides education services to the 54 States and Territories and comprises the Education and Employment Counseling Support Teams (CSTs), GI Bill Support Team, Federal Tuition Assistance Support Team, Incentives Support Team, Information Technology Support Team, Testing Support Team. The GSC training cell conducts courses in Army Training Requirements Reporting System (ATRRS) for each respective team. The GSC assembles subject matter experts (SMEs) to support the 54 state education offices.

What has the National Guard done?

During FY11, the National Guard has completed the following:

- The ARNG Federal Tuition Assistance program processed over 39,511 Soldiers funding 154,022 courses.
- The GSC Counseling Support Team has provided education service support to approximately 59,376 Soldiers (primarily), Family Members, and Civilian Employees of the ARNG. This customer service activity consists of GED Plus Testing Sessions, Benefits Counseling, Employment Counseling, Degree Plans, College Credit Assessments, Soldier/Student Information Briefings, and degree planning/counseling support for Officers Without a Degree.
- The GI Bill Support Team provided GI Bill benefit related service and assistance to over 75,000 Soldiers and or family members under the following programs: MGIB-SR, MGIB-AD, Reserve Educational Assistance Program, Post 9/11 GI Bill, Post 9/11 GI Bill – Transferability, and GI Bill Kicker.
- The GSC oversees 4 ATRRS courses at PEC: The Education Services Course, Federal Tuition Assistance Managers Course, the GI Bill Managers Course, and the Incentives Managers Course; each course is offered three times per fiscal year.
- The Incentive Support Team processed over 27,000 payments to ARNG Soldiers to support bonuses and student loan repayment contracts, processed over 2,000 Exceptions to Policy, and conducted 2 Incentives Manager Courses, training 45 state Incentive Team Members. The team conducted 6 NGB state assistance visits culminating in the recertification of all 54 state and territory incentive managers at the August 2011GIMS conference.

What continued efforts does the National Guard have planned for the future?

In addition to the services listed above, recent additions to benefits and services include:

- Soldiers who are eligible for the new Post 9/11 Transferability option are better served through the GI Bill Support Team, which coordinates with the four Department of Veterans Affairs regional processing centers.
- All ARNG Soldiers can now use www.GoArmyEd.com to begin the process for Federal Tuition Assistance.

- Regional Counselors are assigned to assist the State managers with the influx of processing created by the transition to the GoArmyEd system.
- Starting with FY12 the GSC now offers Employment Support services such as resume writing, interview skills coaching, and job placement.
- Army e-Learning provides free Internet access to over 1,500 Information Technology, and Business Skills courses – potentially evaluated for college credit.
- The GSC identifies, contacts, and tracks company grade officers without degrees, helping them to get on the path to degree completion and thereby increasing the retention rate of recently commissioned officers in the ARNG.

Why is this important to the National Guard?

Education is the driving force for a strong nation and a strong military. Thousands of Soldiers and ARNG civilians take advantage of educational benefits and services during their active years and during their retirement or post-military time. The importance of education benefits to the Army National Guard cannot be overstated. These benefits represent some of the most important reasons why young men and women join the Guard and stay in the Guard. The decentralization of program operations offers a very effective way to reach Soldiers directly, but comes with many challenges. One of the primary challenges to decentralization is to maintain a consistently high expertise level across 54 States and Territories.

Additionally, education programs are complex and take considerable time and effort to learn and learn well. For this reason, centralized teams were established at PEC. The teams consist of subject matter experts who provide the continuity and stability that has been lacking in the states and is critical to future success. Without the support of the expert teams at PEC, the ARNG Education programs would be less successful and we would be more likely to fail in our mission to support the recruiting and retention efforts of the ARNG. Our continuing mission is to enable our Soldiers and their families to pursue civilian education goals for their personal and professional development.

For additional information:

<http://nationalguard.com>