

## **Guard Apprenticeship Program Initiative (GAPI)**

### **What is it?**

To help Soldiers improve their job skills and establish lifetime careers, the Army National Guard (ARNG) has established the Guard Apprenticeship Program Initiative (GAPI) – a partnering with the Department of Labor (DOL) in coordination with Veterans Administration (VA) offices. GAPI is an “earn while you learn” experience whereby Soldiers learn new concepts and skills and also obtain national certification in one of over 100 trades while earning wages. These trades are mapped to over 200 military occupational specialties (MOSs) and eligible Soldiers receive VA educational benefits while enrolled in an apprenticeship program. The apprenticeship combines an educational curriculum with on-the-job training supervised by a trade professional. Apprenticeship training takes one to five years depending upon the complexity of the job field (for example, it takes a full five years to become an electrician). Each apprenticeship year consists of 2000 documented work hours of on the job training (OJT) and 144 related instructional hours for the Soldier to become fully qualified in an occupation or trade.

### **What has the Army done?**

The GAPI program has been facilitating the accreditation of military training with the requirements set by the DOL and the VA.

GAPI addresses Soldier employment needs as Soldiers learn a new trade or earn certification in a field where the Soldier frequently has a combination of military and civilian on-the-job or “at home” experience but lacks the certification. In other cases, the Soldier selects a trade of interest and starts the program with a “Trade” 101 fundamental curriculum and completes the program as a certified professional.

### **What continued efforts does the Army have planned for the future?**

GAPI's future consists of facilitating apprenticeship programs with fire departments; trade unions for pipefitters, machinists, electricians; health and pharmacy occupations; construction apprenticeship programs – to name just a few. In addition, GAPI is planning to assist armories across the country start their own apprenticeship programs by helping them sponsor their technicians and provide opportunities for technicians to earn certifications and receive GI Bill benefits at no cost to the state. The GAPI program builds synergies with civilian employers and labor unions while developing specific apprenticeship opportunities for Soldiers.

**Why is this important to the Army?** This collaboration with DOL and community employers is essential to the sustainability of the ARNG and the vitality of the best trained and dependable professionals our nation has to offer – our volunteer Soldiers. The GAPI program provides Soldiers from the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve an opportunity to gain civilian employment and certification, while continuing to serve in the all-volunteer force or while transitioning back to the civilian workforce. Civilian employment is vital to our volunteer Soldiers and families because it improves the quality of life and allows Soldiers to capitalize on their skills and training acquired in

the Army and Army Guard while working in specialized careers. GAPI indirectly helps to reduce the number of Soldiers receiving unemployment services paid for by the government or the Department of Defense. Civilian skills and certifications are essentially force multipliers as they improve retention, morale, resilience, and overall readiness.