

# Frequent Asked Questions for Parents

For a young adult, the decision to join the Army will be the most important choice of his or her life. But that decision can be difficult to make without the support of family and friends. This is designed to help you understand the benefits of military service, and what you can expect for the future.

The U.S. Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve offer training and hands-on experience in hundreds of career paths. From engineering to law, medicine to mathematics, there are few institutions in the world that can match the training and educational services of the Army.

Aside from on-the-job training, the Army has dozens of programs designed to help Soldiers earn a college degree without having to swim through a sea of debt afterwards. For example, the ROTC program allows a young adult to attend college, receive Army training, and earn a commission as a U.S. Army Officer upon graduation.

Joining the Army is the opportunity to be a part of something greater than a nine to five office job. Army Soldiers have strength of body and character. They carry out orders with pride, and they are equipped to lead in any situation that requires a firm hand and a strong voice.

The United States Army is part of the Department of Defense, the largest employer in the world. There are opportunities to work full-time or part-time, get a degree or participate in hobbies, travel the world or sit at desk.

The Army is the oldest branch of the U.S. Military, founded in 1775, the Army defends the nation by land, sea and air. The Army offers over 990,000 members 150 career opportunities across various disciplines, including aviation, information technology, health care, aircraft maintenance and Special Forces.

Army Core Values: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage

# U.S. ARMY

## **I WANT MY CHILD TO GO TO COLLEGE. CAN S/HE DO BOTH?**

- In short Yes.
- Your child may opt to earn a college degree first, then join as an officer. This is an attractive option for those who feel called to lead. However, if s/he earned a degree, s/he can still choose to join as an enlisted service member. The enlisted vs officer page has more details.
- Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs provide officer training for students during college in exchange for scholarship money. In return, the students commit to serving for a set period of time after graduation. ROTC programs are offered at schools in every state and allow the student to have college experience while preparing to be an officer. College classes are mixed with service-specific ROTC curriculum (in the classroom and in the field), which covers everything from leadership studies to combat technique. Upon completion, your child would enter his/her chosen service as an officer
- The National Guard and Army Reserve is another option for those who wish to attend college and serve
- Enlisted service members can also earn a degree while serving.

## **WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ENLISTED AND OFFICER?**

- Enlisted: Much like employees at a company, every enlisted service member has a trained specialty, and plays a part in the success of his or her unit. If your child enters the military straight out of High School, they will be enlisted.
- Warrant Officers are specialized experts and trainers. Unlike commissioned Officers, who focus more on command and staff duty positions, Warrant Officers are focused solely on advancing within their chosen career specialties. You cannot enter military service as a Warrant Officer, they are chosen from the high ranks of enlisted personnel.
- Commissioned Officers are managers and planners. They are generally tasked with leading others. One of the best ways for your son or daughter to become an Officer is to join ROTC as a college student.

## **CAN MY CHILD SERVE PART-TIME? WHAT SERVICE OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE?**

- Active Duty: Active Duty service members make up America's ready, full-time defense force. They receive training to perform their jobs, and carry out day-to-day operations. Generally, Active Duty terms are full-time and range from two to six years.
- Reserve: Service members keep their civilian careers while training part-time. Service commitments range from one to six years, depending on the job and the location. Many professionals and college students serve in the Reserve. In times of need, Reserve service members may be called to Active Duty.
- National Guard: Another part-time duty option available in the Army and Air Force is the National Guard. The Guard are part-time service members whose main focus is on homeland security and humanitarian relief. National Guard units train close to home and assist communities in their state during emergencies like storms, floods, fires and other natural disasters.

- **Delayed Entry/Enlistment Program:** (also called the Future Soldiers Program in the Army) If your son or daughter wants to enlist as an Active Duty service member, he or she can enlist first into the Delayed Entry Program (DEP). This is a legally binding agreement to report for active duty (to ship out to boot camp) at a specific time in the future. Under current regulations, one can remain in the DEP for up to 365 days. Your son or daughter may decide on the DEP so he or she can prepare to meet the height and weight standards or graduate from high school. The Reserves and the National Guard do not have a DEP.

### **WHAT CAN WE DO TO PREPARE DURING HIGH SCHOOL?**

- **ASVAB Career Exploration Program:** Your son or daughter can participate in ASVAB Career Exploration Program (ASVAB CEP) as early as 10th grade. This program allows students to take the Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and an interest inventory to guide them in exploring careers and the different paths they can take to reach their career goals. If students participate during their 11th and 12th grade years, the ASVAB score they earn, can be used for enlistment (for up to 2 years) if they choose to enlist. The ASVAB CEP gives students who are interested in the military a huge advantage when comparing the jobs, benefits, and bonuses offered by the Services. Since they already have usable scores, these students can identify the best job opportunity for them among the services.
- Even if your son or daughter isn't interested in the military, they can still benefit from participation in ASVAB CEP. The career exploration tools allow students to understand their skills and interests, then explore civilian and military career options. They're able to understand entry requirements, daily tasks, advancement and earning potential. They also gain access to a customizable portfolio where they can chart their test scores, unique experiences, and preferences then, share with you and their school counselor for guidance on next steps.
- If you would like to see more information on this program, please go to [www.asvabprogram.com](http://www.asvabprogram.com)

### **CAN MY CHILD JOIN BEFORE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION?**

- Traditional high school juniors have a chance to enlist and reserve their place in select military careers. They must be 17 years of age or older to participate, and if they are 17, they must have parental consent.
- These programs run from April through September of your child's junior year. Participants will be entered into the Delayed Entry Program, but will not attend Basic Training until after receiving a high school diploma. Applicants must meet normal enlistment qualifications.

### **HOW LONG IS MY CHILD'S COMMITMENT?**

- This depends on what service they choose, what career field they pick and the training they accept.
- Some enlistment terms are as short as two years.

### **WILL THE MILITARY PREPARE MY CHILD FOR A CIVILIAN JOB?**

- Yes. The armed forces offer more than 4,100 careers, most of which have direct counterparts in the private sector.
- Additionally, service in the military builds leadership skills and personal responsibility traits that many employers seek in employees.

### **ARE THERE MEDICAL BENEFITS?**

- Members of the military and their families receive outpatient care at military hospitals and clinics at no charge. There is a nominal charge for in-patient care of family members.
- For families not located near military health facilities, the military medical insurance program (TRICARE) pays 80% to 100% of the costs at civilian hospitals and clinics.
- Dental care is free to service members.

### **WHAT MILITARY SERVICE BENEFITS WILL MY CHILD GAIN BY JOINING?**

- Military service comes with many benefits, including health care, life insurance, retirement benefits, and housing and food allowances.
- There are also perks like discounts at commercial retailers, special home loans, and free flights.

### **HOW DOES THE MILITARY COMPARE WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR?**

- The military offers stable but challenging careers with regular promotions and often accelerated responsibility. It provides training in 4,100 specialties, many of which have civilian counterparts.
- The armed forces also provide leadership experience and training that help people excel if they leave the military following their commitment.
- Other military benefits include early retirement programs, health and dental care, 30 days of paid vacation each year, veterans benefits, competitive [pay](#) and a variety of ways to earn money for college and training.

### **DO YOU HAVE TO BE A US CITIZEN TO JOIN?**

To enlist in the armed forces, you must be a citizen or legal resident. To become an officer, you must be a U.S. citizen.

### **WHAT KINDS OF QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK A RECRUITER?**

- Is there a enlistment bonus available for the job my child wants?
- Are there scholarship opportunities available for my child? What are the deadlines?
- My child wants a certain job, how can we be sure to get it?
- How long is the service commitment?
- Are there any upcoming events in our area where we could speak directly to service members?