

Postsecondary Training Options: United States Military

The military is a postsecondary training and employment option used by approximately 1.5 million people in the United States. While serving their country, military personnel develop transferable interpersonal and technical skills that can enhance their career prospects. All six branches of the military (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Space Force) offer extensive and diverse job training.

General Entry Requirements

Age: 17 (with parental consent) or 18 (without parental consent)

Physical requirements: Good general health, appropriate weight, and ability to pass standard physical screening are required. Applicants can be denied based on specific physical and learning characteristics. Physical requirements may vary across each service branch.

Educational requirement: Enlisted positions: High school diploma (GED is an acceptable option in some cases). Officer positions: Four-year degree or equivalent.

Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB): The ASVAB is a tool to explore careers or determine eligibility for military service. Each branch sets its own test scores to determine eligibility and placement into career tracks.

Typical Duration

Military commitment is an eight-year minimum for full or part-time enlistments, with a few exceptions. Boot camp generally lasts 6 to 13 weeks.

Full-Time or Active Duty

These members live on a base either in the United States or in another country for assignments that typically last 2 to 6 years.

Part-Time or Reservists and National Guard

Part-time employees are required to participate in training drills 1 weekend a month as well as a 2-week program each year. Reservists and National Guard members sometimes also serve alongside active duty service members and respond to national disasters.

Career Cluster Connection

There are two main types of military careers:

1. **Enlisted careers (82%).**

These include jobs that support military operations such as combat roles, and jobs that involve hands-on training for mechanical, transportation, human service or office jobs that transfer well into civilian life.

2. **Officer careers (18%).**

These include jobs that involve leadership and management of the military. Officer positions also include careers that require advanced degrees, such as law and medicine.

Some people choose to spend their entire working career in the military. Others use their military training and experiences to enter civilian jobs.

Learn More

- Search military careers by industry, salary and skills through [My Future: Military](https://myfuture.com/military) (myfuture.com/military).
- Review [Sample ASVAB questions](https://officialasvab.com/applicants/sample-questions) (officialasvab.com/applicants/sample-questions).
- Explore individual service branches' eligibility requirements and career paths at [Today's Military](https://todaysmilitary.com) (todaysmilitary.com).
- Review specific jobs, work environments, and additional jobs outlooks of the military through the [Occupational Outlook Handbook](https://bls.gov/ooh/military/military-careers.htm) (bls.gov/ooh/military/military-careers.htm).