

Military & Career Pathways

A Guide for Students and Families / Una Guía para Estudiantes y Familias

Military service is a real postsecondary option — one that can provide education benefits, career training, a paycheck, and a structured path forward. This guide explains the main routes, what each one generally requires, and what families should know before making a decision. Each branch sets its own standards, so details vary.

El servicio militar es una opción postsecundaria real que puede ofrecer beneficios educativos, capacitación profesional, un salario y un camino estructurado. Cada rama tiene sus propios estándares, así que los detalles varían.

Verify Before Deciding / Verifique Antes de Decidir

Requirements, benefits, and eligibility rules can change by branch and by service date. Confirm details with an official recruiter or VA source before deciding. Last reviewed July 2026.

Los requisitos, beneficios y reglas de elegibilidad pueden cambiar según la rama y la fecha de servicio. Confirme los detalles con un reclutador oficial o una fuente del VA antes de decidir. Última revisión: julio de 2026.

1. FOUR ROUTES INTO SERVICE / CUATRO RUTAS PARA INGRESAR AL SERVICIO

These are four common paths into service — not the only ones, and not identical across every branch. Standards, timelines, and requirements vary by branch.

Estas son cuatro rutas comunes para ingresar al servicio, no las únicas. Los estándares, plazos y requisitos varían según la rama.

OFFICER • COLLEGE FIRST

ROTC — Reserve Officers' Training Corps

Cuerpo de Entrenamiento de Oficiales de Reserva

Attend college full-time while training to become a military officer. Graduate with a degree and a commission.

Asista a la universidad a tiempo completo mientras se entrena para ser oficial militar. Se gradúa con un título y un nombramiento.

- Enroll at a college with an Army, Navy/Marine Corps, Air Force, or Space Force ROTC program
- Complete coursework and physical training alongside regular classes
- Scholarships may cover up to 100% of tuition and fees, depending on the program and scholarship level, plus a monthly stipend
- Apply junior or senior year of high school — deadlines vary by branch and school

BEST FIT FOR STUDENTS WHO

- Want a degree AND military service
- Are drawn to leadership and management roles
- Need financial help paying for college

ENLISTED • FULL-TIME

Enlisted Service

Servicio Alistado

Join directly after high school. Pay, housing, healthcare, and job training generally begin upon enlistment and completion of required processing and training — plus education benefits to use later.

Únase directamente después de la secundaria. El salario, la vivienda y la capacitación generalmente comienzan al alistarse y completar el procesamiento requerido, además de beneficios educativos.

- 8–12 weeks of basic training (varies by branch)
- Assigned a specific job or skill area (MOS)
- Typical commitment: 4 years active duty
- Tuition Assistance: up to \$4,500/year for college courses while serving
- Six branches: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard

WORTH RESEARCHING BEFORE COMMITTING

- Each branch has different jobs, culture, and deployment patterns

PART-TIME · CLOSE TO HOME

National Guard & Reserves

Guardia Nacional y Reservas

Serve part-time — about one weekend a month and two weeks a year — while living and working in your community.

Sirva a tiempo parcial, aproximadamente un fin de semana al mes y dos semanas al año, mientras vive y trabaja en su comunidad.

- Texas Hazlewood Act: Texas National Guard members may qualify for up to 150 credit hours of tuition exemption at Texas public colleges — eligibility is not automatic
- One of the most valuable state education benefits in the country
- Depends on Texas residency, service history, and current policy rules

BEST FIT FOR STUDENTS WHO

- Want to stay close to home and community
- Want education benefits without a full-time commitment
- Are drawn to emergency response or state-level roles

OFFICER · AFTER A DEGREE

OCS — Officer Candidate School

Escuela de Candidatos a Oficial

The path to becoming an officer for college graduates who didn't do ROTC. Enlist, complete OCS, receive a commission.

El camino para convertirse en oficial para quienes ya tienen un título universitario y no hicieron ROTC.

- Must have a bachelor's degree (any major)
- Meet age, fitness, medical, and background requirements — these vary by branch
- Program length typically 10–17 weeks, varies by branch

BEST FIT FOR STUDENTS WHO

- Already have or are finishing a degree
- Want officer status and leadership responsibility
- Didn't do ROTC but want to serve

2. CAREER FIELDS BY BRANCH / CAMPOS PROFESIONALES POR RAMA

Each branch trains for its own mission, so the jobs available look different depending on where a student enlists. These are examples, not a complete list — exact jobs depend on recruiting needs, qualifications, and current openings.

Cada rama entrena para su propia misión. Estos son ejemplos, no una lista completa; los empleos exactos dependen de las necesidades de reclutamiento, las calificaciones y las vacantes actuales.

- Army (Ejército) — infantry & combat arms, aviation, cyber & signal, military police, intelligence, medical, engineering & construction, logistics.
- Navy (Marina) — naval aviation, nuclear power & submarines, medical, cryptology & intelligence, special warfare, logistics & supply.
- Marine Corps (Infantería de Marina) — infantry, intelligence & communications, aviation maintenance, logistics, military police, combat engineering.
- Air Force (Fuerza Aérea) — aviation & flight, cyber & intelligence, maintenance & repair, healthcare, science & engineering, security forces.
- Space Force (Fuerza Espacial) — space operations, intelligence, cyber operations, engineering, acquisitions & contracting.
- Coast Guard (Guardia Costera) — deck & weapons, engineering, aviation, maritime law enforcement & search and rescue, administration & science.

3. MILITARY JOBS THAT TRANSITION BEST TO CIVILIAN CAREERS / EMPLEOS QUE MEJOR SE TRANSFORMAN EN CARRERAS CIVILES

Every military job builds transferable skills, and some fields often align with civilian careers more directly — based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data comparing military and civilian occupation codes. Civilian hiring also depends on credentials and licensing.

Todo empleo militar desarrolla habilidades transferibles, y algunos campos suelen alinearse más directamente con carreras civiles. La contratación civil también depende de credenciales y licencias.

- Cybersecurity & IT (Ciberseguridad y TI) — cyber and IT roles often align with information security analyst and network administrator jobs. Fastest-growing IT field, projected 33% growth.
- Healthcare (Atención Médica) — combat medics and corpsmen often qualify for EMT or paramedic roles, and with more schooling, can pursue registered nurse or physician assistant paths. Nurse practitioner: projected 46% growth.
- Logistics & Supply Chain (Logística) — supply and logistics roles across every branch often align closely with supply chain coordinator and operations roles.
- Skilled Trades (Oficios Especializados) — construction, electrical, and mechanical training can lead to licensed trade work, often with credit toward apprenticeship hours.
- Law Enforcement & Security (Aplicación de la Ley) — Military Police and Security Forces roles often align with civilian police work and corporate security.
- Leadership & Operations (Liderazgo y Operaciones) — even roles without a direct civilian match build leadership and team-management experience valued across every industry.

Free Tool / Herramienta Gratuita

The O*NET Military Crosswalk (onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC) lets a student search their exact military job code (MOS, AFSC, or rating) for a personalized list of matching civilian careers, required education, and typical pay.

Busque el código de empleo militar exacto para obtener una lista personalizada de carreras civiles equivalentes.

4. GI BILL & EDUCATION BENEFITS AFTER SERVICE / BENEFICIOS EDUCATIVOS DESPUÉS DEL SERVICIO

Veterans who complete their service obligation may qualify for education benefits that can cover college, trade school, certificate programs, and more. Benefit levels depend on service time and other eligibility factors — this is a summary, not a benefit guarantee.

Los veteranos que completan su obligación de servicio podrían calificar para beneficios. El nivel de beneficio depende del tiempo de servicio y otros factores; este es un resumen, no una garantía de beneficios.

Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33)

- May cover up to 100% of tuition and fees at public in-state schools, depending on length of service
- Monthly housing allowance and book/supply stipend, where eligible
- Up to 36 months of benefits (about 4 academic years) for fully eligible veterans
- May be transferable to a spouse or dependent child if eligibility and service commitments are met

Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 30)

- Monthly stipend for education — amount depends on enrollment and training type
- Requires a contribution of \$1,200 during service to activate

Vocational Rehabilitation (Chapter 31)

- For veterans with a service-connected disability
- Covers education, training, and employment services

Rates, eligibility, and program details change — verify current figures at va.gov before deciding.

Las tasas y la elegibilidad cambian; verifique las cifras actuales en va.gov antes de decidir.

5. QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE DECIDING / PREGUNTAS ANTES DE DECIDIR

- What job or career am I interested in? Does the military offer training in that area? / ¿Qué trabajo me interesa? ¿Ofrece el ejército capacitación en esa área?
- Am I ready for a multi-year commitment right after high school, or do I want college first? / ¿Estoy listo para un compromiso de varios años, o prefiero la universidad primero?
- What branch fits my personality and goals? / ¿Qué rama se ajusta a mi personalidad y metas?
- What happens to my education if I enlist? What benefits will I have? / ¿Qué pasa con mi educación si me alisto?
- How does deployment affect my family and plans? / ¿Cómo afecta el despliegue a mi familia?
- What are the obligations after enlistment — deployment, training, and time away from family? / ¿Cuáles son las obligaciones después de alistarse: despliegue, entrenamiento y tiempo lejos de la familia?
- What do veterans in my community say about their experience? / ¿Qué dicen los veteranos de mi comunidad?
- Have I spoken with an official recruiter and a veteran or service member I trust? / ¿He hablado con un reclutador oficial y con un veterano o militar de confianza?

How Anchored Pathways Can Help / Cómo Puede Ayudar Anchored Pathways

We can help you and your family think through whether military service fits your goals, compare pathways side by side, understand your education benefits, and ask the right questions before committing to anything.

Le ayudamos a usted y a su familia a pensar si el servicio militar se ajusta a sus metas, comparar rutas y hacer las preguntas correctas antes de comprometerse.

One-on-one navigation sessions are free, private, and available in English and Spanish.

Request a meeting: anchoredpathways.org | gutierrezm@anchoredpathways.org

