

Tuition Assistance for Service Members



Through its Tuition Assistance (TA) program, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) allows service members to further their education by enrolling in college-level courses and workforce training programs. Authorized through the annual National Defense Authorization Act, total DoD investment in TA exceeds \$480 million.¹ TA exists to:



Enhance readiness across the military and broader American workforce



Create incentives for service member retention and recruitment



Increase social mobility and provide smoother transitions into civilian life

TA plays a direct role in enabling the readiness of America's all-volunteer military force by providing financial support for occupation-related college courses and workforce training programs. As an employment benefit, TA provides access to meaningful personal and professional development. TA builds upon other educational programs offered by DoD, including its programs that are designed to translate military training and occupational experiences into academic credit.

HOW IT WORKS

Through the TA program, service members can pursue a range of educational pathways—including undergraduate, graduate, vocational, licensure, or certificate programs—either in person or online. TA benefits offer up to \$4,500 per year for each service member across all branches of service. DoD has currently established a cap on TA at \$250 per semester credit hour. Funds can be used to cover tuition and course-specific fees but cannot be used for other expenses such as books, course materials, transportation, or housing.

Colleges and universities that participate in the TA program agree to the terms of the DoD Voluntary Education Partnership Memorandum of Understanding, which outlines program standards and reporting requirements. Funds are distributed directly to the institution on behalf of the service member, though each service member must apply for TA and meet eligibility requirements to receive funds.

TUITION ASSISTANCE BY THE NUMBERS



270,000 service member beneficiaries (five-year average)



\$489 million in TA expenditures in FY 2023



665,000 courses funded annually



1,600+ academic institutions eligible for TA reimbursement



\$736 average cost per three-semester-hour course

¹ Tuition assistance benefits build on the **DoD Voluntary Education Programs** dating back to 1941. TA was formally authorized under the **National Defense Authorization Act of 1974** and codified in **10 U.S.C. § 2007**.