



UNCLASSIFIED



How to apply for TN STRONG Act

PRESENTED BY:
TNNG Education Services
TNNG-G1-EDU

As of 1 April 2019



Tennessee STRONG Act

- **The TN STRONG Act:**
 - Established a 'last dollar' four-year pilot program
 - Provides eligible members of the TNG tuition **reimbursement** toward an associate's degree or first bachelor's degree, or up to 120 credit hours (or equivalent), or 8 full semesters; which ever is met first.
 - Tuition **reimbursement** program; payments sent directly to postsecondary institution on behalf of TNG Member
 - Maintain satisfactory academic progress and a **GPA of 2.0** for courses which STRONG Act is requested
 - Apply for **reimbursement** after enrolled in classes or NLT 90 days of course completion



Tennessee STRONG Act

■ Program requirements...

- TNG Members responsible for **routing application through unit & submission** to State TA managers.
- Submission dates*: 1 Oct (Fall), 1 Feb (Spring), and 1 June (Summer)
- Application acceptance letters provided to TNG Members & schools
- Degree plans required after (9) semester hours or equivalent when STRONG Act is used.
- Attend regionally accredited **community colleges, 4 year public & private schools or institutions within TN**; THEC & FTA approved. School's primary campus must be domiciled in Tennessee
- Verified **itemized billing information & unofficial transcripts/final grades** are required before payments are made directly to school on behalf of member; release statement required.

Check with school about deferment deadlines



Tennessee STRONG Act

- Eligibility Requirements:
 - May apply upon enlistment and must have not missed a ship date to successfully complete basic military training.
 - Currently serving members Air or Army Components, to include Traditional, Technician & AGR
 - Apply for and exhaust all Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) if eligible.
 - Be in good standing with the TNG for the purposes of this program
 - Missed Ship Date
 - “Bad Year” (9 unexcused absences or missing Annual Training)



Step 1: Application Process

1. Enroll and register with eligible institution.
2. Register classes for FTA through GoArmyEd and provide proof of registration with STRONG application (If applicable).
3. Fill out Application and required documents at following web-site:
www.tn.gov/military/section/education-incentives
4. Degree plan required (first time students after 9 hours of usage.)
5. Submit application once enrolled in classes or by chosen schools submission deadline
6. Law allows complete application NLT 90 days of course completion for reimbursement.



Application Instructions



Application Instructions for TN STRONG Act



NEW...Submission Deadlines: 1 October (Fall); 1 February (Spring) & 1 June (Summer)

*****Check with your post-secondary institutions for deferment deadlines!*****

Print or save the entire packet. Follow detailed instructions regarding each item as follows:

- TNG STRONG Act tuition reimbursement Application Form:**
Section I - Members Information: Complete in full, blocks 1-16 as required.
Block 15: used to validate member's eligibility for Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) and is a serving member during the school semester.
Section II - Members Waiver & Certification - Read statement, sign and date as required.
Check all items included in your application packet.
Section III - Unit/Squadron Commander: Submit your application packet to your Commander for review. Commander will recommend or non-recommend, sign and date. If non-recommended, Commander is required to provide a letter outlining reasons. Include letter in application packet.
Section IV - Enrollment Certification: Take to certifying official at postsecondary institution to complete.
Section V - State TA Manager Review: Completed by State Tuition Assistance Manager ONLY.
- TNG STRONG Act tuition reimbursement State of Understanding (SOU):** Applicants must READ and initial each paragraph, sign and date as required.
This is legal acknowledgement for record and is considered supporting documentation.
- TNG STRONG Act Tuition Reimbursement Authorization for Release Form:**
Print member name and last 4 of SSN. Read statements, initial each paragraph, complete postsecondary institution information, sign and date as required. *The postsecondary institution version of FERPA will be accepted.*

Once application packet is complete, upload as one document and email to either Air or Army mailboxes relevant to your branch of service.

Air email: ng.tn.tnarnng.mbx.ngtn-state-tuition-assistance-air@mail.mil

Army email: ng.tn.tnarnng.mbx.ngtn-state-tuition-assistance-army@mail.mil

Questions? Use the contact sheet to contact our State Tuition Assistance Managers.



Section I- III

-Every block should be filled out and/or signed.

- If you are unsure of what to enter in a block, please contact your unit, school or the STA Manager.

- Submission of an incomplete form(s), will result in a returned packet and will delay the acceptance process.

Tennessee National Guard Application for the STRONG Act Tuition Reimbursement Program				
"This document contains information exempt from mandatory disclosure under the FOIA. Exemption 5 U.S.C. 553(b) (6) applies. This document also contains personal information that is protected by the Privacy Act of 1974 and must be safeguarded from unauthorized disclosure"				
SECTION I – MEMBER'S INFORMATION				
1. Member's Name (Last, First, MI):	2. Gender (M/F)	3. Date of Birth (YYYYMMDD)	4. Rank/Grade	5. SSN:
6. Permanent Home Address:		7. City	8. State:	9. Zip Code:
10. Phone Number (Home, Cell, Work)		11. Valid Email Address (Work, Civilian, Military)		
12. Unit of Assignment / City:		13a. Branch Of Service: <input type="checkbox"/> Air Guard <input type="checkbox"/> Army Guard		
		13b. Duty Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input type="checkbox"/> Active Guard Reserve (AGR)		
14. Highest Level of Education Completed: <input type="checkbox"/> HS Graduate/GED <input type="checkbox"/> Associate's Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Some College <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree		15. Enlistment Date: (YYYYMMDD)	16. ETS Date: (YYYYMMDD)	
SECTION II – MEMBERS WAIVER & CERTIFICATION				
By signing this form, I agree to have my transcript, itemized bill and withdrawal information released to the TNG JFHQ A-1/JFHQ G-1. I understand that my acceptance for the STRONG Act tuition reimbursement program is based upon availability of funding. I have carefully read the attached SOU and all questions have been explained to my satisfaction.				
Member's Signature:				Date Signed (YYYYMMDD):
SECTION III – UNIT/SQUADRON COMMANDER				
I certify that the Member is a satisfactory participant in good standing with less than 9 unexcused absences from UTAs within any 12 month period with my respective unit as prescribed in AR 135-91, AR 350-1, or AFI 36-3209. Further I certify that he/she meets the eligible criteria outlined in Rule 0930-02-01 of the policy for the STRONG Act Program.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Recommend <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Recommend				Date Signed (YYYYMMDD)
Commander's Printed Name:		Commander's Signature:		



Section IV

SECTION IV- Enrollment Certification						
****Filled by Certification Official at Postsecondary Institution****						
<p>"This document contains information exempt from mandatory disclosure under the FOIA. Exemption 5 U.S.C. 553(b) (6) applies. This document also contains personal information that is protected by the Privacy Act of 1974 and must be safeguarded from unauthorized disclosure"</p> <p>Request the postsecondary institution provide the following information in order to certify member's enrollment to complete the application packet for TN STRONG Act tuition reimbursement as outlined in the State of Tennessee Public Chapter No. 229 And Rule 0930-02-01.</p>						
Name of Student (Last, First, Middle Initial):			SSN: (Last 4)	Degree Major:		
ENROLLMENT DATA						
Class Start/End Dates (YYYYMMDD)		Course Number	Course Title	Credit/Clock Hour Cost	Total Hours	Total Course Charges
START	END					
Total Credit Hours Earned Towards Degree:		Number of Hours Enrolled:		Total Tuition Charges:		
CERTIFICATIONS – The provisions described on this sheet are certified to be correct as of date signed below.						
Name and Address of Financial Aid/Business Office:				Phone Number:		
Email:		Printed Name and Signature of Certifying Official:			Date Signed: (YYYYMMDD)	
SECTION V- STA MANAGER REVIEW						
I certify that the Member's application packet contains all required documents and I have properly reviewed this application packet.						
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected				Tuition Amount Accepted:		
STA Manager Signature:			Date:			



Statement of Understanding



Tennessee National Guard STRONG Act Tuition Reimbursement Statement of Understanding



Applicants must initial each paragraph indicating the acceptance of this Agreement. This is a legal acknowledgement for record & is considered supporting documentation.

I understand to be eligible for STRONG Act tuition reimbursement, I must be a member of the Tennessee National Guard and have not missed a *ship date** to begin basic military training prior to current course start date. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I understand that it is my sole responsibility to submit all required documentation, as part of a complete application packet to ensure proper and timely processing. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I understand that I must submit my complete application by the submission deadlines as follows: 1 October (Fall); 1 February (Spring); 1 June (Summer) depending upon date of courses. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I understand that if my application is submitted late for any reason then it will be rejected. Approval for STRONG Act tuition reimbursement is subject to availability of funding. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I must serve in the Tennessee National Guard beyond the end of the term for the academic period for which STRONG Act tuition reimbursement is requested. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I understand that I must first apply and exhaust ALL Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) when eligible before submitting my application for STRONG Act tuition reimbursement. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I understand that if I am an Army National Guard member, I must provide proof of an existing 'GoArmyEd' account** which provides access to FTA DOD funding. State law requires usage of FTA before TN STRONG Act tuition reimbursement can be executed. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I understand that if I am a non-scholarship Army ROTC Cadet, I must apply for and exhaust all FTA when eligible before submitting my application for STRONG Act tuition reimbursement. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I understand that if I fail to apply for and exhaust FTA as required by State law, I will receive a reduced amount of STRONG Act tuition reimbursement. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I have not previously received a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited postsecondary institution. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

(*ship date for purposes of this program refers to the date a TNG Member departs to begin basic military training.)



Tennessee National Guard STRONG Act Tuition Reimbursement Statement of Understanding



I have not received nor have I applied for STRONG Act tuition reimbursement, which exceeds or will exceed more than 120 credit hours, 8 full-time semesters or equivalent if the educational institution is on a system other than a semester system. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I understand that I must successfully complete all courses and maintain a GPA of 2.0 for the academic period that STRONG Act tuition reimbursement is being sought. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I understand if STRONG Act tuition reimbursement is approved, it shall not exceed the actual tuition charged by my chosen postsecondary institution approved to receive state or federal funds. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I understand that TN STRONG Act tuition reimbursement must be paid to an educational institution, not to the individual. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I understand after submission of my application packet, I must report any changes immediately to the State Tuition Assistance Manager to include withdrawals or adding additional courses. Course cost will not be covered after the schools official withdrawal date. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I understand that I MUST provide a copy of my unofficial transcripts and detailed itemized bill for the academic period in which I have submitted an application packet for STRONG Act tuition reimbursement. This constitute a complete application packet. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I understand I MUST notify the State Tuition Managers if this funding results in a degree (Associates or Bachelors). Submit copy of diploma or transcripts. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I understand that my questions regarding the program, application process, or payment information should be directed to the State Tuition Assistance Manager. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I have read and understand that if I do not comply with all of the above, I will not be approved for STRONG Act tuition reimbursement. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

I understand that the STRONG Act tuition reimbursement program is subject to appropriations set by the Tennessee State Legislature and limitations are set forth in Public Chapter No. 229. ____ (Applicant's Initials)

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

(**Instructions for 'GoArmyEd' accounts are on [tn.gov/military/programs & benefits](http://tn.gov/military/programs&benefits))



Release Form /// AKA(FERPA)



Tennessee National Guard STRONG Act Tuition Reimbursement Authorization to Release



Student Name: _____ SSN: XXX-XX-_____

This form allows students to authorize the release of confidential academic, financial aid, discipline, and student account information otherwise protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to designated person(s). These designated person(s) will have access to the student's grades and progress reports, certain disciplinary records, and other information related to academic progress, financial aid, and student financial accounts.

In an attempt to handle requests for grades, account balances and/or financial aid information, etc. we are requesting that the student complete this form at the time of registration. This release will allow the chosen postsecondary institution listed below to discuss this information with the Tennessee National Guard without a delay.

If for any reason, I decide to change any information on this form, I must notify my chosen postsecondary institution immediately.

Authorization: Initial the following boxes and complete requested information below:

____ Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the postsecondary institution listed below is permitted to disclose information from your education records to the Tennessee National Guard with your consent. By signing this form you agree to allow your institution to release information from your academic records. I consent to the disclosure of any personally identifiable information from my education records to the Tennessee National Guard, as my institution finds appropriate.

____ I hereby authorize the release of my grades, when available, to the Tennessee National Guard

____ I hereby authorize the release of information related to my student account and financial aid received, including oral and/or written communication with the postsecondary institution listed below, as requested.

Postsecondary Institution Name: _____

Postsecondary Institution POC: _____

Student's Address _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____



Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA)



Updated: 3 October 2018

Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA)

1. What Is It?

- FTA is financial assistance provided for voluntary off-duty education programs in support of a Soldier's professional and personal self-development goals. (Reference: AR 621-5, Army Continuing Education System)

2. How Do I Qualify?

- Tier 1:**
 - Be currently serving in the ARNG and completed either Advanced Individual Training (AIT), Warrant Officer Basic Course (WOBC), or Basic Officer Leaders Course (BOLC).
 - Have not attained a bachelor's degree and wish to pursue an undergraduate academic certificate, associate's or bachelor's degree or.
 - Have attained a bachelor's degree and wish to pursue a graduate academic certificate or.
 - Have attained a bachelor's degree without the use of FTA and wish to pursue a master's degree.
- Tier 2:**
 - Be currently serving in the ARNG and completed either Advanced Leader's Course (ALC), Warrant Officer Advanced Course (WOAC), Captain's Career Course (CCC), or equivalent.
 - Have attained a bachelor's degree with the use of FTA and wish to pursue a master's degree.
- Service Requirement/Obligation:**
 - Have an ETS or MRD after completion of FTA funded course(s).
 - Officers and Commissioned Warrant Officers are subject to a four year Reserve Duty Service Obligation (RDSO) OR a two year Active Duty Service Obligation (ADSO).
- Additional Criteria:**
 - The college is regionally or nationally accredited AND is a participant in GoArmyEd (GAE).
 - The funded course(s) meets a requirement listed in your personalized degree plan provided by the school (this can include prerequisite courses).
 - You maintain an undergraduate GPA of 2.0 or a graduate GPA of 3.0 for FTA-funded courses.
 - You must submit your FTA request at least 5 business days prior to course start date.
 - NOTE! FTA is NOT authorized simultaneously with Chapter 1606/MGIB-SR or Chapter 1607/REAP for the SAME course (Ref. DODI 1322.25).

3. What Do I Get?

- FTA will pay up to \$250 per semester hour and up to 16 SHs per fiscal year.
- Lifetime limit of 130 undergraduate semester hours and 39 graduate semester hours.
 - Up to 21 additional semester hours for a Transition Certificate not previously received within the past five years. Must apply within three years of anticipated separation.
- FTA will pay toward one credential at each of the following levels:
 - Associate Degree, Bachelor Degree, Master Degree, Undergraduate/Graduate Certificate
 - First Professional degrees are NOT eligible (i.e. doctorate degrees, Juris doctorates).

Updated: 3 October 2018

4. Programs NOT Eligible For FTA

- Courses leading to a credential that are lower or lateral to the highest credential you have already earned.
 - Example: if you have a bachelor's degree (even if you came in the ARNG with one), you cannot use FTA to pursue a second bachelor's or associate's degree.
- Any program that bundles tuition and fees together into a lump sum charge.
- Continuing Education Units (CEUs) or courses that do not meet degree requirement.

5. How Do I Apply?

- Create a user account in GoArmyEd.com:
 - Go to www.goarmyed.com and establish a GAE Federal Tuition Assistance account by clicking on the "New User" button and entering all required data.
- Tips to remember when applying:
 - Apply for FTA up to 60 days prior to the class start date, but no later than 5 business days prior to the class start date (all FTA MUST be approved prior to the class start date).
 - You must submit an FTA request for each individual course that you want FTA to fund.
 - If your school charges by quarter hour or clock hour, GAE will automatically convert them into semester hours on the FTA request.
 - If your school's courses are not listed in GAE (i.e. you have to physically enter your courses into each FTA request), you must upload the following documentation into your GAE "Education Record" eFile:
 - Cost Verification Statement: individualized document such as a billing statement/invoice specific that breaks out the cost of tuition and fees separately.
 - Class Schedule: individualized document that shows all courses to include class name, start date, end date, course number, and number of credit hours.
 - All of these documents MUST have your name and the name of the school on them, and cannot be in an editable format.
 - After you complete six semester hours of FTA-funded coursework, you must provide an individualized degree plan/student agreement to GAE.
 - This document should list the courses required for completion of your degree, as well as the existing credits already applied toward your degree.
 - New FTA users and anyone who changes their degree plan are required to complete VIA (VIA is a planning tool in GAE designed to help Soldiers identify their "best fit" school).

For More Information:

- Apply On Line: www.goarmyed.com
- Visit us On-Line: www.nationalguard.com/education
- Contact your Education Services Office: <https://www.tn.gov/military/programs-benefits/education-incentives>

 Follow us on Facebook! [www.facebook.com/ Tennessee-Army-National-Guard-Education-Services-211268552242105/](https://www.facebook.com/Tennessee-Army-National-Guard-Education-Services-211268552242105/)

NATIONAL GUARD



Degree Plan

Tennessee School Knoxville, TN

Degree Plan

Program: Bachelor of Applied Science in Network Security
Transfer Credits Accepted: 38 Semester Credit Hours
Total Credit Hours Needed to Graduate: 126 Semester Credit Hours

Student: Eric Delco
Address: 123 Joe Lane
Nashville, TN
Phone: 615-123-4567

To Whom It May Concern:

Eric Delco, SS# XXX-XX-1234, is enrolled full-time in our Bachelor of Applied Science in Network Security Program. Eric will begin his degree program on August 28, 2017 and is expected to graduate on August 23, 2019. The total degree credit hours required to graduate for the NS program is 126 Semester Credit Hours. Eric pays \$483.00 per semester credit hour and his tuition and fee charges are as follows:

Fall Semester 2017

Semester Start Date: August 28, 2017

Semester End Date: December 12, 2017

The following is a list of courses/charges for Fall Semester, 2017:

Course	Course Title	Credit Hours	Charge
BC205	A+ Essentials	3	\$1455.00
BC206	A+ Practical Application	3	\$1455.00
BC207	Linux Fundamentals	3	\$1455.00
NS303	Sec+, Network Security & Management	3	\$1455.00
BC204	Intro to Networking	3	\$1455.00
TOTAL		15	\$7275.00

Supplies and Expenditures	Charge
Tech Fee	\$100.00
Textbooks and Supplies	\$625.00
TOTAL	\$725.00
TOTAL REIMBURSABLE CHARGES	\$8000.00

Best Regards,

Horatio Caine

Financial Aid Representative



Step 2: Acceptance of Packet

1. Applicants will receive a letter from the State Tuition Assistance Manager stating whether application packet is accepted or rejected.
 - *If rejected, applicant may fix errors and immediately return application to State Tuition Assistance Manager in a timely manner*
2. Acceptance letter will be sent to applicants and chosen school; Section VII will be forwarded to obtain Federal & State funding sources.



Step 3: Approval of Packet

1. Applicants will complete classes and obtain a 2.0 GPA
2. Submit **unofficial transcripts/final grades** to State Tuition Assistance managers in a timely manner
(screenshots with student names are acceptable)
3. School will verify sources of any **Federal and/or State funding** from student's itemized bill on Section VII which completes the application process.
4. Signed FERPA allows schools to provide both items directly to State Tuition Assistance managers.
5. Applicant will receive a formal approval or denial letter after Advisory Board convenes.



Section VII

SECTION VII – BILLING SUMMARY	
Request the postsecondary institution provide the following information in order to certify student's funding from their itemized bill to complete the application packet for STRONG Act tuition reimbursement as outlined in the State of Tennessee Public Chapter No. 229 and Rule 0930-02-01.	
Member's Last Name, First Name:	Member's Social Security Number: (Last 4)
Total Amount of Tuition Accepted: (Amount Accepted from Section V Enrollment Certification)	
FTA (Federal Tuition Assistance) Used This Academic Term	
Amount of Federal funding granted to Student (Pell Grant, Federal Scholarships, Chapter 33 Post 9/11, etc..)	
Amount of State funding granted to Student (Hope Scholarship, TSAC Grant etc..)	
Final remaining balance after deductions from above (FTA, Federal Funding, State Funding)	
Is Service Member Graduating This Semester? Yes No	Expected Graduation Date (YYYY/MM):
Printed Name and Signature of Certifying Official	Date Signed: (YYYYMMDD)
<u>Comments:</u>	

****Note: Please provide a copy of Itemized Bill & Unofficial Transcript ****

Revised 29 November 2018



Tennessee STRONG Act

- **Application Packets** consist of a two page application form, authorization to release form, statement of understanding, and a course degree plan. Obtain packet from:
<http://tn.gov/military/section/education-incentives>
- **It is the TNG Member's responsibility** to route application packet through Commander for recommendation & submit as follows:
- Submit to Army or Air email boxes:

ng.tn.tnarng.mbx.ngtn-state-tuition-assistance-air@mail.mil

ng.tn.tnarng.mbx.ngtn-state-tuition-assistance-army@mail.mil



State Tuition Assistance Contacts



TN STRONG Act Contact Information

Website for current TN STRONG Act information:

<http://tn.gov/military/section/education-incentives>



Air Guard State Tuition Assistance Manager

MSgt Joseph Wilson – Commercial: (615) 313-0849

Air email: ng.tn.marng.mbx.ngtn-state-tuition-assistance-air@mail.mil

Army Guard State Tuition Assistance Manager

SFC Stephen Biase - Commercial: (615) 313-0737

Army email: ng.tn.tnarmg.mbx.ngtn-state-tuition-assistance-army@mail.mil

TN STRONG Act Outreach NCO

SSG Joseph Baydoun – Commercial: (615)313-2697; Cell – (629) 395-3437

Email: joseph.h.baydoun.mil@mail.mil





Helpful Websites

- Federal Tuition Assistance: Army
<http://www.goarmyed.com>
- State Tuition Assistance information:
www.tn.gov/military/section/education-incentives
- Tennessee Higher Education Commission:
<http://www.tn.gov/thec/>



Frequently asked Questions

1. Can I use the Chapter 33 GI Bill with The TN STRONG Act? *No, both are last dollar*
2. Can I use Chapter 1606 GI Bill with the TN STRONG Act? *Yes, will be paid to student*
3. Can I use Pell Grants and Scholarships with The TN STRONG Act? *Yes, but all sources of Federal or State funding is deducted from total reimbursed by TN STRONG Act.*



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Questions

