

Governor Schwarzenegger Announces Education Assistance for California National Guard Members



Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today announced the California National Guard Education Assistance Program (CNGEAP), a new program he made sure was part of the state budget that will provide financial assistance for California's National Guard members to get a college education. Before this legislation, California was the only state in the nation that did not offer an education incentive to reward and retain National Guard members.

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"California's National Guard is on the front lines of every disaster. From protecting citizens from wildfires and floods here at home to serving the people of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, the Guard can be relied on in every emergency," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "These brave men and women are heroes, and now they will have the opportunity to get the college education they deserve. I have fought for education benefits for California's troops since I came into office, and I will continue to work to ensure they are rewarded with the opportunities they have earned."

CNGEAP is designed to help nearly 1,000 Guard members pay to attend colleges and universities. It will begin in January 2010 with \$1.8 million to cover the majority of fees associated with attending a public or qualifying private institution.

"This legislation is a small token of our state's appreciation of our citizen soldiers who selflessly answer the call to defend our freedom," said Senator Dave Cogdill (R-Modesto), an Air National Guard veteran who carried SB 815, nearly identical legislation designed to help National Guard members with the costs of attending college or a vocational education program. "By investing in the education of our brave servicemen and women, we are investing in our overall economy."

While the new Post-9/11 G.I. Bill and Montgomery G.I. Bill provide education benefits for National Guard members who have been deployed on a federal overseas deployment, they do not apply to Guard members who remain at home on state service. The newly enacted bill, [ABX4 12](#), was signed at the State Capitol on July 28 and means California Guard members are eligible to apply for education assistance.

Providing an educational benefit will give an incentive for the best and most experienced Guard members to continue their service. According to the California Military Department, an overwhelming 74 percent of servicemembers said they would extend their service in exchange for help with the costs of higher education.

"The California National Guard Education Assistance Award Program will ensure that the most qualified and experienced Guard members will be retained to continue to serve the great state of California," said California Adjutant General Major General William H. Wade II.

Please see [Fact Sheet](#) for more information on CNGEAP.