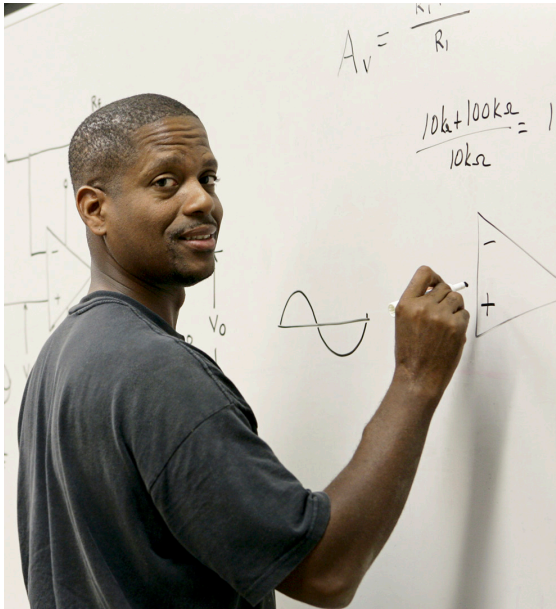
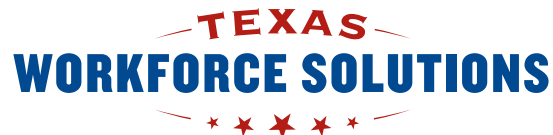


# College Credit for Heroes Annual Report 2014-15



**Texas Workforce Commission Mission:  
To promote and support a workforce  
system that creates value and  
offers employers, individuals, and  
communities the opportunity to  
achieve and sustain economic  
prosperity.**



# COLLEGE CREDIT FOR HEROES 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

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# INTRODUCTION

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## HISTORY

Senate Bill (SB) 1736, passed by the 82nd Texas Legislature in 2011, authorized the College Credit for Heroes program to identify, develop, and support methods to maximize college credit awarded to veterans and military service members for their military experience, education, and training.

In 2015 further legislation changed the program's status from a demonstration program to a permanent one. SB 806, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, also requires the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), in consultation with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), to annually report to the legislature and the governor on program-related results, best practices, and additional measures needed.

## PROGRAM DESIGN

The College Credit for Heroes initiative seeks to maximize college credit awarded to veterans and service members for their military experience in order to expedite their transition into the Texas workforce. The program's goal is to eliminate obstacles to attaining licensing, certification and accreditation, and degree awards at state and national levels so that veterans transition more quickly from college classrooms to the workforce.

Since 2011, College Credit for Heroes has focused on three primary aspects of the program: the online web portal, network of partner schools, and accelerated curriculum.

## ONLINE WEB PORTAL

In April 2012, Central Texas College launched [CollegeCreditforHeroes.org](http://CollegeCreditforHeroes.org), an online application and database through which veterans and service members can receive an official evaluation of credit to be used at colleges and universities throughout the state. As of July 1, 2015, the website has received over 70,000 visits, with 50,000 veteran and service member account holders who have requested more than 10,000 evaluations for college credit. Results from the first three years show that Texas veterans and service members have been recommended an average of 25 credit hours per evaluation issued through the College Credit for Heroes website.

## NETWORK OF COLLEGE CREDIT FOR HEROES PARTNER SCHOOLS

Since the award of academic credit is contingent upon approval of the receiving Texas college or university, increasing awareness and encouraging participation is imperative. Schools sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to review College Credit for Heroes evaluations and make a commitment



to award as many credits as possible and as applicable. To date, the number of College Credit for Heroes partner institutions has grown from 7 to 42. For a complete list of College Credit for Heroes MOU partners, see Appendix 1, "List of College Credit for Heroes Partner Schools."

## **ACCELERATION CURRICULA**

Thirteen Texas colleges and universities have created a total of 76 acceleration curricula in fields such as emergency medical services,

surgical technology, respiratory therapy, health information technology, nursing, cyber security, information technology, firefighting, advanced manufacturing, logistics, wind engineering, and oil field technology. Five more schools are currently developing 11 new acceleration curricula, and one school is replicating previously developed curricula as part of College Credit for Heroes Phase III. For details about the specific curricula projects, see Appendix 2, "Curricula Developed under College Credit for Heroes."





## PHASE I

On April 13, 2010, TWC dedicated \$3 million funds to be used for transitioning veterans back into the Texas workforce.

The 82nd Texas Legislature passed SB 1736, which authorized the program to identify, develop, and support methods to maximize college credit awarded to veterans and military service members for their military experience, education, and training in order to expedite entry into the workforce.

Seven community colleges were selected and awarded contracts in June 2011 to develop model programs for veterans and service members to obtain the maximum credit from their military experience toward a degree or a professional certification.

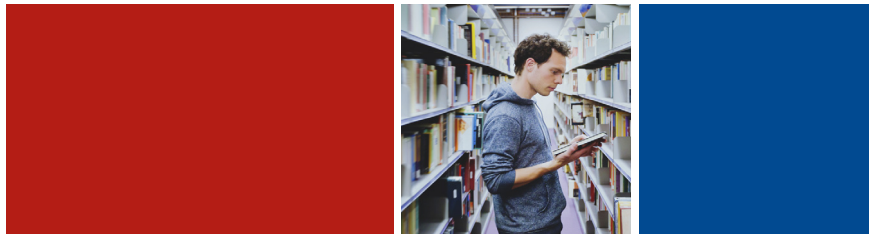
- Alamo Community College District
- Central Texas College
- Houston Community College System
- Lee College
- Lone Star College System
- San Jacinto College
- Temple College

The first phase of the project focused on high-demand allied health careers such as nursing, surgical technology, and emergency medical technology. Each of the seven colleges worked individually on its own project, as well as collectively—as part of the Texas Inter-College Council on Veterans—

to develop and test models for maximizing college and workforce credit awarded from military training and experience. The formation of the Texas Inter-College Council on Veterans enabled the colleges to meet monthly to discuss challenges, report on progress, and exchange ideas and information. TWC and THECB participated in meetings, with TWC hosting several of them.







## PHASE II

College Credit for Heroes Phase II began on September 4, 2012, with approval to set aside \$1.3 million to be used for transitioning veterans back into the Texas workforce. Phase II expanded to other regions of the state and focused on occupations requiring technical skills by developing acceleration curricula in areas such as:

- Cyber Security
- Information Technology
- Firefighting
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Logistics
- Wind Engineering
- Oil Field Technology

Through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process, eight community colleges, one technical

college and one university were selected in April 2013 to develop model programs for veterans and service members to obtain the maximum credit from their military experience toward a degree or a professional certification.

- Alamo Community College District
- Angelo State University
- Austin Community College
- Dallas County Community College District
- Grayson College
- Lee College
- Lone Star College System
- San Jacinto College
- Tarrant County College District
- Texas State Technical College-Harlingen





## PHASE III

College Credit for Heroes Phase III began on April 3, 2014, with approval to set aside \$850,000 to be used for transitioning veterans back into the Texas workforce. Phase III expands the project by awarding funding for additional college partners to create acceleration curricula in new fields and replicating College Credit for Heroes curricula at new schools. Phase III also supports partnerships with industry leaders to create jobs for veterans and provide paid internships. New programs under Phase III include:

### **TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER**

Texas Tech University's Health Science Center School of Nursing's Operation RevUp will begin the implementation phase of a new accelerated (one year) Veteran to Baccalaureate of Science Nursing (VBSN) pilot program designed specifically for veterans.

### **ALAMO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT**

Alamo Community College District will create five new accelerated curriculum pathways leading to an Associate of Applied Science in the fields of pharmacy technology, emergency medical services (EMT/paramedics), medical assisting, dental assisting, and nursing.

### **GRAYSON COLLEGE**

Grayson College, in collaboration

with industry partners, will provide internships in advanced technology certifications and replicate curricula developed by Phase I and II College Credit for Heroes grantees in which academic credit may be awarded for military training and experience, specifically in the area of health care.

### **TEXAS STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE-HARLINGEN**

Texas State Technical College-Harlingen will create a new streamlined Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree based on the Ford Maintenance Auto Mechanic Certificate. Well-qualified veterans have the opportunity to eliminate up to one full semester under the proposed program.

### **LONE STAR COLLEGE SYSTEM**

Lone Star College System will create new streamlined curricula (leading to fast-track certificates) based on prior learning assessments in the fields of industrial diesel technology, oil and gas drilling, and electrical technology.



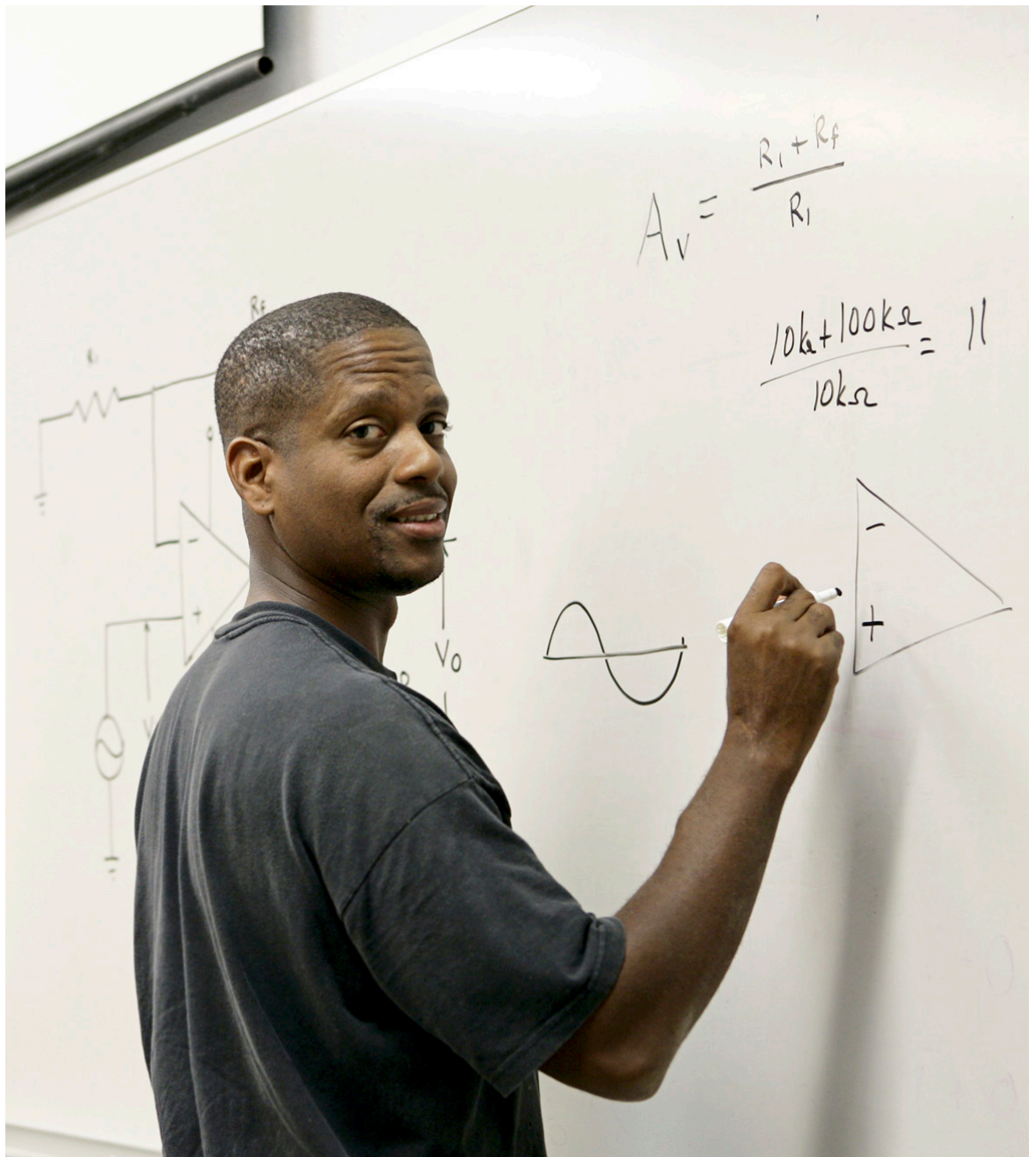




## PHASE IV

College Credit for Heroes Phase IV began on August 11, 2015, with approval to set aside \$1.4 million in federal Workforce Investment Act funds. Phase IV expands the

project by awarding funding for additional college partners to create acceleration curricula in new fields and replicating College Credit for Heroes curricula at new schools.





## LESSONS LEARNED—PHASES I AND II

The work accomplished by the partner colleges and TWC during Phases I and II resulted in the following findings.

**College Credit for Heroes has been very cost-effective and speeds veterans' entry into the civilian workforce.** Fiscal impact studies provided by partner schools through the first three phases of College Credit for Heroes demonstrate that veterans and service members, colleges and universities, and state and federal governments will all benefit from continuing the program.

**The inventory of nursing and allied health programs across the state points to directions for further reforms.** Three health programs were studied—surgical technology, associate degree nursing, and emergency medical services—yet a vast array of other health programs also can be studied with the intent of streamlining military training into civilian licensing, certification, or degree programs. The 64 health programs at the Medical Education and Training Campus (METC) provide a wide menu of choices for next steps.

**Nursing and allied health education can be streamlined for experienced veterans and service members and still meet state and national licensing or certification guidelines.** TWC, academic faculty, and the State of Texas want qualified health practitioners to enter into their

professions. College Credit for Heroes projects have proven that streamlined civilian education courses for experienced veterans and service members meet state and national licensing, certification, and accrediting guidelines.

**Continued outreach to veterans, service members, and colleges is key to encouraging other Texas institutions to adopt College Credit for Heroes best practices and to award credit for military training and experience.** Other Texas colleges and institutions have been very receptive to undertaking their own College Credit for Heroes projects. TWC plans to continue this outreach to benefit veterans and service members.





## BEST PRACTICES



**College Credit for Heroes identifies, develops, and supports methods to maximize college or workforce education credit awarded to veterans and service members for their military experience, education, and training to expedite entry into the workforce.**

The primary focus is on the award of college and workforce credit towards degrees, certifications and licenses.

**Each of these best practices stems from innovations, lessons learned, and the creativity of the member colleges working with TWC in the College Credit for Heroes program.** These practices exemplify how Texas colleges can best prepare returning veterans and service members to find jobs in the civilian workforce.

Other Texas colleges and universities should replicate these practices, which fall into seven general areas: workforce, accreditation and certification, military-related and education.

### WORKFORCE BEST PRACTICES

**Design programs and practices that will move veterans and help transition service members into the workforce quickly.**

Ensure new curricula are approved by national or state accrediting or licensing bodies—or by internal approval at the institution developing the curricula. Prioritize occupations with high or rapidly growing workforce demand. Maximize early outreach. Participate in the Concurrent Admission Program (ConAp).

### ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION BEST PRACTICES

**Assess military training.** Military education has many of the same learning objectives and content as education in colleges and universities. Assessing the training saves resources that would otherwise be used to evaluate individual transcripts.

**Develop alternative pathways to meet national or state certification or accreditation standards.** Competency testing, review of military training and skills, award of academic credit, and modular testing are examples of alternative pathways that colleges use to award college credit for veterans and service members.



## **Understand internal and external processes and time frames at the beginning of the project.**

Developing a new degree program or pathway may require multiple approval processes within an institution as well as for outside licensing or accreditation entities.

## **MILITARY-RELATED BEST PRACTICES**

**Ask the military.** Military education leaders and officers who work daily with veterans and service members know the content of military training and education and understand how to outreach to veterans and service members.

- Train college staff and faculty on the American Council on Education's (ACE) Military Guide. Communicate early and effectively with the military. Know your potential population of veterans and service members. Make changes that include all branches of the military, to the extent possible. Use veteran-specific events and services. Establish a veterans' center on your campus.

## **EDUCATION BEST PRACTICES**

**Memoranda of Understanding or similar agreements can assist in overcoming intercollegiate barriers.** Establishing ground rules up front can define roles and responsibilities and eliminate potential problems.

### **Establish clear and open communications.**

Regular meetings, including teleconferences and other communication means, add to communication successes. Sharing of ideas, challenges, and best practices will help other colleges replicate programs statewide.

### **Involve community and external groups.**

Community employers, businesses, and veterans' support groups can leverage limited resources and provide valuable information on program design.

**Make full use of Veterans Affairs (VA) work-study students.** The VA will pay for veteran students to work as faculty assistants, student advisors, peer



advisors, etc. Often veterans are most effective when working with other veterans.

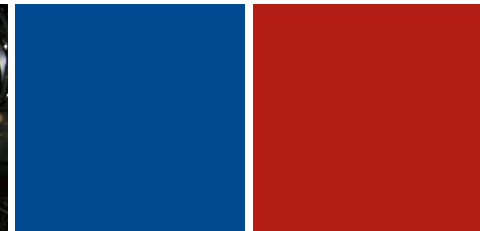
**Use external resources to their full extent.** Attend military or veterans' conferences, join listservs, and use these resources to create an effective program for veterans. College registrars, veterans' certifying officials, and veterans' student groups are useful in implementation.

**Assess the fiscal impact of the program.** Fiscal impact assessments inform policymakers and potential funders of program success and give the college an understanding of all components of the program.

**Evaluate student performance.** Student performance is the ultimate test of a program's success. Did they pass the test or get their license? Did they obtain a job in their course of study?

### **Record, document, and share best practices.**

Thousands of service members will be exiting the military as the announced drawdown of forces occurs and will be ready to use their GI education benefits. Every Texas college can adapt programs and processes to welcome them, provide training, and assist them to enter the civilian workforce.



## RECOMMENDATIONS: ADDITIONAL MEASURES NEEDED

### **SB 806 requires TWC to report to the Texas legislature and the governor specifically on:**

- “measures needed to facilitate the award of academic or workforce education credit by institutions of higher education for military experience, education, and training obtained during military service”; and
- “other related measures needed to facilitate the entry of trained, qualified veterans and military service members into the workforce.”

The following recommendations stem from final project reports submitted by colleges and universities participating in College Credit for Heroes.

### **Expand TWC’s College Credit for Heroes program to other colleges and universities, geographic areas, and other professions. Funding is now available for colleges to replicate the curricula at their own schools.**

Increase MOU participation among partner colleges and universities.

### **Encourage Texas colleges and universities to adopt the 76 streamlined curricula developed by College Credit for Heroes colleges toward associate’s degrees, workforce licenses, and certifications upon approval by the THECB.**

### **Encourage greater use of prior learning assessments and other competency-based models to maximize award of credit for military experience and training.**

Prior learning assessments and competency and challenge exams award credit for demonstrated experience, saving service members valuable time and GI Bill benefits.

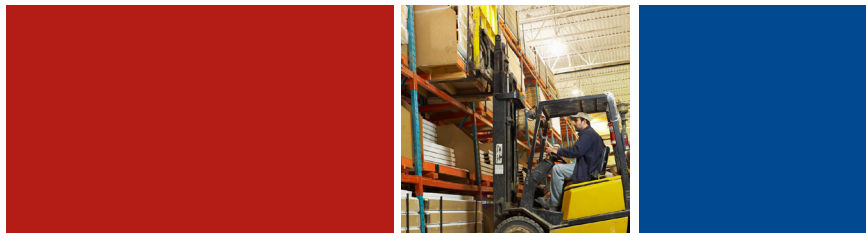
### **Ensure continued communication among colleges, universities, TWC, THECB, and local employers and businesses on the award of college credit for veterans and service members.**

### **Disseminate information statewide on College Credit for Heroes projects and encourage Texas colleges and universities to adopt College Credit for Heroes best practices.**

- Provide best practices information to Texas colleges and universities.
- Continue to participate in higher education conferences, forums, and other discussions regarding veterans’ education.

### **Encourage Texas colleges and universities to partner through MOUs to accept all credit evaluated or awarded for military service under the College Credit for Heroes program.**

Continue collaboration between TWC and THECB, military bases and installations in Texas (including METC, Fort Hood, Fort Sam Houston, Fort Bliss, and others), and colleges and universities to improve the award of college credit and the transition to the civilian workforce.



## APPENDIX 1

### **LIST OF COLLEGE CREDIT FOR HEROES PARTNER SCHOOLS**

#### College Credit for Heroes Curricula- Developing Partner Schools

Alamo Community College District  
 Angelo State University  
 Austin Community College District  
 Dallas County Community College District  
 Grayson College  
 Houston Community College  
 Lee College  
 Lone Star College System  
 San Jacinto Community College District  
 Tarrant County College District  
 Temple College  
 Texas State Technical College–Harlingen  
 Texas Tech University

#### College Credit for Heroes Partner Schools

Brookhaven College  
 Cedar Valley College  
 Central Texas College  
 Del Mar College  
 Eastfield College  
 El Centro College

Galveston College  
 Mountain View College  
 National University  
 Navarro College  
 North Lake College  
 Parker University  
 Prairie View A&M University  
 Richland College  
 Tarleton State University  
 Texas A&M International University  
 Texas A&M University  
 Texas A&M University–Central Texas  
 Texas A&M University–Commerce  
 Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi  
 Texas A&M University at Galveston  
 Texas A&M University–Kingsville  
 Texas A&M University–San Antonio  
 Texas A&M University–Texarkana  
 Texas State Technical College System  
 The University of Texas at Arlington  
 The University of Texas at El Paso  
 West Texas A&M University  
 Western Governor’s University–Texas





## APPENDIX 2

### **CURRICULA DEVELOPED UNDER COLLEGE CREDIT FOR HEROES**

Listed below are the 13 curricula development projects and 76 individual curricula that have been accelerated under College Credit for Heroes. For each curriculum, the number of credit hours required for each existing catalog course is listed, along with the number of credit hours required for the accelerated curricula and the resulting reduction between the two. For curricula that are noted as resulting in the award of a certification without further study, students may be awarded credit hours toward an associate's degree in the field as noted under the Veterans Success Through IT Career Pathways.

#### **Phase I**

##### Alamo Community College District Military to RN Career Mobility Track Program

Military service members and veterans who have completed training in the Army Combat Medic, Navy Corpsman, and the Air Force Medic programs qualify for the accelerated RN Career Mobility Track program. Qualified military service members and veteran students receive advanced standing credit for 11 nursing credit hours. The accelerated pathway to an AAS degree in nursing facilitates the transition of these military specialists into the Texas civilian nursing workforce.

The Military to RN Career Mobility Track Program is now accredited by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing.

##### Houston Community College Accelerated Alternate Delivery Program (AADP)

Houston Community College (HCC) developed and implemented an accelerated refresher program for surgical technicians who were trained in the military to sit for the national accrediting exam and receive credit toward an associate's degree in allied health. Due to work that the college conducted with the National Board of Surgical Technology (NBST), the board no longer requires 37 credit hours prior to taking the national certification exam. As an accelerated alternative, HCC developed a five-hour refresher course instead.

##### Temple College Accelerated Emergency Medical Services Program for Veterans (AEMSP)

Temple College developed and implemented an accelerated program in emergency medical services for veterans and service members with military medical experience. Well-qualified veterans who receive high scores on a prior learning assessment competency exam can be awarded nearly half the credit toward their level II paramedic certification.

## Phase II

### Alamo Community College District Accelerated AAS Degree in Respiration Technology (RT)

Graduates of this two-year AAS degree program are eligible to sit for the National Board of Respiratory Care entry-level examination (CRT) and the advanced-level examination (RRT) for respiratory care practitioners. Veterans who have received 16 weeks of didactic training at the METC at Fort Sam Houston (San Antonio, Texas) will receive an average of 15 credits applied to the AAS degree.

### Accelerated AAS degree in Health Information Technology (HIT)

The awarding of 31 transfer credit hours for having completed military Medical Laboratory Technician technical courses results in a reduction from 61 required credit hours to 30. This reduction enables the student to complete



the degree in three semesters rather than the six semesters needed if no transfer credits were awarded.

### Angelo State University Accelerated Pathways to Master's Degrees in Security Fields

Angelo State University developed and implemented accelerated pathways toward a

master's degree. The university grants graduates of the Air Force Intelligence Officers course 12 semester credit hours of the 36 required to obtain their Master's in Intelligence, Security Studies, and Analysis.

### Austin Community College Accelerated Pathways to Certifications in Advanced Technology Fields (APCAT)

Austin Community College has streamlined the college's systemic evaluation process to award college credits to veterans and service members with equivalent military training in advanced technologies and energy industries. The programs evaluated include robotics, automation and controls, nanoelectronics technology manufacturing, and renewable energy. Well-qualified veterans and service members enrolled in the program have saved an average of 24 hours in transfer credits, with a maximum of 30 credits awarded if possible.

### Dallas County Community College District Veteran Success Through Accelerated IT Career Pathways

Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD) has developed and implemented a district-wide evaluation process for Military Occupation Specialties (MOS), resulting in the award of college credit. A total of 60 IT certificates and degrees and four online prior learning assessments were modified and streamlined for the entire DCCCD. To date, DCCCD has enrolled 390 students in College Credit for Heroes programs.

In each accelerated curricula listed below, the number of credit hours required for existing curricula is listed as it appears in the DCCCD course catalog, followed by the number of hours required by the Veterans Success Through IT Career Pathways accelerated curricula developed by DCCCD under College Credit for Heroes.



For programs that indicate “Certificate Granted,” a veteran may receive course credit, a certificate, and additional course credits that can be used toward a higher level certification or AAS based on an evaluation of their military training and experience.

#### Grayson College

Accelerated Curricula in Advanced Technologies and Manufacturing

Grayson College developed and implemented a curriculum crosswalk plan for four programs in advanced technologies and high-demand occupations. Programs include electrical technology; heating, ventilation, and refrigeration (HART); industrial maintenance; machining; occupational safety and health; and welding. Grayson College also assessed and overhauled all institutional services to veterans and established a one-stop shop called the Veteran Hub for all veteran advising and benefit processing needs.

#### Lee College

Accelerated Manufacturing and Logistics Certifications and Associate’s Degree Programs

Lee College developed and implemented accelerated curricula in an AAS in Logistics Management, a one-semester certificate of completion in Logistics and Supply Chain

Management, and a Manufacturing Skills Standards Council Certified Logistics Technician (MSSC CLT) certification. Lee College also awarded 15 scholarships for veterans in the MSSC CLA and CLT certification programs. Additionally, the school created new internship partnerships with Walmart and United Parcel Service for logistics students and signed articulation agreements with American Intercontinental University and Lamar University.

#### Lone Star College System

Fast-Track Field Service Technician Marketable Skills Award toward Oil Field Certification

Lone Star College developed and implemented a fast-track technician certification program, which also provides job placement services, using strong oil and gas industry connections with the college to leverage good-paying jobs for veteran students. The Fast-Track Engineering Technician Marketable Skills Award Certification program prepares veterans and service members to work in high-demand engineering and technology positions in the oil and gas industry. Well-qualified veterans and service members who acquired skills and military occupational specialty training can receive college credits for their experience, which expedites their completion of the program.





San Jacinto Community College District  
Veterans' Information Technology Fast Track to  
Employment Program

San Jacinto College developed and implemented the Veteran's Information Technology Fast Track to Employment Project, which tracks veterans into short-term "boot camps" leading to certifications in network and security engineers, network and security analysts, IT support specialists, software developers, database administrators, computer numerical controllers, IT technicians, IT managers, and computer support specialists. During the grant period they enrolled, trained, and awarded certification to 115 veterans, in addition to having created the curricula to serve all future veteran students. They also established an articulation agreement with Western Governors University, ensuring seamless transferability for students in the program to receive credit towards a bachelor's degree.

Tarrant County College District  
Fire Technology

Tarrant County College developed and implemented an accelerated AAS in Fire Technology and an accelerated certification in both basic and advanced firefighting.

The college graduated its first class of firefighter candidates in August 2014 and has greatly modified the award of credit process for all future candidate classes.

Texas State Technical College–Harlingen  
Wind Engineering Technology Program

Texas State Technical College–Harlingen developed and implemented an accelerated certification and degree program in Wind Engineering Technology (WET). Additionally, they established a Veteran's Center on campus providing counseling, advising, evaluation of prior training or experience, testing, tutoring, and assistance with applications for scholarships.

A total of up to six credit hours are awarded to service members and veterans who qualify and meet requirements to successfully receive credit for the WET program. These six credit hours can be applied to the level II WET certification, their associate's degree, or both. In addition to the exit points, students take core courses that are transferable between Wind Energy Technology, Biomedical Equipment Technology, and Mechatronics Technology. These transferable courses include DC Circuits, Basic Fluid Power, AC Circuits, and Digital Fundamentals.

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