



# CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU INSTRUCTION

NGB-J1  
DISTRIBUTION: A

CNGBI 9350.01B  
30 April 2026

## NATIONAL GUARD YOUTH CHALLENGE PROGRAM

References: See Enclosure B.

1. Purpose. This instruction establishes policy and assigns responsibilities for the National Guard Youth Challenge Program (NGYCP) in accordance with (IAW) reference a through reference e.
2. Cancellation. This instruction cancels and replaces its previous edition, Chief of the National Guard Bureau Instruction 9350.01A, 22 December 2020, "National Guard Youth Challenge Program."
3. Applicability. This instruction applies to all elements of the National Guard Bureau (NGB) and the States, Territories, and the District of Columbia that have entered into a cooperative agreement with NGB to establish a NGYCP.
4. Policy. It is NGB policy to improve the education and employment of potential civilian youth through the NGYCP IAW reference a, by providing youth who graduate from the NGYCP the values, skills, education, and self-discipline necessary to succeed as adults.
  - a. General. The NGYCP provides military-based training, discipline, and structure; job readiness training; and alternative educational approaches through a military-based training model to eligible civilian youth participants IAW reference b.
  - b. Phases. All NGYCP participants are required to complete four out of five phases of the Basic Challenge Program which include: Recruitment, Acclimation, Residential, and Post-Residential. NGYCPs may establish a Job Challenge Program as the optional fifth phase in which programs partner with industry and technical schools to offer NGYCP graduates the opportunity to learn job skills to enhance their employability.
  - c. Consideration. States must consider program funding and facility availability when determining whether to implement a Job Challenge Program. The NGB Manpower and Personnel Directorate (NGB-J1) must endorse all requests to

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implement a Job Challenge phase for Assistant Secretary of War for Manpower and Reserve Affairs approval prior to State implementation. Job Challenge participants must meet eligibility criteria IAW reference b.

5. Definitions. See Glossary.

6. Responsibilities. See Enclosure A.

7. Summary of Changes. This instruction updates responsibilities for offices and directorates with responsibilities pertaining to the NGYCP to match regulatory guidance IAW reference b and the references have been updated.

8. Releasability. This instruction is approved for public release; distribution is unlimited. It is available at <<https://www.ngbpmc.ng.mil/>>.

9. Effective Date. This instruction is effective upon publication and must be reviewed annually by the Proponent/Office of Primary Responsibility for continued validity, and must be revised, reissued, canceled, or certified as current every ten years.



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Chief, National Guard Bureau

Enclosures:

- A -- Responsibilities
- B -- References
- GL -- Glossary

ENCLOSURE A

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Director of NGB-J1. The Director of NGB-J1 will:
  - a. Provide management oversight and coordination of the NGYCP.
  - b. Serve as the primary point of contact for the primary point of contact for the Office of the Secretary of War, Headquarters, Department of the Army, Headquarters Department of the Air Force, Army National Guard and Air National Guard Directorates, The Adjutants General, and the Commanding General of the District of Columbia.
  - c. Establish an appropriately manned NGB Youth Program Division to implement the management and administrative functions of the NGB Youth Programs as outlined in reference e.
  - d. Develop and coordinate with the NGB Acquisitions, Grants, and Cooperative Agreement Oversight and Compliance Division, an NGYCP Cooperative Agreement, subject to approval from the Assistant Secretary of War for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, the Governors and The Adjutants General or the Commanding General of the District of Columbia to participate in the NGYCP.
  - e. Issue regulations, procedures, implementing guidance, and operational evaluation standards to govern all phases of the NGYCP.
  - f. Establish and manage a comprehensive NGYCP inspection program and ensure each NGYCP receives an on-site inspection at least once every three years.
  - g. Recommend probationary status, withholding or cancelling Federal matching funds for poor-performing programs as determined by underuse or misuse of NGYCP funding, consecutive unsatisfactory inspections or audits, or substandard graduation numbers that do not improve within three fiscal years or cooperative agreement periods.
  - h. Issue NGYCP budget request procedures and coordinate NGYCP funding, budgeting, and fiscal matters with the Assistant Secretary of War for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, the United States Property and Fiscal Officers, and NGYCP Directors.
  - i. Establish NGYCP staffing guidance and parameters, including minimum staff-to-cadet ratios and NGYCP employee national training requirements.
  - j. Ensure that all NGYCP organizations operate IAW applicable Federal and State laws, this instruction, Assistant Secretary of War for Manpower and Reserve Affairs policy and guidance, and NGB grants and cooperative agreements.
  - k. Administer an annual program budget review and approval process for the participating States, Territories, and the District of Columbia to ensure compliance with the NGYCP cooperative agreements and NGYCP policies.

2. The Adjutants General and Commanding General of the District of Columbia.

The Adjutants General and the Commanding General of the District of Columbia will:

- a. Serve as the recipient to enter into a cooperative agreement with the NGB to participate in the NGYCP IAW State laws and procedures.
- b. Comply with all terms, conditions, and standards of the NGYCP Cooperative Agreement.
- c. Supervise and manage all activities or projects within the scope of the NGYCP Cooperative Agreement IAW sound business practices.
- d. Provide the financial and property reports required by the NGYCP Cooperative Agreement.
- e. Provide the personnel, supplies, services, and matching funds required by the NGYCP Cooperative Agreement.
- f. Appoint an NGYCP Director to provide management and administrative oversight of their NGYCP including:
  - (1) Adhere to the NGYCP Cooperative Agreement; district, State, and national-level coordination; policy and procedure development; fiscal management; personnel and labor relations management; contract administration and purchasing; and compliance with Federal and State laws governing the NGYCP.
  - (2) Develop and submit the NGYCP Annual State Plan for the State, Territory, or the District of Columbia through the Grants Officer to the NGB-J1 IAW reference b.
  - (3) Complete and submit a Director's Self-Assessment to the Grant Officer to the NGB-J1 for each year the program does not receive an on-site inspection.
  - (4) Develop local standard operating procedures required by regulation and update the standard operating procedures regularly to align with current guidance.
  - (5) Verify that all State NGYCP employees undergo a national background check IAW reference b and NGYCP regulations.
  - (6) Ensure that all staff members whose place of employment is the NGYCP, regardless of the entity funding the staff position(s), complete all required training within the regulatory time frames.
  - (7) Appoint a program budget officer to prepare the annual budget request package, quarterly budget reports, and budget modifications for approval while tracking expenditures and variances to identify budgetary problems and recommend solutions.

3. United States Property and Fiscal Officers. The United States Property and Fiscal Officers will:

a. Serve as the qualified commissioned officer designated by the Chief of the NGB to serve as the Grants Officer in executing the NGYCP Cooperative Agreement.

b. Fulfill the responsibilities specified IAW reference d, reference e, and reference f, or as specified in a subsequent regulation, for those aspects of the NGYCP Cooperative Agreement.

c. Appoint a Federal Cooperative Agreement Program Manager and determine his or her duties and responsibilities IAW the NGYCP Cooperative Agreement and IAW reference d.

d. Appoint a Grants Officer Representative and determine his or her duties and responsibilities IAW the NGYCP Cooperative Agreement and IAW reference d.

e. Audit their programs and retain the results of each audit for external review IAW applicable references in this instruction.

ENCLOSURE B

REFERENCES

PART I. REQUIRED

- a. Title 32 United States Code, “National Guard”
- b. Department of Defense Instruction 1025.08, 31 December 2020, “National Guard Youth Challenge Program,” Incorporating Change 2, 12 August 2025
- c. 2 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”
- d. 2 Code of Federal Regulations, “Grants and Agreements,” Subtitle B, Chapter XI, “Department of Defense”
- e. Chief of the National Guard Bureau Instruction 9101.00, 27 January 2023, “National Guard Grants and Cooperative Agreements”

PART II. RELATED

- f. Department of Defense Instruction 1402.05, 11 September 2015, “Criminal History Background Checks on Individuals in Child Care Services,” Incorporating Change 1, 14 July 2016
- g. Department of Defense Manual 1402.05, 24 January 2017, “Background Checks on Individuals in Department of Defense Child Development and Youth Programs”
- h. 32 Code of Federal Regulations, Subchapter C, Part 21, 19 August 2020, “DoD Grant and Agreement Regulations”

## GLOSSARY

### PART I. ACRONYMS

IAW	In accordance with
NGB	National Guard Bureau
NGB-J1	National Guard Bureau Manpower and Personnel Directorate
NGYCP	National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program

### PART II. DEFINITIONS

Advance Payments -- Federal funds disbursed to the grantee only when grantees are required to have sufficient funds on deposit in the State treasury before a funding obligation may be incurred.

Employee -- Any person, paid or unpaid, who performs work for the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, who receives periodic work tasking from the State's National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program Director or staff and is accountable to the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program Director for that individual's actions or performance. The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program Director, his or her staff, and the instructors, counselors, cadre, and volunteers are all considered employees of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program.

Equipment -- Tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.

Grantee -- The State, organization, or other entity receiving funding under a National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program Cooperative Agreement.

Grants Officer -- For National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program agreements, the United States Property and Fiscal Officer for that State.

Modification -- A change to a Cooperative Agreement typically for one of the following purposes: funding, terms and conditions, termination, or other administrative reasons.

State -- Any of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, any Territory or possession of the United States, or any agency or instrumentality of a State exclusive of local governments.

Supervisory Staff -- Employees who have unsupervised and unaccompanied access to cadets.

Supplies -- All tangible personal property other than equipment (defined in "Equipment" above).