



Texas ChalleNGe Academy

A Youth Education Program of the Texas National Guard

ABOUT THE TEXAS CHALLENGE ACADEMY

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Texas ChalleNGe Academy is to reclaim the potential of at-risk youth through education, training, mentoring and service to the community.

BACKGROUND

The Texas ChalleNGe Academy (TCA) is part of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program. The program is authorized and funded by the Department of Defense and the State of Texas. The Youth ChalleNGe Program is a national program that was created in 1993. TCA is under the operational control of the Joint Counterdrug Task Force of the Texas National Guard. The goal of the program is to give dropouts a second chance to complete their high school education. One of the most important things you need to know is that participation in the program is voluntary – you have to apply and compete for admission.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

The TCA is not like a high school. The program is more a military academy or more closely a residential ROTC program. The 17 ½ month process has three phases you should think about. First, a 2-week acclimation phase to determine a candidate's determination and motivation to successfully complete the residential phase. Second, the residential phase is conducted in a quasi-military format that fosters our principles, structure and emphasis on self-discipline and personal responsibility. You'll be a member of a 50 person training platoon, live in a dormitory, wear a uniform, meet military grooming standards, observe military customs and courtesies, do lots of marching, and perhaps most importantly, you will be held accountable for your words and actions. The staff is caring, dedicated, trained, and committed to helping you; they understand and appreciate the tough decision you've made to come to the TCA and they will do everything they can to help you succeed—however, they will not compromise our standards. You choose to comply with the program's policies and procedures. The staff uses a "hands off" approach that is tough and disciplined, yet caring and respectful to instruct, train, and motivate youth. Third, after graduating from the residential phase, you will continue in a mandatory 12 month mentoring phase to help you continue the positive values and skills you acquired during the 22 week residential phase.

WHO IS A GOOD CANDIDATE TO ATTEND THE TCA?

We outline the mandatory eligibility criteria in TCA Form 1. However, beyond that we are looking for students who recognize the need to improve their education level and employment potential and are ready to make the effort and commitment to try their hardest and succeed. This has to be your choice.

WHAT CAN YOU ACHIEVE AT THE TCA?

Academically – depending on your age and how many high school credits you've already earned—you may:

1. Earn or retrieve credits and return to your regular high school.
2. Complete the GED requirements and advance to further higher education.
3. Earn a high school diploma certified by a school district (if qualified).

Personally – you will learn a great deal about yourself and be amazed at what you achieve and how much more you're capable of doing. Graduating from the TCA has the potential to change your life forever and give you the desire, the confidence, and the tools to build a better life for yourself.