



April 2022

MILITARY PERSONNEL

Actions Needed to Improve Workforce Data for Technicians Supporting Mission Readiness

Accessible Version

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-22-104484](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

Dual-status military technicians (“military technicians”) are a unique type of federal employee who are required by law to maintain military status in one of the Army or Air Force Reserve Components as a condition of their civilian employment.

Nonpermanent military technicians—whose services typically range from 1 year to up to 6 years—usually fill vacancies created when permanent military technicians deploy, are in training, or are on other military assignments.

Senate Report 116-236, accompanying a bill for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, includes a provision for GAO to report on the military technician workforce. This GAO report examines, among other things, (1) the circumstances under which the Army and Air Force Reserve Components use nonpermanent military technicians and (2) the extent to which these Components track military technician data.

GAO surveyed the adjutants general of the 54 U.S. states, territories, and the District of Columbia; analyzed DOD civilian personnel data; conducted small group discussions with military technicians; reviewed relevant policies and guidance; and interviewed National Guard and Reserve Component officials, among others.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making two recommendations, including that DOD develop guidance and a common definition for extracting military technician data to ensure consistency in reporting such workforce data. DOD concurred with the recommendations.

View [GAO-22-104484](#). For more information, contact Brenda S. Farrell at (202) 512-3604 or FarrellB@gao.gov.

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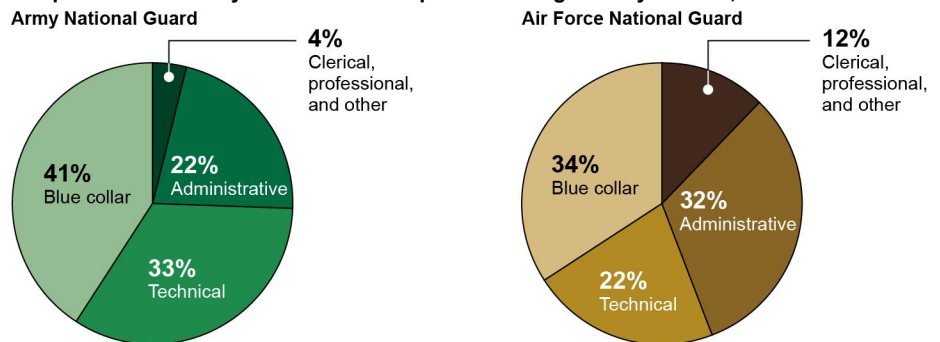
Actions Needed to Improve Workforce Data for Technicians Supporting Mission Readiness

What GAO Found

The Army and Air Force Reserve Components—which consist of the Army and Air National Guard and Reserve—use nonpermanent military technicians to fill vacancies created when permanent military technicians deploy or are fulfilling military training requirements or completing education and schooling. Nonpermanent military technicians are also used to fill critical needs vacancies created by attrition and for other staffing needs, such as emerging missions created by COVID-19. Officials reported that their ability to hire nonpermanent military technicians enhances readiness. For example, these military technicians may be used to maintain equipment during unit deployments and can be hired quickly to fill critical voids. Additionally, nonpermanent military technicians who accept such positions benefit from gaining the experience they need to qualify for permanent military technician positions.

In fiscal year 2020, the Army and Air Force Reserve Components employed approximately 11,000 nonpermanent military technicians, the majority of which (approximately 10,500) worked for the Army or Air National Guard. Nonpermanent military technicians work in all occupational job categories, with the highest percentages employed in blue collar (e.g., mechanic), technical, and administrative occupations (see figure).

Nonpermanent Military Technician Occupational Categories by Service, 2017-2020



Source: GAO analysis of Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service and Defense Manpower Data Center matching data. | GAO-22-104484

Accessible Data for Nonpermanent Military Technician Occupational Categories by Service, 2017-2020

	Army National Guard	Air Force National Guard
Clerical, professional, and other	4%	12%
Administrative	22%	32%
Technical	33%	22%
Blue collar	41%	34%

The Department of Defense (DOD) collects and tracks military technician workforce data used to determine funding, but does not have guidance or a common definition of military technicians for which to extract and report such data. GAO found that DOD officials inconsistently report such data for internal

and external uses. Specifically, Army and Air Force Reserve Component and Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service data are inconsistent, when extracted from the same reporting system and for the same time period. Without guidance and a common definition for extracting and reporting military technician data, DOD may continue to report inconsistent data, which may affect the funding needed to hire permanent and nonpermanent military technicians to support their missions.

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Abbreviations

AFSC	Air Force Specialty Code
AGR	Active Guard and Reserve
DCPAS	Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service
DCPDS	Defense Civilian Personnel Data System
DMDC	Defense Manpower Data Center
DOD	Department of Defense
FEHB	Federal Employees Health Benefits
FERS	Federal Employees Retirement System
FY	fiscal year
GS	general schedule
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty

NDA	National Defense Authorization Act
NGB	National Guard Bureau
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
TAG	The Adjutant General
USERRA	Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act

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April 27, 2022

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
The Honorable Mike Rogers
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

Dual-status military technicians (“technicians”) are a unique type of federal employee who are required by law to maintain military status in one of the Army or Air Force Reserve Components as a condition of their civilian employment.¹ They are employed to provide the day-to-day support such as training, maintenance, and other activities required to support military units. The Army and the Air Force each have two Reserve Components—a National Guard and a Reserve. National Guard technicians work for the adjutants general (TAG) of the 54 U.S. states, territories, and the District of Columbia in the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard. Reserve technicians work for the Army Reserve or the Air Force Reserve under the oversight of the Army Reserve Command or Air Force Reserve Command, respectively.

Over the past several years, the technician workforce has been subject to several transformations. For example, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 required the Department of Defense (DOD) to convert a percentage of technician positions to full-time federal civilian positions.² Further, the NDAA for FY 2017 required the

¹10 U.S.C § 10216; 32 U.S.C. § 709.

²Pub. L. No. 114-92, § 1053 (2015), as amended by Pub. L. No. 114-328, § 1084 (2016). Federal civilian positions are typically filled in accordance with title 5 of the U.S Code and have no military membership requirements.

Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Chief of the National Guard, to submit a report on the feasibility and advisability of realigning technicians to Active Guard and Reserve (AGR).³ The resulting September 2017 report to Congress suggested realigning technician positions to AGR with the intention of sustaining and enhancing the readiness of the National Guard.⁴ In FY 2019, the Air National Guard realigned 3,183 military technician positions to AGR.

More recently, the Senate Armed Services Committee noted that the use of nonpermanent technicians (e.g., temporary, term, or indefinite positions) is not subject to any congressional oversight, so the size, structure, and purpose of this workforce are largely unknown outside of DOD.⁵ Nonpermanent technicians—whose services typically range from 1 to 6 years—usually fill vacancies created when permanent technicians deploy, are in training, or are on other military assignments.

Senate Report 116-236, accompanying a bill for the NDAA for FY 2021, includes a provision for us to report on the technician workforce, with an emphasis on determining how nonpermanent technician positions align with law, rules, and procedures governing the permanent technician workforce.⁶ Our report examines (1) the circumstances under which the Army and Air Force Reserve Components use nonpermanent technicians; (2) the extent to which the Army and Air Force Reserve Components track and report permanent and nonpermanent technician workforce data; (3) employment hiring processes and benefits that apply to Army and Air Force Reserve Component permanent and nonpermanent technicians; (4) minimum qualification standards that Army and Air Force Reserve Component permanent and nonpermanent

³Pub. L. No. 114-328, § 1084(c) (2016). The report also had to include an analysis of the costs of the conversion, and an assessment of the ratio of members of the Armed Forces performing AGR duties and DOD civilian employees required to best contribute to the readiness of the National Guard and Reserve. AGRs on full-time National Guard duty orders are available for military duty 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. See background section for more information.

⁴Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, *Report to Congress on the Feasibility and Advisability of Converting Military Technician Positions to Personnel Performing Active Guard and Reserve Duty* (Washington, D.C: Sept. 25, 2017).

⁵S. Rep. No. 116-236, at 213-214 (2020). In this report, we use the term “nonpermanent technicians” to describe temporary, term, and indefinite positions. See background for additional information.

⁶S. Rep. No. 116-236, at 213-214 (2020).

technicians are required to meet to perform their duties; and (5) readiness and other considerations that the Air National Guard used in its decision to realign technicians to AGR positions in FY 2019.

To address our first objective, we requested and analyzed civilian workforce data from the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS) regarding the number of nonpermanent technicians from FY 2009 through FY 2020, including job description, appointment type, service, and employment experience. We requested matching military data from the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) regarding military occupational specialty, service, and appointment type.⁷ DMDC was able to provide matching data for FY 2017 through FY 2020. DMDC matched technician military data to the civilian data provided by DCPAS using social security numbers. We analyzed the matching DCPAS data to describe the civilian and military work performed by nonpermanent technicians. We interviewed TAGs from selected states and officials from the National Guard Bureau (NGB), the Army and Air Force Reserve Components, and unions representing military technicians regarding the circumstances and rationale for using nonpermanent technicians.

To address our second objective, we obtained technician authorization and end-strength data from DMDC and the Army and Air Force Reserve Components and DCPAS data regarding the number of technicians.⁸ We compared the number of technicians in DCPAS data and Army and Air Force Reserve Component data to determine if there were any differences. We also compared the DMDC end-strength data to the number of technicians in the DCPAS data from FY 2017 through FY 2020. We interviewed officials from DMDC, DCPAS, and the Army and Air Force Reserve Components to understand the function and entry of the data, the data elements received, the quality, the inconsistencies, and the limitations of the data. We reviewed Department of Defense Instruction 1205.18 regarding responsibilities for defining and requiring the periodic collection of data.⁹ We interviewed DCPAS, DMDC, and

⁷We requested DMDC data from FY 2009 through FY 2020; however, data were only available starting in FY 2017.

⁸Authorizations represent the number of positions for which resources have been allocated to fulfill the services' mission. End-strength numbers represent the number of personnel fulfilling specific billet positions at the end of the FY.

⁹Department of Defense Instruction 1205.18, *Full-Time Support (FTS) to Reserve Components* (June 5, 2020).

Army and Air Force Reserve Component officials to determine the extent to which military technicians were defined in their data collection systems.

To address our third objective, we collected, assessed, and analyzed laws, regulations, and Office of Personnel Management (OPM), NGB, DOD and service-related policies and procedures related to recruitment or hiring approval processes to understand management controls. We also reviewed laws, regulations, and OPM, NGB, and Army and Air Force Reserve documents for summaries of benefits and employment protections for technicians to compare the benefits offered to permanent and nonpermanent technicians. We interviewed OPM and NGB officials; selected TAGs, wing or unit commanders, and their human resource officials; officials with the Army and Air Force Reserve Commands, and military technician unions to understand recruitment, hiring, or approval processes or employment benefits and protections for permanent and nonpermanent technicians.

To address our fourth objective, we collected, assessed, and analyzed OPM, NGB, and DOD policies related to employment qualification standards and duties and responsibilities for technicians to understand differences and similarities between permanent and nonpermanent technicians. We requested and analyzed the same matching data from DCPAS and DMDC (mentioned previously) regarding the amount of federal civilian and military experience technicians have in order to describe the average amount of experience possessed. We interviewed officials with OPM, NGB, the Army and Air Force Reserve Components and military technician unions to learn about employment qualifications (e.g., military or civilian work experiences and trainings), duties, and responsibilities.

To assess the reliability of the data used in the first, second, and fourth objectives, we tested the data for consistency, errors, and logic. We interviewed officials from DCPAS and DMDC to understand the function and entry of the data, the data elements received, and the quality and limitations of the data. We found the technician information in the matching employment data provided by DCPAS and DMDC to be sufficiently reliable for the purpose of reporting the military and civilian jobs held by technicians and the military and civilian employment experience of technicians. These data allow us to report on known technicians included in both databases, but may not be sufficiently reliable to capture the full population of technicians.

To address our fifth objective, we requested and analyzed documents from the Air National Guard to determine how they targeted certain airframes, career fields, and other readiness factors to prioritize positions for AGR realignment. In addition, we obtained data regarding the number of technicians that realigned to AGR from FY 2019 through FY 2021 from the Air National Guard. We checked for inconsistencies and missing data and sent a question set to knowledgeable officials in the Air National Guard. We found AGR realignment data to be sufficiently reliable for the purpose of reporting annual officer and enlisted realignments from FY 2019 through FY 2021. We also interviewed officials from the NGB, Air National Guard, and selected state TAGs and air wing commanders about the processes they used to make realignment decisions for AGR positions in FY 2019. Finally, we held small group discussions and conducted interviews with Air National Guard technicians to obtain their perspectives on the AGR application process, and the reasons they did or did not realign to AGR.

To address all five objectives, we sent a questionnaire to each of the 54 TAGs who oversee Army and Air National Guard technicians in their respective states, territories, and the District of Columbia. The questionnaire included topics on employment and budget management, duties related to permanent and nonpermanent technicians, hiring processes, work experiences, trainings, readiness, and AGR realignments. We received a 100 percent response rate, and the results represent the views of TAGs for all 54 states, territories, and the District of Columbia. Appendix I contains information pertaining to survey development and administration. A reproduction of the questions and the aggregate responses can be found in appendix II.

We also conducted virtual site visits to Ohio, Arizona, and North Dakota. We selected these states based on the number of technicians and Air National Guard AGR realignments. We also selected these states based on the presence of both the Army and Air National Guard and active union representation. In addition, we wanted to provide for a range of geographic locations. See appendix III for our site visit methodology. During these site visits, we conducted interviews with TAGs, human resources officials, and Army and Air Force Commanders. We also conducted small group discussions and interviews with technicians during site visits, to include collecting their perspectives on the hiring process, training, employment benefits, duties, AGR realignments, and how

technician use affects readiness.¹⁰ Findings from the interviews and small group discussions provide insights and context on the issues we discussed but are not generalizable.

We conducted this performance audit from August 2020 to April 2022 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

Organizational Roles and Responsibilities

The National Guard Bureau (NGB). The NGB is a joint activity of the Department of Defense.¹¹ The NGB consists of the Office of the Chief, National Guard Bureau; the National Guard Joint Staff; the Office of the Director, Army National Guard; and the Office of the Director, Air National Guard.¹² It serves as the principal organization providing policy, guidance and resourcing to the 54 states and territories that comprise the National Guard. According to officials, NGB establishes the policies and programs for the employment and use of excepted service technicians.¹³

¹⁰We conducted three discussion groups at each of our three virtual site visits, for a total of nine discussion group sessions. We segmented our groups so that similar types of technicians were in the same group. Our discussion groups in each state selected consisted of the following: Air National Guard temporary technicians, Army National Guard permanent technicians who were once temporary technicians, and Air National Guard technicians that realigned to AGR. We also conducted interviews with Air National Guard technicians who did not realign to AGR at each of our three virtual site visits, for a total of three interviews.

¹¹10 U.S.C. § 10501.

¹²Department of Defense Directive 5105.77, *National Guard Bureau (NGB)* (Oct. 30, 2015) (incorporating change 1, Oct. 10, 2017).

¹³Excepted service refers to positions in the executive branch of the federal government that are specifically excepted from the competitive service by or pursuant to statute, by the President, or by OPM, and which are not in the Senior Executive Service. 5 U.S.C. § 2103; 5 C.F.R. § 213.101 (2013). National Guard technician positions are in the excepted service pursuant to 32 U.S.C. § 709(e).

The Adjutant General (TAG). The TAG is a senior Army or Air National Guard military officer that is in charge of a state, territory, or District of Columbia’s military forces, including the National Guard residing within those jurisdictions.

Army Reserve and Air Force Reserve Components. The Army and Air Force each have two Reserve Components—a National Guard and Reserve.

- **Army and Air National Guard.** The National Guard has two elements—the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard—that mostly consist of part-time forces responsible for both federal and state missions.¹⁴
- **Army Reserve.** According to officials, the Army Reserve provides combat ready units and soldiers to the Army and the Joint Force across the full spectrum of conflict. The Chief of the Army Reserve is responsible for managing the Full-Time Support program, including technicians,¹⁵ and budget by developing, overseeing, planning, and supervising execution of policies and programs.¹⁶
- **Air Force Reserve.** The Air Force Reserve provides a broad range of combat and combat support capabilities. According to Air Force Reserve officials, the Air Force Reserve Command is responsible for the overall management of the Air Reserve Technician program. This includes managing the Air Reserve Technician program’s overall resources and developing guidance for technicians.

Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS). Unlike most executive branch agencies, DOD has specific legal authority to waive certain statutory and regulatory requirements relating to personnel hiring authorities, including for term and temporary appointments.¹⁷ DCPAS develops, implements, and monitors DOD civilian human resources

¹⁴32 U.S.C § 101(3).

¹⁵The Full-Time Support program is maintained by the reserve components and includes a mix of active component, Active Guard and Reserve, technician, and other federal civilian employee personnel.

¹⁶10 U.S.C. § 7038 (d)-(e).

¹⁷Section 9902(b) of title 5, U.S. Code, allows DOD to waive the requirements of chapter 33 of title 5, U.S. Code, and the regulations implementing chapter 33, in order to achieve the objectives of 5 U.S.C. § 9902.

policies and programs. In this capacity, DCPAS supports the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy with personnel policy leadership.

Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC). DMDC is a key defense support organization that generates reports for defense organizations such as the military services, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Staff. DMDC states that it maintains the largest archive of personnel, manpower, training, and financial data in DOD. DOD is required to report personnel data¹⁸ for its Major Headquarters Activities to Congress to support oversight of these activities, which are listed in a DOD instruction.¹⁹

U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). OPM serves as the chief human resources agency and personnel policy manager for the federal government. As part of that role, OPM directs human resources and employee management services, administers retirement benefits, manages healthcare and insurance programs, oversees merit-based and inclusive hiring into the civil service, and provides a secure employment process.

Technicians. Technicians are full-time civilian personnel employed under section 3101 of title 5 or section 709(b) of title 32, United States Code.²⁰ As a condition of their civilian employment, technicians are required to maintain military status in one of the Army or Air Force Reserve Components.²¹ Figure 1 illustrates the civilian and military roles of military technicians.

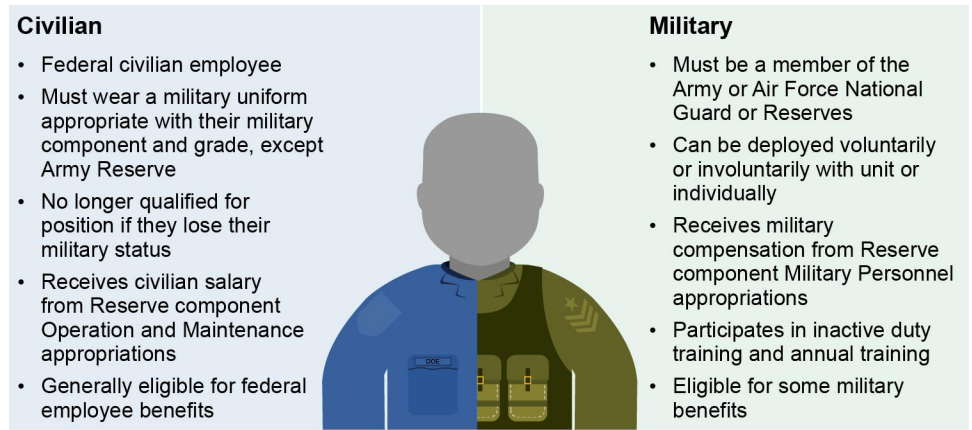
¹⁸10 U.S.C. § 115a(f). This report includes the number of positions assigned to Major Headquarters Activities in the previous year, among other things.

¹⁹Department of Defense Instruction 5100.73, *Major DOD Headquarters Activities* (Dec. 1, 2007) (incorporating change 2, June 12, 2012).

²⁰10 U.S.C. § 10216.

²¹10 U.S.C. § 10216(a)(1)(B); 32 U.S.C. § 709(b). Technicians may maintain their military status in the Army Reserve, the Air Force Reserve, the Army National Guard, or the Air National Guard.

Figure 1: Dual-Status Military Technician Roles



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense information (text); djvstock/stock.adobe.com (illustration). | GAO-22-104484

Types of Technicians (Permanent and Nonpermanent) and Active Guard Reservists

The Army and Air Force Reserve Components employ technicians under permanent and nonpermanent appointments. The technician appointment types and length of the appointments are shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Military Technician Appointment Types and Tenure

Appointment type	Tenure
Temporary	Appointments not to exceed 1 year; can be extended in increments up to 1 year for a total of 3 years for Army or Air Force Reserve technicians, and 4 years for Army or Air National Guard technicians.
Term	Appointments for period greater than 1 year, but not more than 8 years. ^a
Indefinite	Appointments with indefinite time limitations that are expected to extend beyond 1 year. ^b
Permanent	Tenure requires a 1 year-probationary period and a total of 3 years of continuous credit service to attain career appointment.

Sources: 5 C.F.R. §§ 316.301, 316.401, 315.201, 315.802; Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Memorandum, *Modification of Temporary and Term Appointments Within the Department of Defense* (June 12, 2017); Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *Extensions of Term Appointments in the Competitive Service in the DOD* (August 10, 2018). | GAO-22-104484

Note: All federal employees are hired in a tenure group, according to National Guard and Reserve officials. Group 1 is for permanent employees, Group 2 is for permanent employees in a probationary period, Group 3 is for long-term indefinite and term employees who do not quite meet career status but receive full pay and benefits (a permanent employee but still considered nonpermanent). Group 0 is a true temporary employee, usually hired for just a few months or for up to 1 year.

^aAccording to officials, the Army and Air Force Reserve hire term technicians, but the National Guard does not.

^bAccording to officials, National Guard hires indefinite technicians, but the Army and Air Force Reserve do not.

AGRs are members of a Reserve Component who are placed on active duty or full-time National Guard duty orders for a period of 180 consecutive days or more. They perform assignments to include providing instruction or training to the Reserve Components, active duty service members, and DOD contractors and civilian employees. AGRs on orders are available for military duty 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.²²

Funding and Salary

Technician federal civilian salaries are paid with Reserve Component Operation and Maintenance appropriations while their military salaries are paid with Reserve Component Military Personnel appropriations. According to Reserve Component officials, when permanent technicians receive military orders, their technician status transfers from civilian to military status. These officials also told us that the origin of their salaries also transfers from civilian to military funding. Unused portions of civilian salaries for permanent technicians on military orders can be used to hire nonpermanent technicians.

Reserve Components Use Nonpermanent Technicians for Varied Mission and Staffing Needs

The Army and Air Force Reserve Components Use Nonpermanent Technicians to Fill Permanent Technician Vacancies

The Army and Air Force Reserve Components use nonpermanent technicians to fill vacancies created by permanent technicians when they deploy or are fulfilling training or educational requirements to support mission and staffing needs. In 2020, there were approximately 11,000 nonpermanent technicians, the majority of which, approximately 10,500, worked for the Army or Air National Guard.²³ According to Army and Air

²²10 U.S.C. §§ 101(b)(16) & (d)(6)(A).

²³We are not reporting actual numbers based on inconsistencies in the data described later in this report.

Force Reserve Component officials, their ability to hire nonpermanent technicians helps the military services ensure mission readiness.

National Guard

The Army and Air National Guard use nonpermanent temporary and indefinite technicians to fill vacancies created when permanent technicians deploy, are fulfilling military training requirements, or are completing education or schooling. These components also use nonpermanent technicians to fill vacancies created when permanent technicians realign to AGR, and for critical needs vacancies and additional staffing needs.²⁴ TAGs in each of the 54 states, territories, and the District of Columbia responded that they use nonpermanent technicians for a variety of reasons, including when:

- **Permanent technicians are deployed.** Forty-nine TAGs reported that they use nonpermanent indefinite and temporary technicians to fill vacancies created when permanent technicians deploy. One TAG we interviewed told us that since deployments can be fast-paced or preplanned, they often rely on nonpermanent temporary technicians because they can hire them quickly to fill critical voids and help ensure mission readiness. Additionally, another TAG told us they use nonpermanent temporary technicians to fill aviation maintenance vacancies to maintain equipment during unit deployments. These officials reported that their use of temporary technicians helps to ensure readiness and provides opportunities for soldiers and airmen to gain additional experience that could lead to future permanent technician positions.
- **Permanent technicians are fulfilling training requirements.** Forty-one TAGs reported that they use nonpermanent temporary technicians to fill vacancies created when permanent technicians are fulfilling military or unit training requirements.
- **Permanent technicians are completing education/schooling.** Forty-one TAGs reported that they use nonpermanent temporary technicians to fill vacancies created when permanent technicians are

²⁴The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), codified as amended at 38 U.S.C. §§ 4301-4335, requires, in certain situations, for employers to reemploy employees who are absent from their positions by reason of service in the uniformed services. The use of nonpermanent technicians to fill vacancies created by permanent technicians that realign to AGR allows the Army and Air National Guard to keep those positions available, should a technician who has realigned to AGR choose to exercise their rights to reemployment under USERRA.

advancing their individual education or attending service training school. For example, according to one state TAG, if a permanent technician needed specialized training in electronics and occupied a mission critical position, then they might fill the vacancy with a temporary technician.

- **Technicians are realigned to AGR positions.** Forty-one TAGs reported that they use nonpermanent indefinite technicians when technicians realign to AGR because of Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) protections. Army National Guard officials told us that TAGs hire nonpermanent indefinite technicians when a technician realigns to AGR to ensure mission readiness while maintaining the permanent technician's right to reemployment under USERRA.²⁵ According to a TAG, when permanent technicians realign to AGR they have the option to exercise their USERRA reemployment rights. As such, TAGs can hire a nonpermanent technician during that period to carry on the work of that position.
- **Critical needs vacancies exist.** Forty-three TAGs reported that they use nonpermanent temporary technicians for critical needs vacancies created through attrition. Additionally, NGB officials told us that nonpermanent temporary technicians help ensure that critical work is completed despite vacancies created by permanent technicians when there is a need for surge capacity with a large deployment.
- **Additional staffing is needed.** Forty-eight TAGs reported that they use nonpermanent temporary technicians for special projects that require additional staffing. For example, one TAG and the TAG's Human Resources Office officials reported using nonpermanent temporary technicians as additional staff needed to attend to wildfires while units were deployed. Another TAG and the TAG's Human Resources Office officials reported using nonpermanent temporary technicians for emerging missions related to COVID-19.

Reserve

The Army and Air Force Reserve employ nonpermanent temporary and term technicians. According to officials, nonpermanent technicians fill vacant permanent technician positions during deployments or active-duty operational support assignments. Air Force Reserve officials stated that nonpermanent temporary technicians are hired when permanent technicians realign to AGR and for temporary missions or special

²⁵38 U.S.C. § 4312.

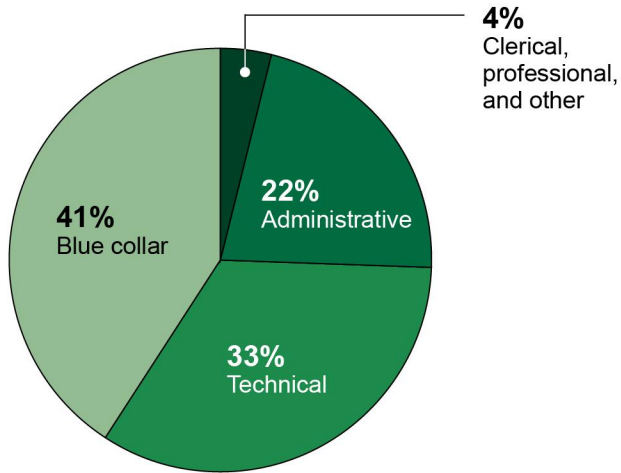
projects, such as standing up a new unit or starting a new mission. Additionally, Army Reserve officials told us they use nonpermanent term technicians to support mission changes, fill vacancies for technicians on military orders, or to meet short-term mission requirements.

Nonpermanent Technicians Work in All Occupational Categories, but Civilian and Military Job Alignment and Deployments Vary by Component

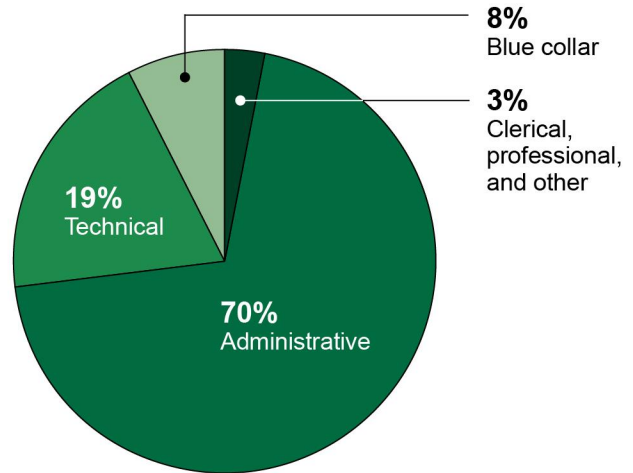
Our analysis shows that nonpermanent technicians work in numerous OPM occupational job categories: administrative, clerical, professional, technical, blue collar, and other. The largest percentage of nonpermanent technicians in each military service work in blue collar, technical, and administrative occupational categories, as shown in figure 2. The largest percentage of Army and Air Reserve Component nonpermanent technicians within each occupational category are shown in table 2.

Figure 2: Nonpermanent Technician Occupational Categories by Military Component, 2017-2020

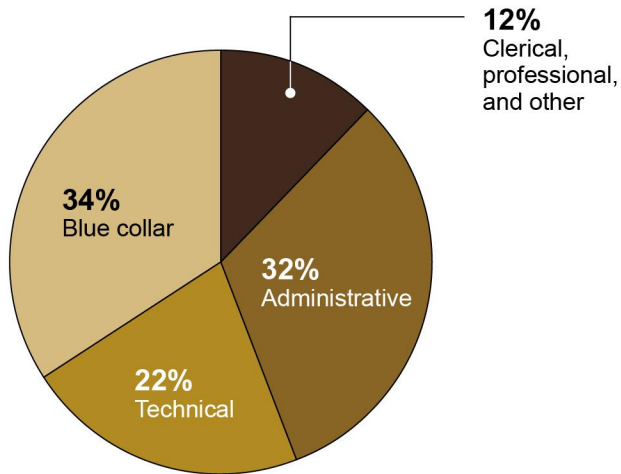
Army National Guard



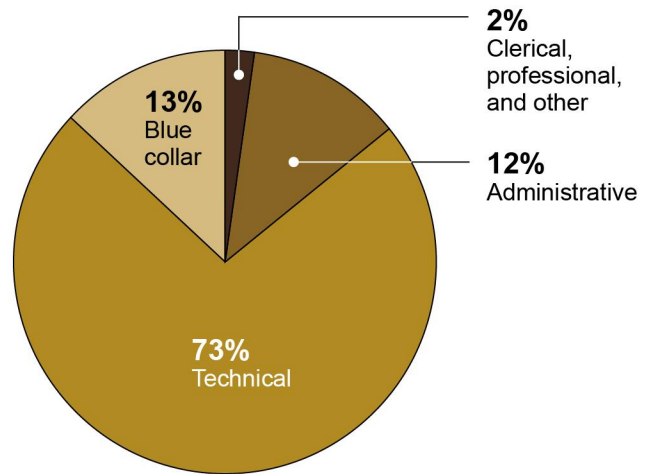
Army Reserve



Air Force National Guard



Air Force Reserve



Source: GAO analysis of Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service and Defense Manpower Data Center matching data. | GAO-22-104484

Accessible Data for Figure 2: Nonpermanent Technician Occupational Categories by Military Component, 2017-2020

	Army National Guard	Army Reserve	Air Force National Guard	Air Force Reserve
Clerical, professional, and other	4%	3%	12%	2%
Administrative	22%	70%	32%	12%
Technical	33%	19%	22%	73%
Blue collar	41%	8%	34%	13%

Note: Matching data refers to technician data captured in both the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System and Defense Manpower Data Center databases.

Table 2: Top Occupational Categories for Army and Air Reserve Component Nonpermanent Military Technicians

Service/occupational category	Occupational series description
Army National Guard Blue collar Technical Administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation/Mobile Equipment Maintenance • Aircraft Mechanic • Materials Handling • Supply Clerical and Technician • Human Resource Assistance • Education and Training Technician • Information Technology Management • Miscellaneous Administration & Program • Human Resources Management
Air National Guard Blue collar Administrative Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aircraft Mechanic • Aircraft Ordnance Systems Mechanic • Electronic Integrated Systems Mechanic • Information Technology Management • Security Administration • Intelligence • Health Aid and Technician • Miscellaneous Clerk & Assistant • Human Resource Assistance
Army Reserve Administrative Technical Blue collar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miscellaneous Administration & Program • Logistics Management • Human Resources Management • Miscellaneous Clerk & Assistant • Human Resource Assistance • Financial Clerical and Assistance • Heavy Mobile Equipment Mechanic • Small Arms Repairing • Electronics Mechanic
Air Force Reserve Technical Blue collar Administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aircraft Operation • Production Control • Miscellaneous Clerk & Assistant • Ordnance Equipment Mechanic • Aircraft Mechanic • Aircraft Ordnance Systems Mechanic • Miscellaneous Administration & Program • Intelligence • Transportation Specialist

Source: GAO analysis of DCPAS and DMDC matching data. | GAO-22-104484

Note: Matching data refers to technician data that was captured in both the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System and Defense Manpower Data Center databases.

According to Army and Air Force Reserve Component officials, the civilian jobs of nonpermanent technicians usually—but not always—align with their military jobs. For example,

- Air Force Reserve officials told us that they have strict requirements for technicians to perform the same jobs on both the military and civilian sides.
- Air National Guard wing commanders told us the civilian and military duties of nonpermanent technicians usually align. Further, nonpermanent technicians in all three of the discussions groups we held with Air National Guard nonpermanent temporary technicians told us that their military and civilian jobs were the same.
- An Army National Guard official stated that nonpermanent technicians might work in different areas in their civilian and military jobs because it is not a requirement for their military and civilian jobs to match. For example, nonpermanent technicians may be in the infantry for their military jobs, but may be qualified for and working in a maintenance position for their civilian jobs.
- Army Reserve officials told us that nonpermanent technicians might be hired for positions that do not have an equivalent military drill weekend position, such as staff operators.

When placed on military orders, nonpermanent technicians may deploy with their unit or in support of a unit. For example, Air National Guard officials stated that technicians deploy with their units while in their military status. In contrast, an Army National Guard official stated that the Army technicians support multiple units throughout a state and might deploy with any unit. Additionally, Army and Air Force Reserve officials stated that nonpermanent technicians can deploy when in their military status and if their unit deploys. In two of the three nonpermanent temporary technician discussion groups we held, technicians stated that they deployed as nonpermanent temporary technicians.

DOD Tracks Data on the Technician Workforce, but Reports the Data Inconsistently

Because technicians are both civilian and military personnel, DOD uses two separate data systems—the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) and the Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System—to track them. According to Army and Air Force Reserve

Component officials, DCPDS is the system of record for information related to military technicians. However, DMDC officials told us that the Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System is the official system of record for military end strength data, including reporting on the military technician population.

In our efforts to compare and analyze the technician data, we found that that military technician authorization and end-strength data from DMDC, DCPAS, and the Army and Air Force Reserve Components were inconsistent in the following four ways:²⁶

First, DMDC officials told us that when they extracted the technician authorization data using the military technician and component type (i.e., National Guard or Reserve) designators, the results were inconsistent, and unexpectedly showed few authorizations from FY 2017 through FY 2020. For example, in FY 2019, DMDC officials reported end-strength numbers that were 45 percent higher than their authorizations. The officials could not explain that variation. However, they told us they could improve the quality of their data results (i.e., make the two numbers more closely align) by removing the National Guard and Reserve designators. They attributed at least some of those errors to the lack of interaction between the military and civilian data systems to capture both the military and civilian technician data.

Second, we found that DMDC military technician end-strength data did not align with externally reported military technician end-strength data. For example, Army and Air Force Reserve Component budget justification book military technician end-strength data for FY 2017 through FY 2020 varied from end-strength data reported by DMDC for the same time period. Specifically, end-strength data reported for the Army Reserve ranged from 2 percent (143 technicians) higher, to 19 percent (1,124 technicians) lower than data reported by DMDC during the same 4-year period. End-strength data were 11 to 22 percent (848 to 1,604 technicians) lower for the Air Force Reserve; 15 to 49 percent (3,290 to 7,272 technicians) lower for Air National Guard; and 2 to 23 percent (449 to 4,965 technicians) lower for the Army National Guard during those same years.

²⁶The total number of technicians reported at the end of a FY in the DCPAS data we requested is considered end-strength.

Third, we found that although all the Army and Air Force Reserve Components use DCPDS as their source for military technician data, the components' end-strength data did not match the DCPAS end-strength data for FY 2017 through FY 2020. Air Force Reserve end-strength data varied by 1 percent (approximately 50 technicians) higher or lower than DCPAS end-strength, while the Army Reserve end-strength varied by 1 to 12 percent (48 to 1,029 technicians) higher. Army and Air Force Reserve officials stated that there could be variations in the end-strength numbers depending on when the data was extracted. For example, Army Reserve officials stated that they extract their end-strength data as of October 1 to capture all personnel who were onboard at the end of the FY (September 30). Air Force Reserve officials told us they use "the end-of-month universe" which captures all personnel actions that occur 10 days after the end of the month and allows them to capture those actions at the end of the FY.

We found that end-strength data varied by 1 to 17 percent (310 to 5,518 technicians) higher than DCPAS end-strength data for the Army National Guard and 1 to 15 percent (273 to 3,795 technicians) higher for the Air National Guard from FY 2017 through FY 2020. Army and Air National Guard officials told us that the variations in the data could be because their end-strength data only includes technicians who are in a paid status. DCPAS officials told us that they do not have a mechanism to separate technicians in paid and unpaid status when they extract their end-strength reports.

End-Strength Floor and Ceiling

Technician end-strength numbers are typically set at a minimum or “floor” by the NDAA. According to Army and Air Force Reserve Component officials, the floor allows flexibility for using nonpermanent technicians to support their missions. Forty-nine TAGs responding to our questionnaire stated they would not be able to successfully meet mission readiness requirements if the funding floor were replaced by a funding ceiling or maximum number of technicians. The NDAA for FY 2022 sets a ceiling on nonpermanent temporary technicians. According to Air National Guard officials, this change will affect readiness as it will affect workload capacity during a surge and they will not be able to hire drill-status guardsmen to gain experience. Additionally, they said it could affect budget execution because they will not be able to bring on temporary technicians when permanent technicians are deployed, leaving the unused portions of the permanent technicians salary.

Source: National Defense Authorization Acts (NDAA) and Army and Air Force Reserve Component officials. | GAO-22-104484

Note: In contrast to a minimum or “floor,” technician end-strength numbers have also been set at a maximum or “ceiling” such as in the NDAA for FY 2017. Pub. L. No. 114-328, § 413 (2016).

Fourth, we found that while DCPAS and the Army and Air Force Reserve Components each extract information regarding military technicians, the designators used to extract the information differ. For example, Army Reserve officials told us that they capture technician information by using civilian type codes, while Air Force Reserve officials told us they use an Air Force technician identification code. The Army and Air Force National Guard identify technicians by pay status. DCPAS officials told us that they used a definition of technicians that was agreed upon by the services in the past; however, they stated that the definition may need to be updated. Officials stated they use designators, codes, and agency group indicators, among other things, to ensure they are capturing the military technician population. However, DCPAS officials stated that they could only ensure that they are using the specific codes for military technicians, but could not determine if any of the military technician data were missing. Additionally, DCPAS and Army and Air Force Reserve officials stated there is no guidance regarding the DCPDS system. They noted there is no common technician definition, designators, or codes for extracting and reporting military technician data.

DOD Instruction 1205.18 states that the Secretaries of the military departments should define and require the periodic collection of data needed for effective full-time support program oversight.²⁷ While DOD is able to track military technician data in DCPDS and Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System, data inconsistencies exist due to a lack of 1) guidance, 2) common definitions and designators for extracting and reporting military technician data, and 3) a process to validate or ensure the civilian and military records are captured correctly in both the civilian and military systems. Officials stated that the Defense Civilian Human Resources Management System will be replacing the DCPDS system in FY 2022 and will be used for military technician data. DCPAS and Army

²⁷DOD Instruction 1205.18.

and Air Force Reserve officials stated that having guidance with common definitions and designators for extracting military technician data for this new system could eliminate inconsistencies and ensure consistent reporting. DCPAS officials also noted that it would be helpful to have guidance about how to use the data fields to ensure common understanding.

Without such guidance, common definitions and designators for military technician data, and a process for ensuring technician data is captured correctly in civilian and military databases, DOD may be reporting inconsistent data on its military technician population internally and externally. According to officials, technician end-strength data is connected to funding, which sets the minimum number of technicians that each service can hire. DOD should ensure that it is reporting technician data consistently to ensure the funding and flexibility necessary to continue using permanent and nonpermanent technicians to support mission readiness.

Hiring Processes and Benefits for Technicians Vary by Service and Appointment Type

Hiring Processes for Permanent and Nonpermanent Technicians Vary by Service and Appointment Type

The Army and Air Force Reserve Components' hiring processes for technicians vary by service and appointment type (i.e., permanent and nonpermanent [nonpermanent includes term, indefinite, or temporary]). Army and Air Force Reserve Component officials told us they use a formal hiring process for permanent, term, and indefinite technician

positions.²⁸ The Army and Air Force Reserve use the same formal process when hiring temporary technicians, according to officials. In contrast, Army and Air National Guard officials reported more frequently using a “less formal” process to hire temporary technicians.²⁹ Similarly, according to Army Reserve Command officials, they also recruit technicians using Veterans’ Recruitment Appointment authority. Neither Veterans’ Recruitment Appointment authority nor the Army and Air National Guard’s informal hiring process require the military services to post positions competitively.

Formal Hiring Process

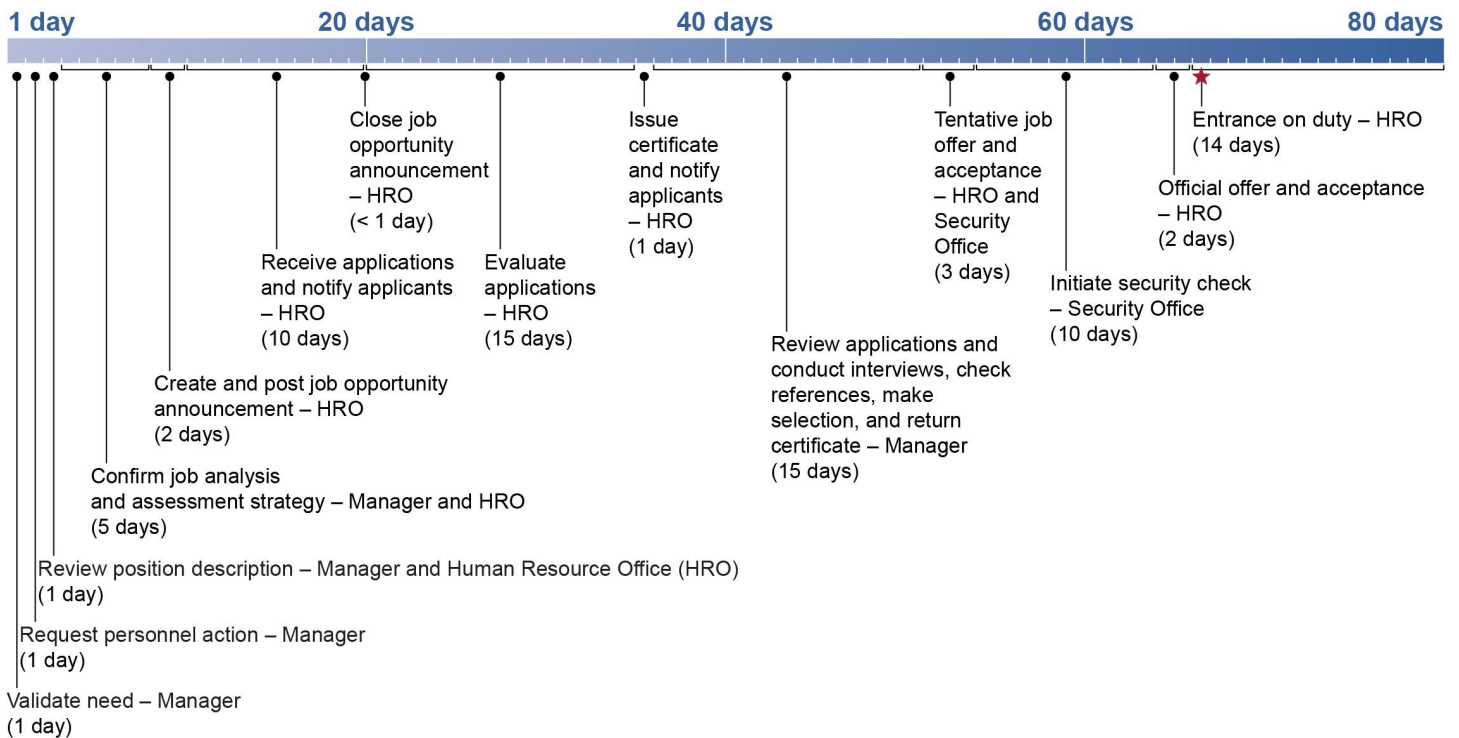
Army or Air National Guard permanent and indefinite positions and Army and Air Force Reserve permanent, term, and temporary positions typically involve a formal hiring process—job openings are competitively posted (e.g., vacancies filled using USAJobs.gov)—according to officials.³⁰ This process generally includes a job announcement, a rating, and interviews as shown in figure 3 and described in more detail below.

²⁸The terms “formal, informal, and less formal” originated through interviews with the TAGs or their human resource officials in selected states who referenced their hiring processes as formal for permanent and indefinite technicians (e.g., a USAJobs.gov announcement, ratings, and interviews), and as informal or less formal for temporary technicians (e.g., recruitment through word-of-mouth and no interviews). The hiring authorities for formal processes used depends on the military service. Specifically, the Army and Air Force Reserve Commands primarily use the competitive hiring authority found in title 5 of the U.S. Code. Comparatively, dual-status technician positions in the Army and Air National Guard are excepted service positions. Excepted service refers to positions in the executive branch of the federal government which are specifically excepted from the competitive service by or pursuant to statute, by the President, or by OPM, and which are not in the Senior Executive Service. 5 U.S.C. § 2103; 5 C.F.R. § 213.101 (2013).

²⁹According to National Guard Bureau officials, they follow a competitive hiring process for all permanent and indefinite positions, in accordance with Technician Personnel Regulation (TPR) 300 (Nov. 5, 1979) (incorporating changes through July 1, 1991). In contrast, they have no requirement to announce temporary technician positions competitively. As such, states may use a word-of-mouth or competitive process to make selections and appoint individuals to temporary positions.

³⁰Technician positions in the Army and Air Force Reserve are in the competitive civil service.

Figure 3: The Federal Government Competitive Hiring Process



Source: GAO presentation of Office of Personnel Management information. | GAO-22-104484

Note: According to OPM, agencies may adjust the number of days for each step as necessary.

Job Announcements

Army and Air Force Reserve Components usually advertise permanent, indefinite, and term technician positions using the same formal, competitive hiring processes used by other federal government agencies. The Army and Air Force Reserve also reported advertising their temporary positions the same way. Each Army and Air Force Reserve Component reported having posted job announcements on USAJobs.gov or via state websites. For example:

- Almost all TAGs (52 of the 53 that answered this question) reported reliance, in part, on OPM’s policies regarding competitive, excepted service, or direct hiring.

-
- Army Reserve officials told us they recruit approximately 70 percent of their technicians (permanent, term, and temporary) using USAJobs.gov.³¹
 - Air Force Reserve officials told us they recruit most (90 percent) of their permanent, term, and temporary technician applicants using OPM's competitive hiring process.³² According to Air Force Reserve officials, applicants follow the OPM process by answering knowledge, skills, and abilities questions related to the specific job's position description and submit résumés and any other required information.

Ratings

Army and Air Force Reserve Component officials review all applicant résumés and responses to knowledge, skills, and abilities questions to ensure that applicants meet the minimum qualification standards associated with each position description.

Hiring managers then decide whether to conduct hiring panels, according to these officials. Notably, some TAGs and Air Force Reserve officials told us that hiring managers, in coordination with either their human resource offices or the Air Force Personnel Center, respectively, choose whether to establish hiring panels to rank applicants against established criteria. In contrast, Army Reserve officials told us that they do not always establish selection panels when hiring for lower general schedule (GS) positions, but always conduct such reviews and ratings for GS-12 or 13 supervisory positions and any GS-14 or 15 position.

Once human resource officials evaluate applications, according to OPM's hiring process analysis tool, they notify each applicant of their qualification status. The hiring process analysis tool suggests that evaluating and notifying applicants can take up to 16 of the 80 days

³¹Generally, according to OPM, when an applicant uses the "Apply Online" button on a USAJobs.gov announcement, their application is sent to an agency talent acquisition system where a questionnaire and supplemental documentation may be submitted to the agency.

³²According to Air Force guidance, when candidates are considered from outside the Air Force for competitive service vacancies that last more than 120 calendar days, the Air Force Personnel Center and operating locations must post these vacancies on USAJobs.gov. This guidance also states that all civilian job announcements must be posted for a minimum of 5 business days on USAJobs.gov. Department of the Air Force Manual 36-203, *Staffing Civilian Positions* (July 30, 2019) (incorporating change 1, effective Oct. 31, 2021).

typically required to hire technicians and all other federal, civilian employees (see figure 3 above).³³ Afterward, according to Army or Air Force Reserve Component officials, selecting officials review and rate applicants to establish a best qualified list.

Interviews and Hiring Decisions

Following ratings, hiring managers interview qualified applicants, check references, and make hiring selections. Per OPM competitive hiring guidelines, this step of the competitive hiring process can take up to 15 days. (See figure 3 above.) While the interview processes are similar, the military services reported some variances. Specifically, Air Force Reserve officials and some TAGs (or their human resource officials) in the three selected states told us that once ratings are completed, hiring managers generally conduct interviews and make selections, select the applicant(s) of their choice without interviews, or cancel job announcements altogether and hire no one.³⁴ However, per Air Force guidance, managers must conduct hiring panels for GS-13 supervisory technician positions. In addition, 49 TAGs reported, as one possibility, that if two applicants met minimum qualifications for a technician position, then the selecting officials could hire the applicant of their choice. One Army National Guard commander also told us that a limited applicant pool can result in no one being hired or in the cancellation or reposting of the position.

In contrast, Army Reserve officials told us, selecting officials may choose to conduct a selection panel for non-supervisory GS-12 positions and below. However, according to Army Reserve policy, selecting officials must conduct selection panels for all supervisory GS-12 and GS-13 positions and all GS-14 and GS-15 positions.³⁵ The selecting official notifies the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center of their choice and, according to officials, at least one alternate in the event that their primary candidate declines the position. Army Reserve officials told us that if the referral list has fewer than three candidates, then the selecting official can

³³According to OPM, agencies may adjust the number of days for each step as necessary.

³⁴Department of the Air Force Manual 36-203 was revised in October 2021 to include a requirement that a hiring panel be used for all General Schedule (GS)-13 supervisory positions, some of which are technician positions.

³⁵Department of the Army Memorandum: *Army Reserve Civilian Selection Panel Policy*.

re-announce or re-advertise the position or choose to cancel the job announcement and hire no one.

Informal Hiring Processes

The Army and Air National Guard and the Army Reserve Command use informal processes (e.g., no competition, USAJobs.gov announcement, or interview required) to hire some technicians. For example, the Army and Air National Guard recruit potential temporary technicians for excepted service positions through word-of-mouth and other means, according to NGB officials.³⁶ Comparatively, Army Reserve Command officials told us they recruit veteran personnel for technician positions through word-of-mouth, using Veterans' Recruitment Appointment authority (an excepted authority that allows agencies to appoint eligible veterans without competition).³⁷ Similar to the formal process, according to officials, human resource officials review all applications to ensure that applicants meet minimum qualification standards.

Army and Air National Guard Temporary Technicians (Excepted Service Positions)

TAGs often recruit temporary technicians for excepted service positions through an informal word-of-mouth process. Specifically, 45 of the 51 TAGs that provided questionnaire responses as to whether they most commonly used excepted service for temporary technicians, responded yes.³⁸ Further, TAGs or commanders in some selected states reported that, since temporary technicians are often needed on short notice, unit or wing commanders usually elicit interest in positions through word-of-mouth and recruit persons in the Guard with like-skills to fill those voids.

³⁶According to OPM, most excepted service positions are not required to be posted on USAJobs.gov.

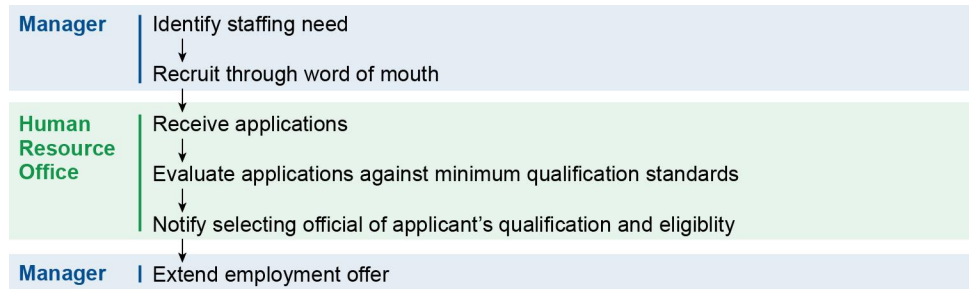
³⁷38 U.S.C. § 4214; 5 C.F.R. part 307.

³⁸TAGs responding to our questionnaire reported having used excepted service hiring authority for temporary technician positions. NGB officials stated that they hire temporary technicians into excepted service positions in accordance with Technical Personnel Regulation 300, which does not require competitive procedures when making temporary excepted service appointments. According to TPR 300, when a technician is absent for an extended period but has not vacated the position, arrangements to carry on the work of the position may be made by, among other means, establishing temporary identical (overhire) positions for periods up to 60 days. These positions must be identical to those on existing staffing documents, and are funded through existing staffing authorizations. With NGB approval, an identical authorization can be established for longer periods of time.

Additionally, learning about or applying to a temporary technician position by word-of-mouth or from a supervisor or commander was a common theme that emerged from our analysis of each of the three discussion groups with Air National Guard temporary technicians. For example, two temporary technicians told us that their commanders approached them during a military drill weekend and asked them if they were interested in applying for a temporary technician position.

Applicants interested in temporary technician positions send their résumé and any other required documentation directly to their state's human resource office for consideration, according to select National Guard human resource officials. Once state human resource officials receive that information, they compare each applicant's knowledge, skills, and abilities against the minimum qualification standards required in a position description. Afterwards, they notify selecting officials of each applicant's status (i.e., met or did not meet the minimum qualification standards). At that point, selecting officials can quickly hire any qualified applicant(s) of their choice. The hiring process for temporary technicians is illustrated in figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Excepted Service Hiring Process for Temporary Military Technicians



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense information. | GAO-22-104484

Wing or unit commanders in some states we selected for interviews told us that the ability to quickly hire temporary technicians helps them ensure mission readiness. These officials stated that while this pool of applicants may initially lack desired experience, the services have the ability to downgrade positions (e.g., offer the position at GS-7 instead of a GS-9, with lower requirements) to enable less experienced applicants or applicants with desirable skills to gain the experience necessary to be more competitive for more permanent positions later. Whenever this informal process proves challenging (e.g., because of a limited applicant pool), officials told us that they might instead choose to recruit temporary

technicians using the same formal competitive hiring process they use for other technicians.

Similarly, technicians in all three of the discussion groups we held with Air National Guard AGRs and in one of the discussion groups we held with Army permanent technicians stated that hiring temporary technicians was beneficial to mission readiness. Technicians in two of the three interviews of Air National Guard permanent technicians who declined AGR also mentioned the same thing.

Army Reserve Veterans (Veterans' Recruitment Appointment Authority)

Army Reserve Commands sometimes use the Veterans' Recruitment Appointment authority, which has no requirement to post vacant or new positions competitively.³⁹ Army Reserve officials reported using this authority to solicit applications for r technicians about 30 percent of the time. According to officials, this authority enables them to recruit soldiers for technician positions non-competitively (i.e., more expeditiously) via word-of-mouth during drill weekends and post internal notices for interested applicants to apply to vacancies. Specifically, these officials reported sending vacancy notifications through emails or posting openings on bulletin boards. Applicants for technician positions under this authority must be veterans in receipt of the appropriate campaign badge, expeditionary medal, or Air Force Service Medal.⁴⁰

Upon receipt of applications, officials told us they verify that all applicants are compliant with applicable laws and regulations. Army Reserve officials told us they are required to rate and refer every applicant. This verification process ensures that each applicant meets the minimum military qualifications (e.g., that they be a veteran) and any other minimum qualification standards of the position description. If an applicant meets the minimum qualification standards, then officials notify the selecting official, who can extend an offer to hire them.

³⁹38 U.S.C. § 4212; 5 C.F.R. part 307.

⁴⁰5 C.F.R. § 307.103 (2006). Army Reserve Command officials reported that Veterans' Recruitment Appointment is the preferred choice for most hiring managers, when they are trying to expedite a hire or reach as many veterans as possible.

Employment Benefits and Protections Vary According to Technician Appointment Type

The employment benefits and protections that permanent and nonpermanent technicians can receive varies. Specifically,

Full- and part-time nonpermanent term and indefinite technicians are eligible for most of the employment benefits and protections afforded permanent technicians and other federal civilian employees.

In contrast, full- and part-time nonpermanent temporary technicians are eligible for some federal civilian benefits, usually upon meeting certain conditions. For example, temporary technicians are generally not entitled to federal civilian retirement benefits unless their employment exceeds 1 year.⁴¹ Additionally, to be eligible for federal civilian health benefits, temporary technicians must work 130 or more hours per month for 90 days or longer or, if less than 30 hours a week, acquire 1 year or more of current continuous employment. Similarly, according to officials, since these technicians are required to serve in an Army or Air Force Reserve Component, each is also eligible for the same National Guard or Reserve employment benefits as similarly situated Guard or Reserve personnel (e.g., military retirement).

Federal Civilian Employment Benefits

Army and Air Force Reserve Component officials told us that technicians are entitled to the same employment benefits offered to other federal, civilian employees. Table 3 below lists the benefits for permanent and nonpermanent technicians. For detailed information on the federal civilian benefits offered to permanent and nonpermanent technicians, see appendix IV.

⁴¹5 C.F.R. § 842.105 (1998).

Table 3: Federal Civilian Employment Benefits for Technicians, by Appointment Type

Employment Benefit	Permanent	Term	Indefinite	Temporary (appointment for 1 year or less)
Thrift Savings Plan	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Life insurance	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^a
Health insurance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^{b,f}
Dental and vision insurance	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^c
Long-term care insurance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^{d,f}
Flexible Spending Accounts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^{f,h}
Annual leave	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^f
Sick leave	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Within-grade increases	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^f
Severance pay	Yes	No ^e	No ^e	No ^e
Military leave ^g	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Source: GAO analysis of OPM data and applicable sections of the United States Code and Code of Federal Regulations. | GAO-22-104484

^aThough temporary employees are generally ineligible for life insurance, there are some exceptions, which can be found at 5 C.F.R. § 870.302(b)(1) (2016).

^bGenerally, temporary technicians in appointments not to exceed 1 year are eligible for health insurance if they work at least 130 hours per month and the appointment, conversion, or extension results in the length of employment being at least 90 days. 5 U.S.C. § 8906a; 5 C.F.R. § 890.102(j) (2016).

^cTemporary employees that have completed 1 year of current continuous employment, excluding any breaks in service of 5 days or less, are eligible for FEDVIP. 5 C.F.R. § 894.302(e) (2016).

^dGenerally, temporary employees that are eligible for FEHB are eligible for long term care insurance. 5 C.F.R. § 875.201 (2005).

^eEmployees on time limited appointments, such as term, indefinite, and temporary technicians, are not eligible for severance pay unless they are appointed to a time limited position within 3 calendar days of separation from a qualifying permanent position. 5 U.S.C. § 5595(a)(2).

^fA technician may be eligible with less than a year of service.

^gMilitary leave generally refers to paid time off that a federal civilian employee or an employee of the District of Columbia is entitled to for certain types of active or inactive duty in the National Guard or as a Reserve of the Armed Forces. See 5 U.S.C. § 6323.

^hGenerally, temporary employees that are eligible for FEHB are eligible for Flexible Spending Accounts.

National Guard or Reserve Service Benefits

Personnel in the Army or Air National Guard or the Army or Air Force Reserve, including technicians, are eligible for military retirement and, in certain cases, other benefits. Army and Air Force Reserve Command officials told us that all technicians are entitled to the same benefits offered to any other member of the Army or Air National Guard or the Army and Air Force Reserve. For instance, all service members, including

technicians, are eligible for military retirement after 20 years of service in the National Guard or Reserve.⁴² According to officials in the Army Reserve, Reserve technicians might also be eligible for additional federal or state benefits such as tuition reimbursement, Veterans Affairs home loan eligibility, base exchange and commissary shopping privileges, access to military clothing stores, use of military recreation facilities, legal assistance, official library services, and U.S. citizenship eligibility.

Permanent and Nonpermanent Technicians Must Meet the Same Qualification Standards

Permanent and nonpermanent technicians in the Army and Air Force Reserve Components must meet the minimum qualification standards associated with a position. According to officials, those requirements depend upon OPM or agency approved qualification standards and usually include military service qualifications, work experience, and training requirements.⁴³ Figure 5 below includes an example of minimum qualification standards from a USAJobs.gov announcement.

⁴²10 U.S.C. § 12731. Years of service are computed in accordance with 10 U.S.C. § 12732.

⁴³According to OPM, when an agency fills positions in the competitive service, applicants must meet the OPM qualifications requirements for the applicable occupational series. In comparison, when an agency fills positions in the excepted service, it may use OPM qualification standards approved for use in the competitive service or agency established standards.

Figure 5: Example of Minimum Qualification Standards for a Dual-Status Military Technician from a USAJobs.gov Announcement

AIRPLANE FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR TITLE 32 Open Until Filled
DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
Air National Guard Units

Overview
Accepting applications
Open & closing dates: 04/26/2021 to 12/10/2021
Pay scale & grade: GS 13
Appointment type: Permanent - This position is in the Federal/Excepted Civil Service. The tentatively selected individual will receive an Indefinite Appointment and may be converted to permanent based on availability of funds or position no longer being encumbered.

Service: Excepted
Salary: \$118,407.1
Work sch: Full-time

Requirements
Conditions of Employment

- NATIONAL GUARD MEMBERSHIP IS REQUIRED.
- This is an excepted service position that requires membership in a compatible military assignment in the employing state's National Guard, required prior to the effective date of placement.
- Selectee will be required to wear the military uniform.
- Acceptance of an excepted service position constitutes concurrence with these requirements as a condition of employment.
- Applicants who are not currently a member of the National Guard must be eligible for immediate membership and employment in the National Guard in the military grade listed in this announcement.
- Males born after 31 December 1959 must be registered for Selective Service.
- Federal employment suitability as determined by a background investigation.
- May be required to successfully complete a probationary period.
- Participation in direct deposit is mandatory.
- Work may require access to classified information. Must be able to obtain and maintain the appropriate security clearance.
- The employee may be required to work other than normal duty hours, which may include evenings, weekends, and/or holidays.

Qualifications
Military Grades: Open to Officer Rank/Grade: O-1/2d Lt - O-5/Lt Col
Compatible Military Assignments: AFSC: Must possess 011F3H
GENERAL EXPERIENCE: This position is located at the unit level in the ANG Aviation Wing, Operations Group at selected Air Combat Command (ACC) and Air Education Training Command (AETC) gained flying units in the Air National Guard (ANG). The primary purpose of the position is to provide ground and flight instruction in high performance, military fighter aircraft i.e. A-10, F-15, F-16 and F-22 weapon systems. In addition to flying training responsibilities, flight instructors perform assignments related to the operational readiness of their unit and assigned, attached or newly acquired to the unit to determine flying background and proficiency in the Unit Equipped (UE) airplane. Projects unit training requirements and prepares required training records. Maintains a thorough knowledge of airplane systems and procedures under normal, instrument, and emergency conditions to give timely and accurate instruction to aircrews in the air or on the ground. Briefs and instructs preflight preparations including: intelligence briefings, mission planning, weather factors, mission objectives, and other agency coordination to ensure safe flight procedures and effective mission accomplishment. Performs other duties as assigned.
SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE: Must possess at least 24 months of F-16 flight lead OR F-16 instructor pilot, which indicates the ability to provide ground and flight instruction in order to upgrade pilot skills to obtain maximum performance in the unit-equipped (UE) aircraft. Must have working experiences in civilian aviation programs or military service aviation programs (active duty or reserve components) or in the Army National Guard Aviation Support facility or Air National Guard Wing/ Operations Group. Qualification competencies are determined by three factors: The aircraft operated; the nature and purpose of assignments; and, the degree of hazard. Experienced in piloting and instructing pilot skills in one or more of the following main-frame/military aircraft: Fixed-wing, rotary, or remotely piloted aircraft (RPA).

Education
NOTE: Must have TS Security Clearance.
GS-13 Air National Guard Officer Positions
An undergraduate degree from an accredited college/university is mandatory. A Graduate Degree from an accredited civilian academic college or from an equivalent professional military education school is optimum. Must have Federal Aviation Administration certifications awarded from accredited civilian aviation programs OR must have aviation certifications from accredited military aviation schools.

Additional information

Annotations:
- A box points to the 'Conditions of Employment' section with the text: 'All applicants must meet the conditions of employment as well as the minimum experience and education requirements to be eligible for this position.'
- A box points to the 'Compatible Military Assignments' section with the text: 'Four different types of experience are acceptable for this position. Three are acquired through military service experience and one is acquired through civilian experience. However, applicants must also possess the Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) 011F3H to qualify for this position.'

Source: USAJobs.gov and GAO analysis of Department of Defense information. | GAO-22-104484

Ohio National Guard Statement Regarding Qualification Standards
According to officials with the Ohio National Guard's human resource office, "Temporary technicians must meet the minimum qualification standards established by a combination of OPM qualification standards and those created by the National Guard Bureau and in compliance with title 32 section 709."

Source: Interview with Ohio National Guard. | GAO-22-104484

Military Service Qualifications

Permanent and nonpermanent technicians must meet the same military service qualifications. Specifically, they must meet military eligibility requirements and maintain an Army or Air Force Reserve Component membership for the duration of their employment. According to Army and Air Force Reserve Component officials, if a technician fails to meet either of these requirements, then they also lose their federal civilian technician position.

Military Service Eligibility Requirements

The Army and Air Force Reserve Components require enlisted soldiers and officers to meet specific Army or Air Force eligibility requirements. Table 4 below identifies some of these Army and Air Force requirements.

Table 4: Summary of Selected Army and Air Force Requirements for Enlisted and Officers

	Army	Air Force
Enlisted	Generally be 17-35 years old	Generally be 17-39 years old
Enlisted	Achieve a minimum score (31) on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test	Achieve a minimum score (typically 36) on the ASVAB test
Enlisted	Meet medical, moral, and physical requirements	Meet medical, moral, and physical requirements
Officers	Possess a college degree at the time of commissioning and be in one of four main paths to becoming an Army Officer: (1) the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), (2) direct commission, (3) Officer Candidate School, or (4) attending the U.S. Military Academy	Four main paths to becoming an Air Force officer: (1) Enlist and work toward becoming an officer (2) join the Air Force ROTC in college, (3) attend officer training school after earning college or postgraduate degree or (4) attend the U.S. Air Force Academy
Officers	Generally be 18-32 years old	Generally be 19-39 years old
Officers	Meet medical, moral, and physical requirements	Meet medical, moral, and physical requirements

Sources: Applicable sections of the United States Code, Code of Federal Regulations, and U.S. Army and Air Force guidance. | GAO-22-104484

National Guard/Reserve Membership

Army and Air Force Reserve Component permanent and nonpermanent technicians are required as a condition of their employment to maintain

membership in the Selected Reserves.⁴⁴ These civilian technicians organize, administer, instruct, or train members of the Selected Reserves or conduct maintenance and repair supplies or equipment issued to the Selected Reserves or the armed forces. Technicians in the Army or Air Force Reserve may also perform additional duties. These duties can include supporting operations or missions assigned in whole or in part to the technician's unit, supporting operations or missions performed by a unit composed of elements from more than one component of the technician's armed force, or supporting operations or missions performed by a joint forces unit.⁴⁵ For example, an Army National Guard official told us that their technicians may either support the mission of the unit to which they are assigned or be pulled from one unit to support the mission of another unit, depending on needs. In contrast, the same official told us that the Air National Guard does a good job at ensuring that their technicians support the missions of the units to which they are assigned.

Work Experience

According to Army and Air Force Reserve Component officials, permanent and nonpermanent technicians usually are required to possess prior military work experience or, on a case-by-case basis, other types of work experience in place of or in addition to military experience. For example, figure 5 (shown above) depicts an Air National Guard USAJobs.gov announcement for which four different types of experience are acceptable for the position (three are acquired through military work experience and the other is through civilian experience). Army and Air Force Reserve Component officials we interviewed told us that the type and amount of experience required for each position is dependent on the specific type of job and whether it is an entry level or a more senior position. TAGs from several states told us that military and other work experience requirements are intended to ensure that technicians are qualified to perform the duties and responsibilities expected of them.

⁴⁴10 U.S.C § 10216. The Reserve Components consist of the Ready Reserve, the Standby Reserve, and the Retired Reserve. Selected Reserve members are enrolled in the Ready Reserve program and attached to a reserve unit. They and their units are on active status. As such, they are the most readily available component for active duty. See 10 U.S.C. §§ 10143-44; 10 U.S.C. § 10154; 10 U.S.C. § 10104.

⁴⁵10 U.S.C § 10216(a)(3)(B).

Prior Military Work Experience

According to agency officials, technicians generally must have obtained a specified amount of military work experience, per specific position descriptions, prior to being hired. For example, 39 TAGs reported that military experience is (or is with some exceptions) required for permanent technician positions. Thirty-eight reported the same for indefinite and 37 the same for temporary technician positions. NGB and selected National Guard officials told us that the amount and type of military experience needed is determined through the minimum qualification standards of the position being filled. For example, a pilot might be required to possess 24 months of F-16 flight lead or F-16 instructor pilot experience to be minimally qualified for an airplane flight instructor title 32 position. (See figure 5 above.)

DOD data suggests that permanent, term, indefinite, and temporary technicians with the Army and Air Force Reserve Components generally average between 15 and 19 years of military experience, as shown in table 5.

Table 5: Military Technician (Permanent, Term, Indefinite, and Temporary) Average Years of Military Experience by Service, Fiscal Years 2017-2020

Fiscal Year	Air National Guard	Air Force Reserve	Army National Guard	Army Reserve
2017	16	18	16	19
2018	16	18	16	18
2019	16	17	15	18
2020	16	17	15	17

Source: GAO analysis of Army and Air Force data pertaining to dual-status military technicians (military technician). | GAO-22-104484

Note: In fiscal year 2017, Defense Manpower Data Center matching data contained information for two additional technicians; however, because they were listed as “other” (no specific military service affiliation), they are excluded from the above calculations.

Technician discussion groups and technicians we interviewed in selected states often reported having prior military work experience. Some indicated that having such experience was advantageous to their having obtained a permanent technician position, or believed that it could help them obtain a future permanent technician position.

Other Work Experience

Federal civilian work experience is sometimes (but not typically) a consideration for technician positions. Instead, applicants generally must meet military service standards and sometimes also possess military

experience, if required, according to National Guard officials. For example, 49 TAGs reported that federal civilian experience is not required for permanent technician positions. Fifty-one TAGs reported the same for indefinite technician positions and 53 reported the same for temporary positions. Fifty-two TAGs also stated that an applicant for a particular nonpermanent job (e.g., civilian electrician) might meet the minimum qualifications for a different job (e.g., aviation mechanic) based on specific experience or training.

DOD data show that permanent, term, indefinite, and temporary technicians with the Army and Air Force Reserve Components generally average between 6 and 9 years of federal civilian work experience, as shown in table 6.

Table 6: Military Technician (Permanent, Term, Indefinite, and Temporary) Average Years of Federal Civilian Work Experience by Service, Fiscal Years 2017-2020

Fiscal Year	Air National Guard	Air Force Reserve	Army National Guard	Army Reserve
2017	8	9	8	8
2018	8	8	8	7
2019	8	8	7	7
2020	8	7	7	6

Source: GAO analysis of Army and Air Force data pertaining to dual-status military technicians (military technician). | GAO-22-104484

Note: In fiscal year 2017, Defense Manpower Data Center matching data contained information for two additional technicians; however, because they were listed as “other” (no specific military service affiliation), they are excluded from the above calculations.

While federal civilian work experience is not typically required, it can make some technicians more marketable or be more advantageous to their success as a technician, according to select technician groups and agency officials.

Like prior federal civilian experience, private sector experience may satisfy some or all experience requirements for select technician positions. Although private sector experience is not usually required, it can offer some applicants a better chance of being hired over applicants with no such experience. For example, according to officials, a technician with secretarial experience in the private sector may be preferable over someone who does not have that additional experience.

Training

According to selected Army and Air Force Reserve Component officials, technicians are typically required to possess job-specific, military training

or other relevant training. Additionally, Army National Guard and Air Force Reserve officials stated they can also downgrade technician positions (e.g., offer a GS-7 position requiring no or less training rather than a GS-9 requiring some or more advanced training) to attract a specific type of technician or a larger technician applicant pool.

Military Training

Army and Air Force Reserve Component officials told us that technician positions often require a military skill set (i.e., a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) for the Army, or an Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) for the Air Force), which can be obtained through weekend Guard or Reserve positions. According to TAG questionnaire respondents, all technician types can obtain MOS, AFSC, and other training through weekend Guard duties before being hired.

Army and Air Force Reserve Component officials reported some variances regarding MOS or AFSC training after a technician is hired. Notably:

- **TAGs.** According to some TAGs in states selected for interviews, applicants for permanent technician positions may require some additional training after they are hired. This applies generally only to entry-level positions, however. For example, according to Air National Guard officials in one state, if the applicant for a permanent position meets the minimum qualifications of the position (e.g., through job experience listed on the applicant's résumé), but does not possess a compatible MOS or AFSC that is required for the position, then the service may hire the applicant under the condition that this new employee has 12 months to attain a compatible MOS or AFSC. Additionally, according to these officials, the service may extend the 12-month deadline for an additional 12 months, if extenuating circumstances exist (e.g., the training was not available).

In contrast, temporary technicians must be fully trained in either their MOS or AFSC, according to some National Guard officials. An MOS or AFSC that mirrors the civilian equivalent technician position is required to perform the duties within their military positions, according to some National Guard officials. A military member must meet minimum qualification standards (including a MOS or an AFSC) established by NGB for each technician position before being hired into a temporary technician position. Therefore, no additional training is required after an MOS or AFSC-qualified military member is hired

into a temporary technician position, according to select National Guard officials.

- **Army and Air Force Reserve.** In comparison, Army and Air Force Reserve officials told us that required training is usually based on position function rather than appointment type. For example, Army Reserve officials told us that if a temporary technician needed training in order to perform the duties and responsibilities associated with a position, then the temporary technician would likely be sent to such training to ensure mission readiness.

Some Army and Air Force Reserve Component officials told us they might also require advanced or specialized military training, which they offer to permanent technicians to improve skill sets, depending on the specific job and service needs. However, the Reserve Components typically do not offer the same types of advanced trainings to temporary technicians primarily because, according to officials, temporary technicians usually fill short-term positions and the return on investment would not be advantageous to the military services. For example, if the service acquired a brand new piece of equipment that required advanced training, then officials told us that they are more likely to send permanent technicians to that advanced training; temporary technicians could still help maintain the older equipment. However, in some circumstances, particularly those critical to successful performance of a job, mission readiness, or an extension of a temporary technician's service time, officials stated that the military services may send temporary technicians to advanced training.

Other Training

Civilian and private sector training, while not usually required, may satisfy some or all training requirements for certain technician positions or give some applicants a better chance of being hired over applicants with no such training, according to a National Guard official. For example, an airplane flight instructor title 32 technician position might require, in addition to an AFSC (011F3H), a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.

The Air National Guard Considered Readiness and Qualifications in Realignment

The Air National Guard Collaborated with States and Air Wings to Select Technician Positions for Realignment Based on Readiness Factors

The Air National Guard selected positions for realignment to AGR positions in 2019 based on readiness factors—such as targeting specific airframes or weapon systems, and career fields for recruitment and retention of personnel. The Air National Guard sent a list of selected positions to the State TAG Human Resources Offices and Air Wing Commanders, who collaborated to determine which positions would be realigned. According to documentation we reviewed and officials we interviewed, the Air Wings had the ability to adjust the listing of positions based on their needs. In response to our questionnaire of the 54 TAGs, 50 cited readiness as a consideration in AGR realignment decisions and 46 respondents reported that AGR realignments have had a positive effect on unit readiness.

The specific readiness factors considered by the Air National Guard, State TAG Human Resources Offices, and Air Wings when targeting positions for realignment were:

- **Recruitment, retention, and career fields.** According to a June 2019 Air National Guard briefing, readiness recovery was the top priority in targeting specific career fields for realignment where there were difficulties with meeting recruitment and retention goals—to include pilot and maintenance positions shortages.⁴⁶ For example, in response to our questionnaire, one TAG stated that they were able to run a second shift in aircraft maintenance by using AGRs, and that this has increased their ability to maintain their aging fleet of aircraft. In addition, February 2020 North Dakota documentation states that their priority for FY 2020 was for realigning positions in intelligence, cyber, space, and remotely piloted aircraft.⁴⁷

⁴⁶National Guard Bureau, Air National Guard, *ANG T2AGR* (June 2019).

⁴⁷*ANG Technician to AGR Realignment* (Feb. 7, 2020).

- **Airframes.** A March 2021 Air National Guard Briefing also emphasized that AGR realignments were readiness focused—prioritizing specific airframes or weapon systems in the first several years of realignments.⁴⁸ For example, in FY 2019, 436 AGR positions were added to KC-135 Stratotanker Air National Guard squadrons to provide for global aerial refueling capability. The second highest number of realignments for FY 2019 were 382 positions added to C-130 Hercules tactical airlift squadrons.
- **Command and Control.** Wing commanders cited command and control of technicians as a readiness consideration when realigning technicians to AGR. AGRs' work schedules are dictated by mission requirements. For example, Air National Guard documentation emphasizes that AGR personnel are willing to work irregular hours to prepare for weekend drill training or to complete a given mission. Officials from two Ohio Air Wings told us that having pilots as AGRs is advantageous because they can deploy more quickly without the administrative requirements of switching statuses from civilian to military as a technician.

DOD's September 2017 *Report to Congress on the Feasibility and Advisability of Converting Military Technician Positions to Personnel Performing Active Guard and Reserve Duty* recommended a full-time support construct of 65 percent AGR, 23 percent technician, and 12 percent civilian mix.⁴⁹ The 3,183 technician positions realigned to AGRs in FY 2019 increased AGR personnel to 47 percent of the full-time technician force, as shown in table 7 below.

Air National Guard officials stated that they

- would not be realigning any technician positions to AGR in FY 2022 because the NDAA for FY 2022 did not allow for an increase in Air National Guard AGR personnel,⁵⁰

⁴⁸National Guard Bureau, Air National Guard, *FY22 ANG Dual-Status Technician to AGR (T2AGR) Realignment* (Mar. 1, 2021).

⁴⁹Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, *Report to Congress on the Feasibility and Advisability of Converting Military Technician Positions to Personnel Performing Active Guard and Reserve Duty* (Washington, D.C: Sept. 25, 2017).

⁵⁰Both the William M. (Mac) Thornberry NDAA for FY 2021 and the NDAA for FY 2022 set an end-strength of Air National Guard AGR personnel at 25,333. Pub. L. No. 116-283, § 412(5) (2021); Pub. L. No. 117-81, § 412(5) (2021).

- are not planning to realign any technician positions to AGR in FY 2023 and that the percentage of AGR personnel will hold at 60 percent of the full-time technician workforce, and
- plan to conduct an analysis to determine the effects of realigning technicians to AGR over the past 3 FYs. This analysis will include a review of the effect of AGR realignments on readiness, recruitment and retention, and USERRA rights.

Table 7: Air National Guard Dual-Status Military Technician Positions Realigned to Active Guard and Reserve (AGR), Fiscal Years 2019–2021

Fiscal Year	Number of officer realignments	Number of enlisted realignments	Total	Percent of technician workforce that was AGR personnel following realignments
2019	267	2916	3,183	47
2020	382	1962	2,344	53
2021	281	2238	2,519	60

Source: GAO analysis of Air National Guard data. | GAO-22-104484

Existing Qualified Technicians Applied and Voluntarily Competed for Positions Realigned to AGR in FY 2019

Permanent technicians who were qualified for their positions could apply and compete for realigned AGR positions in FY 2019. According to an Ohio National Guard human resource office information paper, AGR positions are competitive and applicants must possess a specified military rank and AFSC.⁵¹ Forty-five of the 54 TAGs reported that the type of work experience—such as the AFSC of a technician—was a factor in making realignment decisions. In addition, 43 TAGs said that the type of training possessed by technicians was a factor in making realignment decisions.

The March 2019 NGB memorandum to the TAGs regarding AGR realignments emphasizes the strictly voluntary aspect of applying for AGR positions.⁵² Similarly, a North Dakota memorandum to technicians, which notifies them that their position will realign to AGR, emphasizes that

⁵¹Ohio National Guard Human Resources Directorate, Information Paper: *Ohio Air National Guard Realignment of Military Technician Positions to Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Positions* (Jan. 14, 2019).

⁵²National Guard Bureau Memorandum, *Military Technician/Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Realignment* (Mar. 14, 2019).

technicians will remain technicians if they chose not to realign or do not meet medical or fitness qualifications.⁵³ Finally, an Ohio National Guard information paper states that military technicians will not incur any negative consequences to their employment if they choose not to apply for an AGR position.⁵⁴

We held three discussion groups with technicians who chose to realign to AGR. We also conducted three interviews with technicians who chose not to realign to AGR. In all three discussion groups and all three interviews, technicians reported that they had a choice or that the decision to realign was voluntary. Also, technicians in all three interviews who chose not to realign to AGR reported that they did not feel pressure to do so. Similarly, technicians who chose to realign in two of three small discussion groups reported that they also did not feel pressure to realign.⁵⁵ Technicians discussed the voluntary aspect of the decision making process. For example:

- One technician who realigned to AGR said that the option to realign to AGR was presented as a choice. He said he felt great about having a choice because he could then decide what the best fit was for his family.
- A technician from a different state who also realigned to AGR stated that no one was dissuaded or encouraged and that officials told them that the decision to realign was up to them. He said there was no pressure to realign.
- A technician who decided not to realign to AGR said that he received a letter from his commander saying that he could opt in or out of a realignment. He also said there was no pressure to realign.

⁵³North Dakota National Guard Joint Force Headquarters Memorandum, *Notification of Realignment from Title 32 Excepted Service Dual Status Technician Employment to Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) Status* (Mar. 1, 2021).

⁵⁴Ohio National Guard Human Resources Directorate, *Ohio Air National Guard Realignment of Military Technician Positions to Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Positions*.

⁵⁵In one of our small group discussions with technicians who chose to realign to AGR, one technician said that he felt rushed in making his decision to realign or not to realign.

Reasons for Realigning to AGR

We asked technicians about the reasons for and the benefits of realigning to AGR in the three discussion groups we held. The responses fell into the following categories:

- **Increased pay and military benefits/early retirement.** For those technicians who chose to realign to AGR, higher pay and better medical insurance or retirement benefits were discussed as reasons for realigning in all three of the small discussion groups. According to DOD's September 2017 *Report to Congress on the Feasibility and Advisability of Converting Military Technician Positions to Personnel Performing Active Guard and Reserve Duty*, military pay and benefit packages are generally more robust for AGRs than for technicians.⁵⁶ For example, AGR personnel are eligible for retirement after achieving 20 years of Total Active Federal Military Service⁵⁷ and can also receive TRICARE medical benefits.⁵⁸
 - When asked how they felt about their decision to realign to AGR, one technician said that, for younger people in their careers, the pay is higher and the insurance for family is a huge benefit. He said that he was happy with his decision to realign.
 - A technician from a different state who realigned to AGR said that his position did not change when he converted to AGR, but he got better pay, medical benefits, and retirement benefits, adding that the decision to realign to AGR was a no-brainer from his perspective.
- **Readiness.** For those technicians who chose to realign to AGR, increased unit readiness and personnel retention was also discussed

⁵⁶Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, *Report to Congress on the Feasibility and Advisability of Converting Military Technician Positions to Personnel Performing Active Guard and Reserve Duty*.

⁵⁷Though technicians are also eligible for military retirement, AGR personnel meet the eligibility requirements for military retirement sooner than technicians based on the computation of their years of service, in accordance with 10 U.S.C. § 12732.

⁵⁸According to the 2017 DOD Report, the total cost of health care borne by the service member for TRICARE is almost always significantly less than the cost associated with Federal Employee Health Benefit (FEHB) Medical insurance. Most technicians, with the exception of certain temporary technicians, are eligible to participate in FEHB insurance instead of TRICARE.

as a benefit to realigning to AGR in one of the three small discussion groups. For example:

- One technician who realigned to AGR said that he would tell Congress to focus more on using the AGR process because it ensures more people want to stay. He also said that being an AGR helps ensure mission readiness and success and retention because of the flexibility it offers.
- A technician who decided not to realign said that AGR has led to a higher degree of readiness because individuals are held to the same requirements as active duty personnel. He added that he would like to see the option to realign to continue and believes that it boosts morale.

Reasons for Not Realigning to AGR

Technicians across our three interviews discussed the reasons for not realigning to AGR. These technicians provided the following reasons for choosing not to realign:

- **Close to retirement.** In all three of the interviews of technicians who chose not to realign to AGR, technicians said that they decided not to realign based on the length of their technician careers and how close they were to retirement. For example, one technician who chose not to realign to AGR said that it did not make sense to convert to AGR because he had 2 years left as a guardsman to hit his 20 years.

According to the 2017 DOD report to Congress, there is no law or policy that allows technicians to convert their years of civilian federal service to the equivalent creditable time toward a military retirement. Therefore, the report emphasizes that in most cases, a technician who realigns to AGR would be starting over in pursuit of a regular 20-year military retirement.⁵⁹ For example, one technician who chose to realign to AGR said that he was conflicted about the decision because he will not be able to get his 20 years of technician service.

- **Flexibility and federal employee benefits.** One technician we spoke with also cited the flexibility of their technician work schedule as a reason not to realign to AGR. He stated that he enjoys having more

⁵⁹Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, *Report to Congress on the Feasibility and Advisability of Converting Military Technician Positions to Personnel Performing Active Guard and Reserve Duty*.

control over his life and the flexibility/work-life balance of being a technician versus AGR. According to the National Guard Technician Handbook, technicians generally have the same benefits, privileges, and rights as other federal employees.⁶⁰ For example, technicians can join unions, earn both annual and sick leave, and are eligible to participate in both federal civilian and military retirement systems. A technician who chose not to realign from a different state said that he appreciates the flexibility of being a technician. He also cited union backing and retirement benefits as some of the benefits of being a technician.

Conclusions

Military technicians maintain positions that support the success of the Army and Air Force National Guard and Army and Air Force Reserve (collectively, the Army and Air Force Reserve Components). Because deployments are often fast-paced and technician positions are critical to mission readiness, the Army and Air Force Reserve Components rely on the flexibilities afforded them to hire nonpermanent technicians to fill critical voids left when permanent technicians deploy, are in training, or are otherwise unavailable. The Army and Air Force Reserve Components track military technician data; however, three factors have led to inconsistent reporting: the lack of guidance, the lack of a common definition and designators for military technicians, and the lack of a process for ensuring data is captured correctly. Without the ability to track and report consistent data related to their technician populations, the Army and Air Force Reserve Components may not receive the appropriate level of funding to use nonpermanent technicians to support their missions.

Recommendations for Executive Action

We are making the following two recommendations to DOD:

The Secretary of Defense should ensure that Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness in coordination with the Secretary of the Army and the Defense Human Resources Activity, develop 1) guidance, 2) a common definition and designator(s) for military technicians, and 3) a process for ensuring technician data is captured correctly in civilian and

⁶⁰National Guard Bureau, *National Guard Technician Handbook* (Jan. 2017).

military databases to ensure consistent extracting and internal and external reporting of such data for permanent and nonpermanent technician appointment types. (Recommendation 1)

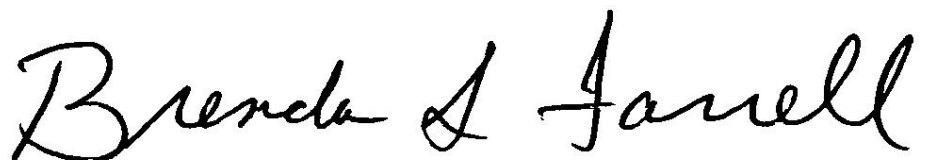
The Secretary of Defense should ensure that Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness in coordination with the Secretary of the Air Force and the Defense Human Resources Activity, develop 1) guidance, 2) a common definition and designator(s) for military technicians, and 3) a process for ensuring technician data is captured correctly in civilian and military databases to ensure consistent extracting and internal and external reporting of such data for permanent and nonpermanent technician appointment types. (Recommendation 2)

Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report to DOD for review and comment. In its written comments reproduced in their entirety in Appendix V, DOD concurred with the recommendations. DOD provided technical comments, which we have incorporated as appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, and the Secretary of the Air Force. In addition, this report will be available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions regarding this report, please contact me at (202) 512-3604 or farrellb@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made major contributions to this report are listed in appendix VI.



Brenda S. Farrell
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management

Appendix I: Survey Development and Administration

We developed, administered, and analyzed a survey to better understand dual-status technician (“technician”) employment and budget management, duties related to permanent and nonpermanent technicians, hiring processes, work experiences, trainings, readiness, and Active Guard and Reserve realignments.

A member of our applied research and methodology survey group peer-reviewed our draft questionnaire for measurement errors. We also took steps to minimize potential errors that any practical difficulties of conducting any survey may introduce. Because we surveyed all 54 state adjutants general (TAG) in the states, territories, and the District of Columbia, there were no statistical uncertainties in our estimates due to sampling errors. However, a different issue (i.e., a measurement error) can result from differences in how a particular question is interpreted, and the sources of information available to respondents. As such, we conducted three pre-tests of the draft questionnaire with the TAGs and their human resource officials from states with geographic and technician population variances to (1) ensure the questions were clear, (2) obtain suggestions for clarification, (3) determine whether different TAG officials would be able to respond to questions with minimal burden, and (4) ensure that the questions were comprehensive and unbiased. We also provided GAO contact information for respondents who had questions about the survey or experienced technical problems.

Because non-response errors can result when a survey fails to capture information from population members, we took steps to minimize this risk. Specifically, we sent emails and conducted telephone follow-up calls to encourage participation from non-respondents. As a result, each of the 54 TAGs responded for a 100 percent response rate.

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

We administered a web-based questionnaire to better understand dual-status technician employment and budget management, duties related to permanent and nonpermanent technicians, hiring processes, work experiences, trainings, readiness, and Active Guard and Reserve realignments. Reproduced herein are the questionnaire text and the aggregated TAG response counts per question for each of the 54 states, territories, and the District of Columbia. Although the format has been modified for readability purposes, this appendix accurately replicates the content of the web-based questionnaire and response counts. Some open-ended questions (those without response options) were included and the responses were analyzed by completing a content analysis. However, for brevity and to limit the possibility of identifying individual respondents, narrative answers to open-ended text questions have been omitted below. Terms used in the survey were defined when they first appeared in the questionnaire. We received a 100 percent response rate; the results represent the views of TAGs for all 54 states, territories, and the District of Columbia.

**Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire
Responses**

**Questionnaire on the Dual-Status Technician Workforce
U.S. Government Accountability Office**

Introduction

Background: The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) is responsible for reporting to Congress on federal programs. In response to a congressional mandate in Senate Report 116-236, accompanying a bill for the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2021, we are assessing the dual-status technician workforce, with an emphasis on gathering information about the extent to which non-permanent positions (i.e., indefinite and temporary) align with the permanent dual-status technician workforce. This questionnaire is being distributed to the adjutants general (TAGs) of each state, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands who oversee or manage dual-status technician populations. Your participation is very important and will enable us to collect information that will inform Congress, the Department of Defense (DOD), and the military services on this important topic.

Scope: The questions are only about dual-status technicians under title 32 (including those who are deployed during active duty assignments or upon realignment to Active Guard Reserves). This includes dual-status technicians in non-permanent (i.e., indefinite or temporary) positions as well as those on permanent appointments.

Confidentiality: We anticipate including the results from this questionnaire in aggregate in our final report and will not attribute any responses to a particular individual or state. We will not share information gathered through this questionnaire with anyone outside of GAO unless compelled by law or court order or required to do so by the Congress.

To learn more about completing the questionnaire, or printing your responses click [here](#) for help.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

I. Employment and budget management of non-permanent, dual-status technicians in the Army and Air Force National Guard

Employment

1. In the past 5 years, what hiring authority did you *most commonly* use to fill *permanent* dual-status technician positions?

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A *dual-status* technician is a unique type of federal employee who as a condition of their employment is required to maintain military status in the National Guard.

By *permanent positions*, we mean dual-status technicians (i.e. title 32) who after completing a one-year probationary period, convert to career status as federal employees (tenure 1 or tenure 2).

1a. Competitive Service

Question 1a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	13	24.07	13	24.07
Yes	3	5.56	16	29.63
No	37	68.52	53	98.15
Not Sure	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

1b. Excepted Service

Question 1b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	1	1.85	1	1.85
Yes	51	94.44	52	96.30
No	2	3.70	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

1c. Direct Hiring Authority

Question 1c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	13	24.07	13	24.07
Yes	7	12.96	20	37.04
No	32	59.26	52	96.30
Not Sure	2	3.70	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

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1d. Other

Question 1d	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	18	33.33	18	33.33
Yes	1	1.85	19	35.19
No	32	59.26	51	94.44
Not Sure	3	5.56	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

1e. What was the other hiring authority?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

2. In the past 5 years, have you managed either of the following *non-permanent* dual-status technicians?

By *non-permanent, indefinite* positions, we mean dual-status technicians who are hired with an unspecified or unknown ending date, typically no longer than 4 years (possibly longer due to USERRA), and for whom permanent employment cannot be justified (tenure 3).

By *non-permanent, temporary* positions, we mean dual-status technicians hired under a temporary appointment where they work for one year or less and can extend incrementally for up to 4 years (tenure 0).

2a. Indefinite (tenure 3)

Question 2a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes	52	96.30	52	96.30
No	2	3.70	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

2b. Temporary (tenure 0)

Question 2b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes	53	98.15	53	98.15

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No	1	1.85	54	100.00
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Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

The next four questions are about dual-status technicians in non-permanent, indefinite positions (tenure 3).

3. In the past 5 years, has it been quicker to hire a *non-permanent* employee for an indefinite duration of time than to hire a *permanent* employee?

Question 3	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	35	64.81	35	64.81
No Response	3	5.56	38	70.37
Not Sure	1	1.85	39	72.22
Yes	15	27.78	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

Why has it been quicker?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

4. In the past 5 years, what hiring authority did you *most commonly* use to fill *non-permanent indefinite* dual-status technician positions?

4a. Competitive Service

Question 4a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	34	62.96	34	62.96
No Response	17	31.48	51	94.44
Not Sure	2	3.70	53	98.15
Yes	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

4b. Excepted Service

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Question 4b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No Response	4	7.41	4	7.41
Not Sure	2	3.70	6	11.11
Yes	48	88.89	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

4c. Direct Hiring Authority

Question 4c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	34	62.96	34	62.96
No Response	16	29.63	50	92.59
Not Sure	2	3.70	52	96.30
Yes	2	3.70	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

4d. Other

Question 4d	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	30	55.56	30	55.56
No Response	21	38.89	51	94.44
Not Sure	3	5.56	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What other authority?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

5. In the past 5 years, did you manage any *non-permanent, indefinite* dual-status technicians when

5a. Permanent technicians deploy?

Question 5a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
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No	2	3.70	2	3.70
No Response	2	3.70	4	7.41
Not Sure	1	1.85	5	9.26
Yes	49	90.74	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

5b. Permanent technicians are fulfilling collective military or unit training requirements?

Question 5b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	22	40.74	22	40.74
No Response	2	3.70	24	44.44
Not Sure	2	3.70	26	48.15
Yes	28	51.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

5c. Permanent technicians are advancing their individual education or attending service school?

Question 5c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	13	24.07	13	24.07
No Response	2	3.70	15	27.78
Not Sure	2	3.70	17	31.48
Yes	37	68.52	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

5d. Special projects require additional manpower and are not expected to last long-term?

Question 5d	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	10	18.52	10	18.52
No Response	2	3.70	12	22.22
Not Sure	4	7.41	16	29.63

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Yes	38	70.37	54	100.00
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Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

5e. Dual-status technicians realign to Active Guard Reserve positions (e.g. because of USERRA)?

Question 5e	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	9	16.67	9	16.67
No Response	2	3.70	11	20.37
Not Sure	2	3.70	13	24.07
Yes	41	75.93	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

5f. Critical needs vacancies are created through attrition?

Question 5f	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	18	33.33	18	33.33
No Response	2	3.70	20	37.04
Not Sure	3	5.56	23	42.59
Yes	31	57.41	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

5g. Critical vacancies are in geographic areas where recruiting permanent dual-status technicians is challenging?

Question 5g	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	35	64.81	35	64.81
No Response	2	3.70	37	68.52
Not Sure	3	5.56	40	74.07
Yes	14	25.93	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

5h. Other reason?

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Question 5h	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	29	53.70	29	53.70
No Response	9	16.67	38	70.37
Not Sure	11	20.37	49	90.74
Yes	5	9.26	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What was the other reason?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

6. Have you ever rehired the same *non-permanent, indefinite*, dual-status technician(s) again?

Question 6	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	4	7.41	4	7.41
No Response	3	5.56	7	12.96
Not Sure	9	16.67	16	29.63
Yes	38	70.37	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

The next three questions are about dual-status technicians in *non-permanent, temporary* positions (tenure 0).

7. In the past 5 years, what hiring authority did you *most commonly* use to fill *non-permanent, temporary* dual-status technician positions?

7a. Competitive Service

Question 7a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	34	62.96	34	62.96
No Response	16	29.63	50	92.59
Not Sure	2	3.70	52	96.30
Yes	2	3.70	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

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7b. Excepted Service

Question 7b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	4	7.41	4	7.41
No Response	3	5.56	7	12.96
Not Sure	2	3.70	9	16.67
Yes	45	83.33	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

7c. Direct Hiring Authority

Question 7c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	25	46.30	25	46.30
No Response	13	24.07	38	70.37
Not Sure	1	1.85	39	72.22
Yes	15	27.78	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

7d. Other

Question 7d	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	31	57.41	31	57.41
No Response	20	37.04	51	94.44
Not Sure	3	5.56	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What other authority?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

8. In the past 5 years, did you manage any *non-permanent, temporary* dual-status technicians when

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8a. Permanent technicians deploy?

Question 8a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	2	3.70	2	3.70
No Response	2	3.70	4	7.41
Not Sure	1	1.85	5	9.26
Yes	49	90.74	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

8b. Permanent technicians are fulfilling collective military or unit training requirements?

Question 8b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	9	16.67	9	16.67
No Response	1	1.85	10	18.52
Not Sure	3	5.56	13	24.07
Yes	41	75.93	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

8c. Permanent technicians are advancing their individual education or attending service school?

Question 8c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	2	3.70	2	3.70
No Response	1	1.85	3	5.56
Not Sure	2	3.70	5	9.26
Yes	49	90.74	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

8d. Special projects require additional manpower and are not expected to last long-term?

Question 8d	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	1	1.85	1	1.85

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No Response	2	3.70	3	5.56
Not Sure	3	5.56	6	11.11
Yes	48	88.89	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

8e. Dual-status technicians realign to Active Guard Reserve positions (e.g. because of USERRA)?

Question 8e	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	23	42.59	23	42.59
No Response	1	1.85	24	44.44
Not Sure	3	5.56	27	50.00
Yes	27	50.00	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

8f. Critical needs vacancies are created through attrition?

Question 8f	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	8	14.81	8	14.81
No Response	2	3.70	10	18.52
Not Sure	1	1.85	11	20.37
Yes	43	79.63	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

8g. Critical vacancies are in geographic areas where recruiting permanent dual-status technicians is challenging?

Question 8g	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	28	51.85	28	51.85
No Response	1	1.85	29	53.70
Not Sure	3	5.56	32	59.26
Yes	22	40.74	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

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8h. Other reason?

Question 8h	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	27	50.00	27	50.00
No Response	12	22.22	39	72.22
Not Sure	9	16.67	48	88.89
Yes	6	11.11	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What was the other reason?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

9. Have you ever rehired the same *non-permanent, temporary*, dual-status technician(s) again?

Question 9	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	3	5.56	3	5.56
No Response	1	1.85	4	7.41
Not Sure	3	5.56	7	12.96
Yes	47	87.04	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

Budget Management

10. If your authorized manning for the dual-status technician program included a “ceiling” instead of the current “floor,” would you still be able to successfully meet your mission readiness requirements?

Question 10	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes	1	1.85	1	1.85
No	49	90.74	50	92.59

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Don't know	4	7.41	54	100.00
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Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

11. If you would *not* be able to successfully meet your mission readiness requirements, is it because

11a. USERRA prevents hiring permanent technician(s) to perform mission critical work while permanent technicians already holding the position are deployed?

Question 11a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	1	1.85	1	1.85
Yes	40	74.07	41	75.93
No	12	22.22	53	98.15
Not Sure	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

11b. It might be difficult to hire additional technician support in order to address military surges to ensure readiness?

Question 11b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes	52	96.30	52	96.30
No	2	3.70	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

11c. Other reason?

Question 11c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	8	14.81	8	14.81

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Yes	22	40.74	30	55.56
No	15	27.78	45	83.33
Not Sure	9	16.67	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What was the other reason?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

II. How do non-permanent, dual-status technician positions align with the requirements of the permanent, dual-status technician workforce?

12. Do each of the following types of *non-permanent*, dual-status technicians perform the same duties and responsibilities as their *permanent* technician counterparts?

12a. Indefinite

Question 12a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes: The Duties Are the Same	43	79.63	43	79.63
Sometimes: The Duties Are Not the Same in All Cases	11	20.37	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

12b. Temporary

Question 12b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes: The Duties Are the Same	30	55.56	30	55.56
Sometimes: The Duties Are Not the Same in All Cases	23	42.59	53	98.15
No: The Duties Are Not the Same	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

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If you indicated the duties and responsibilities are *not* or are *sometimes not* the same, can you provide a brief description of any differences?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

13. We understand that non-permanent dual-status technicians are required to deploy as a condition of their employment. If dual-status technicians do *not deploy*, could it be because

13a. Deployments are circumstantial depending on need and specific job responsibilities?

Question 13b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes	34	62.96	34	62.96
No	18	33.33	52	96.30
Not Sure	2	3.70	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

13b. Non-permanent technicians must remain to perform mission critical work?

Question 13B	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	1	1.85	1	1.85
Yes	10	18.52	11	20.37
No	43	79.63	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

13c. Not all technicians in a unit or wing deploy simultaneously?

Question 13c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes	46	85.19	46	85.19
No	6	11.11	52	96.30
Not Sure	2	3.70	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

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13d. Other reason?

Question 13d	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	12	22.22	12	22.22
Yes	17	31.48	29	53.70
No	17	31.48	46	85.19
Not Sure	8	14.81	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What was the other reason?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

14. Which of the following, if any, are reasons that you might hire someone whose current civilian job is different from the non-permanent, dual-status technician job (e.g. an accountant is hired as a dual-status technician pilot) over someone whose job is similar?

14a. The applicant whose job is not the same met the correct training and all other minimum qualification standards and the other applicant did not.

Question 14a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	1	1.85	1	1.85
Yes	50	92.59	51	94.44
No	1	1.85	52	96.30
Not Sure	2	3.70	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

14b. If both met minimum qualifications, the selecting official can hire the applicant of their choice.

Question 14b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes	49	90.74	49	90.74
No	3	5.56	52	96.30

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Not Sure	2	3.70	54	100.00
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Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

14c. Other reason

Question 14c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	11	20.37	11	20.37
Yes	8	14.81	19	35.19
No	21	38.89	40	74.07
Not applicable	9	16.67	49	90.74
Not Sure	5	9.26	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What was the other reason?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

15. What kind of impact, if any, has resulted from hiring non-permanent, dual-status technicians whose civilian jobs differed from their dual-status technician jobs?

Question 15	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Impact	2	3.70	2	3.70
Minor Impact	5	9.26	7	12.96
No Impact	44	81.48	51	94.44
N/A, Do Not Employ	1	1.85	52	96.30
Don't Know	2	3.70	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

Would you please briefly describe the impact (e.g. additional training would be required)?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

16. Do the following technicians *usually* maintain military jobs (e.g. weekend Guard) that are the same as their non-permanent dual-status technician jobs?

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16a. Indefinite

Question 16a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes, they are the same	40	74.07	40	74.07
No, they are not the same	8	14.81	48	88.89
Not applicable	3	5.56	51	94.44
Not Sure	3	5.56	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

16b. Temporary

Question 16b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes, they are the same	28	51.85	28	51.85
No, they are not the same	16	29.63	44	81.48
Not applicable	6	11.11	50	92.59
Not Sure	4	7.41	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

17. Do any of the following explain why a non-permanent technician *could* be hired for a job that is not the same as their weekend Guard job?

17a. A college student(s) with weekend, Guard duties may meet the minimum qualifications for a position based on specific training and/or experience (e.g. prior guard assignment).

Question 17a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
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Yes	54	100.00	54	100.00
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Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

17b. An applicant for a particular job (e.g. civilian electrician) might meet the minimum qualifications for a different job (e.g. aviation mechanic) based on specific training and/or experience.

Question 17b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes	52	96.30	52	96.30
No	1	1.85	53	98.15
Not Sure	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

17c. Other explanation

Question 17c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	15	27.78	15	27.78
Yes	13	24.07	28	51.85
No	13	24.07	41	75.93
N/A, Do Not Employ	7	12.96	48	88.89
Not Sure	6	11.11	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What is the other explanation?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

18. Which of the following, if any, are reasons that you might hire someone whose military job (i.e. weekend Guard) is different from the non-permanent, dual-status technician job (e.g. a

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mechanic is hired as a dual-status technician electrician) over someone whose job is similar?

18a. The applicant whose job is not the same met the correct training and all other minimum qualification standards and the other applicant did not.

Question 18a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes	52	96.30	52	96.30
No	1	1.85	53	98.15
Not Sure	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

18b. If both met minimum qualifications, the selecting official can hire the applicant of their choice.

Question 18b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes	49	90.74	49	90.74
No	5	9.26	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

18c. Other explanation

Question 18c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	14	25.93	14	25.93
Yes	11	20.37	25	46.30
No	11	20.37	36	66.67
N/A	11	20.37	47	87.04

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Not Sure	7	12.96	54	100.00
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Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What is the other explanation?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

19. What kind of impact, if any, has resulted from hiring non-permanent, dual-status technicians whose military job (i.e. weekend Guard) differed from their dual-status technician jobs?

Question 19	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Significant Impact	1	1.85	1	1.85
Impact	2	3.70	3	5.56
Minor Impact	12	22.22	15	27.78
No Impact	38	70.37	53	98.15
N/A, Do Not Employ	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

Would you please briefly describe the impact (e.g. additional training would be required)?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

20. Are *permanent*, dual-status technicians able to obtain training through weekend Guard duties *before being hired*?

20a. Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)

Question 20a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes, Can Obtain Through Guard Before	52	96.30	52	96.30

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No, Cannot Obtain Through Guard Before	1	1.85	53	98.15
Not Applicable	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

20b. Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC)

Question 20b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes, Can Obtain Through Guard Before	52	96.30	52	96.30
No, Cannot Obtain Through Guard Before	1	1.85	53	98.15
Not Applicable	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

20c. Other training

Question 20c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	8	14.81	8	14.81
Yes	26	48.15	34	62.96
No	2	3.70	36	66.67
N/A	8	14.81	44	81.48
Not Sure	10	18.52	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What is the other training?

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

21. Are *non-permanent, indefinite* dual-status technicians able to obtain training through weekend Guard duties *before being hired*?

21a. Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)

Question 21a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes, Can Obtain Through Guard Before	51	94.44	51	94.44
No, Cannot Obtain Through Guard Before	1	1.85	52	96.30
Not Applicable	1	1.85	53	98.15
Don't Know	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

21b. Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC)

Question 21b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes, Can Obtain Through Guard Before	51	94.44	51	94.44
No, Cannot Obtain Through Guard Before	1	1.85	52	96.30
Not Applicable	1	1.85	53	98.15
Don't Know	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

21c. Other training

Question 21c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
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Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

Not checked	7	12.96	7	12.96
Yes	24	44.44	31	57.41
No	2	3.70	33	61.11
N/A	11	20.37	44	81.48
Not Sure	10	18.52	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What is the other training?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

22. Are *non-permanent, temporary* dual-status technicians able to obtain training through weekend Guard duties *before being hired*?

22a. Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)

Question 22a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	1	1.85	1	1.85
Yes, Can Obtain Through Guard Before	49	90.74	50	92.59
No, Cannot Obtain Through Guard Before	2	3.70	52	96.30
Not Applicable	1	1.85	53	98.15
Don't Know	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

22b. Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC)

Question 22b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	1	1.85	1	1.85

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

Yes, Can Obtain Through Guard Before	49	90.74	50	92.59
No, Cannot Obtain Through Guard Before	2	3.70	52	96.30
Not Applicable	1	1.85	53	98.15
Don't Know	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

22c. Other training

Question 22c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	8		8	14.81
Yes	23	42.59	31	57.41
No	2	3.70	33	61.11
Not Applicable	11	20.37	44	81.48
Not Sure	10	18.52	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What is the other training?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

III. Approval process and types of work experience required for hiring non-permanent, dual-status technicians

23. Do any of the following specific laws or policies govern your hiring of permanent dual-status technicians?

23a. Title 32

Question 23a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	1	1.85	1	1.85

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

Yes	53	98.15	54	100.00
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Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

23b. Office of Personnel Management's Policies Regarding Competitive, Excepted Service or Direct Hiring

Question 23b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	1	1.85	1	1.85
Yes	52	96.30	53	98.15
No	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

23c. National Guard Bureau's (NGBs) Merit Placement Plan

Question 23c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	1	1.85	1	1.85
Yes	47	87.04	48	88.89
No	5	9.26	53	98.15
Not Sure	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

23d. A state, territory or DC's Merit Placement Plan

Question 23d	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	1	1.85	1	1.85
Yes	46	85.19	47	87.04

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

No	4	7.41	51	94.44
Not Sure	3	5.56	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

23e. Army National Guard Guidance

Question 23e	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	3	5.56	3	5.56
Yes	29	53.70	32	59.26
No	14	25.93	46	85.19
Not Sure	8	14.81	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

23f. Air National Guard Guidance

Question 23f	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	3	5.56	3	5.56
Yes	29	53.70	32	59.26
No	14	25.93	46	85.19
Not Sure	8	14.81	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

23g. Other specific laws or policies

Question 23g	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	14	25.93	14	25.93
Yes	26	48.15	40	74.07
No	8	14.81	48	88.89

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

Not Sure	6	11.11	54	100.00
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Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What is the specific state, territory or DC's Merit Placement Plan?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

What is the name of the Army National Guard Guidance?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

What is the name of the Air National Guard Guidance?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

What other specific laws or policies are applicable?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

24. Are any of the specific laws or policies that govern your hiring of *permanent*, dual-status technicians different from those used to hire *non-permanent*, dual-status technicians?

24a. Indefinite

Question 24a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes	2	3.70	2	3.70
No	51	94.44	53	98.15
Not Sure	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

24b. Temporary

Question 24b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
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Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

Not checked	1	1.85	1	1.85
Yes	14	25.93	15	27.78
No	38	70.37	53	98.15
Not Sure	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What are the specific laws or policies for the indefinite that differ?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

What are the specific laws or policies for the temporary that differ?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

25. In the past 5 years, did you require dual-status technicians applying for the following types of appointments possess *prior federal* civilian work experience?

25a. Permanent

Question 25a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes, Prior Federal Civilian Required	4	7.41	4	7.41
No, Prior Federal Civilian Not Required	49	90.74	53	98.15
Not Applicable	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

25b. Indefinite

Question 25b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes, Prior Federal Civilian Required	2	3.70	2	3.70
No, Prior Federal Civilian Not Required	51	94.44	53	98.15
Not Applicable	1	1.85	54	100.00

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

25c. Temporary

Question 25c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes, Prior Federal Civilian Required	1	1.85	1	1.85
No, Prior Federal Civilian Not Required	53	98.15	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

If you indicated that the dual-status technician workforce for one or more of the *non-permanent* appointment types was required to possess prior federal, civilian experience, then was that prior federal, civilian work experience directly related to the technician position for which they were hired?

Question 25cu1	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	35	64.81	35	64.81
Yes	6	11.11	41	75.93
No	9	16.67	50	92.59
Don't Know	4	7.41	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

Can you describe an example that includes the appointment type and the reasoning for why prior, related federal, civilian experience was not required?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

26. In the past 5 years, did you usually require dual-status technicians applying for the following types of appointments possess *prior military* experience?

26a. Permanent

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

Question 26a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes, Prior Military Experience Required	28	51.85	28	51.85
Yes, Prior Military Experience Required With Some Exceptions	11	20.37	39	72.22
No, Prior Military Experience Not Required	13	24.07	52	96.30
Not Applicable	2	3.70	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

26b. Indefinite

Question 26b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes, Prior Military Experience Required	28	51.85	28	51.85
Yes, Prior Military Experience Required With Some Exceptions	10	18.52	38	70.37
No, Prior Military Experience Not Required	14	25.93	52	96.30
Not Applicable	2	3.70	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

26c. Temporary

Question 26c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes, Prior Military Experience Required	27	50.00	27	50.00
Yes, Prior Military Experience Required With Some Exceptions	10	18.52	37	68.52
No, Prior Military Experience Not Required	15	27.78	52	96.30
Not Applicable	2	3.70	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

Questionnaire information available from GAO upon request.

If you indicated that the dual-status technician workforce for one or more of the *non-permanent* appointment types was required to possess prior military service, then was that prior military work experience directly related to the dual-status technician position for which they were hired?

Question 26cu1	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Not checked	13	24.07	13	24.07
Yes	20	37.04	33	61.11
No	17	31.48	50	92.59
Don't Know	4	7.41	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

Can you describe an example that includes the appointment type and the reasoning for why prior related military experience was not required?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

If you indicated that there are some exceptions to requiring prior military experience, can you describe an example?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

If you indicated that the amount of experience expected for at least one of the *non-permanent* appointments was not commensurate with the permanent technician workforce, can you provide a brief explanation?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

IV. The extent to which the Air National Guard considered work experience and impacts to readiness in its decisions to realign dual-status technicians to Active Guard Reserve (AGR) positions in the Air National Guard in fiscal year 2019.

28. Has your organization begun conducting any realignments of dual-status technicians to AGR?

Question 28	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes	52	96.30	52	96.30

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

No	2	3.70	54	100.00
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Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

29. Were any of the following organizations involved in the realignment decisions of dual-status technicians to AGR positions?

29a. The National Guard Bureau (NGB)

Question 29a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	1	1.85	1	1.85
No	3	5.56	4	7.41
No Response	2	3.70	6	11.11
Yes	48	88.89	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

29b. The Office of the Adjutant Generals (TAGs)

Question 29b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	5	9.26	5	9.26
No Response	2	3.70	7	12.96
Yes	47	87.04	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

29c. The Air National Guard

Question 29c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No Response	2	3.70	2	3.70
Yes	52	96.30	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

29d. The Army National Guard

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

Question 29d	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	3	5.56	3	5.56
No	42	77.78	45	83.33
No Response	4	7.41	49	90.74
Yes	5	9.26	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

29e. Other

Question 29e	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	10	18.52	10	18.52
No	25	46.30	35	64.81
No Response	14	25.93	49	90.74
Yes	5	9.26	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What are the other organizations?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

30. Were any of the following considered in AGR realignment decisions?

30a. Type of work experience (e.g. AFSC, MOS)

Question 30a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	2	3.70	2	3.70
No	5	9.26	7	12.96
No Response	2	3.70	9	16.67
Yes	45	83.33	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

30b. Amount of military work experience

Question 30b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	5	9.26	5	9.26
No	15	27.78	20	37.04
No Response	2	3.70	22	40.74
Not Applicable	1	1.85	23	42.59
Yes	31	57.41	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

30c. Type of training (e.g. AFSC, MOS)

Question 30c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	2	3.70	2	3.70
No	7	12.96	9	16.67
No Response	2	3.70	11	20.37
Yes	43	79.63	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

30d. Amount of military training

Question 30d	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	4	7.41	4	7.41
No	13	24.07	17	31.48
No Response	2	3.70	19	35.19
Not Applicable	1	1.85	20	37.04
Yes	34	62.96	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

30e. Lethality of the Force

Question 30e	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	6	11.11	6	11.11
No	6	11.11	12	22.22
No Response	2	3.70	14	25.93
Not Applicable	1	1.85	15	27.78

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Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

Yes	39	72.22	54	100.00
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Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

30f. Morale

Question 30f	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	4	7.41	4	7.41
No	16	29.63	20	37.04
No Response	2	3.70	22	40.74
Not Applicable	1	1.85	23	42.59
Yes	31	57.41	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

30g. Job Retention

Question 30g	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	2	3.70	2	3.70
No	8	14.81	10	18.52
No Response	2	3.70	12	22.22
Yes	42	77.78	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

30h. Readiness

Question 30h	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	2	3.70	2	3.70
No Response	2	3.70	4	7.41
Yes	50	92.59	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

30i. Other Consideration

Question 30i	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	10	18.52	10	18.52

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Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

No	14	25.93	24	44.44
No Response	12	22.22	36	66.67
Not Applicable	7	12.96	43	79.63
Yes	11	20.37	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What are the other considerations?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

31. What are the impacts, if any, of the realignment decisions on personnel and unit readiness?

31a. Personnel readiness

Question 31a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Did Not Track It	2	3.70	2	3.70
Don't Know	3	5.56	5	9.26
No Impact	6	11.11	11	20.37
No Response	2	3.70	13	24.07
Positive Impact	41	75.93	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

31b. Unit readiness

Question 31b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Did Not Track It	2	3.70	2	3.70
Don't Know	3	5.56	5	9.26
No Impact	1	1.85	6	11.11
No Response	2	3.70	8	14.81
Positive Impact	46	85.19	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

32. Did you assess any readiness impacts related to dual-status technician positions realigning to AGR positions?

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

Question 32	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	13	24.07	13	24.07
No Response	2	3.70	15	27.78
Not Sure	8	14.81	23	42.59
Yes	31	57.41	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What readiness impacts did you assess?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

33. In addition to any readiness issues you may have indicated previously, what other impacts, if any, did AGR realignments have on the dual-status technician workforce as a whole?

33a. Morale

Question 33a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	5	9.26	5	9.26
Negative Impact	5	9.26	10	18.52
No Impact	9	16.67	19	35.19
No Response	2	3.70	21	38.89
Positive Impact	33	61.11	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

33b. Amount of workforce experience

Question 33b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	3	5.56	3	5.56
Negative Impact	3	5.56	6	11.11
No Impact	29	53.70	35	64.81
No Response	2	3.70	37	68.52
Positive Impact	17	31.48	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

33c. Civilian retirements

Question 33c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	4	7.41	4	7.41
Negative Impact	4	7.41	8	14.81
No Impact	38	70.37	46	85.19
No Response	2	3.70	48	88.89
Positive Impact	6	11.11	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

33d. Military retirements

Question 33d	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	5	9.26	5	9.26
Negative Impact	2	3.70	7	12.96
No Impact	33	61.11	40	74.07
No Response	2	3.70	42	77.78
Positive Impact	12	22.22	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

33e. Other impact

Question 33e	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	16	29.63	16	29.63
Negative Impact	4	7.41	20	37.04
No Impact	16	29.63	36	66.67
No Response	14	25.93	50	92.59
Positive Impact	4	7.41	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What is the other impact?

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

34. Did realignments from dual-status technician positions to AGR positions change how you use *non-permanent* dual-status technicians?

Question 34	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Missing	2	3.70	2	3.70
Not checked	1	1.85	3	5.56
Yes	11	20.37	14	25.93
No	39	72.22	53	98.15
Not Sure	1	1.85	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

35. Do any of the following explain how your use of non-permanent, dual-status technicians has/may change(d)?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

35a. Not as many *non-permanent* technicians needed since AGRs are required to be available 24/7

Question 35a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	8	14.81	8	14.81
No Response	43	79.63	51	94.44
Not Applicable	1	1.85	52	96.30
Yes	2	3.70	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

35b. Won't be able to hire as many *non-permanent* technicians once the positions are eliminated (e.g. USERRA) that differ

Table 35b.
Would not be able to hire as many non-permanent technicians once the positions are eliminated (e.g. USERRA) that differ

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

Question 35b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No Response	43	79.63	43	79.63
Yes	11	20.37	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

35c. Would not be able to hire as many *non-permanent* technicians to ensure mission readiness, but can instead hire non-permanent AGRs (paid under a separate funding source)

Question 35c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
No	5	9.26	5	9.26
No Response	43	79.63	48	88.89
Not Applicable	1	1.85	49	90.74
Yes	5	9.26	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

35d. Other changes

Question 35d	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Don't Know	1	1.85	1	1.85
No	4	7.41	5	9.26
No Response	46	85.19	51	94.44
Not Applicable	1	1.85	52	96.30
Yes	2	3.70	54	100.00

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

What are the other changes?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

Final Thoughts

36. After considering the topics covered in this questionnaire, do you have any other thoughts you wish to share about the dual-status technician workforce or AGR realignments?

Answers intentionally omitted for open-ended responses.

Submit Your Final Responses to GAO

Appendix II: National Guard Questionnaire Responses

37. Are you ready to submit your final completed questionnaire to GAO?

(This is equivalent to mailing a completed paper questionnaire to us. It tells us that your answers are official and final.)

Yes, my questionnaire is complete - *To submit your final responses, please click on "Exit and save"*

No, my questionnaire is not yet complete

FINISH	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
Yes, my questionnaire is complete - To submit your final responses, please click on "Exit and save" below	54	100.00	54	100

(This is equivalent to mailing a completed paper questionnaire to us. It tells us that your answers are official and final.)

Source: GAO | GAO-22-104484

Appendix III: Site Visit Methodology

We conducted virtual site visits to Ohio, Arizona, and North Dakota. We selected these states based on the number of technicians (i.e., large, medium and small populations) and Air National Guard Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) realignments (i.e., large and small numbers of realignments in Fiscal Year 2019). We also selected these states based on the presence of both Army and Air National Guard and active union representation. In addition, we wanted to provide for a range of geographic locations. During these site visits, we conducted interviews with Offices of the Adjutants General (TAG), human resources officials, and Army and Air Force Commanders. We also conducted small group discussions and interviews with technicians during site visits, to include collecting their perspectives on the hiring process, training, employment benefits, duties, AGR realignments, and how technician use affects readiness.¹ Findings from the discussion groups and interviews provide insights and context on the issues we discussed but are not generalizable.

Air Wing and Army interviews. We interviewed National Guard commanders from each Air Wing and selected Army unit commanders during our site visits to each state.

- In Ohio, we interviewed commanders from each of the state's four National Guard Air Wings: the 121st Air Refueling Wing, the 178th Wing, the 179th Airlift Wing, and the 180th Fighter Wing. We also interviewed an Army representative of the Ohio National Guard.
- In North Dakota, we interviewed commanders with the 119th Air Wing, the only Air Wing in the state. We also interviewed the Chief of Staff of the North Dakota Army National Guard.
- In Arizona, we interviewed commanders from both of the state's Air Wings, the 161st Air Refueling Wing and the 162nd Fighter Wing. We

¹The small group discussions had a participant range of three to seven individuals. In contrast, interviews had one to two participants. We conducted nine small group discussions and three interviews. Please see the segmentation and implementation section for additional details.

also met with a commander from the Arizona Army National Guard 198th Regional Support Group.

Technician small group discussion/interview selection. We selected units/wings for small group discussions and interviews with technicians in each of the selected states based on situational conditions and criteria.

- In Ohio, we selected the 179th Airlift Wing for our two Air National Guard small group discussions. One group was held with temporary technicians and the other with permanent technicians who realigned to AGR. We also conducted an interview with a permanent technician who declined to realign to AGR. We selected the 179th Air Wing for the small group discussions and interview based on the quality of information found in the provided technician list. We also held a small group discussion with Army permanent technicians who used to be temporary technicians from the Joint Force Headquarters. We selected the Joint Force Headquarters because an HRO official stated that this organization has the largest Army technician population among Army National Guard units, brigades, or organizations in Ohio.
- In North Dakota, we conducted two small group discussions with Air National Guard temporary technicians and permanent technicians who realigned to AGR with the 119th Air Wing. We also conducted one interview with permanent technicians who declined AGR with the 119th Air Wing. We selected this Air Wing because it is the only National Guard Air Wing in the state. We also held a small group discussion with Army permanent technicians who used to be temporary technicians from various North Dakota National Guard Army units or organizations.
- In Arizona, we selected the 162nd Fighter Wing to conduct our two Air National Guard small group discussions. One group was held with temporary technicians and the other with permanent technicians who realigned to AGR. We selected the 162nd Fighter Wing because it had a larger technician population than the 161st Air Refueling Wing, which is the only other Air Wing in the state. We also conducted one interview with a permanent technician who declined AGR. In addition, we also held a small group discussion with Army permanent technicians who used to be temporary technicians from a surface maintenance group. We selected this group because an Army National Guard commander said that the surface maintenance group has the largest group of technicians under his command.

Small group segmentation. We conducted three separate small discussion groups at each of our three state site visits, for a total of nine

discussion group sessions as follows: three small groups each with Air National Guard temporary technicians, Air National Guard permanent technicians who realigned to AGR, and Army permanent technicians who were previously temporary technicians. We also conducted three interviews with Air National Guard permanent technicians who declined to realign to AGR. We segmented our groups so that technicians in similar appointment types were in the same group. We did this to make participants feel comfortable and to collect information specific to the roles and responsibilities of technicians in different appointment types (i.e., temporary, permanent, and AGR).

Participant selection. To identify potential participants for our small groups, we requested lists of technicians from the Army and Air National Guard that were non-supervisory and were not deployed or otherwise unavailable. We asked for their names, position, and rank or grade. We then randomly selected technician participants for the discussion groups. Participants for the interviews were provided to us because Air Wings may have not documented who declined to re-align to AGR since technicians voluntarily applied.

Implementation. Discussions were guided by a moderator who followed a standard protocol to encourage participants to share their thoughts and experiences. Our analysts developed standardized questions according to technician appointment type (i.e., Air National Guard temporary technician, Air Force permanent technician who realigned to AGR, Army permanent technician who used to be temporary, etc.) to collect information that was specific to the technician's appointment type, roles and responsibilities, and experiences. We asked some questions to all groups of technicians and some questions to specific groups. For example, we asked questions that were specifically directed to temporary technicians about their hiring process experiences or questions specific to why a technician declined or opted to apply to AGR. For the small group discussions, the number of participants ranged from three to seven. We conducted six of the small group discussion sessions via a video conference platform, and three of the small group sessions using a standard teleconference. We held each of the three interviews—which involved one to two participants—via a standard teleconference.

Analysis. During the small group discussions and interviews, our team members independently took sets of detailed notes to document the participant's comments. Afterwards, each team member's notes were compiled into one final official record documenting the comments made in each of the small groups and interviews we conducted. The team then

met as a group to create categories of common themes after reviewing each of the discussion group notes and interviews. The team documented its classification scheme in a codebook, which was used to categorize comments from discussion groups and interviews. To conduct the analysis, analysts coded the comments from the interviews and small group discussions by placing comments into the categories of themes. Another team member reviewed the coding for accuracy. The two analysts met to discuss any discrepancies in the coding. The goal of the discussion groups was not to reach a consensus, and not every technician in a small group or interview had to be in agreement with a statement or topic in order for it to be counted as a theme. Once team members reached agreement with the coding, the team generated a report that presented the summary count of the categories or themes found in the discussion groups and interviews.

Appendix IV: Employment Benefits for Permanent and Nonpermanent Technicians

Federal civilian employment benefits. Federal civilian employees, including dual-status military technicians (“technicians”), may be eligible for the following employment benefits: retirement, Thrift Savings Plan, life insurance, health insurance, dental and vision insurance, long-term care insurance, flexible spending accounts, annual leave, sick leave, within-grade increases, military leave,¹ and severance pay.²

- **Retirement.** Permanent, term, and indefinite technicians on full- or part-time appointments are eligible for Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS).³ In general, full- and part-time technicians on temporary appointments that do not last more than 1 year are excluded from FERS coverage.⁴ However, technicians on temporary appointments are eligible for FERS if the appointment follows, without a break in service in excess of 3 days, employment in a position that was eligible for FERS (e.g., full- or part-time permanent, term, and indefinite appointments).⁵
- **Thrift Savings Plan (TSP).** TSP is a tax-deferred retirement savings and investment plan for federal employees. Permanent, term, and

¹Military leave generally refers to paid time off that a federal civilian employee or an employee of the District of Columbia is entitled to receive for certain types of active or inactive duty in the National Guard or as a member of the Reserve of the Armed Forces. See 5 U.S.C. § 6323.

²Per 10 U.S.C § 10216, dual-status military technicians (“technicians”) are a unique type of federal employee who are required by law to maintain military status in one of the Army or Air Force Reserve Components as a condition of their civilian employment.

³Some technicians may also be eligible for the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), but enrollment for this retirement system was generally closed for new participants on January 1, 1984.

⁴5 C.F.R. § 842.105 (1998).

⁵According to Army documentation, full-time and part-time employees with term and other time limited appointments exceeding 1 year who are covered by FERS are generally eligible for Federal Employee Group Life Insurance, FEHB, Federal Vision Insurance Plan, Federal Long Term Care Insurance Plan, and Flexible Spending Accounts.

indefinite technicians on full- or part-time appointments and with a Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), FERS, or equivalent retirement plan are eligible for Thrift Savings Plan benefits.⁶ However, full- and part-time technicians on temporary appointments that do not last more than 1 year are generally excluded from TSP participation.

- **Life insurance.** Full- and part-time permanent, term, and indefinite technicians, generally, are eligible for Federal Employee Group Life Insurance (FEGLI). However, full- and part-time technicians on temporary appointments that do not to exceed 1 year are typically ineligible for FEGLI benefits, with some exceptions.⁷
- **Health insurance.** Full- and part-time permanent, term, and indefinite technicians as well as temporary technicians meeting specific guidelines are eligible for Federal Employee Health Benefits (commonly referred to as FEHB). Specifically, full- and part-time temporary technicians in appointments not to exceed 1 year are eligible for FEHB if they work at least 130 hours per month and the appointment, conversion, or extension results in the length of employment being at least 90 days.⁸ Employees who work less than 130 hours per month and acquire 1 year or more of current continuous employment, excluding any break in service of 5 days or less, may elect to enroll in FEHB upon reaching 1 year of service. These employees pay both the government and employee costs.⁹
- **Dental and vision insurance.** Full- and part-time permanent, term, and indefinite technicians are eligible for Federal Employee Dental and Vision Insurance Plans (FEDVIP). According to Army documentation, full-time and part-time employees under temporary appointments less than 1 year are eligible for FEDVIP only when the

⁶FICA (or Social Security only), NAF (or Non-Appropriated Fund), or other plans are ineligible.

⁷For example, an employee whose full- or part-time temporary appointment follows employment in which the employee was insured under FEGLI, with no break in service or a break in service of no longer than 3 days, is eligible to continue their FEGLI coverage. For a full list of the exceptions, see 5 C.F.R. § 870.302(b) (2016).

⁸5 C.F.R. § 890.102(j) (2016).

⁹5 U.S.C. § 8906a.

temporary appointment follows, without a break in service in excess of 3 days, employment in which the employee was enrolled in FEDVIP.¹⁰

- **Long-term care insurance.** Full- and part-time permanent, term and indefinite technicians are eligible to enroll in a Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Plan (FLTCIP). Temporary employees employed continuously for 1 year or more, excluding any break in service of 5 days or less, are also eligible to enroll in FLTCIP.¹¹ FLTCIP eligibility is typically based on FEHB eligibility, so employees eligible for FEHB (even if not enrolled) generally may enroll in FLTCIP.
- **Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA).** FSAs allow personnel to save money for health care expenses with a Health Care or Limited Expense Health Care FSA. Full- and part-time permanent, term and indefinite technicians are eligible to enroll in a FSA. Temporary employees eligible for FEHB (even if not enrolled) may also enroll in FSAs.
- **Annual leave.** Full- and part-time term, temporary, indefinite, and permanent technicians can earn annual leave.¹² Annual leave is earned as follows:
 - **Full-time employees** earn 4 hours of annual leave per pay period for their first 3 years, 6 hours for their third to 15th years, and 8 hours per pay period after 15 years.¹³
 - **Part-time employees** earn 1 hour of annual leave for every 20 hours in pay status if less than 3 years of service, 1 hour for every 13 hours in pay status for their third to 15th years of service, and 1 hour for every 10 hours in a pay status after 15 years of service.¹⁴

¹⁰According to Army documentation, FEHB eligibility does not convey FEDVIP eligibility for these employees. If an employee later cancels FEDVIP enrollment, the employee is ineligible to reenroll until he or she returns to an appointment that is not excluded.

¹¹5 C.F.R. § 875.201(a) (2005); 5 U.S.C. § 8906a.

¹²Temporary employees who are appointed for a period of 90 days or less are only eligible to accrue annual leave after being continuously employed for a period of 90 days under successive appointments without a break in service. After completing a 90-day period of employment, they are entitled to any leave that would have accrued during those 90 days. A temporary employee whose employment is limited to less than 90 days will not accrue annual leave. 5 U.S.C. § 6303(b).

¹³5 U.S.C. § 6303(a).

¹⁴5 C.F.R. § 630.303 (1983).

- **Sick leave.** All technicians are eligible to receive sick leave. Specifically, all full- and part-time technicians earn sick leave at the rate of 1 hour of sick leave per every 20 hours in a pay status regardless of their length of service.¹⁵
- **Within-grade increases.** Term, indefinite, and permanent technicians on full- or part-time appointments are eligible for within-grade increases, while temporary technicians are eligible for this benefit only under certain circumstances. Temporary technicians who are hourly (wage system) employees are eligible to receive within-grade increases. However, salaried employees on temporary appointments are not eligible for within-grade increases but, according to Army documentation, may use time spent on a temporary appointment toward a within-grade increase if the employee converts to a covered appointment (i.e., a term, indefinite, or permanent technicians on full- or part-time appointments).
- **Severance pay.** Within the technician population, only full- and part-time permanent technicians are eligible for severance pay.¹⁶ Specifically, employees in time-limited appointments, such as term, indefinite, and temporary technicians, are not eligible for severance pay unless they are appointed to a time limited position within 3 calendar days of separation from a permanent position.
- **Military leave.** Permanent, indefinite,¹⁷ and term technicians are eligible for military leave as follows:
 - Fifteen days per FY for active duty, inactive duty training, funeral honors duty, or engaging in field or coast defense training.¹⁸
 - Twenty-two workdays per calendar year when performing military service in support of civil authorities or a contingency operation.¹⁹

¹⁵ U.S.C. § 6307(a).

¹⁶ U.S.C. § 5595(a)(2).

¹⁷Section 6323 of title 5, U.S. Code, states that “permanent and temporary indefinite” employees are eligible for military leave. The term “temporary indefinite,” for purposes of 5 U.S.C. § 6323, refers to appointments for periods of 1 year or more. Thus, appointments for a period of 1 year or more are eligible for military leave, but temporary appointments for periods of less than 1 year do not qualify for military leave, even if an employee serves multiple consecutive appointments that together would equal longer than one year. B-232438, Feb. 24, 1989.

¹⁸ U.S.C. § 6323(a).

¹⁹ U.S.C. § 6323(b).

- Military leave to members of the National Guard of the District of Columbia for certain types of duty ordered or authorized under title 39 of the District of Columbia Code.²⁰
- Reserve and National Guard technicians specifically are entitled to 44 workdays per calendar year of military leave for participation in overseas operations.²¹

National Guard or Reserve employment benefits. Employment benefits applicable to people in the Army or Air National Guard or the Army or Air Force Reserve, including technicians, include military retirement and military health care.²²

- Military Retirement. All technicians with 20 years of service in the National Guard or Reserve by age 60 are eligible for this benefit.²³
- Military Health Care. Temporary technicians whose appointments are less than 90 days are eligible for TRICARE Reserve Select.²⁴ After 90 days of employment, or if expected to work at least 90 days, a temporary technician is eligible for FEHB instead of TRICARE Reserve Select.²⁵

²⁰5 U.S.C. 6323(c).

²¹5 U.S.C. 6323(d).

²²According to officials in the Army Reserve, Reserve technicians can receive additional federal or state benefits other than those discussed herein. Some of the military benefits not further discussed might include federal and state college tuition reimbursement, Veteran's Affairs home loan eligibility, base exchange and commissary shopping privileges, access to military clothing stores, use of military recreation facilities, free space available air travel, legal assistance, official library services, and U.S. citizen eligibility.

²³10 U.S.C. § 12731. Years of service are computed in accordance with 10 U.S.C. § 12732.

²⁴Eligibility for TRICARE Reserve Select is found in 10 U.S.C. § 1076d(a).

²⁵5 C.F.R. § 890.102(j) (2016).

Appendix V: Comments from the Department of Defense

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of Defense**



MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

Ms. Brenda Farrell
Director, Defense Capabilities Management
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Ms. Farrell,

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the GAO Draft Report GAO-22-104484, 'MILITARY PERSONNEL: Actions Needed to Improve Workforce Data for Technicians Supporting Mission Readiness,' dated March 16, 2022 (GAO Code 104484).

As the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness on all matters related to manpower and reserve affairs, my office is responsible for guidance to the DoD Components on matters pertaining to personnel, and the Reserve Components. There is consensus across the Department that there should be consistency throughout the Reserve Components when reporting strength numbers for all civilian employee types, including Dual Status Military Technicians.

A review of the definition and designator(s) for military technicians will take place. Additionally, we will ensure that the process for capturing technician data is correct in both the civilian and military databases, to produce consistent reporting of data concerning civilian employees with permanent and nonpermanent technician appointments.

Enclosed is DoD's response to the subject report. My point of contact is COL Elaine Johnson who can be reached at elaine.j.johnson.mil@mail.mil and phone 703-693-8789.

Sincerely,

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Date: 2022.04.22 12:22:47 -04'00'

Virginia S. Penrod
Acting

Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
Secretaries of the Military Departments
Chief of the National Guard Bureau

**GAO DRAFT REPORT DATED MARCH 15, 2022
GAO-22-104484 (GAO CODE 104484)**

**“MILITARY PERSONNEL: ACTIONS NEEDED TO IMPROVE WORKFORCE DATA
FOR TECHNICIANS SUPPORTING MISSION READINESS”**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS
TO THE GAO RECOMMENDATIONS**

RECOMMENDATION 1: The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness in coordination with the Secretary of the Army and the Defense Human Resources Activity develop guidance, a common definition, and designator(s) for military technicians and a process for ensuring technician data is captured correctly in civilian and military databases to ensure consistent extracting and internal and external reporting of such data for permanent and nonpermanent technician appointment types.

DoD RESPONSE: DoD concurs with the GAO recommendation. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower & Reserve Affairs (ASD(M&RA)) is the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) on all matters related to manpower and reserve affairs. The ASD(M&RA) is responsible for guidance to the DoD Components on matters pertaining to personnel, and the Reserve Components.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness in coordination with the Secretary of the Air Force and the Defense Human Resources Activity develop guidance, a common definition, and designator(s) for military technicians and a process for ensuring technician data is captured correctly in civilian and military databases to ensure consistent extracting and internal and external reporting of such data for permanent and nonpermanent technician appointment types.

DoD RESPONSE: DoD concurs with GAO’s recommendation.

Accessible Text for Appendix V: Comments from the Department of Defense

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Director, Defense Capabilities Management
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

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Sincerely,

Virginia S. Penrod
Acting

Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
Secretaries of the Military Departments
Chief of the National Guard Bureau

GAO DRAFT REPORT DATED MARCH 15, 2022 GAO-22-104484 (GAO CODE
104484)

“MILITARY PERSONNEL: ACTIONS NEEDED TO IMPROVE WORKFORCE DATA
FOR TECHNICIANS SUPPORTING MISSION READINESS”

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DoD RESPONSE: DoD concurs with GAO’s recommendation.

Appendix VI: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Brenda S. Farrell, (202) 512-3604 or farrellb@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, Vincent Balloon (Assistant Director), Nicole “Nikki” Collier (Analyst-in-Charge), Tracey Kalinowski, Nick Benne, Jasmine Porter, Priscilla Tsai, Breanne Cave, Ron La Due Lake, Kelly Rubin, Caitlin Cusati, David Ballard, Alexandra Gonzalez, Lillian Ofili, David Jones, and Lillian Moyano Yob made key contributions to this report.

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