

BattleGround to Breaking Ground

Program Introduction

What We Do

BattleGround to Breaking Ground (BGBG) program is a 3 phase program designed to increase the number of veteran, active duty military, and other beginning farmer/ranchers in Texas and across the nation, as well as, to enhance their sustainability.

About the Program:

The BattleGround to Breaking Ground Program is now available for participants in two ways.

1. Farmer Education & Training (FEAT) Project:

The Farmer Education & Training (FEAT) Project has partnered with the Battleground to Breaking Ground program to provide the tuition for 15 veteran & active duty military members per cohort thanks to a 3 year grant from USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture & in partnership with Compatible Lands Foundation.

Key things to note for this program track are:

- Available for veterans & active duty military **only**
- Only 15 spots per cohort; Competitive application process
- In-person attendance to Basic Training & Graduation required
- 64 hours of hands-on training in Phase 3 are required to be conducted at either the Farmer's Education & Training Center in Gatesville, TX (near Ft. Hood) or at Mesquite Field Farm in Nixon, TX and 32 hours can be conducted with an approved mentor for a total of 100 hands-on learning hours
- Cost: \$125 in Phase 2 for Basic Training & \$125 in Phase 3 for Graduation

2. BattleGround to Breaking Ground Fee Based Program:

The BGBG program has now moved to a fee-based program. This program provides all 3 phases of the BGBG program, as well as, the additional services provided by BGBG partners with some added flexibility in meeting program requirements.

Key things to note for this program track are:

- Available for veterans, active duty military, and all other farmers/ranchers
- Simplified application process
- In-person attendance to Basic Training & Graduation are optional
- 30 spots per cohort available
- 100 hands-on learning hours required in phase 3 & maybe completed with an approved mentor or at hands-on learning events
- Cost: Phase 2 tuition \$600; Phase 3 tuition \$900

Please see the chart at the end of this document to compare the programs and their requirements side by side.

If you are interested in enrolling in the BGBG Fee Based Program, please send an email to Erin.Kimbrough@ag.tamu.edu.

What We Offer

The BGBG training consists of 3 phases including:

1. Face to face and online educational training in farm management and production specific agriculture practices
2. Individualized educational planning to support diverse agriculture business interests
3. Hands-on learning opportunities connected to online course content
4. Follow-up mentor support.
5. Peer-to- peer learning utilizing a structured Community of Practice
6. Veteran transition, VA benefits, health & wellness, and disability coaching services

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Phase 1

BattleGround to Breaking Ground: Agriculture Workshop

- Designed for veterans, active duty military, and their families but open to all beginning farmer/ranchers
- Topics include business planning, rural business ideas, farming/ranching with a disability, funding sources for agriculture businesses, and more
- 6 workshops are held per year across the state of Texas
- Workshop attendance is not required for application to program but is suggested

Phase 2

BattleGround to Breaking Ground: Business Planning

- 16 weeks of online business planning courses including operations planning, marketing planning, financial planning, and more
- Individual Education Planning (IEP) to set your goals, make a personal plan, and explore the resources provided to reach your goals
- Educational webinars on topics selected by the cohorts
- Educational modules from agencies/organizations that provide additional services, like funding
- Transition & career services through VetAdvisors
- Disability/chronic health conditions services through Texas AgrAbility
- Team Project- Conduct a hands-on training to teach 5-10 farm/ranch skills to gain experience with agritourism

Phase 3

BattleGround to Breaking Ground: Hands-On Training

- 8 months of online agriculture production courses specific for your chosen area of interest
- 100 hours of hands-on learning provided through mentorships & custom tailored learning opportunities to meet participant's identified skill needs
- *FEAT Project participants will be required to complete 64 hours of hands-on training at 1 of the 2 training farms & 32 hours with their chosen mentor.
- *BGBG Fee-Based Program participants can complete their 100 hours of hands-on training completely with an approved mentor or in combination with available hands-on learning opportunities at 1 of our approved training sites.
- Ongoing transition and disability support services
- Participation in the community of interest
- VetAdvisors coaching calls
- Individual Education Planning calls

What You Gain

- Business Plan for management of your operation and to submit for funding opportunities
- Marketing & Financial skills to enhance your sustainability
- Production skills to more effectively produce agriculture products
- Networks to connect to marketing, financial, and operational channels
- Financing Options knowledge of loans and grants for veteran and other agriculture producers

Once participants have completed all of the requirements for phase 2 & 3 they will be provided a certificate of completion that highlights the skills they have acquired through the program. The certificate of completion will also provide participants access to land for lease at our incubator sites to start or expand their farming/ ranching operation.

Training Sites

- Farmer's Education and Training Center: Gatesville, TX (near Ft. Hood)
- Mesquite Field Farm: Nixon, TX

BattleGround to Breaking Ground Program Comparison Chart		
	Farmer' Education & Training Project	BattleGround to Breaking Ground Program *Fee Based*
<u>Phase 1</u>		
Open to veterans, active duty military members, and other beginning farmer/ranchers	Open to all	Open to all
Required to access Phase 2 & 3	No	No
Cost	\$0	\$0
<u>Phase 2</u>		
Open to veterans, active duty military members, and other beginning farmer/ranchers	Veterans & Active Duty Military only	Open to all
Application	Required	Not required
Number of available spots per cohort	15	30
Basic Training in College Station	In-Person Attendance Required	Optional; Online version available
Team Project	Required	Required
Cost	\$125 for participant; \$75 for spouse	\$600
<u>Phase 3</u>		
Phase 2 completion	Required	Optional with approved business plan
Open to veterans, active duty military members, and other beginning farmer/ranchers	Veterans & Active Duty Military only	Open to all
Graduation in College Station	Required	Optional
Team Project	Required	Required
Hands-On Hours	64 hours completed at either Farmer's Education & Training Center in Ft. Hood and/or at Mesquite Field Farm in Nixon, TX; 36 hours completed with an approved mentor and/or at other monthly hands-on learning events= total of 100 hours	100 hours- Can be completed with an approved mentor and/or at monthly hands-on learning events
Cost	\$125 for participant; \$75 for spouse	\$900