

# **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
- 100 hours of hands-on training are required. To receive a tuition waiver, participants must agree to complete 64 of those 100 hours at either the Farmer Education & Training Center in Gatesville, TX (near Ft. Hood) or at Mesquite Field Farm in Nixon, TX
- Registration cost: \$125 for Basic Training & \$125 for Graduation

#### **2. BattleGround to Breaking Ground Fee Based Program:**

The BGBG program now offers a 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
- No 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 and may be completed with a mentor or through 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 want to enroll in the BGBG Fee-based Program, please access the Phase 2 course directly through AgriLife Learn or through our website then pay the tuition to be added into the Phase 2 course.

### **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

# **BattleGround to Breaking Ground**

## **Program Introduction**

### **Phase 1**

Phase 1 - BattleGround to Breaking Ground *Agriculture Workshop/Online Course*

- 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
- In-person workshops are held across the state of Texas each year
- Phase 1 attendance is NOT required for application to program but is suggested

### **Phase 2**

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 and 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**

Phase 3 - BattleGround to Breaking Ground *Production Training*

- 8 months of online agriculture production courses specific for your chosen area of interest
- 100 hours of hands-on learning provided through mentorship and custom-tailored learning opportunities to meet participant's skill needs
- \*FEAT Project (tuition-waived) participants will be required to complete 64 hours of hands-on training at 1 of the 2 training farms and 36 hours with their chosen mentor.
- \*BGBG Fee-based Program participants complete 100 hours of hands-on training with an approved mentor or in combination with available hands-on learning opportunities.
- 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 may also provide participants increased access to funding opportunities to start or expand their farming/ranching operation.

### **Training Sites**

- Farmer 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 *Tuition Waived*	BattleGround to Breaking Ground Program *Fee-based*
<b><u>Phase 1</u></b>		
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
<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$30</b>	<b>\$30</b>
<b><u>Phase 2</u></b>		
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-Person Attendance Required	Optional
Team Project	Required	Required
<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$125 for participant; \$75 for spouse</b>	<b>\$600</b>
<b><u>Phase 3</u></b>		
BGBG Phase 2 course 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	Required	Optional
Team Project	Required	Required
Hands-On Hours	<b>64 hours</b> completed at either Farmer's Education & Training Center in Ft. Hood and/or at Mesquite Field Farm in Nixon, TX; <b>36 hours</b> completed with an approved mentor and/or at other monthly hands-on learning events = total of 100 hours	<b>100 hours</b> - Can be completed with an approved mentor and/or at hands-on learning events
<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$125 for participant; \$75 for spouse</b>	<b>\$900</b>