Columbus Technical College (CTC)

The Puckett Center – SkillBridge Path Checklist

(last updated 3 Nov 2026)

Overview

Purpose: This guide walks you step-by-step through applying to Columbus Technical College (CTC) to complete the DoW approved Accelerated SkillBridge Program(s).

About the Puckett Center & SkillBridge: The Puckett Center is part of Columbus Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia. Our SkillBridge programs are employer-aligned, accelerated training pathways designed for active-duty Service Members within their final 180 days of service. Participants earn college credit and industry-recognized credentials while preparing for immediate employment in high-demand career fields.

Why should you choose a technical college SkillBridge over a traditional model?

Eligibility Requirements (see MILPER Message 25-116, 3 APR 25)**:**
Basic Qualifications: active duty | participate within 180 days of separation or retirement
Required to start on time: Complete Admissions and Financial Aid | COC Approval | Attend Training Daily
***** highly encouraged to ensure on time start and program alignment when feasible with your SkillBridge timeline (NET start and NLT end dates)

SkillBridge Program Offerings & Start Dates:

Accelerated SkillBridge Program	Days Required to Complete
CDL	40
Logistics Management Specialist	75
Welding (Basic)	75
Welding (Advanced)	75
Industrial Electrician	75
Electrical Technician	75
Nurse Aide	75
Phlebotomy Technician	75
EMS Technician (EMT) Basic or Advanced	75
Alternative Basic is a prereq for Advanced EMT (Advanced EMT also 75 days)	
Medical Coding Specialist	75
Basic Machinist	75

Housing & Transportation:
- Housing is available on Fort Benning for Service Members on permissive TDY status (unaccompanied).
- Transportation to and from training is the responsibility of the participant.

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Checklist

Process:

1. Unit Coordination (see MILPER Message 25-116, 3 APR 25)

☐ Inform Supervisor, First Sergeant, and Commander (approving authority)

☐ Confirm eligibility (within 180 days of separation) may apply and seek approval from CTC prior to 180 day time period

☐ Complete TAP (if not already done)

2. Connect with Columbus Technical College

☐ Submit inquiry via Puckett Center website (w/Application Waiver Code 'TCARD')

☐ Review SkillBridge-approved programs

☐ Identify program of interest - requires 40-125 days to complete (Planning considerations: program starts, your ETS/EAS + Terminal Leave + Out-processing time)

3. Apply to Columbus Technical College

☐ Submit application Apply Here

☐ Submit Supporting Documents as a part of application to admissions@columbustech.edu

***must come directly from the school to the email above

- High School Transcript
- College (any transcripts for previous, in progress or completed attendance)
  - List all schools attended – may receive transferable credit
- Joint Service Transcript (JST) – may receive transferable credit

4. Financial Aid (Required – Must Complete)

Overview

**All SkillBridge programs must be funded. Enrollment is delayed without an approved funding source.*

You must complete the FAFSA to begin the funding process at: https://studentaid.gov

School code information and FAFSA year requirements will be provided during admissions counseling.

A. Lawful Presence Verification (MANDATORY)

You must prove lawful presence in the U.S. before tuition or aid can be processed.

☐ Submit Supporting Documents for Lawful Presence to military@columbustech.edu

Acceptable documents include:

- ☐ U.S. Passport
- ☐ Birth Certificate
- ☐ Permanent Resident Card
- ☐ Military ID or State ID (GA/AL)

AND

- ☐ Military Orders (must update w/ PTDY orders after acceptance into SkillBridge completed)

B. Georgia Residency (Tuition Classification)

Determines if you pay in-state tuition.

You may qualify if:

- You are stationed in Georgia on active duty
- You have established legal residency in Georgia

OR

C. Georgia Resident Waiver (Military)

If you are not a Georgia resident, this waiver allows you to still pay in-state tuition rates.

Eligible:

- Active-duty servicemembers stationed in Georgia
- Spouses of active-duty servicemembers
- Dependents of active-duty servicemembers

Required documentation:

- ☐ Military orders
- ☐ Military ID (or dependent ID)

This is the primary pathway for most SkillBridge participants.

D. State Reciprocity Agreements

If you do not qualify under residency or military waiver:

You may qualify for in-state rates if:

- Your home state has a reciprocity agreement with Georgia

Alabama Counties: Lee County | Chambers County | Russell County | Barbour County

E. Typical Funding Sources

Hope Career Grant | Hope Grant | Zell Miller Grant | Pell Grant | Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (if eligible) | TA (Warrant and below) | VA Education Benefits (optional and not required while on active duty) | Employer or philanthropic support, depending on pathway

Please note:

- FAFSA and WIOA funding are generally intended for students without a completed bachelor's degree. If you already hold a bachelor's degree, we will walk you through alternative funding options.
- *Tuition Assistance (available for enlisted/NCO/Warrant): Not authorized if courses begin within 60 days of separation or end less than 14 days prior to separation. Managed through your local education office.*
- Financial Aid must be approved by the drop day of the courses; if you are out of state financial aid is generally approved once PTDY orders are received to establish residency.
- *If you already have a bachelor's or higher degree your only options for funding are utilizing TA (available to all but commissioned officers) utilizing your GI Bill (VR&E if already discharged)*

5. Final Financial Aid Checklist

☐ Submit financial aid application

☐ Upload lawful presence documents

☐ Submit military orders (for waiver)

☐ Verify tuition classification (in-state/waiver/reciprocity)

☐ *Confirm funding is approved (note* this final step occurs **after** you have registered via your Advisor for classes)

6. Admission & Acceptance

☐ Receive admission decision (Application Decision Letter) and Student ID# (starts with 910*) available in Enrollment Portal and with Next Steps: https://columbustech.my.site.com/apply)

☐ **Provide Command POC (Name, Email and Cell Phone Number) Information to** SkillBridge@columbustech.edu

☐ Begin speaking with Your Advisor (can be done virtually):

- Tamara Hardnett, Advisor – Last Names A – E thardnett@columbustech.edu
- Nichole Marshall, Advisor – Last Names F – J nmarshall@columbustech.edu
- Maiya Harris, Advisor – Last Names K – N mharris@columbustech.edu
- Yolanda Strong, Advisor – Last Names O – S ystrong@columbustech.edu
- Felicia Harris, Director – Last Names T – Z fharris@columbustech.edu

☐ Schedule New Student Orientation (encouraged, NOT required)

☐ Confirmation financial aid / funding is approved

The Puckett Center will follow up with an email containing the following items:

- Acceptance Letter (includes dates, location, program details)
- Training Plan (required for your unit)
- Welcome Packet

7. Submit Packet to Unit for Approval

☐ Acceptance Letter from CTC

☐ Training Plan from CTC

☐ TAP completion

☐ Command request memo

☐ Leave/PTDY plan

8. Commander Approval

☐ Receive approval to participate in SkillBridge

☐ Send SkillBridge approval to the Puckett Center - Puckett Center provides MOU w/ employer partner

☐ Send copy of PTDY Orders to
military@columbustech.edu and puckettcenter@columbustech.edu

☐ Remit Memorandum of Participation (MoP) to SkillBridge@columbustech.edu

9. Attend Training

☐ Maintain attendance

☐ Actively participate

☐ Complete coursework

☐ Register for and complete the Talent Alignment Program with the Puckett Center

Additional Information

Training Locations: Puckett Center | Columbus Technical College Main Campus

Training Hours: Typically between **7:30 AM - 5:00 PM** (program dependent)

10. Employment Preparation (4 - 6 Weeks Before Completion)

☐ Attend ***Talent Alignment Partner +*** (TAP+) events *as available/desired* at the Puckett Center

☐ Apply for jobs

☐ Attend interviews

☐ Secure employment offer

☐ Apply for graduation

11. Graduate

☐ Complete program

☐ Receive **Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC)**

☐ Transition to civilian career aligned with your priorities and goals

Key Success Factors

- Start early (6+ months out recommended)
- Applying and securing Financial Aid are essential to successfully starting program on time
- Complete financial aid immediately after applying
- Maintain communication with CTC

Need Help?

For Admissions Questions:

- Email us at admissions@columbustech.edu or Give us a call at 706-649-1847

For Financial Aid Questions:

- Email Kristi Carroll at kcarroll@columbustech.edu

SkillBridge Questions

- Contact the Puckett Center puckettcenter@columbustech.edu or Call 706.225.0544