



Pennsylvania  
**Department of Military  
and Veterans Affairs**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Dec. 13, 2025**

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## **Keystone State ChalleNGe Academy for At-Risk Teens Graduates Largest Class in Program History, Offering Life Skills and Career Preparation**

*Teens who complete the program walk away with lessons on academic excellence,  
physical fitness, leadership, civic responsibility and job skills.*

**Annville, PA –** Today, 75 cadets from the Keystone State ChalleNGe Academy (KSCA) graduated from the 22-week residential phase of the program on their way to a brighter future. The group boasts the largest class size in the program's history.

The KSCA is designed to give challenged teens a second chance at obtaining their basic education and the opportunity to learn leadership, self-discipline and responsibility, while working toward finishing their education and building a better life. The cadets participated in and completed 3,272 hours of community service throughout the program, including volunteering at food banks, assisting with the annual March for the Fallen, along with maintaining cemetery, park and military ceremony grounds.

Along with aiding the community, their efforts are estimated to have saved up to \$93,382 in labor costs. The cadets will now complete a 24-month mentorship phase of the program throughout their various communities while they pursue their future endeavors.

"It was an absolute honor to see our cadets graduate from the Keystone State ChalleNGe Academy today. The lessons accrued during their months-long commitment to the program is sure to carry them forward to a brighter future," said **Maj. Gen. John Pippy, Pennsylvania's adjutant general and head of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA)**. "Thank you to the academy staff for your dedication to the program and professionalism working with the cadets."

The opening of the academy at Fort Indiantown Gap (FTIG) in Lebanon County in July 2022 formally established the National Guard Bureau's Youth ChalleNGe Program in Pennsylvania.

The program is open to 16- to 18-year-old Pennsylvanians who are failing to progress in high school or may not be on a clear path to graduating. Applicants must be willing to be drug free, free of felony convictions and voluntarily commit to the program. The first 22-weeks of the program consist of residential training at FTIG, followed by 24-months of mentorship back in their home communities.

"Class 25-2 has been remarkable in so many ways; from the strong showing in passing the GED, to the exemplary recovery of credits for those who failed or missed courses, to the

outstanding development in leadership/followership skills,” said **Steve Grossman, KSCA director**. “I would just like to encourage teens and their families, those who feel like they need something different to meet success, to find out more about KSCA. Our record for quality graduates and preparing teens to build better tomorrows is exceptional.”

Cadets are introduced to the military structure, focusing on eight core components: Academic Excellence; Physical Fitness; Leadership/Followership; Responsible Citizenship; Job Skills; Service to the Community; Health and Hygiene; Life Coping Skills. Graduates often receive high school credits, credentials or a GED. There is no tuition cost to attend. Meals, housing, uniforms and school supplies are provided at no charge.

The KSCA is a joint effort between the DMVA and the National Guard Bureau in consultation with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

The KSCA is now accepting applications for its next class, slated to begin in January.

For detailed eligibility requirements and to begin the application process, visit our [Eligibility and Admissions](#) webpage. If someone prefers to have an application mailed to them or would like to talk with someone about this program, they can contact the academy by emailing [RA-MVPACHALLENGE@pa.gov](mailto:RA-MVPACHALLENGE@pa.gov), or by calling 717-861-7767 or 717-820-2936.

Since the program's inception in 1993, more than 200,000 young people have completed the ChalleNGe program nationwide. This award-winning program has been recognized as one of the nation's most effective and cost-efficient programs for targeting youth who have dropped out of school, or are at the greatest risk for not satisfactorily progressing, are unemployed or under-employed.

The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program currently operates 37 Youth Challenge sites and nine Job ChalleNGe Programs in 29 states and territories, with 2,400 employees.

More details about Pennsylvania's KSCA can be found at [www.dmva.pa.gov/KeystoneStateChallengeAcademy](http://www.dmva.pa.gov/KeystoneStateChallengeAcademy).

**NOTE:** Photos and video from this event will be available at <https://pacast.com/>.

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