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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Accessions Pilot Program Authorized

The Defense Department announced today that it has authorized the military services to implement a pilot program; temporarily permitting enlistment into military service certain legal aliens (who have lived in the United States for at least two years) who hold skills that are critically needed in the military.

The pilot will address health care professionals holding needed medical specialties (physicians and nurses) and people with skills in certain strategic foreign languages and cultures, qualifications important to present and future military operations. A fact sheet detailing the languages and basic requirements is [available](#).

"The services are doing a tremendous job of recruiting quality personnel to meet our various missions," said Bill Carr, deputy under secretary of defense for military personnel policy. "This pilot seeks to provide yet another opportunity to fill the gaps, with people who are highly qualified and eager to serve this nation."

The military services will review their requirements and determine the pilot's efficacy within their service. If they choose to participate, they will provide implementation plans within 45 days. The pilot may recruit up to 1,000 people, and after one year, its value for enhancing military readiness will be evaluated.

Non-citizens have served in the U.S. military since the Revolutionary War. Today about 29,000 non-citizens serve in uniform, and about 8,000 permanent resident aliens (green card holders) enlist each year. This initiative expands non-citizen eligibility for military service to include not only the green card holders, but also those visa holders legally present in the U.S., such as doctors, nurses, and students.

Those volunteering to serve the nation by joining the military during a time of war would be eligible for accelerated citizenship – as are all others who serve in the military – by virtue of the July 3, 2002 executive order which allows expedited naturalization for those non-citizens who serve in our armed forces.

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MILITARY ACCESSIONS VITAL TO NATIONAL INTEREST (MAVNI) RECRUITMENT PILOT

The Secretary of Defense authorized the military services to recruit certain legal aliens whose skills are considered to be vital to the national interest. Those holding critical skills – physicians, nurses, and certain experts in language with associated cultural backgrounds – would be eligible. To determine its value in enhancing military readiness, the limited pilot program will recruit up to 1,000 people, and will continue for a period of up to 12 months.

ELIGIBILITY

1. The applicant must be in one of the following categories at time of enlistment
 - a. asylee, refugee, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), or
 - b. nonimmigrant categories E, F, H, I, J, K, L, M, O, P, Q, R, S, T, TC, TD, TN, U, or V
2. The applicant must have been in valid status in one of those categories for at least two years immediately prior to the enlistment date, but it does not have to be the same category as the one held on the date of enlistment; and
3. An applicant who may be eligible on the basis of a nonimmigrant category at time of enlistment (see 1b above) must not have had any single absence from the United States of more than 90 days during the two year period immediately preceding the date of enlistment.

Health Care Professionals

- Applicants must fill medical specialties where the service has a shortfall
- Applicants must meet all qualification criteria required for their medical specialty, and the criteria for foreign-trained DoD medical personnel recruited under other authorities
- Applicants must demonstrate proficiency in English
- Applicants must commit to at least 3 years of active duty, or six years in the Selected Reserve

Enlisted Individuals with Special Language and Culture Backgrounds

- Applicants must possess specific language and culture capabilities in a language critical to DoD
- Applicants must demonstrate a language proficiency
- Applicants must meet all existing enlistment eligibility criteria
- Applicants must enlist for at least 4 years of active duty

(Services may add additional requirements)

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Languages

- Albanian
- Amharic
- Arabic
- Azerbaijani
- Bengali
- Burmese
- Cambodian-Khmer
- Chinese
- Czech
- Hausa
- Hindi
- Hungarian
- Igbo
- Indonesian
- Korean
- Kurdish
- Lao
- Malay
- Malayalam
- Moro
- Nepalese
- Persian [Dari & Farsi]
- Polish
- Punjabi
- Pushtu (aka Pashto)
- Russian
- Sindhi
- Sinhalese
- Somali
- Swahili
- Tamil
- Turkish
- Turkmen
- Urdu
- Yoruba

BACKGROUND

Non-citizens have served in the military since the Revolutionary War. The Lodge Act of 1950 permitted non-citizen Eastern Europeans to enlist between 1950 and 1959. Additionally, the United States officially began recruiting Filipino nationals into the Navy in the late 1940s, when it signed the Military Bases Agreement of 1947 allowing U.S. military bases in the Philippines. In total, over 35,000 Filipinos enlisted in the Navy through the program between 1952 and 1991.

Today, about 29,000 non-citizens serve in uniform, and about 8,000 legal permanent resident aliens (green card holders) enlist each year. Law ensures that the sacrifice of non-citizens during a time of national need is met with an opportunity for early citizenship, to recognize their contribution and sacrifice.

In fact, today's service members are eligible for expedited citizenship under a July 2002 Executive Order, and the military services have worked closely with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to streamline citizenship processing for service members. Since Sept. 11, 2001, nearly 43,000 members of the Armed Forces have attained their citizenship while serving this nation.

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