The Center for Laser and Fiber Optics Education, LASER-TEC, is a National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education Center of Excellence headquartered at Indian River State College, in Fort Pierce, Florida. It is an association of community and state colleges, universities, K-12 schools and technical centers, trade associations, and laser and fiber optic companies.

The Center’s mission is to develop a sustainable pipeline of qualified laser and fiber optic technicians to meet industry needs.

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MARINES
Military Occupational Specialties
Experience in these military occupational specialties make a good fit for a career in photonics.

- Tactical Air Operations Module/Air Defense Technician
- Artillery/Electronics Technician
- Calibration Technician
- Electronic Switching Equipment Technician
- Electronics Maintenance Technician
- Metrology Technician
- Satellite Communications (Satcom) Technician
- Electro-Optical Ordnance Repairer
- Main Battle Tank (Mbt) Repairer/Technician
- Advanced Aircraft Communications/Navigation Systems Technician, Ima
- Advanced Aircraft Electrical/Instrument/Flight Control Systems Technician, Ima
- Aircraft Communications Systems Technician, Ima
- Aircraft Electrical/Instrument/Flight Control Systems Technician, Fixed Wing, Ima
- Aircraft Electronic Countermeasures Systems Technician, Fixed-Wing, Ima
- Aircraft Electronic Countermeasures Systems Technician, Helicopter, Ima
- Aircraft Navigation Systems Technician, Iff/Radar/Tacan, Ima
- Aviation Electronic Microminiature/Instrument And Cable Repair Technician, Ima
- Aviation Meteorological Equipment Technician, Oma/Ima
- Aviation Precision Measurement Equipment/Calibration And Repair Technician, Ima
- Avionics Test Set (Ats) Technician, Ima
- Aircraft Communications/Navigation Systems Technician, Kc-130
- Aircraft Communications/Navigation/Electrical Systems Technician, Ch-46
- Aircraft Communications/Navigation/Electrical Systems Technician, Ch-53
- Aircraft Communications/Navigation/Electrical/Systems Technician, V-22
- Aircraft Communications/Navigation/Electrical/Weapons Systems Technician, U/Ah-1
- Aircraft Communications/Navigation/Radar Systems Technician Av-8
- Aircraft Communications/Navigation/Radar Systems Technician Ea-6
- Aircraft Communications/Navigation/Radar Systems Technician F/A-18
- Aircraft Electrical Systems Technician, Av-8
- Aircraft Electrical Systems Technician, Ea-6
- Aircraft Electrical Systems Technician, F/A-18
- Aircraft Electrical Systems Technician, Kc-130
- Aircraft Electronic Countermeasures Systems Technician, Ea-6b
- Avionics Maintenance Chief Unmanned Aerial System (Uas) Avionics Technician
- Engineer Equipment Electrical Systems Technician

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Credit to OP-TEC, National Center for Optics and Photonics Education
What is Photonics?
Photonics involves cutting-edge uses of lasers, optics, fiber-optics and electro-optical devices in numerous and diverse fields of technology.

Why is Photonics Important?
Lasers and other light beams are the “preferred carriers” of energy and information for many applications.

The applications of photonics as an “enabling” technology are extremely broad. From an educational standpoint, this means that the infusion of one or two photonics courses into two-year postsecondary programs in related technologies can qualify graduates for a far wider variety of jobs and increase the global competitiveness of the American workforce.

National Median Salary for Photonics Technicians 2017*
$62,230

A two-year college degree is necessary for a photonics technician to be successful.

Photonics Industry Needs Trained Professionals
The industry is experiencing increasing growth in all sectors, and the demand for well-educated technicians has risen faster than supply to fill those positions.

Sample of Photonics Technicians’ Tasks
Build, install, test, or maintain optical, electro-optical, or fiber optic equipment, such as lasers, lenses, mirrors, fiber optic links using spectrometers, interferometers, or related equipment.

Where do Photonics Technicians Work?
Trained professionals in the photonics field are needed in numerous photonics-enabled fields, such as:
- Defense and National Security
- Advanced Manufacturing and Automation
- Analytical Equipment and Manufacturing
- Laser and Optical Equipment Manufacturing
- Research and Development
- Communications and Information Technology
- Healthcare

To learn more, visit: laser-tec.org/discover-careers

How to Get Started
1. Find a college near you that offers a photonics program; laser-tec.org or op-tec.org
2. Contact the VA office at the college(s) of your choice
3. Identify your Educational Benefits; benefits.va.gov
   - Post 9-11 GI Bill
   - Montgomery GI Bill
   - GI Bill Selected Reserve
   - Reserve Educational Assistance
   - $600 Buy-up Program
   - Survivors & Dependents Assistance
4. Apply online at gibill.va.gov or call 1-888-GI BILL-1 (1-888-442-4551)
   - Application form 22-1990
   - Transfer of entitlement form 22-1990E
   - Application for dependents form 22-5490
   - Vocational rehab: see counselor for form 28-1905
5. Follow the steps to be admitted to the college
6. Register for classes

*source: onetonline.org