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

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

- Aviation Structural Mechanic, Safety Equipment
- Aviation Support Equipment Technician
- Aviation Electronics Technician
- Naval Aircrewman, Avionics
- Cryptologic Technician, Maintenance, Technical
- Electricians Mate
- Electronics Technician, Nuclear Power
- Electronics Technician, Submarine, Communications, Navigation
- Electronics Technician
- Fire Controlman
- Fire Control Technician, Submarine
- Gunner’s Mate
- Gas Turbine System Technician, Electrical, Mechanical
- Interior Communications
- Information Systems Technician
- Machinists Mate, Non-Nuclear, Submarine Auxiliary
- Machinists Mate, Nuclear Power
- Machinists Mate, Weapons
- Sonar Technician

More on mynextmove.org/vets

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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.

What is Photonics?
Photonics involves cutting-edge uses of lasers, optics, fiber-optics and electro-optical devices in numerous and diverse fields of technology.

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.

$62,230
National Median Salary for Photonics Technicians 2017*
A two-year college degree is necessary for a photonics technician to be successful.

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

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.

*source: onetonline.org