

Army National Guard Distributed Learning Program

What is it? The Army National Guard (ARNG) Distributed Learning (DL) Program uses information technology to develop and deliver instruction that enhances and extends traditional methods of learning. The ARNG DL Program provides several methods and technologies to improve the readiness of Soldiers and units through the flexible delivery of standardized individual and collective training when and where needed. The ARNG DL Program is part of The Army DL Program (TADLP) and is funded by Headquarters, Department of the Army. The ARNG DL Program has three major components: Courseware Development, Guard University, and DL Classrooms, all of which support ARNG Soldiers and units as they train for Full-Spectrum Operations during all phases of the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) process.

What has the ARNG done?

Courseware Development: The ARNG DL Development Center (DLDC) produces DL products for Military Occupational Specialty Qualification training, Professional Military Education, functional training, and Pre- and Post-Mobilization Training that Soldiers and units use to attain individual and unit readiness. The DLDC produced over 2,900 hours of courseware from FY96 to FY09, and over 600 hours of courseware produced during FY10. Examples of courseware produced during FY10 include The Army Training System Senior Leaders Course, Hazardous Materials Handling and Logistics Certification Courses, Mobilization and Deployment Training Courses, Military Funeral Honors Course, and Movement Tracking System Course.

Guard University: For many years the ARNG DL Program lacked a consolidated online “portal” where ARNG Soldiers and units could easily find ARNG-specific DL training resources. During 2008, ARNG training leaders determined the need for expanded online learning capabilities for ARNG Soldiers and the DL Program began work to field “GuardU” in FY11. The DL Program chose the Blackboard “Learn” platform for GuardU because it offers expanded capabilities and functionality over previous platforms and because the Army chose the Blackboard platform as the standard for its lifelong learning centers (LLCs). With Blackboard, we ensure our implementation will be compatible Army-wide.

Distributed Learning Classrooms: The ARNG DL Program funds and manages the operation of 339 fixed DL Classrooms (DLCs) in all States and Territories (figure 1 on page 3). The DLCs provide computer workstations and video-teletraining capabilities (which access the Internet through a dedicated, high-speed network) and audio-visual equipment. The DLCs augment traditional instruction and provide alternative means for individual and collective training. The DLCs enable Soldiers to receive training at home station, reducing travel time and costs. The DLCs also enable commanders to schedule training that otherwise would be inaccessible, increasing the scope of available training and expanding opportunities to conduct training. Besides individual training, the DLCs can be connected to the ARNG Battle Command Training Capability network to provide units nationwide with access to distributed simulations for collective training.

The ARNG DL Program coordinates with the Army's Project Directorate, Distributed Learning System to obtain Deployed Digital Training Campuses (DDTCs) for ARNG combat brigades deploying overseas. The DDTC is a transportable, networked classroom with workstations, video-teletraining, and access to the World Wide Web, the Army Learning Management System (ALMS), and other web-based training products and simulations via satellite communications.

Why is this important to the ARNG?

The ARNG Distributed Learning Program provides:

- Distributed learning products that address ARNG-specific training requirements, ensuring that ARNG leaders can attain necessary levels of certification and readiness within constrained resources
- Alternative methods for commanders to conduct required training for their Soldiers, enabling flexible training schedules and expanded training opportunities
- A nationwide network of distributed learning classrooms that support the conduct of distributed simulations, enabling staffs and units at remote locations to participate in exercises that otherwise would require them to travel to simulation centers
- Alternative methods for Soldiers to accomplish required training, reducing time away from home station and access to courses that they otherwise could not attend
- Opportunities for ARNG Soldiers to acquire additional skills, either for self-development or readiness requirements, that otherwise would be unavailable or too costly (for example, the “Rosetta Stone” language programs and the SkillSoft information technology and management training available online through Army e-Learning)
- Opportunities for ARNG Soldiers to improve their computer literacy if they otherwise do not have access to information technology resources

What continued efforts does the ARNG have in the future?

Courseware Development: The ARNG DLDC plans to produce over 600 hours of courseware in FY11. Examples of courses planned for production during FY11 include five Duty Military Occupational Specialty courses, two Captains Career Courses (Field Artillery and Military Police), and interactive multimedia instructional products for UH-72 Lakota helicopter training. The DLDC is validating requirements for FY12 (and beyond) courseware production, with an anticipated emphasis on mobilization training, reclassification training, critical functional training, and Professional Military Education.

Guard University: The ARNG DL Program will field GuardU during FY11 and evaluate its implementation to determine its effectiveness and utilization. GuardU will initially replace the learning management system used by the Guard’s Professional Education Center (PEC) at Camp Robinson, Arkansas. Later, as we gain experience and additional users, GuardU will provide States, units, and Regional Training Institutes with an online capability to create and manage training for their unique requirements while providing a standard interface for ease of use.

Distributed Learning Classrooms: To further improve access to DLCs, the DL Program will field six Mobile DL Classrooms (MDLCs) during FY11 as a test for future replacement of fixed DLCs. The MDLCs will replace fixed DLCs one-for-one, and will normally be used at the site of the original fixed DLC. But whenever States or units want to move an MDLC to another location, they can pack the equipment into inexpensive yet durable cases, transport the entire MDLC in a standard commercial van, and set up the MDLC at any site with access to the National Guard’s operational network. Over the next several years the ARNG DL Program plans to replace many

of the fixed DLCs with Mobile DL Classrooms (MDLCs) and migrate the dedicated DLC high-speed network to the National Guard's operational network. Combined, those actions will reduce DL Program operating costs while providing increased flexibility to States and units.

The DL Program will continue collaboration with TADLP to ensure all ARNG DL "platforms" remain compatible with US Army and USAR systems, and to ensure the ARNG is positioned to implement the latest TADLP developments (for example, the potential deployment of handheld devices to deliver DL to Soldiers). The DL Program will also continue coordination with the Army's Project Directorate, Distributed Learning System to obtain DDTCs for deploying ARNG combat brigades.



DL Classrooms

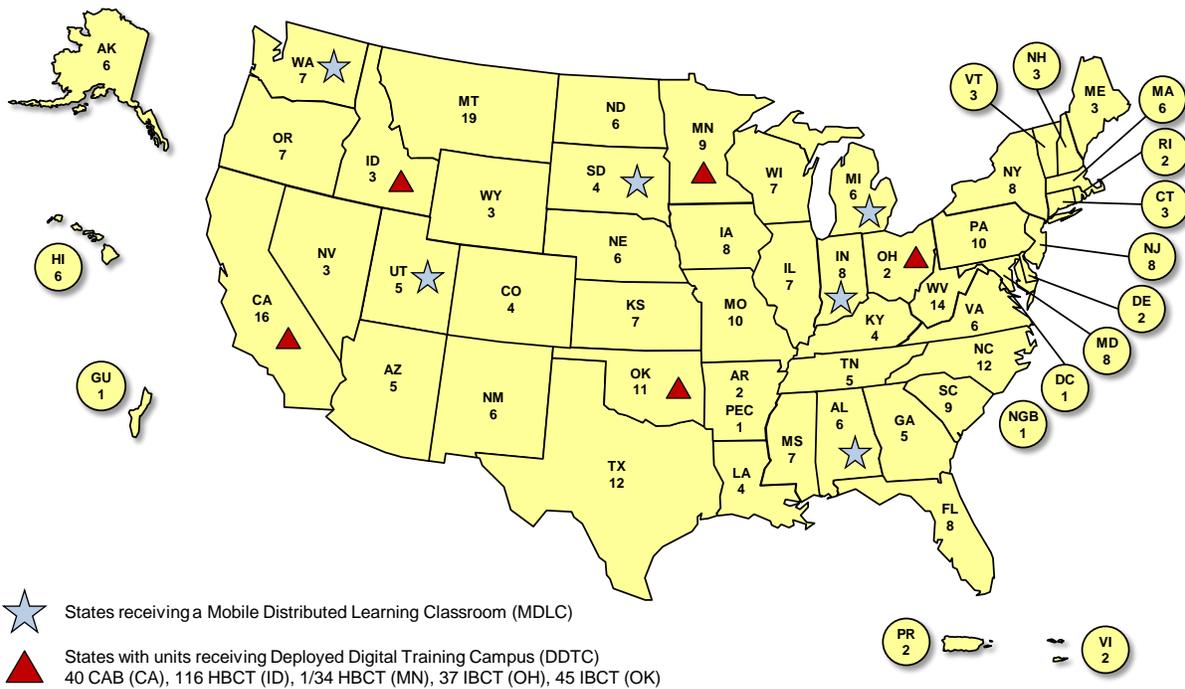


Figure 1: ARNG Distributed Learning Classrooms

Click on the following links for additional information:

<http://www.arng.army.mil/aboutus/guardtraining/Pages/default.aspx>

https://gkportal.ngb.army.mil/sites/G3_ART/DL/default.aspx