



# Identifying Opportunities to Recruit More Individuals Above the Age of 21 into the Army

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Although the Army has traditionally focused most of its recruiting efforts on high school diploma holders ages 18 to 24, older recruits, as a group, score higher on qualification tests and are more likely to reenlist and to be promoted. RAND researchers examined the potential for recruiting individuals older than 21 and derived actionable recommendations for improving recruitment among older individuals.



## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the accession, attrition, and performance trends of older cohorts of first-time Army enlistees?
- What are the current constraints to recruiting this group?
- What recruitment strategies could more effectively recruit them?



## KEY FINDINGS

- Older individuals represent a potential growth area for Army recruiting.
- The quality of older recruits is generally high.
- Age, in itself, does not appear to pose a significant barrier to accession.
- Older recruits attrite at higher rates during basic training, at lower rates in their first term.
- Accession of older recruits may require more time and resources.
- Recruiters typically do not specifically target older recruits.
- Virtual recruiting may be especially important for older recruits.
- Recruiting of older individuals requires targeted messaging.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

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- Expand the Army Loan Repayment Program.
- Allow certain waivers to be managed at echelons below brigade.
- Expand market research and share data more widely with station-level recruiters.
- Expand social media and virtual recruiting teams at the battalion-and-below level.
- Continue to broaden recruiting and marketing campaigns for wider appeal.
- Enhance recruiter knowledge of Military Occupational Specialty options.
- Expand virtual recruiting while strategizing long-term Army presence on campuses.

