

# **POLICY**

## **MICHIGAN NATIONAL GUARD STATE TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

*As of 07/24/2017*

### **Reference:**

Public Act No. 259 of 2014

### **General:**

State Tuition Assistance may be provided for voluntary off-duty education programs in support of Soldiers' and Airmen's professional and personal self-development goals. The State Tuition Assistance Program is directly related to retaining quality Soldiers and Airmen, enhancing their career progression, increasing the combat readiness of the Michigan National Guard, and returning Soldiers and Airmen to civilian careers.

Commanders at all levels are encouraged to use the State Tuition Assistance Program as a retention tool, to encourage Soldiers and Airmen to remain satisfactory participants, and meet their military obligations.

The Adjutant General is responsible for overall policies, guidance, administration, implementation and proper utilization of the Michigan State Incentives Program.

The MING-G/J1 is charged with validating the program for the Adjutant General and is the official designee of the Adjutant General for such purposes. Further sub-delegation of authority may be granted to the Army National Guard Education Services Officer (ESO).

The Recruiting and Retention Battalion Commander (Army) and the State Recruiting and Retention Superintendent (Air) are responsible for promoting the State Tuition Program as a recruiting and retention tool utilizing the incentives offered by the State Tuition Assistance Program.

Commanders at all levels are responsible for keeping members of their commands informed of the State Tuition Assistance Program. Commanders must continue to monitor eligibility of members who are receiving state incentives.

### **Rate of Reimbursement:**

The State Tuition Assistance Program will reimburse all or a portion of the tuition and fees for Soldiers and Airmen enrolled in an educational institution during the Soldiers' and Airmen's off-duty periods.

**Duplication of Benefits:**

The State Tuition Assistance may be combined with Federal Tuition Assistance. The State Tuition Assistance Program is paid on a course-by-course basis.

The State Tuition Assistance Program may be used in conjunction with GI Bill Programs, provided the Soldiers and Airmen are otherwise qualified.

The combination of Federal Tuition Assistance, State Tuition Assistance and any other tuition specific aid cannot exceed 100% of the cost of tuition.

**Authorized Uses:**

The State Tuition Assistance Program is limited to no more than one credential from each of the following levels:

1. Training Program – only one regardless of who paid for it.
2. Certificate Program – only one regardless of who paid for it.
3. Associate Degree – only one regardless of who paid for it.
4. Baccalaureate (undergraduate) Degree, including minors. Double majors are not authorized unless they are part of a documented degree plan – only one regardless of who paid for it.
5. Master's or first Professional Degree – if they have one we will pay for the other, but if they already have both it is not covered.

**Eligible Institutions:**

Soldiers and Airmen may be authorized to use the State Tuition Assistance Program at any eligible educational institution, such as a public or private college, university, vocational school, technical school, or trade school located in this state. The exception to this is allowing Airmen pursuing an approved on-line degree program through the Air University General Education Mobile (GEM) or Associate to Baccalaureate Cooperative (ABC) programs until such time that the programs are offered by a Michigan-based institution to use the State Tuition Assistance Program.

**Eligible Courses:**

The State Tuition Assistance Program is intended to culminate in vocational or technical training, a certificate, or the student's first associate's degree, bachelor's degree, or master's degree or first professional degree.

1. Courses taken on-line or on campus at any eligible institution located in this state or off-duty courses taken through the Air University,
2. Vocational, technical or trade school must submit the pass/fail documentation or a certificate of completion provided at the end of the course.
3. Courses a student is currently attending at the time of direct commission (AMEDD/Chaplain/JAG Corps Officers) into the MNG,
4. Courses which start after their Pay Entry Basic Date (PEBD) and end prior to the Service Members Expiration Term of Service (ETS) date.

**Ineligible Courses:**

Reimbursement is not authorized for:

1. MOS/AFSC and/or mission-required military training courses,
2. Courses of all types for which instruction is available through the Army e-learning portal, unless the course is a requirement for a college degree,
3. Exam Prep Courses (e.g., GRE, GMAT),
4. Courses that earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs – may be paid thru other funding sources).

**Ineligible Fees & Costs:**

Fees levied by institutions not required for enrollment in a given course including:

1. Parking privileges (can be paid only if charged as a condition of registration).
2. Nonrefundable charges. Covered fees must be refundable to the same extent as tuition, in accordance with the institution's tuition refund policy. At a minimum, all tuition and fees must be 100 percent refundable at least up to the start of the course.
3. Transcript fees – we will pay for 1 per year.
4. Medical services (Student Health Center fees can be paid only if charged as a condition of registration).
5. Books, room and board expenses.
6. Evaluation of portfolio/transcription for credit.
7. Courses sponsored by continuing education departments yielding CEUs (or equivalent) that cannot be used towards degree/certificate completion.
8. Preparatory courses for college/graduate admissions testing such as the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), Graduate Record Examination (GRE), Law School Aptitude Test (LSAT),
9. Courses of all types for which instruction is available through the Army e-learning portal, unless the course is a requirement for a college degree.

**Maximum Lifetime Benefit:**

The maximum lifetime benefit under the State Tuition Assistance program is funding for 144 semester hours of undergraduate credit or a baccalaureate degree, whichever comes first. Soldiers and Airmen may use up to 42 hours of graduate credit of a master's or first professional degree, whichever comes first. Post-Bachelors credit toward a certificate program will count against the graduate credit limit.

**Deadlines:**

Soldiers and Airmen must submit their application for State Tuition Assistance to the State Operations Budget Office no earlier than 60 calendar days before and no later than 14 calendar days after the course start date.

**General Eligibility:**

All Soldiers and Airmen currently in good standing; AGR Soldiers and Airmen pursuant to Title 10 and Title 32. Soldiers and Airmen in ING or IRR status are ineligible for State Tuition Assistance.

Members receiving Federal Benefits which pay tuition costs directly to the institution are eligible to receive funds under the State Tuition Assistance program, but not to exceed 100% of the cost of tuition.

**Satisfactory Participant:**

A satisfactory participant of the Michigan National Guard is defined as a Service Member who meets the following criteria:

1. Is an active drilling member of his/her unit of assignment or attachment,\
2. Is not under UCMJ.
3. Is not AWOL.
4. Is not under suspension of favorable actions (Army) or adverse administrative actions (Air) in accordance with applicable regulation and policy,

The service member must be a satisfactory participant at the time of application.

**Suspension of Eligibility:**

Soldiers and Airmen who are not satisfactorily fulfilling their military obligations but have not been discharged or separated will have all State Tuition Assistance payments immediately suspended. If the Soldier or Airman's conduct is corrected and/or satisfactory participation is resumed, the suspension will be lifted effective the next semester/term.

**Termination of Eligibility:**

A Soldier or Airman's eligibility for State Tuition Assistance will be terminated if the Soldier or Airman:

1. Transfers to the National Guard of another state, to the United States Army Reserve or enlists into active military duty.

**Service Obligation:**

Soldiers and Airmen who use the State Tuition Assistance Program will not incur an additional service obligation. Only courses that start after a Soldier or Airman's PEBD or end prior to a Soldier or Airman's ETS are eligible for the State Tuition Assistance Program.

**Exception to Policy requests:**

When extenuating circumstances exist, a request for exception to policy may be initiated in writing by the Soldier or Airman and endorsed by his/her chain of command to the Michigan Army National Guard Education Services Office. The request must clearly explain the circumstances that may merit an exception to policy. Some examples may include deployment issues, State Active Duty issues, military training conflicts that result in missed suspense's or delays, or medical issues that disrupt civilian education.

The approval authority for all Exception to Policy requests is the Michigan National Guard Education Services Officer.

**Fraud, Waste, and Abuse:**

The submission of a falsified grade report, transcript, final fee statement, fraudulent application form or an attempt to receive funds to which a member is not due will result in termination with recoupment and suspension from the State Tuition Assistance program for a minimum of one year. A Service Member who received State Tuition Assistance funds utilizing a falsified grade report, transcript, final fee statement or fraudulent application may be subject to prosecution under the Michigan Code of Military Justice or the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Recoupments will be processed in accordance with DMVA policies and procedures and may include tax refund intercepts.