

# Department of Military and Veterans Affairs



<b>Policy Title:</b>	State Tuition Assistance Program				
<b>Issued:</b>	10/01/2020	<b>Revised:</b>	07/03/2023	<b>Process:</b>	State Operations

## **Application:**

This policy is intended for Michigan National Guard members and their dependents regarding the Michigan National Guard State Tuition Assistance Program.

## **Purpose:**

To provide for tuition assistance at certain educational institutions for Michigan National Guard members and their dependents; and to prescribe duties for certain state officials. It also establishes the criteria under which the State of Michigan will award tuition assistance to eligible participants of the Michigan Air and Army National Guard and their dependents.

## **Policy:**

The Michigan National Guard State Tuition Assistance Program (MINGSTAP) 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. MINGSTAP is a reimbursement program that reimburses for eligible tuition and mandatory fees after demonstrating academic success.

## **General Eligibility:**

All eligible Michigan National Guardsmen currently in good standing, including Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Soldiers, Airmen pursuant to Title 10 and Title 32 and their dependents. Soldiers and Airmen in the Inactive National Guard (ING) or the Inactive Ready Reserve (IRR) status are ineligible for State Tuition Assistance Program, as are their dependents. Applications are received and approved on a conditional basis once a year, but invoices will only be approved if all criteria are still met at the time of reimbursement. If at that time a service member is ineligible the dependent will also be ineligible. The dependent must also have prior approval of the service member to use benefits.

## Service Member Eligibility Criteria:

1. Is an active drilling member of his/her unit of assignment or attachment.
2. Is not under MCMJ (Michigan Code of Military Justice) or UCMJ (Uniform Code of Military Justice) action.



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Individuals attending Flight Training at a 4-year degree granting institution will receive benefits at the higher benefit amount of \$14,400 per academic year up to the lifetime limit of \$86,400.

## **Service Member and Dependent Benefits:**

Each service member is the owner of their own benefit to use themselves or transfer to a dependent as they see fit. If a service member is also a dependent, each benefit is a separate instance, and each instance is subject to all stipulations, terms and conditions within this policy.

<p style="text-align: center;">Undergraduate Limit \$14,400 – Academic Year \$86,400 – Lifetime Limit <u>Example One</u> Service Member, Dependent/s all using funds for an Undergraduate Degree</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Graduate/Certificate Limit \$6,000 – Academic Year \$25,200 – Lifetime Limit <u>Example One</u> Service Member, Dependent/s all using funds for an Undergraduate Degree</p>
<p>If the service member and dependent/s are all working on an undergraduate degree, they will have up to \$14,400 for the academic year. The \$14,400 is to be shared between all users. The service member and dependent/s should coordinate usage to avoid incurring charges that go over the authorized academic year limit.</p> <p>The lifetime limit will work in the same manner. The \$86,400 will be shared between all users, each person does not have access to \$86,400. The service member and dependent/s should coordinate usage to avoid incurring charges that go over the authorized lifetime limit.</p>	<p>Service member and dependent/s are all working on undergraduate degree, no one is using funds from this category.</p>

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<p style="text-align: center;">Undergraduate Limit \$14,400 – Academic Year \$86,400 – Lifetime Limit <u>Example Two</u> Service Member, Dependent all using funds for a Graduate/Certificate Program</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Graduate/Certificate Limit \$6,000 – Academic Year \$25,200 – Lifetime Limit <u>Example Two</u> Service Member, Dependent all using funds for a Graduate/Certificate Program</p>
<p>Service member and dependent/s are all working on a Graduate/Certificate Program, no one is using funds from this category.</p>	<p>If the service member and dependent/s are all working on a Graduate/Certificate Program, they will have up to \$6,000 for the academic year. The \$6,000 is to be shared between all users. The service member and dependent/s should coordinate usage to avoid incurring charges that go over the authorized academic year limit.</p> <p>The lifetime limit will work in the same manner. The \$25,200 will be shared between all users, each person does not have access to \$25,200. The service member and dependent/s should coordinate usage to avoid incurring charges that go over the authorized lifetime limit.</p>

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<p>Undergraduate Limit                  \$14,400 – Academic Year                  \$86,400 – Lifetime Limit  <u>Example Three</u>                  One or more persons using funds from each category. It can be any combination of Service Member, Dependent/s.</p>	<p>Graduate/Certificate Limit                  \$6,000 – Academic Year                  \$25,200 – Lifetime Limit  <u>Example Three</u>                  One or more persons using funds from each category. It can be any combination of Service Member, Dependent/s.</p>
<p>Regardless of who is using benefits from this category, they will have up to \$14,400 for the academic year. The \$14,400 is to be shared between all users. The benefit should be coordinated to avoid incurring charges that go over the authorized academic year limit.</p> <p>The lifetime limit will work in the same manner. The \$86,400 will be shared between all users, each person does not have access to \$86,400. The benefit should be coordinated to avoid incurring charges that go over the authorized lifetime limit.</p>	<p>Regardless of who is using benefits from this category, they will have up to \$6,000 for the academic year. The \$6,000 is to be shared between all users. The benefit should be coordinated to avoid incurring charges that go over the authorized academic year limit.</p> <p>The lifetime limit will work in the same manner. The \$25,200 will be shared between all users, each person does not have access to \$25,200. The benefit should be coordinated to avoid incurring charges that go over the authorized lifetime limit.</p>

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## **Duplication of Benefits:**

Service members must apply for and use Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) first with the following exceptions.

1. Service members who use FTA for any portion of their undergraduate degree and who are working towards their master's degree, but have not yet completed Advance Leadership Course (ALC), Warrant Officer Advanced Course (WOAC), or Career Captains Course (CCC).
2. Service members working towards a professional degree. (Note that students already enrolled in MINGSTAP will be grandfathered in. New professional degrees will not be accepted.)
3. APFT/AFFA/HT/WT information is not correct due to the lag time between IPPS-A and Army Ignited.
4. Service member used the max 16 credits or \$4,000 for the fiscal year.
5. Service members that are in a VA work study program are not eligible for FTA.
6. ROTC SMP cadets that are on any type of scholarship to include room and board are not eligible for FTA.
7. If Service member is required to re-enlist to utilize FTA.
8. Other circumstances MAY be considered on a case-by-case basis.
9. If the service member fails to use FTA the dependent will not be penalized, however, the service member will be unable to use the benefit.

Federal Tuition Assistance may be used in conjunction with GI Bill Programs and other aid, provided the service members are otherwise qualified and does not exceed 100% of the cost of attendance (cost of attendance does not include room and board).

## **Recoupment:**

If funds are paid for an eligible/ineligible participant for courses that they were not authorized, the funds shall be reimbursed in an amount and in a manner prescribed by the Adjutant General unless the eligible participant was deployed in a state or federal status that resulted in the eligible participant's inability to complete the course of study. In that case, the matter shall be determined by the Adjutant General.

## **Deadlines:**

An eligible participant has 14 calendar days after the start of class to submit an application.

Example: If classes started on August 23, 2022, the application would have to be submitted on or before September 6, 2022.

An eligible participant must submit a new application for every academic year. The applications open on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

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An eligible participant must submit their reimbursement request, along with supporting documentation within 60 calendar days after the last day of class. Because reimbursement is subject to the availability of funds, it is based on a first come first serve basis as determined by the submission date of the reimbursement request, not the date the application was submitted. The requests for reimbursement will be paid on a first come first serve basis regardless of whether they are a service member or a dependent.

## **Maximum Lifetime Benefit:**

The maximum lifetime benefit under the State Tuition Assistance Program is funding for up to 144 semester hours of undergraduate credit or a baccalaureate degree, whichever comes first and up to 42 semester hours towards a master's degree. The service member and dependent's usage will be combined when calculating the lifetime limit.

## **Authorized Uses:**

The State Tuition Assistance Program applies to any course of study that is intended to culminate in vocational or technical training, a certificate, or the eligible participant's first associate degree, first bachelor's degree, first master's or first professional degree\*. The State Tuition Assistance Program does not allow you (service member or dependent) to work on a degree lower than one you (service member or dependent) already possess or for a degree that you (service member or dependent) already possess.

The State Tuition Assistance Program will not reimburse for more than one degree (per service member or dependent) per academic year. Once a degree type/funding source is selected for the Academic Year by the Service Member, spouse or dependent it cannot be changed until the following Academic Year. The State Tuition Assistance Program will reimburse the following for service members and their dependents and will use IPPS-A to verify the service member's education level. Dependents will have to certify their level of civilian education.

- a. Training Programs – Applies towards graduate lifetime limit.
- b. Certificate Programs – Applies towards graduate lifetime limit.
- c. Associate Degree – Applies towards undergraduate lifetime limit – only one regardless of who paid for it.
- d. Baccalaureate Degree – Applies towards undergraduate lifetime limit – only one regardless of who paid for it.
- e. Master's Degree – Applies towards graduate lifetime limit – only one regardless of who paid for it.



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- f. Professional Degree\* – Students already enrolled in MINGSTAP to apply towards a professional degree will be grandfathered into the program. New professional degree applications will not be accepted.

## **Eligible Institutions:**

Eligible participants 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 that is eligible to receive Federal Tuition Assistance.

The first exception to this is allowing Airmen pursuing an approved on-line degree program through Air University General Education Mobile (GEM) or the 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.

The second exception to this is allowing service members to request a waiver if the university or program does not accept Federal Tuition Assistance but provides an accredited degree or career training certification in a career field that is in high demand or clearly defined (for example, CDL training, cosmetology, etc.) and the individual provides a certification stating they passed the course.

The third exception to this is allowing service members who are actively/currently using the program to be grandfathered into colleges/universities/training programs/vocational/trade schools.

## **Eligible Courses:**

The State Tuition Assistance Program is intended to culminate in vocational or technical training, a certificate, or the student's first associate degree, first bachelor's degree, first master's degree or first professional degree\*. Students already enrolled in MINGSTAP to apply towards a professional degree will be grandfathered into the program. New professional degree students will not be accepted.

Courses taken on-line or on campus at any eligible institution located in this state or off-duty courses taken through the Air University.

Vocational, technical or trade school must submit the pass/fail documentation, or a certificate of completion provided at the end of the course.

Courses a student is currently attending at the time of direct commission (AMEDD/Chaplain/JAG Corps Officers) into the MNG.



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Courses which start on or after their Pay Entry Basic Date (PEBD) and end on or prior to the Service Members Expiration Term of Service (ETS) date.

## **Ineligible Courses:**

Reimbursement is not authorized for:

- a. DMOS/AFS and/or mission-required military training courses.
- b. 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.
- c. Exam Prep Courses (e.g., GRE, GMAT).
- d. Courses that earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs may be paid through other funding sources).

## **Ineligible Fees & Costs:**

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

- a. Parking privileges (can be paid only if charged as a condition of registration).
- b. 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.
- c. Medical services (Student Health Center fees can be paid only if charged as a condition of registration).
- d. Books, room and board expenses.
- e. Evaluation of portfolio/transcription for credit.
- f. Courses sponsored by continuing education departments yielding CEUs (or equivalent) that cannot be used towards degree/certificate completion.
- g. Preparatory courses for college/graduate admissions testing such as the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT).
- h. Graduate Record Examination (GRE), Law School Aptitude Test (LSAT).
- i. 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.
- j. Costs associated with Study Abroad travel.

## **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 a service member is ineligible the dependent will also be ineligible. If the Soldier or Airman's conduct is corrected and/or satisfactory participation is resumed, the suspension will be lifted effective the next academic year.

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## **Termination of Eligibility:**

A Soldier or Airman's eligibility for the State Tuition Assistance Program will be terminated if the Soldier or Airman transfers to the National Guard of another state, to the United States Army Reserve or enlists into active military duty. If a service member is ineligible the dependent will also be ineligible.

## **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 (Pay Entry Base Date) or end prior to a Soldier or Airman's ETS (Expiration Term of Service) are eligible for the State Tuition Assistance Program.

## **Exception to Policy:**

When extenuating circumstances exist, a request for exception to policy may be initiated in writing by the service member or their dependent and endorsed by his/her chain of command to the Senior Deputy Director for State Operations as delegated by The Adjutant General. 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.

## **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 or dependent 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.

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## **Legal and Regulatory Governance:**

- Public Act No. 033 of 2023
  - Public Act No. 531 of 2016
  - Public Act No. 259 of 2014
  - Public Act No. 150 of 1967
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## Terms and Conditions:

I understand the State of Michigan sponsors the State Tuition Assistance Program. The state legislature appropriates funds for this program annually. If, in the future, the State does not fund the State Tuition Assistance Program, or funds are depleted, neither the State of Michigan nor the Michigan National Guard is obligated to continue such a program.

I understand that the State Tuition Assistance program reimburses eligible participants after successful completion of course/programs.

I understand to qualify as a dependent, I must either be lawfully married to the service member or be a dependent child, stepchild, or legally adopted child who has graduated high school or obtained a high school diploma equivalent certificate, or who has turned 18 years of age, and who must use the eligible person's tuition assistance by submitting an application before turning 26 years of age.

I understand that as a dependent, I must have pre-approval to use the benefits of the service member I am dependent upon.

I understand that the State Tuition Assistance Program will cover fees that are mandatory as a condition of enrollment.

I understand that the State Tuition Assistance Program is not authorized to reimburse books and room and board expenses.

I understand I must attend an eligible educational institution, such as a public or private college, university, vocational school, technical school, or trade school located in this state that is eligible to receive Federal Tuition Assistance. Courses that earn Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) are not eligible for State Tuition Assistance Program funds.

I understand the maximum lifetime benefit that I may receive under this program is funding equivalent up to 144 semester hours of undergraduate credit or a baccalaureate degree, whichever comes first and up to 42 semester hours towards a master's degree and that vocational and certificate producing programs up to 42 credit hour equivalency.

I understand that I must pass each class I am requesting reimbursement for with a 2.0 or better on a 4.0 scale for undergraduate work, or a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for graduate work or passing grade for certificate or training programs.

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I understand that I, or the service member I am dependent upon, must complete initial active duty for training (IADT) as defined by regulations.

I understand that I, or the service member I am dependent upon, must be an active member of their unit of assignment or attachment.

I understand that I, or the service member I am dependent upon, cannot be under MCMJ (Michigan Code of Military Justice) or UCMJ (Uniform Code of Military Justice) action.

I understand that I, or the service member I am dependent upon, cannot be AWOL (Absent Without Leave).

I understand that I, or the service member I am dependent upon, cannot be flagged for HT/WT and must have a current compliance date within the last 12 months.

I understand that I, or the service member I am dependent upon, cannot be flagged for APFT or AFFA and must have a current test within the last 12 months if M-Day and within 6 months if AGR.

I understand that I, or the service member I am dependent upon, must be in the Michigan National Guard from the first day of class until the last day of class.

I understand that as the service member using MINGSTAP, I must apply for and use FTA in order to be eligible for the State Tuition Assistance Program unless I meet one of the criteria to be exempt. I understand that FTA requirements do not apply to dependents.

I understand that I cannot receive more than 100% of the cost of attendance (cost of attendance does not include room and board).

I understand that funds from the State Tuition Assistance Program cannot be refunded to me.

I understand that I am authorizing my school and the State Tuition Assistance Program to share my academic information (grades, GPA, academic status, and other academic/enrollment information) and account information (billing statements, charges, credits, payments, past due amounts, and/or collection activity) with each other. I understand that I am agreeing to waive my rights of nondisclosure of these records under applicable law regarding the State Tuition Assistance Program. I understand this release is valid as long as I am participating in the State Tuition Assistance Program.

I understand that reimbursement is based on a first come first serve basis as determined by the submission of my reimbursement request, not the date I submitted my application.

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I understand I will only be reimbursed for eligible courses and authorized uses as laid forth in this policy.

I understand that I, or the service member I am dependent upon, must meet all the criteria at both the time I submit my application and at the time I request reimbursement.

I understand that if at any point I, or the service member I am dependent upon, fail to meet all the criteria of the program, I may be denied reimbursement.

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## **Terms and Definitions:**

### **Academic Year**

The period of the year during which a student attends an educational institution. For purposes of the State Tuition Assistance Program that means starting in the fall and ending in the summer.

### **Active Service**

Term as defined in section 105 of the Michigan Military Act 1967, PA 150, MCL 32.505.

### **Adjutant General**

The Adjutant General of this state.

### **Course of Study**

An individual class, or group of classes, in which an eligible participant is enrolled for the purpose of obtaining a not yet completed training program, obtaining a not yet completed certificate program or obtaining a not yet completed associate, bachelor's or master's degree.

### **Eligible Educational Institution**

Public or private college, university, vocational school, technical school or trade school located in this state that is eligible to receive Federal Tuition Assistance.

### **Eligible Participant**

A member of the Michigan National Guard who meets all the following conditions:

- a. Is an active drilling member of his/her unit of assignment or attachment.
- b. Is not under UCMJ or MCMJ.
- c. Is not AWOL.
- d. Is not under suspension of favorable actions (Army) or adverse administrative actions (Air) in accordance with applicable regulation and policy.

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- e. Cannot be flagged for the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) or the Air Force Fitness Assessment (AFFA) and have a passing APFT or AFFA within the last 12 months for MDAY and within the last 6 months for Army Guard Reserve (AGR); or has a physical profile exempting them from completing a fitness test.
- f. Cannot be flagged for Height/Weight (HT/WT) and must have a compliant date within the last 12 months for M-DAY and AGR.
- g. Completed initial active duty for training (IADT) as defined by regulations before the first day of class.
- h. Any other criteria determined by the Adjutant General consistent with Michigan National Guard recruiting and retention requirements.

## **Dependent**

- a. A person lawfully married to a service member.
- b. A dependent child, stepchild, or legally adopted child who has graduated high school or obtained a high school diploma equivalent certificate, or who has turned 18 years of age, and who must use the eligible person's tuition assistance by submitting an application before turning 26 years of age.

## **Fund**

The Michigan National Guard Tuition Assistance Fund.

## **Professional Degree**

An advanced degree such as a JD, MD or PHD. This list is not all inclusive.

## **Tuition**

The cost of a course of study at an eligible educational institution, including the cost of instructional fees, laboratory fees, computer fees, and other fees directly related to that eligible participant's specific course of study at that eligible educational institution. Tuition/Cost of Attendance does not include the cost of books or study materials.

## **Tuition Assistance Program**

The Michigan National Guard Tuition Assistance Program

Approving Authority Signature

14 July 2023

Date

**End of Document**