



Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Policy Title:	Member Benefits Assistance Program				
Issued:	18 February 2026	Revised:		Process:	

Application:

This policy is intended for Michigan National Guard members regarding the Michigan National Guard Member Benefit Assistance Program

Purpose:

To provide college/trade school tuition reimbursement, childcare assistance and bridging TRICARE premium reimbursement to eligible Michigan National Guard members through the Member Benefit Assistance Program. It also establishes the criteria under which the State of Michigan will award reimbursements to eligible participants of the Michigan Air and Army National Guard and their dependents as appropriate.

Policy:

The Michigan Member Benefits Program is directly related to retaining quality Soldiers and Airmen and increasing the combat and personnel readiness of the Michigan National Guard. The Member Benefits Assistance Program includes tuition reimbursement, childcare assistance, and TRICARE Reserve Select and TRICARE Dental Program premium reimbursement for eligible Michigan guardsmen. Payments for the benefit program are subject to the availability of funds and based on the established eligibility criteria and approval of the Adjutant General or his designees.

General Eligibility:

To be eligible for any of the three benefits of the Member Benefit Assistance Program Michigan National Guardsmen must be actively drilling.

Soldiers and Airmen in the Inactive National Guard (ING) or the Inactive Ready Reserve (IRR) status are ineligible for the Member Benefit Assistance Programs.

Service Member General Eligibility Criteria for the Benefits Program:

1. Is not under MCMJ (Michigan Code of Military Justice) or UCMJ (Uniform Code of Military Justice) action.
2. Is not AWOL (Absent Without Leave).



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3. Is not under suspension of favorable actions (Army) or adverse administrative actions (Air) in accordance with applicable regulation and policy.
4. Is not flagged for the Service Fitness Test within the last 12 months for M-DAY and within the last 6 months for AGR members; or has a physical profile exempting them from completing a fitness test.
5. Is not flagged for Height/Weight (HT/WT) and must have a compliant date within no greater than 8 months prior to applying for the benefit for M-DAY and AGR.
6. Any other criteria determined by the Adjutant General consistent with Michigan National Guard recruiting and retention requirements.

TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Additional Requirements in addition to General Benefits Program requirements:

Actively drilling members of the Army and Air National Guard who have completed Basic and are reserved for or completed Advanced Individual or Technical Training as defined by regulation or Contracted Cadets (09R10 or 09R20) in the ROTC Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) members.

The Adjutant General has determined that the State Tuition Assistance Program reimburses up to 100% of an eligible participant's tuition and mandatory fees per academic year at the maximum rate of \$600 per credit hour not to exceed the limits listed below, on a first come first serve basis. For course work to be reimbursed it must be passed with a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale for undergraduate work or a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for graduate work or a passing grade for eligible certificate or training programs.

Training Programs– up to \$6,000
Certificate Programs – up to \$6,000
Professional Degree – up to \$6,000
PhD/Doctorate Degree - up to \$6,000
Master's Degree – up to \$6,000
Baccalaureate Degree – up to \$14,400
Associate Degree – up to \$14,400

Any funds paid for a dependent will be subtracted from the service members academic year and lifetime limits. The funds for the service member and dependent combined cannot exceed either of the authorized limits.

Because this is a reimbursement program, service members and dependents need to make payments according to the schools' deadlines or work with them to make prior payment arrangements.



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Eligible participants must submit a new application every academic year.

Eligible participants must submit their reimbursement request, along with supporting documentation within 60 calendar days after the last day of class. Reimbursement is funded based on a first come, first served basis as determined by the submission date of the reimbursement request, not the date the application was submitted.

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. Lifetime limit for Training/Graduate/Professional Degree programs cannot exceed \$25,200 and Undergraduate lifetime limits cannot exceed \$86,400. 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, first doctorate, or first professional degree. The program can be applied to multiple institutions within the same academic year if classes at the secondary institution support the member's degree at and is accepted by the member's primary institution. Example: An undergraduate student completes Fall and Winter semesters at a university, they can attend community college and transfer credits back to their university if they support their pursued degree. Repeat classes will not be reimbursed. This exception does not alter rates of reimbursement for a given academic year.

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.
- f. PhD/Doctorate Degree - Applies towards graduate lifetime limit – only one regardless of who



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paid for it.

- g. Professional Degree - Applies towards graduate lifetime limit – only one regardless of who paid for it.

Eligible Institutions:

The State Tuition Assistance Program may be authorized to use 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 allows 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 allows MINGSTAP members to request an Exception To Policy (ETP) to attend a recognized university or institution that 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. ETPs are not required for certifications in cosmetology, commercial driver's licenses, and pilot's licenses.

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.

Courses taken online 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, licensing documentation or official industry recognized certificate provided at the end of the program/course.

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

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.



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- 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).
- e. Professional Development programs that are pass/fail and do not result in licensing or industry certification.
- f. Courses that are not led by an instructor

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.

Termination of Eligibility:

A Soldier or Airman's eligibility for the State Tuition Assistance Program is 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:



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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.

CHILDCARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:

Additional eligibility requirements for the Childcare Assistance Program:

1. Service member is a single Soldier or Airman or is dual military and simultaneously drilling.
2. Title 10 or Title 32 AGR Service members are not eligible
3. Service member has completed Advanced Individual or Technical Training (need documentation)
4. Dependent Child 12 and under

The Adjutant General has determined that the stipend rate for the Childcare Assistance Program pays \$60 per day, per dependent for weekend drills and annual training, up to a maximum of 39 days each year. The daily rate will be reviewed annually. For dual military drilling at the same drill period, only one member may submit for assistance. A qualified child is a child 12 and under. Service members with children enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMB) may submit an exception to the policy (ETP) waiving the age criteria.

Eligible service members must submit their request along with supporting documentation via <https://signer.gov.esignlive.com/a/ft?token=ekVaZmVyU0ZfemU0eHptbW5Qb1ZHVVtXN0Y4PSZmYWxzZQ>.

Reimbursement is funded based on a first-come, first-served basis as determined by the submission date of the reimbursement request. This benefit will be paused when available funds are exhausted.

TRICARE PREMIUM REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM:

Additional eligibility requirements for the TRICARE Premium Reimbursement Program:

1. Service member is uninsured
2. Service member's employer does not provide insurance
3. Service member is in traditional (non-full time) Michigan National Guard status
4. Service member is enrolled in and has paid for TRICARE coverage
5. Service member not eligible for enrollment in employer-sponsored medical insurance through their own civilian employer
6. Service member not eligible for enrollment in a spouse's medical insurance program



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7. Service member is not eligible to be enrolled on a parent's health plan (for example, because they are age 26 or older on the first day of the month, or the parent's plan does not offer dependent coverage, or the service member does not meet the plan's dependent eligibility criteria)
8. Service member is not enrolled in any other medical coverage that would duplicate the program's benefits
9. Service member has completed Advanced Individual or Technical Training
10. Service members are not eligible for Medicaid.

This bridging program provides a reimbursement of up to the service member's monthly member-only portion TRICARE premium for TRICARE Reserve Select Member only and TRICARE Dental member-only, for eligible Michigan National Guard traditional (M Day/DSG drill status) service members enrolled in member-only TRICARE coverage. Family coverage is not reimbursable. Reimbursements are paid only to the service member.

The current cost for TRICARE Reserve Select Member only is \$57.88 monthly and \$8.65 monthly for TRICARE Dental.

Those service members seeking premium reimbursement must submit request via <https://signer.gov.esignlive.com/a/ft?token=R251bHdScnJmSHc4VVlxS3o3WldtWV9BU3ljPSZmYWxzZQ>.

Reimbursement is funded based on a first-come, first-served basis as determined by the submission date of the reimbursement request. This benefit will be paused when available funds are exhausted.

Application Process

Documentation Requirements: To claim reimbursement, the servicemember must submit the following, in the form and manner the Program prescribes:

Proof of payment and coverage for the month claimed: Acceptable proof includes TRICARE premium receipts, DFAS allotment statements, insurer invoices marked paid, or bank/credit statements clearly tying payment to the TRICARE premium for the specific month, and documentation that the coverage tier is member-only.

Member Affidavit (signed each claim period): The servicemember must attest, under penalty of perjury, that they meet all eligibility criteria for the claimed month(s), that the information and documents supplied are true and complete, and that they understand the penalties for false statements and for failing to report changes.

Employer Affidavit (annually, and sooner upon change): A notarized affidavit from the



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servicemember's current civilian employer, completed by an authorized HR/benefits representative or business owner, certifying whether the employer offers medical insurance and whether the servicemember is eligible to enroll (and if not, the specific reason), with contact information for verification. The affidavit must be dated within 12 months of the reimbursement request, or more recently if the member's job status/hours/classification changed within the last 12 months.

Parent coverage attestation (if under age 26 on the first day of any claimed month): The servicemember must attest that they are not eligible to be enrolled as a dependent under any parent's plan for the claimed month(s), and provide, upon request, parent plan documentation (e.g., a summary plan description excerpt showing dependent eligibility limits, or an employer/insurer letter stating no dependent coverage or denial of dependent enrollment).

Process and Timelines

Claim Frequency: Claims may be submitted quarterly for the prior three months. Claims must be received with command endorsement within 30 days of the end of the quarter being claimed.

Payments:

For the Childcare Assistance and TRICARE Premium Reimbursement programs, service members are required to register and create an account in SIGMA at the following link: [AdvantageVSS - SIGMA VSS](#).

Updates and Change Reporting: The servicemember must report, in writing within 30 days, any change that may affect eligibility, including changes in employment, job status/hours, benefits eligibility, or potential eligibility for parent coverage (for those under 26). Failure to report may result in denial, overpayment recovery, disqualification, and referral for investigation.

Annual Recertification: Each servicemember seeking TRICARE Reimbursement must complete an annual recertification consisting of a Member Affidavit, a current Employer Affidavit, and any additional documents the Program prescribes. Failure to recertify results in suspension of reimbursements until complete.

Fraud, Waste and Abuse:

The submission of a falsified document or an attempt to receive funds to which a member is not due will result in temporary or permanent suspension from the Benefits Program. A Service Member or dependent who received State funds utilizing a falsified document may be subject to prosecution under the Michigan Code of Military Justice or the Uniform Code of Military Justice and/or applicable state or federal laws.

Verification and Anti-Fraud Controls:

Pre-Payment Checks: The DMVA will review each application for completeness of the file, confirm



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member-only TRICARE coverage and payment, validate affidavit accuracy, and screen for red flags.

Data Matching and Computer Cross-Checks: With the servicemember's consent (provided via the Member Affidavit), the Program may verify information by computer cross checking with other public and private agencies, including state wage records, unemployment insurance data, and federal defense/benefits systems (e.g., IPSSA, DPRO, IPERMS DMDC/DEERS and TRICARE enrollment files), to the extent permitted by law. Discrepancies may be verified via collateral contact and may delay or deny payment until resolved. [This process may never be implemented, but is helpful to have the member consent so that it remains an option.]

Record Retention: Servicemembers and employers must retain records supporting eligibility and payments for six years from the latest of: the date of payment, the close of the Program year, or final resolution of any audit/appeal. Records must be produced within 30 business days of a Program request.

Enforcement; Consequences of Ineligibility or Fraud

Denial and Suspension: The Program may deny or suspend claims for incomplete documentation, unresolved discrepancies, refusal to cooperate with verification, or failure to recertify.

Overpayment Recovery: Any payment for an ineligible month is an overpayment. The Program will issue written notice with a 30 day demand to repay. If not repaid, the Program may assess interest consistent with state policy, offset against future reimbursements, enter a repayment plan, or commence collection action. For willful misrepresentation, the Program may seek damages and civil penalties where available.

Referral: Credible evidence of fraud, false claims, or false pretenses will be referred to the Michigan Attorney General, Office of Inspector General, or other appropriate authorities for investigation and prosecution. Actions will be directed by Executive Directive-2019-2.

Employer Sanctions: Where an employer knowingly makes false statements or refuses reasonable verification requests, the Program may: (a) reject claims supported by that employer's affidavit; (b) notify the employer of potential liability and refer the matter for enforcement; and (c) require additional documentation (e.g., third party plan administrator letters) for any future claims tied to that employer.

Appeals and Member Rights:

Notice and Appeal: The Program will provide written notice of denials, suspensions, overpayments, or disqualification decisions, describing the reasons and the evidence relied upon.



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The servicemember may appeal in writing within 30 days. An impartial review will be completed within 45 days, with a written decision. This internal appeal does not limit referral or external enforcement.

Legal and Regulatory Governance:

MCL 22 Public Act of 2025 Section 307, 314, 315, 286 Michigan National Guard tuition assistance act, 2014 PA 259, MCL 32.431 to 32.434

Michigan False Claims Act, MCL 400.601 et seq.

Michigan Penal Code – False Pretenses and related fraud offenses, MCL 750.218

Michigan Whistleblowers' Protection Act, MCL 15.361 et seq.

Michigan civil liability for fraud/convertive conduct, including MCL 600.2919a (treble damages) and other applicable civil remedies.

ED-2019-2 -Executive Directive: Reporting Irregularities Relating to Public Money and Public Property

Terms and Definitions:

"Active state service", as applied to the national guard and the defense force, means military service in support of civil authorities, at the request of state or local authorities, including, but not limited to, support in the enforcement of laws prohibiting the importation, sale, delivery, possession, or use of a controlled substance, if ordered by the governor.

"Traditional Guardsman" or M-Day: means a drilling member of the Michigan National Guard who is not in full-time military status (e.g., not AGR/ADOS/T 10/T 32 FTNGD).

"DSG" means Drill Status Guardsman

"Employer-sponsored insurance" (ESI) means any medical plan offered by a civilian employer (including group health plans, union plans, or retiree plans) that provides major medical coverage.



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“Parent coverage” means a group or individual health plan under which a parent (or legal guardian) could enroll the servicemember as a dependent, if the servicemember meets plan eligibility (e.g., age and other criteria).

“Member-only TRICARE coverage” means TRICARE Reserve Select or other TRICARE member-only option where the servicemember is the sole covered person.

“Claim period” is the period that the servicemember is claiming, which is not to exceed 3 months.

“Dual Military” means both spouses are enlisted in the National Guard.

Michael J. Price
Approving Authority Signature

18 Feb 2026
Date

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