

## CHAPTER 2

### MINNESOTA STATE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

2-1. **GENERAL.** The State of Minnesota sponsors the State Tuition Reimbursement Grant Program. The State Legislature appropriates the funding for the program biennially. If, in the future, the legislature does not fund the program, neither the State of Minnesota nor the Minnesota National Guard is obligated to continue such a program.

2-2. **ELIGIBILITY.** The State Tuition Reimbursement program is available to the following individuals, in addition to those covered under Chapter 3:

a. Current members of the Minnesota National Guard who:

(1) Are serving satisfactorily as defined by the Adjutant General in paragraph 1-7; and

(2) Have successfully completed Basic Training (BT) or Basic Military Training (BMT); and

(3) Are between the ranks of **E-1 through O-5** (to include Warrant Officers). Officers promoted to the grade of O6 during the school term are eligible to use the State Tuition and Textbook Reimbursement Program until the end of that term.

b. Former members of the Minnesota National Guard who:

(1) Have satisfactorily completed their service contracts in the Minnesota National Guard or the portions of it involving selective reserve status, for which any part of that service was spent serving honorably in federal active service or federally funded state active service since September 11, 2001. In these cases, the person's eligibility is extended for a period of two years (2), plus an amount of time equal to the duration of that person's active service. Eligibility effective date is **4 June 2005**.

(2) Have served honorably in the Minnesota National Guard and have been separated or discharged due to a service-connected injury, disease, or disability. In these cases, the person's eligibility is extended for eight (8) years beyond the date of separation. Eligibility effective date is **4 June 2005**.

2-3. **RATE OF REIMBURSEMENT.** The Minnesota National Guard will reimburse up to 100% of the tuition charged for eligible coursework (undergraduate and graduate) at accredited post-secondary institutions, not to exceed 100% of the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus, undergraduate tuition rate of \$326.92 per credit with a maximum of \$4250.00 per term for school year 2008-2009.

#### 2-4. **COURSE REQUIREMENTS.**

a. Reimbursement is authorized for:

(1) Courses taken at an accredited post secondary educational institution or certification program approved for veteran's benefits.

(2) Courses eligible for placement on a transcript from the post secondary educational institution.

(3) Undergraduate courses completed with a grade of "**C**" or higher.

(4) Graduate courses completed with a grade of "**B**" or higher.

b. Reimbursement is not authorized for:

(1) Courses that were not completed.

(2) Courses that earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

(3) Activity fees, computer user fees, registration fees, books, room and board expenses, and other school-related fees.

c. If a service member receives a tuition waiver (no tuition paid or the fee statement indicates no tuition charges), reimbursement is not authorized. For example, high school students who attempt post-secondary coursework, where the courses are paid for by the high school, school district, or state, are not eligible to receive reimbursement for this coursework.

2-5. **MAXIMUM LIFETIME BENEFIT.** The maximum **lifetime** benefit under the State Tuition Reimbursement Program is funding for **208 quarter/144 semester credits**.

#### 2-6. **ADMINISTRATION.**

a. Tuition reimbursement is paid upon successful completion of coursework.

b. A member must request tuition reimbursement **no later than 60** days from the last official day of the term.

c. The service member's fee statement is the source document for determining the amount of reimbursement. If the fee statement does not clearly show the amount of tuition charged, the soldier must obtain a letter from the institution that states the amount of tuition charged and a point of contact at the institution.

#### 2-7. **ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF FUNDING.**

a. Members of the Minnesota National Guard may use the State Tuition Reimbursement Program in conjunction with the following federally funded programs:

(1) The Montgomery GI Bill.

(2) Army National Guard Federal Tuition Assistance (ARNG FTA).

(3) Army Continuing Education System Tuition Assistance (ACES TA).

b. Tuition reimbursement grants received under this subdivision may not be considered by the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office or by any other state board, commission, or entity in determining a person's eligibility for a scholarship or grant-in-aid.

#### 2-8. **APPLICATION PROCEDURES.**

a. Service Member's Responsibilities.

(1) Read and sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Annex A) annually. This memorandum specifically outlines the member's responsibility for obtaining reimbursement under the State Tuition and Textbook Reimbursement Program.

(a) Review the MN National Guard Circular 621-5-1 annually and sign a new MOU.

(b) Submit the signed MOU to his/her unit. Do not forward directly to the Education Service Office.

(c) Complete an Annual Obligation Request (Annex A). Units must enter the obligation into the automated system. Failure to obligate may result in suspension until after the end of the state fiscal year, to ensure funds are available for those who obligated. The service member will complete the MN-NG Form 621-5-1-R-E, (Annual Obligation Request) and submit it to the unit prior to beginning classes. Service members who enlist into the MN National Guard during a school term must submit the Annual Obligation Request prior to requesting payment. The annual obligation is an estimate of tuition cost for each term during the school year. The actual amount of reimbursement is dependent on the cost of tuition and the number of credits completed. The current school year is Summer Session II 2008 through Summer Session I 2009.

(2) The service member must submit a tuition reimbursement Payment Request (Annex A). Service member must submit the following forms and supporting documents to the unit in sufficient time for the reimbursement request to be entered into the payment request system **no later than 60** days from the last official day of the term. See paragraph 2-9 for information on incomplete coursework or late requests for reimbursement. Soldiers and Airmen enrolled in accelerated programs, where several terms are completed during the course of a normal semester should submit their requests in groups that correspond with a normal semester.

(a) Payment Request, MN-NG Form 621-5-2-R-E (See Annex A).

(b) Grade Report. Reports downloaded from the Internet are acceptable.

(c) Fee statement that clearly shows the amount of tuition charged. If the fee statement does not clearly show the amount of tuition charged, the service member must obtain a letter from the institution that states the amount of tuition charged and a point of contact at the institution.

(d) State payments are now made via direct deposit using Minnesota Direct Deposit Authorization for EFT. The latest form available can be found at:

<http://www.finance.state.mn.us/agencyapps/maps/directdepositform.pdf>

b. Unit Responsibilities.

(1) Execute Memorandum of Understanding. Ensure service member reads and signs the MOU annually. Provide the member with a copy and maintain a copy in the member's education file. NOTE: The MOU should not be forwarded to the ESO.

(2) Ensure all Soldiers and Airmen request for tuition reimbursement annually. Soldiers and Airmen who have not obligated will not be reimbursed for their tuition. Enter annual obligations into the web-based tuition reimbursement program for each member participating in the program to the ESO. Do not send paper copies of the obligation to the ESO.

(3) Enter payment requests into the system immediately upon receipt from the soldier. All requests for reimbursement must be submitted **no later than 60** days from the last day of the school term. Prior to forwarding, the unit must complete the following:

(a) Perform quality review to ensure that the information is complete and that the member has submitted a fee statement that clearly shows the amount of tuition charged and a grade report.

(b) Verify that the service member has completed Basic Training. If the service member has not completed basic training, click on "no" in the web-based tuition reimbursement program and fill in an estimated completion date. Upon completion of basic training, the unit must change the status to "yes". This will bring the soldier's request into the state incentives manager's active payment screen.

(c) Verify that the service member is in good standing IAW paragraph 1-7. If the service member is not in good standing, return request to the service member without action.

(4) Communicate with the ESO to facilitate the administration of the tuition reimbursement program.

c. ESO Responsibilities.

(1) The ESO allocates funds according to the Annual Obligation Requests received.

(2) Process payment requests.

(a) Verify all information is correct; this may include contacting the member's school.

(b) Calculate the actual amount of reimbursement.

(3) Suspend payment for service members who have not completed basic training until notification that the training is complete. Process for payment upon notification of completion.

(4) Suspend payment on Requests for Reimbursement that arrived at the ESO in excess of 60 days after the last official day of the school term. Process in the order received after 1 July providing funds remain for the State fiscal year.

## 2-9. INCOMPLETE COURSEWORK AND LATE REQUESTS.

a. Incomplete Coursework.

(1). If the service member has an incomplete, the unit should request payment for completed classes. Once the service member has finished the incomplete class(es), unit should request payment for those courses (specify which classes submitting for). Service member must submit reimbursement requests for **completed** courses **no later than 60** days from the last official day of the term; the ESO will reimburse for these courses provided annual obligation was submitted and funds are available.

(a) In the comments block, annotate the classes that are incomplete and the expected completion date.

(b) Service member must submit request for reimbursement, along with fee statement and grades to the unit.

(c) Retain a copy of this **Request for Payment** form and paperwork to submit upon completion of **incomplete** coursework.

(2). Upon completion of the coursework, complete a new MN-NG Form 621-5-2-R-E, requesting reimbursement for only the courses that were originally incomplete but are now complete. Provide this request along with a grade report showing satisfactory completion and a copy of the original request to the unit.

b. Late Requests for Tuition Reimbursement.

(1). If a service member misses the 60-day suspense, he/she should still submit their request for reimbursement as soon as possible. Late requests will be held for payment until after 1 July 2009. Requests will be paid in the order received, providing funds are available for that fiscal year. The ESO does not guarantee payment of requests received after the 60-day window.

(2). The deadline for requesting reimbursement for coursework completed prior to July 2008 (school year 2007-2008) is 15 December 2008.

2-10. **TERMINATION.** The submission of a falsified grade report, transcript or fee statement, or an attempt to receive funds to which a member is not due will result in the termination from the State Tuition Reimbursement Program for a minimum of one year from the date of detection.

#### 2-11. **TUITION REIMBURSEMENT OPTION FOR SPOUSES.**

a. Service members who meet the following criteria may opt to have their Spouse use a portion of the remaining balance of their State Tuition Reimbursement Grant.

(1) Are serving satisfactorily as defined by the Adjutant General in paragraph 1-7; and

(2) Have served at least 8 years of [active-drilling, non-ING] service in the Minnesota National Guard

(3) Are between the ranks of **E-1 through O-5** (to include Warrant Officers). Spouses of Officers promoted to the grade of O6 during the school term are eligible to use the State Tuition and Textbook Reimbursement Program until the end of that term.

b. Annual Cap. Spouses may use up to 12 semester/17 quarter credits annually, not to exceed the sponsoring Service member's lifetime benefit of 144 semester/208 quarter credits.

Payment Procedures will remain the same as for the Service member, and all payments will be direct deposited into the sponsoring Service member's bank account.

## ANNEX A

### MINNESOTA STATE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FALL 08-SUMMER 09

#### A-1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Full Name, Rank), certify that I have read this memorandum prior to signing and fully understand the policies and procedures of the Minnesota State Tuition Reimbursement Program as described in Minnesota National Guard Circular 621-5-1 and this MOU.

#### A-2. INTRODUCTION.

a. The State of Minnesota sponsors the Tuition Reimbursement Program. The state legislature appropriates funds for this program biennially. If in the future, the state does not fund the Tuition Reimbursement Program, I understand that neither the State of Minnesota nor the Minnesota National Guard is obligated to continue the benefit.

b. I also understand that if I do not meet all the criteria outlined in Minnesota National Guard Circular 621-5-1, dated 1 Jul 08, I may jeopardize my entitlement to receive reimbursement.

c. I understand that the State Tuition reimbursement Program will reimburse up to 100% of tuition, not to exceed 100% of the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus, undergraduate tuition rate. That rate is currently \$326.92 per credit, with a maximum of \$4250.00 per term for school year 2008-2009.

d. I UNDERSTAND THAT NGB POLICY NOW STATES THAT SOLDIER'S CAN USE FTA AND STR IN CONJUNCTION WITH EACH OTHER PROVIDED THAT THE TOTAL COMBINED AMOUNT OF BENEFITS PAID DOES NOT EXCEED 100% OF ACTUAL TUITION/FEE'S COSTS.

e. I understand that reimbursement is not authorized for activity fees, computer user fees, registration fees, books, room and board expenses, and other school-related fees.

#### A-3. CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION.

a. I understand that in order to be eligible for payment of tuition reimbursement, I must meet the following membership criteria:

(1) I must be a member of the Minnesota National Guard; grades from E-1 through O-5 (to include Warrant Officers.) If I am a lieutenant colonel, promoted to colonel during a school term I will not be eligible to participate in the program for future school terms.

(2) I must successfully complete Basic Training (BT) or Basic Military Training (BMT).

(3) I must maintain active membership in the Minnesota National Guard throughout the entire term for which reimbursement is tendered. If I become a member during a school term, I will be eligible for payment of that term upon completion of basic training, provided all other criteria are met.

b. I understand that to receive payment under this program that I must follow the rules regarding satisfactory participation:

(1) I can have no periods of unauthorized absence (i.e. AWOL) within the last 12 months while participating in the program.

(2) I can have no more than four (4) periods of Excused Absence during the last 12 months.

c. I understand the following additional requirements:

(1) I, or my spouse, must attend a post secondary educational institution approved for VA benefits.

(2) I will be reimbursed only for courses that are eligible for placement on a transcript from the educational institution. Courses that earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are not eligible for the Minnesota State Tuition Reimbursement Program.

(3) The maximum lifetime benefit that I may receive under this program is equivalent to 208 quarter/144 semester credits.

(3) To use the Tuition Reimbursement option for Spouses, I must have served at least 8 years of [active-drilling, non-ING] service in the Minnesota National Guard

d. I understand that I, or my spouse, must complete coursework in accordance with the following guidelines:

(1) Undergraduate Study. I, or my spouse, must achieve a grade of “**C**” or better, “**Pass**” or “**Satisfactory**.” I understand that the National Guard will not reimburse me for any course from which I, or my spouse, “**withdraw**” or receive a grade of “**C-**” or lower.

(1) Graduate Work. I, or my spouse, must achieve a grade of “**B**” or better. I understand that the National Guard will not reimburse me for any course from which I, or my spouse, “**withdraw**” or receive a grade of “**B-**” or lower.

e. I understand that I will be eligible for reimbursement for the course upon completion, and if the grade requirements outlined above are met.

#### A-4. REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES.

a. Memorandum of Understanding. Annually, I will carefully read, sign and submit a MOU to my unit.

b. Annual Obligation Request.

(1) I must complete the MN-NG Form 621-5-1-R-E, (Annual Obligation Request) and submit it to my unit prior to beginning classes. If I enlisted during a current school term, I will submit the Annual Obligation Request immediately and understand that the ESO will reimburse me for the current school term upon completion of basic training.

(2) I understand that the annual obligation is an estimate of tuition cost for each term during the school year. The actual amount of reimbursement is dependent on the school, credits and terms attended. The school year is Summer Session II 2008 through Summer Session I 2009.

(3) I understand that failure to obligate may result in my not being reimbursed.

c. Request for Reimbursement Payment:

(1) I understand that I must submit the following forms and supporting documents to my unit in sufficient time for them to arrive at the ESO within 60 days after the last official day of the term. Soldiers and Airmen enrolled in accelerated programs, where several terms are completed during the course of a normal semester should submit their requests in groups that correspond with a normal semester. One submission each for Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer and Summer 2 terms.

(a) Payment Request, MN-NG Form 621-5-2-R-E.

(b) Grade Report. Grades from the internet are acceptable.

(c) Fee statement that clearly shows the amount of tuition charged. If the fee statement does not clearly show the amount of tuition charged, I will obtain a letter from the institution that states the amount of tuition charged and lists a point of contact at the institution.

(d) Direct deposit form – State payments are now made via direct deposit using Minnesota Direct Deposit Authorization for EFT. If your form is not already on file with the State (*not Federal*) Department of Finance, it needs to be included with your STR request. *Latest form available at <http://www.finance.state.mn.us/agencyapps/maps/directdepositform.pdf>*

(2) I understand that my signature on the MN-NG Form 621-5-2-R-E will verify that all information is true and correct. My signature also authorizes the ESO to contact the school to verify course grades.

(3) I understand that I must submit my request for tuition reimbursement within 60 days after the last official day of the course.

(a) I understand that if I fail to meet this suspense, I must submit the request for reimbursement as soon as possible but the ESO does not guarantee reimbursement.

(b) I understand that late requests will be processed in the order they are received and I will not receive payment for late requests until after 1 July 2008 provided there are funds remaining for the State fiscal year.

#### A-5 **INCOMPLETE COURSEWORK AND LATE REQUESTS.**

##### a. Incomplete Coursework.

(1) I understand that if I have an incomplete, that I should request payment for completed classes. Once I have finished the term I must submit reimbursement requests for **completed** courses **no later than 60** days from the last official day of the term; the ESO will reimburse for these courses provided annual obligation was submitted and funds are available.

(a) In the comments block, annotate the classes that are incomplete and the expected completion date.

(b) I must submit request for reimbursement, along with fee statement and grades to the unit.

(c) Retain a copy of this **Request for Payment** form and paperwork to submit upon completion of **incomplete** coursework.

(2) I understand that upon completion of the coursework, complete a new MN-NG Form 621-5-2-R-E, requesting reimbursement for only the courses that were originally incomplete but are now complete. Provide this request along with a grade report showing satisfactory completion and a copy of the original request to the unit.

##### b. Late Requests for Tuition Reimbursement.

(1) ) I understand that if I miss the 60-day suspense, I should still submit their request for reimbursement as soon as possible. Late requests will be held for payment until after 1 July 2009.

Requests will be paid in the order received, providing funds are available for that fiscal year. The ESO does not guarantee payment of requests received after the 60-day window.

(2) The deadline for requesting reimbursement for coursework completed prior to July 2008 (school year 2007-2008) is 15 December 2009.

A-5 **TERMINATION.** ) I understand that the submission of a falsified grade report, transcript or fee statement, or an attempt to receive funds to which a member is not due will result in the termination from the State Tuition Reimbursement Program for a minimum of one year from the date of detection

A-6. **OTHER MEMBER'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

a. I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that my application for the Minnesota State Tuition Reimbursement Program is submitted within the guidelines indicated herein and in accordance with MN NG Cir 621-5-1. Late requests for reimbursement will delay my reimbursement until after the end of the state fiscal year and will be processed only if sufficient funds exist.

b. I further understand that any attempt to submit falsified documents will result in my termination from the State Tuition Reimbursement Program for a MINIMUM of one year from the date of detection.

c. I fully understand the directives outlined herein and in MN-NG CIR 621-5-1 and my responsibilities for participation in the Minnesota state tuition reimbursement program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Service Member  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Unit Rep.