

**NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU**  
111 SOUTH GEORGE MASON DRIVE  
ARLINGTON VA 22204-1382

ARNG-GSE

29 July 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Army National Guard (ARNG) Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) Guidance FY11

**1. References.**

- a. Title 10, United States Code (USC), Section 2007, Payment of Tuition for Off-Duty Training or Education, 19 January 2004.
- b. Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 1322.8E, Voluntary Education Programs for Military Personnel, 23 April 2007.
- c. Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 1322.25, Voluntary Education Programs for Military Personnel, 03 February 1999.
- d. Army Regulation (AR) 621-5, Army Continuing Education System, 6 September 2009.
- e. Army Regulation (AR) 600-8-2, Suspension of Favorable Personnel Actions (FLAGS), 23 December 2004.
- f. Army Regulation (AR) 11-6, Army Foreign Language Program, 31 August 2009, Table 6-3, Approved list of languages for the use of Tuition Assistance (TA). (Talk to NGB Program Manager or see annual DoD memo for list of current languages approved for TA.)
- g. Memorandum, Under Secretary of Defense, 21 May 2008, subject: Repayment of Unearned Portions of Bonuses, Special Pay, and Educational Benefits or Stipends. (Attached)

**2. Purpose.** This memorandum establishes guidance to administer the ARNG FTA Program. The intent of this program is to provide financial assistance for voluntary civilian education programs in support of a Soldier's professional and personal self-development goals. For further guidance refer to Army Regulation 621-5, Rapid Action Revision dated 6 September, 2009.

**3. Implementation.** This guidance supersedes NGB-ARM Policy, 12 May 2008, subject: Army National Guard (ARNG) Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA). This guidance will be implemented October 1, 2010 and remain in effect until rescinded or superseded.

ARNG-GSE

SUBJECT: Army National Guard (ARNG) Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) Guidance FY11

**4. Eligibility - Soldiers are eligible if they:**

a. Are traditional M-day Soldiers NOT in a Title 10 or Title 32 status. All Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Soldiers and all federally mobilized Soldiers, Officer and Enlisted, must apply for TA through the GoArmyEd portal. **(NOTE: There is currently a legal review underway to determine whether TA may be awarded to Soldiers who have not yet completed Basic Training. You should be prepared to cease or continuing awarding TA to this group of Soldiers based on the findings of that review.)**

b. Are Soldiers serving on Active Duty for Operational Support (ADOS) or Active Duty Special Work (ADSW).

c. Have no active adverse flagging actions per AR 600-8-2, paragraph 1-12 through 1-15, on the approval date of application for TA. **(NOTE: Flags for APFT Failure or for Weight Control do NOT prohibit the use of FTA.)**

d. On the date of the application, have less than nine (9) unexcused absences within 12-months prior to submission of the FTA application.

e. Are ARNG Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) Soldiers and ROTC scholarship recipients who elect the Room and Board Scholarship option.

**(NOTE: Those scholarship recipients who elect the tuition option are NOT eligible to receive FTA.) (NOTE: This paragraph is currently under legal review. You should be prepared to either cease awarding TA or continue pending result of findings.)**

f. Are attending an authorized Institution of Higher Learning (IHL). Authorized IHLs are those that are regionally or nationally accredited or those that have been formally recognized as a candidate for accreditation by a regional accrediting association and are recognized by the US Department of Education (DOE). Secondary schools approved by their respective state boards of education are also eligible for FTA funding. ARNG-GSE reserves the right to refuse participation of any IHL with practices that are contrary to the intent and objectives of FTA program. A current listing of accredited schools previously awarded TA can be found in iMARC and all currently accredited schools can be found on the following website(s) at: US Department of Education-<http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/> or The Council for Higher Education Accreditations (CHEA)- <http://chea.org/default.asp>.

g. Are attending an IHL with a valid CAGE code. All IHLs must have Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) codes to receive FTA payment IAW Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) subpart 4.11. CAGE codes are five-position codes that identify contractors doing business with the federal government. The CAGE code supports a variety of systems throughout

ARNG-GSE

SUBJECT: Army National Guard (ARNG) Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) Guidance FY11

the government and provides a standardized method of identifying a given facility at a specific location. College representatives may visit <http://www.ccr.gov> to obtain CAGE codes. Requests to have schools added to the Information Management and Reporting Center (iMARC) database for FTA funding are to be submitted to ARNG-GSE on the "School Info Sheet".

## **5. Administration.**

a. Statement of Understanding (SOU). In order to submit an application for FTA, Soldiers will indicate that they understand their responsibilities regarding FTA, as well as, the restrictions regarding the duplication of federal funding, by electronically signing the SOU. In addition to describing the terms and conditions for using FTA, the SOU also facilitates the Reserve Duty Service Obligation (RDSO) of commissioned officers and commissioned warrant officers (CW2 – CW5), who incur an additional 4-year reserve duty service obligation commencing at the course completion date. If the Soldier fails to meet the RDSO after receiving FTA, recoupment will begin on a prorated basis. The member must indicate concurrence with the SOU to proceed with the online application process. This concurrence will be the official acceptance and act as the Soldier's signature of the SOU and will be date/time stamped in the application process based upon that applicant's login, utilizing Soldier's Common Access Card (CAC).

b. Degree Plans. Soldiers must submit a degree plan for record to outline their goals after the completion of nine semester hours (SH) of course work. Degree Plans will be forwarded to Soldier's state Education Services Office (ESO) and uploaded into the Soldier's iMARC record.

c. FTA application. The ARNG electronic version of DA Form 2171 generated from the automated online application is the only form authorized for the administration of the ARNG FTA program. Each application must include a control number, which is automatically generated in iMARC.

d. DA Form 669. Paper copies of the DA Form 669 are no longer used. The ARNG electronic version of DA Form 669 is now automated within the iMARC database, essentially, the "Remarks" section within each Soldier's individual record in iMARC.

e. Exception to Policy (ETP). Requests for ETPs to the FTA policy are to be forwarded by the requesting Soldier's ESO to ARNG-GSE with the following documents:

- (1) Memorandum from the Soldier explaining the circumstances.
- (2) Memorandum from the Commander or Commander's Representative (with signature authority) supporting the request.

ARNG-GSE

SUBJECT: Army National Guard (ARNG) Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) Guidance FY11

(3) Memorandum from the ESO endorsing the request.

f. Course completion/grade reporting. Soldiers must ensure grade reports are provided to the State ESO either by themselves or the school within 45 days of course completion. Unofficial/Official Transcript, grade report or completion notification may be used to update grades in Soldier's application in iMARC. The document will be subsequently uploaded into Soldier's iMARC record. The ARNG electronic version of DA Form 2171, the Soldier Education Statement (SES) and the SOU authorizes ARNG education staff to receive grades from the school on behalf of the Soldier; however, this does not relieve the Soldier of the primary responsibility of submitting grades. Soldiers will receive a reminder to submit grades at 15 days and 30 days past course end date through their Army Knowledge On-line (AKO) email account. If grades are not received by 45 days past course end date, the Soldier will be locked out from applying for further FTA, until the grades are submitted and entered into iMARC. Note AR 621-5 paragraph 2-11 a (4).

g. Recoupment. ESO's must work with their United States Property & Fiscal Officer (USP&FO) to process recoupment of funds. The FTA Managers are responsible for verifying applicants' course completion status by receipt of a valid grade report or college transcript and processing recoupment's of FTA funds in the following cases:

(1) Course withdrawals due to commander's disciplinary actions.

(2) Course withdrawal or incomplete for personal reasons.

(3) Failing grades for academic reasons or nonattendance.

(4) Incomplete grades that are not corrected within the time limits stipulated by the institution, but not more than 120 days from course end date.

(5) Commissioned Officers who fail to complete the required 4-year RDSO will reimburse the amount of FTA paid according to the following formula: amount of TA divided by number of months of obligation (48) and multiplied by the remaining amount of obligation (IAW U.S. code Title 10 chapter 101 section 2007). For example, an officer receives \$563 in ARNG FTA but departs 24 months before completion of the four-year obligation.  $\$563/48 = 11.73 \times 24 = \$282$  to be recouped.

(6) Enlisted Soldiers must have sufficient time in their term of service to complete the course. Enlisted Soldiers who are discharged due to unsatisfactory participation before the course end date will reimburse the full amount of FTA awarded for the course.

ARNG-GSE

SUBJECT: Army National Guard (ARNG) Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) Guidance FY11

(7) The ESO's will distribute letters of notice outlining TA recoupment requirements to Soldiers and commanders with suspense dates that will document the action taken.

(8) For further guidance on whether or not to pursue recoupment actions, you should direct questions to the ARNG GSE FTA Program Manager.

**6. Authorized Rates.** The total amount of FTA (including all qualifying fees) each Soldier can receive will not EXCEED \$4,500 per fiscal year (FY). The following authorized rates for ARNG FTA apply:

a. 100% of the tuition cost and authorized fees with limitations of: \$250 per semester hour (SH) or \$167 per Quarter Hours (QH) or \$16.66 per Clock Hours (CH).

Authorized fees must meet all three of these criteria in order to receive tuition assistance funding.

(1) Fee charged by the institution as a condition of enrollment in a specific course/term.

(2) Fees must be refundable, i.e., if the Soldier drops the class before it starts, ARNG must not be billed for any portion of the fee.

(3) Fees charged to all students. One-time or occasional fees are not eligible for FTA funding.

b. 100% of the tuition costs associated with obtaining a high school diploma from The Patriot Academy. This does not include the costs books and related fees. **(NOTE: Only the ARNG-sponsored high school completion program is authorized for the use of TA. The use of TA to pay for private high schools is no longer authorized.) (NOTE: FTA for High School completion is NOT subject to the \$4,500/FY cap.)**

**7. Authorized Uses.**

a. No more than one credential from each of the following degree levels:

(1) High school diploma from the Patriot Academy.

(2) Certificate & licensure.

(3) Associate.

(4) Baccalaureate (undergraduate).

ARNG-GSE

SUBJECT: Army National Guard (ARNG) Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) Guidance FY11

(5) Master's or first professional degree.

b. Courses leading to State education credentials (teaching, administration, supervision, and support services) to teach in the nation's public school system, regardless of the degree level the Soldier has already attained.

c. Undergraduate or graduate prerequisite courses for enrolling in a Bachelor's or Master's degree or for completing requirements for career advancement programs, such as, United States Military Academy (USMA), the Army Medical Department (AMEDD) Enlisted Commissioning Program, and the Physician's Assistant (PA) Program as long as the Soldier does not already have a similar degree.

d. Courses offered by institutions that are accredited by regional or national accrediting agencies recognized by the DOE.

e. Accredited institutions contracted with learning networks or courseware vendors must include the following requirements:

(1) Courses are part of a program appearing in the academic institution's catalog.

(2) Courses and grades reflected on the transcript are those of the academic institution's curriculum.

f. Foreign language courses identified by the Under Secretary of Defense per reference 1f listed above. (See the most current list of approved languages to confirm.)

g. Credit By Examination (CBE) or Institutional Challenge Examinations, if the examination is to be used as a required part of the Soldier's degree plan, does not duplicate a free DANTES exam, and is accessible to the Soldier. Note: FTA recoupment is not required when a Soldier fails an initial CBE test. However, FTA is not authorized for CBE retests or a comparable course to a previously failed CBE test.

**8. Limitations - TA will not be authorized for the following:**

a. Courses leading to a degree at or below the level that the Soldier already possesses. (Regardless of whether or not FTA was used to pay for that degree.)

b. Courses yielding Continuing Education Units (CEUs) or equivalent that cannot be used toward degree/certification completion. CEUs are not related to academic credit.

ARNG-GSE

SUBJECT: Army National Guard (ARNG) Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) Guidance FY11

c. Funding of FTA for Soldiers who have nine (9) or more SH's of FTA-funded credit without a documented degree plan on file.

d. Funding of FTA for Soldiers without a cumulative Grade Point Average of 2.0 or higher after completing 15 SHs (or 22 1/2 QH or 240 CH) of FTA-funded college credit.

e. Fees levied by institutions that do not meet the criteria contained in 6a.

f. A course that was previously funded by FTA (unless Soldier reimbursed the costs of the course or withdrew from the course for mission-related reasons). **(NOTE: If a course is being recouped, FTA may be awarded for the same course once the recoupment action has been initiated.)**

g. Military Occupational Specialty or mission required training courses.

h. Preparatory courses for college/graduate admissions testing, i.e., Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), Graduate Record Exam (GRE) Law School Aptitude Test (LSAT).

i. ARNG ROTC scholarship recipients who elect the Tuition and Fees Scholarship option.

j. CH 31 GI Bill, The Vocational Rehabilitation Program cannot be combined with FTA.

k. High school completion anywhere other than the Patriot Academy.

l. All other prohibitions as listed in AR 621-5, paragraph 5-7.

**9. Duplication of Benefits.** Eligible ARNG Soldiers may use FTA in addition to other funding sources based on certain limitations. State TA and FTA may be used concurrently, but in no case are FTA funds allowed to be used in conjunction with state education benefits (either state tuition assistance or an education reimbursement programs) to achieve more than 100% of actual costs.

a. In cases where the Soldier is eligible for the DOE Pell Grant, FTA may be used concurrently and will be applied first.

b. The ARNG's Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP) is an education incentive that has no impact on receiving funds from the FTA Program.

c. ARNG GI Bill Kicker can be combined with either the CH 1606 Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve or CH 1607 Reserve Education Assistance Program (REAP) and FTA, providing the Service member is attending school at least half-time.

ARNG-GSE

SUBJECT: Army National Guard (ARNG) Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) Guidance FY11

d. The CH 30 Montgomery G.I. Bill-Active Duty can be combined with the ARNG GI Bill Kicker and FTA, providing the Service member is attending school half-time or more.

e. ARNG Guaranteed Reserve Forces Duty ROTC Scholarship recipients who elect room and board payments in lieu of tuition and fees are eligible to receive FTA concurrently, if otherwise eligible.

f. The CH 33 GI Bill (Post 9-11) can be used concurrently with FTA and shall be applied first. The amount of FTA awarded, when combined with the CH 33 GI Bill, shall not exceed 100% of the actual cost of Tuition and Fees. The FTA Manager should work with the school to ensure that any overpayment is NOT refunded to the Soldier, but is refunded to the ARNG. The SOU that the Soldiers sign will indicate that they acknowledge that they are not authorized to receive refunds in cases of overpayment and will inform the Education Office for action.

**10. Application Process.** Use of the iMARC system to administer, manage and report FTA information is mandatory.

a. FTA application submittal. The FTA manager must either validate or deny the application based upon: the status of the applicant, school accreditation, the applicant's goals/previous course completion history, and upon funding availability. The approval of a validated FTA application constitutes an obligation of FTA funds.

(1) Applications for ARNG FTA must be submitted NLT the terminal add date of the course. No applications will be accepted beyond the terminal add date of a course unless the circumstances were beyond the Soldier's control (i.e. deployment) and an ETP is granted by ARNG-GSE. The ESO has the authority to establish application deadlines to meet state-specific demands.

(2) Soldiers must register for classes with an accredited school and then apply for FTA via the <https://minuteman.ngb.army.mil/benefits> online application process. Soldiers may apply for FTA up to 30 days prior to the course start date.

(3) The application must be validated and approved by the ESO or FTA manager. Only the approved application may be submitted to the school.

(4) The online FTA application will suffice as an "electronic signature" for SOU or RDSO agreement. The FTA manager is responsible for verifying the Soldier's eligibility.

(5) It is the Soldier's responsibility to notify the state ESO of transfers to another State/Territory. Whichever State approved active FTA requests must continue to process them to


ARNG-GSE

SUBJECT: Army National Guard (ARNG) Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) Guidance FY11

completion. If the FTA application is not yet approved, the losing State should immediately transfer the application in iMARC to the gaining State for processing.

(6) Applicants are responsible to report any change in courses such as adds, drops or withdrawals, no later than the terminal add date.

11. Point of Contact for this policy is 1LT Kurt M. Rauschenberg, ARNG Federal Tuition Assistance program manager, at (703) 607-9749 or [kurt.rauschenberg@us.army.mil](mailto:kurt.rauschenberg@us.army.mil).

  
DIANA A CRAUN  
COL, FI  
Chief, Education, Incentives and  
Employment Division

DISTRIBUTION:  
Each State MILPO  
Each State RRM  
Each State ESO