

**NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD**

**STATE TUITION ASSISTANCE**

Office of the Adjutant General

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This regulation supersedes and replaces NEARNGR 621-10/NEANGR 213-10 Dated 22 July 2022

**NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**Effective Date 1 May 2023**

**STA Application Website:** <https://ne.ng.mil/Resources/Education-Incentives/State-Tuition-Assistance-Information/>

## **Key Updates**

This regulation has undergone a complete revision; it supersedes NEARNG Regulation 621-10 and NEANG Regulation 213-10. Much of the information within remains the same but is in a different format. Additionally, many concepts and principles of the State Tuition Assistance program are now better developed and clarified. Prior and new users alike should pay close attention to all portions of the document. The following is a list of highlights.

- STA no longer has restrictions or eligibility requirements based on years of service (Effective 20JUL22)
- STA now covers 100% for a diploma, certificate, associate degree or baccalaureate degree program (pg. 1)
- STA now covers 50% for a graduate or professional degree program (pg. 1)
- New application deadlines have been established (pg. 4)
- There is no corresponding ETP for FTA as for STA (pg.8)
- The Annexes for State Process and Internal Controls have been removed.

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NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD STATE TUITION ASSISTANCE

**1. GENERAL:** The following policy provides guidance for the administration of the Nebraska National Guard State Tuition Assistance Program.

**2. STATUTE AUTHORITY:** Nebraska Revised Statutes 85-505 through 85-508 provide authority for the Tuition Assistance Program.

**3. STATUTORY RULES AND LIMITS:** The rules and limitations placed on the Nebraska National Guard (NENG) State Tuition Assistance (STA) program via appropriate State statutes include:

a. The Adjutant General (TAG) shall retain the responsibility and authority to establish limitations and controls as deemed necessary to ensure maximum fiscal efficiency and productivity of the STA program. Expenditures for the STA program will not exceed the appropriated State funds available for a given State Fiscal Year. The TAG may appoint an individual (the Tuition Approval Authority (TAA) to manage the STA program.

b. Any qualified member of the NENG who enrolls in any state-supported university, college, or community college or any independent, not-for-profit, regionally accredited college or university in this state shall be entitled to a credit of one hundred percent of the resident tuition charges of such school. Except that any member, who attends an independent, not-for-profit, regionally accredited college or university in this state shall receive a credit in an amount no higher than the base in-state tuition rate for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

(1) STA will pay 100% of a Service member's school tuition rate or 100% of the base tuition rate for the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, whichever is lower for a diploma, certificate, associate degree, or baccalaureate degree program.

(2) STA will pay 50% of a service member's resident tuition charges of such school for a graduate or professional degree program or 50% of the base tuition rate for the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, whichever is lower. FTA does not cover for professional degree programs.

c. Priority will go to those individuals who have previously received STA while being a NENG member. (See para 4d)

d. The tuition assistance program shall not be available to:

(1) More than one thousand two hundred members during any state fiscal year.

(2) Any member who has not exhausted any available federal tuition assistance (see paragraph 10) benefits.

- e. Any member of the Nebraska National Guard receiving state tuition assistance under this program may not receive a duplicate/lateral or lower degree. Service members can use STA to obtain additional degrees if they are higher or greater than what they currently hold.
- f. Only credit-bearing courses, which meet program requirements, get approval for tuition assistance. Members shall not receive tuition assistance for any noncredit courses.
- g. If a member of the NENG voluntarily withdraws from a course paid for with tuition assistance, the member shall be liable for all costs relating to such withdrawal, including, but not limited to, all the costs billed by the educational institution to the NENG.
- h. Any member of the NENG who receives tuition assistance shall agree in writing to serve in the NENG for three years after the completion of the last courses paid for with tuition assistance. Any member who receives tuition assistance may have to reimburse the State of Nebraska if any such member leaves the NENG during such three-year period.
- i. It shall be the responsibility of the individual member of the NENG to obtain a certificate from such member's commanding officer attesting as to the satisfactory guard performance of such member and to present the same to the educational institution in order to obtain tuition credit. Such certification is required at the time of enrollment for each semester or academic term for tuition requests.
  - (1) The A1 and G1 currently validate satisfactory performance through the organizations systems of record in order to meet the above requirement.
  - (2) Such certification shall include a signed agreement by the individual to serve in the NENG for a minimum of three years in accordance with the provisions outlined in paragraph 3i.
  - (3) The STA Manager will provide the certification with the final list of approved Service members and courses.

#### **4. NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD RULES AND LIMITS:**

- a. All NENG rules and limits are subject to change based on funding availability and at TAG's discretion.
- b. The NENG will not authorize STA payments for classes which applicants fail, drop, withdraw, or receive incomplete grades.
- c. Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) is Tuition assistance available through the Army Continuing Education System (ArmyIgnitED 2.0) or the Air Force Virtual Education Center.
- d. The NENG will approve applicants on a first come, first served basis within the following prioritized categories:

(1) Prior users who are fully qualified and are not able to use any FTA.

(2) Prior users who are fully qualified and currently using FTA.

(3) New users who are fully qualified and are not able to use any FTA.

(4) New users who are fully qualified and currently using FTA.

(5) Late applicants. All late applicants must have a signed exception to policy prior to approval. Service members should submit a memorandum requesting the exception through their chain of command to the NEARNG G1 or NEANG A1 for approval (Education Service Officer can have signature authority).

e. The NENG will not pay for any course more than one time for any applicant.

f. State Tuition Assistance may fund the NENG member through the completion of their degree or any combination of Semester Hours, Quarter Hours, and Clock Hours equaling an equivalent of 130 Semester Hours for an undergraduate degree, and 39 semester hours for a graduate degree.

g. Newly enlisted members of the NENG may use STA for any term/session that begins after the date of enlistment.

h. Applicants will use the process and guidelines found at <https://ne.ng.mil/Resources/Education-Incentives/State-Tuition-Assistance-Information/> in order to complete their applications.

i. Service members receiving STA are required to serve in the Nebraska National Guard in an active drilling status for three years after the completion of the last course for which STA is used. This three-year commitment must be in an active drilling or Active Guard Reserve (AGR) status. Inactive Ready Reserve and Inactive National Guard time will not count as part of the three years.

(1) The Nebraska National Guard will attempt to notify all personnel who appear as though they will not fulfill their three-year commitment prior to their departure from the Nebraska National Guard.

(2) The Nebraska National Guard may attempt to recoup any payments made to service members who do not complete their three-year obligation. The recoupment will be prorated for the percentage of their three-year commitment, which they completed.

(3) Service members may refute the recoupment action in accordance with paragraph 12 of this regulation.

**5. NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD MEMBER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVAL INTO THE PROGRAM:** The Nebraska National Guard (NENG) will assess each Nebraska Army National Guard applicant for the following eligibility requirements upon receipt of the application and at the application deadline. The Nebraska Air National Guard will assess their applicants only after the submission deadline. Applicants who do not meet all eligibility requirements on the application deadline for the term for which they are requesting assistance will not receive state tuition assistance (STA).

a. Applicants must not already possess a baccalaureate degree if they are requesting STA for anything less than a master's degree. STA will not pay for a lateral or lower degree.

b. Applicant enrollment at an institution of higher learning IAW Nebraska Revised Statute 85-505 is required.

c. Applicants must have satisfactory performance, based on his or her branch of service requirements as discussed in paragraph 9 of this regulation, at the STA submission deadline for the term of their requested courses.

d. Applicants will validate acceptance of all terms and conditions as part of the application submission process. This will include an agreement to serve in the Nebraska National Guard for three years after the completion of the last course for which STA is used.

e. Applicants must not have an existing debt to the State of Nebraska based on a requirement to reimburse the STA program.

f. Applicants must submit their request within the submission window, which is no earlier than 60 days prior to the class start date and no later than 7 days prior to the class start date (same as FTA).

g. Applicants from the Army component must have a valid CAC to access ArmyIgnitED 2.0.

h. Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) applicants from the Air component must have a valid Air Force Virtual Education Center account.

i. Applicants must have exhausted, or must not be eligible for, FTA.

**6. STATE TUITION ASSISTANCE APPLICANTS WITH SCHOLARSHIPS:** Members of the NENG who are receiving scholarships are eligible for STA so long as STA and the scholarship are not providing a

duplication of funds to the school.

## **7. RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS (ROTC):**

a. Members of the NENG that have contracted with the ROTC program are eligible for STA so long as they are not receiving a scholarship for tuition. Cadets receiving room and board scholarships are eligible for STA. All other rules of eligibility apply to Cadets as they would any other applicants.

b. The Education and Incentives Office will coordinate with the Officer Strength Manager for the Nebraska Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion to update Army ROTC participation and scholarship information in the State Tuition Assistance system.

c. Cadets receiving STA are required to serve in the Nebraska National Guard for three years after the completion of the last course for which STA is used. Failure to remain in the Nebraska National Guard for the three-year period may result in recoupment in accordance with paragraph 4i of this regulation.

## **8. GI Bill**

a. The GI Bill is not considered a form of FTA or scholarship and will not affect priority for STA.

b. Members of the NENG who are eligible for, or receiving GI Bill benefits, are eligible for STA so long as STA is not providing a duplication of funds to the school.

**9. SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE:** The term “satisfactory performance” is a qualifying factor for eligibility to use the STA program; the definition is as follows.

a. Applicants from the Army component must not have an existing flag to suspend favorable personnel actions per criteria stated in AR 600-8-2.

b. Applicants from the Air component must:

(1) Have a current, passing physical fitness test.

(2) Have no current or pending unfavorable administrative actions such as involuntary separation, letter of reprimand, suspended or revoked security clearance or involuntary demotion.

(3) Have attained sufficient retirement points, or pro-rated retirement points, to have a good year on his or her Retention/Retirement (R/R) date.

(4) Not be the subject of a Command Directed Investigation (CDI).

(5) Have no other enlistment, reenlistment or extension disqualifying factors IAW ANGI36- 2002, Table 1.3.



**10. EXHAUSTION OF FEDERAL TUITION ASSISTANCE:** Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) is exhausted if a service member reaches either the fiscal cap of \$4,500 and/or credit hour cap of 16 semester hours for their available benefits per fiscal year. Though a service member may have additional FTA funds available, FTA is exhausted if the service member is using all possible funds for the courses in which they are currently registered.

**11. STATE TUITION ASSISTANCE AS A SUPPLEMENT TO FEDERAL TUITION ASSISTANCE:** Service members may use STA to pay for courses or portions of courses, which are not covered by FTA, during the same term they are receiving FTA benefits.

**12. RECOUPMENT:** The following guidelines govern the recoupment of funds distributed via STA when appropriate:

a. NENG members may have a repayment obligation to the State of Nebraska whenever a tuition payment is made on behalf of that member and:

(1) The NENG member, dropped, withdrew or otherwise did not successfully complete funded classes.

(2) The NENG member was retaking a course for which tuition assistance paid for once before.

(3) The NENG member fails to fulfill the three-year service obligation after the completion of the courses for which they received tuition assistance.

(4) Service members who withdraw from courses due to military service or medical reasons must first attempt to work with their school in order to waive payments for the term. Students will inform the STA manager of the outcome of their request from the school. If schools will not waive the tuition costs, the service member must submit a request to the STA manager to waive recoupment.

(a) When requesting a waiver for recoupment for military service related or medical reasons, service members will provide evidence of their school's response to their requests to waive tuition fees.

(b) Waiver requests will also include documentation verifying the inability to continue school.

b. The STA Manager will not approve requests for tuition assistance for any NENG member with an open recoupment obligation (i.e., existing debt).

c. When a recoupment action is appropriate, the State Tuition Assistance Office will send the NENG member a formal notification of recoupment, via certified mail - return receipt requested, explaining the reason, amount and methods for repayment. This notification will inform the member of their ineligibility to use the program until repayment is complete. The STA Manager will also provide a copy of this notification to the service member's commander in order to facilitate future eligibility certification.

d. The NENG member may refute the validity of the recoupment action.

(1) The NENG Member must submit a written response explaining the circumstances, and detailing the reasons they are disputing the recoupment within 30 calendar days of receipt of the initial notification of recoupment informing them of their indebtedness.

(2) The TAG, or TAA, if appointed, will make the final determination of the validity of the request and determine the NENG member's level of indebtedness within 10 working days.

e. If the member fails to contact the State Tuition Assistance Office within a 30-calendar day period from receipt of the notification, the member will be deemed as having waived their right to refute the recoupment action and applicable collections actions will be initiated.

f. The State Tuition Assistance Office must receive payment in full within 90 calendar days of when the NENG member received the notification of recoupment, unless the NENG member successfully refutes the recoupment action. Failure to receive the requested recoupment amount within 90 days may result in the Nebraska National Guard, in consultation with the Nebraska Attorney General's Office, determination of the appropriate action(s) to recover on the delinquent funds and take all other actions IAW State law.

g. An employee of the Nebraska National Guard State Support Services Office shall receive repayment of an obligation by a NENG member. That employee shall duly record the funds received and annotate the payment and status on the recoupment list. When the member no longer has a recoupment obligation and is eligible for the program all systems of record will reflect accordingly unless other prohibiting factors exist.

