

261.86 National guard educational assistance program.

1. A national guard educational assistance program is established to be administered by the college student aid commission for members of the Iowa national guard who are enrolled as undergraduate students in a community college, an institution of higher learning under the state board of regents, or an accredited private institution. The college student aid commission shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A to administer this section. An individual is eligible for the national guard educational assistance program if the individual meets all of the following conditions:

a. Is a resident of the state and a member of an Iowa army or air national guard unit while receiving educational assistance pursuant to this section.

b. Satisfactorily completed required initial active duty training.

c. Maintains satisfactory performance of duty upon return from initial active duty training, including attending a minimum ninety percent of scheduled drill dates and attending annual training.

d. Is enrolled as an undergraduate student in a community college as defined in section 260C.2, an institution of higher learning under the control of the board of regents, or an accredited private institution as defined in section 261.9, and is maintaining satisfactory academic progress.

e. Provides proper notice of national guard status to the community college or institution at the time of registration for the term in which tuition benefits are sought.

f. Submits an application to the adjutant general of Iowa, on forms prescribed by the adjutant general, who shall determine eligibility and whose decision is final.

2. Educational assistance paid pursuant to this section shall not exceed the resident tuition rate established for institutions of higher learning under the control of the state board of regents. If the amount appropriated in a fiscal year for purposes of this section is insufficient to provide educational assistance to all national guard members who apply for the program and who are determined by the adjutant general to be eligible for the program, the adjutant general shall, in coordination with the commission, determine the distribution of educational assistance. However, educational assistance paid pursuant to this section shall not be less than fifty percent of the resident tuition rate established for institutions of higher learning under the control of the state board of regents or fifty percent of the tuition rate at the institution attended by the national guard member, whichever is lower. Neither eligibility nor educational assistance determinations shall be based upon a national guard member's unit, the location at which drills are attended, or whether the eligible individual is a member of the Iowa army or air national guard.

3. An eligible member of the national guard, attending an institution as provided in subsection 1, paragraph "d", as a full-time student, shall not receive educational assistance under this section for more than eight semesters, or if attending as a part-time student for not more than sixteen semesters, of undergraduate study, or the trimester or quarter equivalent. A national guard member who has met the educational requirements for a baccalaureate degree is ineligible for educational assistance under this section.

4. The eligibility of applicants and amounts of educational assistance to be paid shall be certified by the adjutant general of Iowa to the college student aid commission, and all amounts that are or become due to a community college, accredited private institution, or institution of higher learning under the control of the state board of regents under this section shall be paid to the college or institution by the college student aid commission upon receipt of certification by the president or governing board of the educational institution as to accuracy of charges made, and as to the attendance and academic progress of the individual at the educational institution. The college student aid commission shall maintain an annual record of the number of participants and the dollar value of the educational assistance provided.

5. For purposes of this section, unless otherwise required, "*educational assistance*" means the same as "*cost of attendance*" as defined in Title IV, part B, of the federal Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended.

6. Notwithstanding section 8.33, until one year after the date the president of the United States or the Congress of the United States declares a cessation of hostilities ending operation Iraqi freedom, funds appropriated for purposes of this section which remain unencumbered or unobligated at the close of the fiscal year for which the funds were appropriated shall not revert but shall be available for expenditure for the following fiscal year for purposes of this section.

99 Acts, ch 205, §40; 2000 Acts, ch 1095, §15; 2003 Acts, ch 182, §14, 22