



HEADQUARTERS IOWA NATIONAL GUARD
Office of the Adjutant General
Camp Dodge Joint Maneuver Training Center
7105 NW 70th Avenue
Johnston, Iowa 50131-1824

NGIA-TAG

26 November 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR Members of the Iowa General Assembly

SUBJECT: Explanation of the Department of Public Defense Bill for 2024 Session

1. Iowa National Guard Service Scholarship (Amendment of Iowa Code 261.86), Federal Tuition Assistance funds excluded from invoicing.

a. Background: From the inception of the Iowa National Guard Service Scholarship (INGSS), recipients could apply for the INGSS award while simultaneously applying for, and receiving, military-based Federal Tuition Assistance (Fed TA) as authorized by 10 USC 2007. In many cases, the recipient of an INGSS and Fed TA award would receive an overpayment refund from the academic institution resulting from dual payment of tuition eligible for payment by both benefits. Fed TA is available at the discretion of the separate Service Secretaries and at the availability of funds. In recent history, the Air National Guard has not had a Fed TA benefit available to them. Academic institutions are not required to participate in Fed TA programs, though the majority of those approved to receive INGSS do participate.

b. Proposed Solution: This change would require Fed TA funding, if available, be used first and authorize INGSS funds only for the balance of tuition not covered by the Fed TA program. The intention is for Service Members of the Iowa National Guard to use Fed TA programs when available, with INGSS funds covering the remainder of tuition as required. Usage of Fed TA first will effectively preserve state funds by reducing the invoicing against the existing INGSS appropriation and ensure the INGSS benefit is available to more service members. Application for INGSS funds will incorporate a status review of Fed TA use in order to ensure Fed TA has been requested.

2. Iowa National Guard Service Scholarship and Continuing Education support. (New Code Section)

a. Background: The INGSS benefit is only useful to those pursuing undergraduate academic degree programs, which does not fit the professional or personal goals of many service members. Accredited institutions eligible to receive INGSS funds for degree programs offer a variety of continuing education courses that provide professional value towards training, certification, or continuing education unit credit. These programs are not always composed of accredited courses.

b. Proposed Solution: The bill would give the Adjutant General (TAG) the authority to receive and approve applications from service members to attend select certificate generating programs at accredited institutions that are already approved to receive INGSS funds. Applications would be approved prior to start of courses utilizing an application process determined by TAG. No

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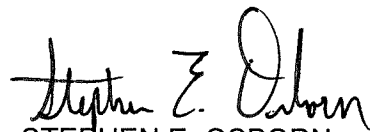
funds would be obligated and reimbursement would not be authorized without prior approval. Upon approval, the individual funds would be obligated for the entire course at the time of approval and reserved for that individual, regardless of taking classes across fiscal years.

3. Iowa National Guard Incentive Program (New Section under Chapter 29A)

a. Background: All military services and their components (active duty, National Guard, and reserves) have seen a significant decline in recruiting over the past 24 months. From 2018 to 2021, the Iowa National Guard averaged over 1100 gains per year, however from 2022 to 2023, the average number of gains dropped to 688 resulting in struggles to fill critical vacancies for both enlisted Soldiers and officers.

b. Proposed Solution: The proposed code would allow TAG appropriated funds to establish an Iowa National Guard Incentive Program (NGIP). NGIP would allow TAG to identify position vacancies or critical skills that would be eligible for an incentive the following state fiscal year. For example, NGIP could be paid to select applicants upon joining the IANG, or to current members of the IANG who agreed to transfer to a needed critical skill vacancy. Critical skills would be determined on an annual basis, based on the current strength and operational needs of the IANG. The incentive program would be limited in its scope and would provide incentives only as critical skills or vacancies were filled. This program would allow the Adjutant General to provide monetary incentives that would directly improve the strength and readiness of the IANG. TAG will annually provide detailed report to the legislature on how appropriations were expended in support of IANG readiness. The annual appropriation will be requested based on the readiness requirements of the organization.

6. For questions regarding this department bill, please contact my Executive Officer, Captain Josh Dunwoody, at 515-252-4018 or joshua.r.dunwoody.mil@army.mil.



STEPHEN E. OSBORN

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The Adjutant General