

# **State of Alaska FY2002 Governor's Operating Budget**

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs  
Educational Benefits  
Component

## **Component: Educational Benefits**

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### **Component Mission**

Increase recruitment and retention by offering educational benefits to members of the Guard.

### **Component Services Provided**

Each eligible member is provided up to 100% of tuition and fees, if they successfully complete classes. Classes can be taken at Alaska Universities, vocational, or technical schools. Standards for membership and promotion in today's military are highly dependent on education. These funds assist members of the Alaska National Guard and Naval Militia to obtain post-secondary degrees or training in order to promote careers in the National Guard.

The Alaska Army and Air National Guard's recruiting and retention is tied closely to an individuals' education and education benefits offered prospective and on board members. Once becoming a member, advancement and promotion within the ranks is heavily education dependent. Officers must have 90 college semester hours completed prior to commissioning and have obtained a BA/BS degree within 2 year after commissioning. Failure to complete a degree terminates the officer's future. Enlisted personnel who enlist with less than a 9th grade reading level are very likely not to be promoted to Sergeant/E-5 due to mandatory military schools that require 9th grade level reading skills.

States that have 100% tuition assistance are at or near full strength in the officer and enlisted ranks and experience an exceptionally high retention rate. The Alaska Army National Guard is critically short of junior officers and senior grade enlisted personnel while the Alaska Air National Guard is behind in personnel strength compared to other like units.

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs lists as one of its major goals and strategies for the Alaska Army and Air National Guard as; improved recruitment, retention, and education levels through a partnership with the University of Alaska. Recently several MOUs have been signed between the University of Alaska and the Alaska National Guard to engage officer and enlisted members in college credit producing courses during unit training time

### **Component Goals and Strategies**

Improve recruitment, retention, and education levels through a partnership with the University of Alaska and full use of military education tools.

### **Key Component Issues for FY2001 – 2002**

The Guard has mandatory educational requirements if a person is to enter and advance in the Guard. The Educational Benefits Program assists the Guard in recruiting and retention of members and in obtaining the required college degree. This program will become more important as our missions become more technical in nature (such as the National Missile Defense mission).

Each year members who have requested assistance have been denied funds due to the small amount available to allocated (\$28,500). To address this shortfall, the Alaska State Legislature in FY 2001 for the first time provided \$100,000 in tuition waivers from the University of Alaska for members of the Guard. These funds were totally allocated for the fall semester demonstrating the high demand for educational assistance. The Governor's SFY02 budget includes a continuation of this \$100,000 directly in the Alaska National Guard Educational Benefits budget component.

## Major Component Accomplishments for FY2000

Guard members received \$28,500 in general fund tuition assistance that was important in assisting Guard members to reach required educational levels. In FY 2001, \$100,000 was provided for Guard educational pursuits, all of the \$100,000 was obligated for the fall semester.

51 guard members were approved for tuition assistance in SFY2000. 126 guard members received tuition waivers in FY 2001 fall semester.

## Statutory and Regulatory Authority

AS 26

## Key Performance Measures for FY2002

### Measure: Increase Guard members' educational level

*(Not yet addressed by Legislature.)*

#### Current Status:

\$100,000 in University of Alaska tuition waivers were obligated in the fall of 2000. The success rate of the enrollees will be known in January 2001.

#### Benchmark:

On Track

#### Background and Strategies:

Guard members received \$28,500 in state tuition assistance and \$100,000 in University of Alaska tuition waivers to assist Guard members in reaching desired educational levels. \$100,000 was obligated for the fall semester of 2000 demonstrating the need for this important program. However, demand outweighs the resources available to reach all members who desire to pursue educational goals. At the current time, only 126 soldiers in the Air and Army Guard received tuition waivers for the fall semester of 2000. During FY 2000, 51 Guard members received tuition assistance from the state. Most of these were enlisted members pursuing a degree program.

The strategies to reach our goal of increased educational levels within the Guard are to:

- Work with the University of Alaska to establish a partnership focused on enhancing Guard members' education levels
- Make information pertaining to military and civilian education opportunities available to Guard members through a variety of communication channels in order to encourage Guard members to pursue their educational goals
- Seek to establish Distance Learning sites at National Guard Readiness Centers to facilitate training/education
- Facilitate expansion of Junior ROTC programs into rural schools to instill awareness and a desire for education skills

## Status of FY2001 Performance Measures

	<i>Achieved</i>	<i>On track</i>	<i>Too soon to tell</i>	<i>Not likely to achieve</i>	<i>Needs modification</i>
• Increase Guard members' educational level		X			

**Educational Benefits**  
**Component Financial Summary**

*All dollars in thousands*

	FY2000 Actuals	FY2001 Authorized	FY2002 Governor
<b>Non-Formula Program:</b>			
<b>Component Expenditures:</b>			
71000 Personal Services	0.0	0.0	0.0
72000 Travel	0.0	0.0	0.0
73000 Contractual	0.0	0.0	0.0
74000 Supplies	0.0	0.0	0.0
75000 Equipment	0.0	0.0	0.0
76000 Land/Buildings	0.0	0.0	0.0
77000 Grants, Claims	28.5	28.5	128.5
78000 Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Expenditure Totals</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>128.5</b>
<b>Funding Sources:</b>			
1004 General Fund Receipts	28.5	28.5	128.5
<b>Funding Totals</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>128.5</b>

## Educational Benefits

### Proposed Changes in Levels of Service for FY2002

For SFY01, the Alaska State Legislature for the first time provided \$100,000 in tuition assistance to the University of Alaska which is to be applied to members of the Alaska Army and Air National Guard during the fall semester 2000 and the spring and summer semesters 2001. The SYF02 Governor's budget includes this same amount (\$100,000) in the Alaska National Guard Educational Benefits component. This \$100K in SFY02 State Tuition Assistance will be paid as 100% reimbursement for tuition and fees regardless of which secondary, vocational or technical schools a guard member attends and is critical to the recruiting, retention, and improving education levels of existing members within the Alaska National Guard.

### Summary of Component Budget Changes

#### From FY2001 Authorized to FY2002 Governor

*All dollars in thousands*

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
<b>FY2001 Authorized</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>28.5</b>
<b>Proposed budget increases:</b>				
-State Tuition Assistance	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
<b>FY2002 Governor</b>	<b>128.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>128.5</b>