

**State of Alaska**  
**FY2003 Governor's Operating Budget**

**Department of Military and Veterans Affairs**  
**Educational Benefits**  
**Component Budget Summary**

## **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 individual's 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 impacts the officer's promotion opportunities. 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.

Educational benefits are a successful recruiting and retention tool. During the two years that the educational program has had access to the University credits program, 324 Guard members have attended the University (126 in FY 2001 and 198 in FY 2002). Both Army and Air National Guard members are actively pursuing educational opportunities. With the availability of the University credits program, more members in the rural areas are able to take advantage of this benefit. In FY 2002, five from Bethel, one from Ninilchik, one from Nulato, one from Hooper Bay and one member from Nome have enrolled in the program. In addition, 132 Guard and Naval militia members received tuition assistance from the state (70 in FY 2001 and 62 in FY 2002). This program reimburses members for classes taken at institutions other than the University of Alaska.

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

- Improve recruitment, retention and education levels through a partnership with the University of Alaska, full use of military education tools and distance learning capabilities
  
- Encourage Guard members to pursue their educational goals by providing information on military and civilian education opportunities available to Guard members.

- Facilitate expansion of Junior ROTC programs into rural schools to instill awareness of and a desire for education.

### **Key Component Issues for FY2002 – 2003**

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).

The State Tuition Assistance Program (STAP) receives \$28,500 to allocate each year. This program is used primarily for non-traditional students that attend a university or training academy outside the University of Alaska system. The requests made by Guard members for this program in FY 2001 exceeded \$100,000.

The State Tuition Waiver Program received \$250,000, which was divided between the fall and spring semesters with the University of Alaska. The program dispersed over \$100,000 on the very first day that applications were accepted. Currently there are 42 Guard members enrolled in the University system that have not received tuition assistance due to insufficient funds. This is after numerous Guard members were Federally mobilized and withdrew from their studies at the University of Alaska. The funding that was returned by these Guard members was redistributed to other applicants. The demand for the remaining \$125,000 for the spring semester at the University of Alaska is anticipated to exceed current demand levels due to the success of the program.

### **Major Component Accomplishments in 2001**

Guard members received \$28,500 in general fund tuition assistance that was important in assisting Guard members to reach required educational levels. Additionally, \$250,000 was provided In FY 2002 for Guard educational pursuits with the University of Alaska; \$125,000 was obligated for both the fall and spring semesters.

70 guard members in SFY 2001 were approved for tuition assistance in amounts ranging from \$90 to \$1000. 198 Guard members received tuition waivers for FY 2002 fall semester with the University of Alaska. It is anticipated that an equal number of Guard members will receive tuition waivers for the spring semester.

### **Statutory and Regulatory Authority**

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

*All dollars in thousands*

<b>Non-Formula Program:</b>	<b>FY2001 Actuals</b>	<b>FY2002 Authorized</b>	<b>FY2003 Governor</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	301.0
78000 Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Expenditure Totals</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>301.0</b>
<b>Funding Sources:</b>			
1004 General Fund Receipts	28.5	28.5	301.0
<b>Funding Totals</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>301.0</b>

**Educational Benefits**

**Proposed Changes in Levels of Service for FY2003**

In SFY03 the Governors budget includes a funding source switch that maintains the amount that will be paid to the University of Alaska for 100% of guard members' tuition and fees. In FY 2002, \$250,000 was received from the Post secondary Education Fund. In SFY 03 the funding source is General Fund. Tuition waivers are critical to the success of the Guard's recruiting and retention goals.

In FY01 and FY02 \$28,500 in general fund tuition assistance was made available for reimbursement of 100% of tuition and fees to guard members attending institutions other than University of Alaska in reaching desired educational levels. In FY01 these funds were used by 70 guard members. In SFY03 the governor's budget proposes to increase the amount of these funds to \$51,000, an increase of \$22,500.

**Summary of Component Budget Changes**

**From FY2002 Authorized to FY2003 Governor**

*All dollars in thousands*

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
<b>FY2002 Authorized</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>28.5</b>
<b>Adjustments which will continue current level of service:</b>				
-State Tuition Waiver Program for Guard Members at University of Alaska	250.0	0.0	0.0	250.0
<b>Proposed budget increases:</b>				
-Guard Member Tuition Assistance	22.5	0.0	0.0	22.5
<b>FY2003 Governor</b>	<b>301.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>301.0</b>