

FIRE AND AVIATION ACADEMIC TRAINING PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The objective of this program is to provide eligible employees with a government-paid educational training opportunity aimed at increasing their knowledge and skill, which in turn will enhance performance in their current position and assist in achievement of their career goals with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This will assist in meeting the agency mission, achieving organizational performance objectives and address human capital management strategies.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Recipients must meet all of the following criteria in order to be considered for an education award:

- are serving in a career or career-conditional appointment (including permanent seasonal appointments),
- have completed a minimum of one (1) year of federal service in a career or career conditional appointment as of application date,
- encumber a position with a full performance level of GS-12 and below or wage grade equivalent,
- have Supervisor Recommendation and Division Chief Concurrence,
- have a fully successful or higher level of performance, and
- do not have an Education Award with an outstanding balance.

AWARD APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The application package must include:

- a completed Education Award Application form,
- a copy of applicant's IDP, and
- a completed Supervisor Recommendation/Division Chief Concurrence form.

RECIPIENT SELECTION AND NOTIFICATION

The applicants will be evaluated to determine which applicants(s) provided information that best meets program objectives. Selected applicants will then be forwarded to the Position Management Committee (PMC) for approval with the support of the Division Chief. Selected recipients and their supervisors will be notified once management has approved recipient selection(s).

REQUIREMENTS FOR USE OF AWARD

Award recipients **MUST** initiate study in the approved education/training course work within 12 months from the date the award is granted. If study is not initiated within this time frame, the award will be forfeited. A copy of study enrollment documentation must be provided to the Award Coordinator.

The recipient may request training from an accredited college or university or through a private vendor within the commuting area of the recipient's home or duty station. Commuting area restriction applies only to training that requires classroom attendance by the recipient. There is no restriction on sources from which correspondence or self-study material is utilized.

An award may be applied to one class or course, or to a series of classes or courses which continue for more than one semester, term or quarter.

The education/training course work must be completed within two calendar years from the date course work begins. Recipient must satisfactorily complete course(s) with a grade of "C" or above. Otherwise, the expense of the particular education/training becomes the personal expense of the recipient. A copy of study completion documentation must be provided to the Education Award Coordinator, within 30 days of course completion.

Recipient will not be compensated for classroom time outside of their normal duty hours. If a course is conducted during an employee's normal duty hours, the recipient may use administrative leave to attend the course. Requests for administrative leave must be approved in advance by the responsible supervisor.

Course changes or substitutions are presented to the Education Award Coordinator who will coordinate with management for approval. The requested substitutions or changes must preserve the intent of the original approval.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The program is administered and coordinated by the Fire and Aviation Human Resources Office. The program contact is the Education Award Coordinator. The amount of each award will vary depending on the cost of course tuition and books.

Fire and Aviation only pays for course tuition and books. Recipients are responsible for payment of any other associated fees or costs. Recipients do not receive cash; therefore, they must coordinate payment.

Recipients will be required to sign an Education Award Acceptance form.

Only one award may be held by an employee at one time. Study under a prior award must have been successfully completed before another award can be granted.

A recipient who accepts employment outside of the BLM prior to completion of coursework, or who changes status so they no longer meet eligibility requirements, forfeits any unused portion of an award.

REIMBURSEMENT REQUIREMENTS

All above criteria must be met or the remaining award may be terminated by the PMC upon review by the Education Award Coordinator. Exceptions may be made where warranted; for example, when uncontrollable circumstances prevent the orderly completion of course work.