



FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

	Date	Number
INSTRUCTION	October 16, 2000	NETC 7900.1

Administration of the Student Stipend Program

1. Purpose. This instruction continues the policy and procedures for the administration of the student stipend program.

2. Applicability and Scope. This instruction is applicable to all U.S. Fire Administration and Preparedness, Training and Exercises Directorate personnel who have responsibility associated with the receipt, approval, or processing of student stipend agreements or the administration of the student stipend program.

3. Supersession: NETC Instruction 7900.1, Administration of the Student Stipend Program, dated August 5, 1999.

4. Authorities:

a. Section 7(i) (1) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, as amended (PL 93-498).

b. Section 201(a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended (PL 93-288).

5. References:

a. FEMA Travel Instructions.

b. NETC Instruction 6000.5, Policy and Procedures for Admissions.

6. Policies: The following policies will apply to the administration of the Student Stipend Program. Any exceptions to these policies must be made in writing prior to the course start date.

a. The elements that are included in the Student Stipend Program are as follows:

(1) Participants in the National Fire Academy (NFA) and the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) on-campus courses receive direct reimbursement for travel costs; no-cost lodging at the National Emergency Training Center (NETC); and no-cost ground transportation to and from the Washington Metropolitan airports (or in some instances, Harrisburg Airport).

(2) Attendees of NFA Regional Delivery courses receive reimbursement for travel as follows: \$100/1 week and \$200/2 weeks.

(3) Attendees of EMI courses held off campus receive reimbursement for travel and lodging subject to certain limitations, including requirement

for 21-day advance purchase, non-refundable airline ticket at economy coach class price or less, mileage reimbursement ceiling or current Federal POV rate x number of days of course, and/or lodging reimbursement ceiling of Federal per diem or nightly rate. (Specific limitations to be set by EMI Superintendent or designee.)

(4) Attendees of EMI and NFA courses conducted at Mt. Weather Emergency Assistance Center (MWEAC) receive direct reimbursement for travel costs, no-cost lodging at MWEAC, and no-cost ground transportation to and from Dulles Airport. If students arranged for no-cost ground transportation and their travel is delayed causing them to miss the no-cost ground transportation, they can call a local taxi company and be reimbursed up to \$65. Original receipts must be submitted with the Student Stipend Agreement (FEMA Form 75-3) at time of stipend registration.

(5) For classes 5 days or less in length, students have the option of traveling over a Saturday (1 day prior or 2 days following a class) to reduce airfare costs. Students may not stay on campus following their courses. This option is only available if a minimum of \$250 off the cost of a round-trip 21-day pre-purchase, non-refundable, economy coach class airline ticket is saved. The students are required to submit documentation showing actual savings. Lodging, transportation, and/or meal costs (not to exceed \$90 if saving \$250 or not to exceed \$180 if saving \$500) will be added to the student's stipend, provided original receipts are submitted. If the cost of POV mileage reimbursement (not to exceed the State ceiling quoted in student's acceptance package) is \$250 less than the documented airfare, lodging costs while enroute (up to \$90 per student occupant) may be added to the student's stipend, provided original receipts are submitted.

(6) If students are on campus (NETC or MWEAC) attending an EMI or NFA course and are accepted into another course the next week, they may not be able to change their airline ticket without a penalty or to coincide with the no-cost transportation back to the airport. In these instances, the student will either be reimbursed the cost of the change fee or up to \$90 for lodging costs/transportation expenses.

(7) For students traveling from Guam, Samoa, and Northern Marianas (and in some cases, Alaska or Hawaii), lodging reimbursement while enroute, up to \$90 each way, will be reimbursed, provided original receipts are submitted.

(8) The student or the student's sponsor's share of the stipend program for NETC courses consists of ground transportation at the point of departure, participation in the NETC meal program, and the salary and benefit cost to the sponsoring organization of the student or any replacement personnel necessitated by the student's absence from duty during the term of participation in a course. Students staying on campus are required to purchase a meal ticket, which includes morning and afternoon breaks; students staying off campus are required to purchase a break ticket only. Failure to purchase the appropriate ticket may result in removal from campus lodging, expulsion from the course, and denial of the student stipend.

(9) The student or the student's sponsor's share of the stipend program for MWEAC courses consists of ground transportation at the point of departure, meals while at MWEAC, and the salary and benefit cost to the sponsoring organization of the student or any replacement personnel necessitated by the student's absence from duty during the term of participation in a course.

b. Student stipends may be paid to individuals representing State or local governmental entities, recognized volunteer organizations or active fire or emergency management organizations who are attending training activities

offered by NFA or EMI in an official capacity. Stipends will not be paid to students representing the Federal Government, foreign countries, the private sector, or students who are employed by contractors to State and local government entities. Exceptions may be made for individuals from private industry attending courses for the benefit of the Government and contract instructor trainees participating in courses.

c. A foreign student is anyone who is NOT a U.S. citizen, even if the student possesses a social security number. However, if the foreign student is representing a qualified U.S. organization at the time of application, the student is eligible for a stipend reimbursement.

d. The cost of one round-trip, 21-day pre-purchase, non-refundable ticket may be paid to each student for each course attended. If students travel on an electronic ticket they must submit the itinerary invoice with the actual payment amount shown (\$0 balance) at registration. Consecutive or back-to-back courses (NETC, MWEAC, or combination) will be treated as one course for this purpose. Students who submit a web-ticket must submit documentation of credit card payment.

e. NFA students are limited to one stipend reimbursement per fiscal year for resident courses. If a student attends more than one resident class in a fiscal year, only one of the trips is reimbursable under the student stipend program, except for participation in pilot programs, train-the-trainer, contract instructor trainee programs, or instructor in-service offerings. Training Resources and Data Exchange (TRADE) members attending the biannual TRADE conference are included in the exception. The Superintendent or designee may waive this policy in order to accommodate special training needs. All waivers granted by the Superintendent will be made in writing to Admissions, Educational and Academic Support Team, NETC Management and Operations Division, prior to the beginning of the class.

f. EMI students are limited to three stipend reimbursements per fiscal year. This restriction does not apply to applicants who are employees of State and local offices of emergency services. The Superintendent or designee may waive this policy in order to accommodate special training needs. All waivers granted by the Superintendent will be made in writing to Admissions, Educational and Academic Support Team, NETC Management and Operations Division, prior to the beginning of the class.

g. The direct reimbursement portion of the student stipend for NFA and EMI resident (includes MWEAC) classes will consist of the cost of a 21-day pre-purchase, non-refundable ticket for round-trip transportation by common carrier (economy coach or lesser accommodations) or current Federal mileage allowance for privately owned vehicle (NTE State ceiling), whichever is less. To avoid the perception of misuse of government funds, first-class, business class, and refundable airline tickets will not be reimbursed. Students who are admitted to class from the wait list and do not have sufficient time to obtain a 21-day pre-purchase, non-refundable ticket will be excluded from this policy.

h. For NFA Regional Delivery and EMI off-campus classes, students will be reimbursed at the current prevailing rate given the mode of transportation, as determined by NFA, depending on the length of the class. Mileage reimbursement will not be limited to one roundtrip; reimbursement may be made for cumulative trips up to the amount allowed.

i. If a student fails a course and reapplies to either EMI or NFA and is accepted, no stipend will be paid. Once the student successfully completes a course the student will be eligible to receive a stipend for future courses.

j. If a student cancels within 30 days or less of the start date of the course, or fails to attend a course for which he/she is scheduled, that student will be prohibited from attending classes at NETC for 2 years, except in cases of emergency cancellation. Any cost incurred from the cancellations/no show (e.g., airline ticket, change fees) will be the student's responsibility.

k. If individuals car-pool in a privately owned vehicle, only one driver is eligible to be reimbursed under the Student Stipend Program.

l. Mileage for use of a State, county, special district or municipal vehicle is reimbursable only upon presentation of a statement from the owning agency that such reimbursement is desired, **and must be submitted with the FEMA Form 75-3 at registration. Reimbursement will be made only to the driver of record.**

m. Each student who is eligible to participate in the Student Stipend Program and who wishes to file a claim for reimbursement must complete a FEMA Form 75-3 with direct deposit information listed/attached. If the student's financial institution cannot accommodate direct deposit, the student must submit a letter from the financial institution stating that fact.

n. Student stipends will only be paid for courses identified in the on-campus schedules of NFA and EMI, EMI and NFA courses scheduled at MWEAC, courses listed in the Regional Delivery schedule of NFA, select EMI off-campus courses, or official training activities authorized by the Superintendent of the appropriate institution.

7. Procedures. The following procedures will apply to the administration of the Student Stipend Program.

a. Eligible students must complete FEMA Form 75-3 (with direct deposit information listed/attached) and submit it at the time of registration, or the claim may be denied. For off-campus courses not mentioned in 7.b., stipend reimbursement will be denied if forms are not received within 30 days from start date of the class. Student Stipend Agreement (Amendment), FEMA Form 75-3a (with direct deposit information), must be used to claim additional reimbursement under the Student Stipend Program, **and must be received within 60 days from start date of the class, or the claim will be denied.**

b. For NFA Regional Delivery courses, eligible students must complete and submit FEMA Form 75-3 (with direct deposit information) to the course sponsor at the time of registration, or claim may be denied. Stipend reimbursement may be denied if FEMA Forms 75-3 and 75-3a (with direct deposit information) are not received by Admissions from the course sponsor within 60 days from start date of the class.

c. FEMA Forms 75-3 and 75-3a (with direct deposit information) will be promptly processed by NETC Management and Operations Division staff. Students should expect to receive payment into their checking/savings accounts (or by check if their financial institution cannot accommodate direct deposit) within 6-8 weeks from the start date of their classes.

d. Privately owned vehicles must be registered for on-campus parking. The vehicle's registration card must be presented at the time of course registration to validate vehicle ownership. Privately owned vehicle mileage will be based on the odometer reading for one-way travel, and may be subject to validation. Day students at NETC and MWEAC will be reimbursed for one round-trip ONLY.

e. If taking advantage of a Saturday stayover for classes 5 days or less in length, the student has the following options:

(1) The student is required to call the Housing and Transportation Office (301) 447-1048/1113 or (540) 542-2266 at MWEAC at least 1 week prior to the start of the course to determine if lodging or transportation is available. If lodging is available, a room will be reserved at that time. Some classes start or end on Saturday, so transportation may be available at no cost. If not, the cost for taxi, limousine or rental car, up to a maximum of \$90, may be reimbursed. **(If students car-pool in a rental car, all students claiming a portion of the reimbursement must have their names printed on the rental agreement.) Original receipts must be submitted at registration or filed with FEMA Form 75-3a within 60 days of the start date of the course, or reimbursement will be denied.**

(2) If lodging is not available or the student wishes to stay in the Washington metro area, the student may use the regularly scheduled transportation to NETC on Sunday. Students may not stay on campus following their courses. Lodging/meal costs (not to exceed \$90/night for no more than 2 nights if savings over \$500) are reimbursable. Students must make their own hotel reservations, and **must submit original receipts at registration. Students choosing this option still need to call the transportation office at least 1 week prior to the start of the course to make a reservation on the bus.**

(3) Students may choose to stay over Friday and Saturday nights following a course by using the NETC Friday transportation and staying in the Washington metro area. Students may be reimbursed for lodging/transportation and/or meals (not to exceed \$90/night for no more than 2 nights if savings over \$500), provided original receipts and FEMA Form 75-3a are submitted within 30 days of the start date of the course.

(4) If the minimum savings of \$250 is not realized, or any documentation or receipts are not valid, reimbursement for limousine, taxi, rental car, lodging, or meal costs may be denied.

(5) If students arrive on campus early or depart late, meals not included in their student meal tickets may be added to the meal ticket or paid for out of pocket.

f. If a class is cancelled, Admissions will notify the accepted student(s) by letter. If the class is not rescheduled, or the student cannot attend the rescheduled class and has already purchased an airline ticket, the student may be reimbursed for the ticket cost fee by submitting FEMA Form 75-3 with the original airline ticket to the Admissions Office within 30 days of original start date of class.

g. If there is a Government furlough or shutdown, the following procedures will apply:

(1) If classes were in session and students are sent home, they may incur and be reimbursed for a penalty fee to change their airline departure times, or for an overnight stayover in the Washington metro area or other connecting cities to make flight connections. The student can claim reimbursement for the penalty fee and lodging costs (up to \$90) by submitting FEMA Form 75-3a within 30 days of original start date of class. If the furlough or shutdown continues beyond 30 days from the original start date of the class, reimbursement will be processed as soon as possible after Government staff are back to work.

(2) If classes were cancelled, and students already purchased airline

tickets, they are eligible for a full reimbursement. If the class is rescheduled and the student can attend the rescheduled offering, the student may claim reimbursement for the penalty fee incurred for changing the ticket by submitting FEMA Form 75-3a within 30 days of notification of being rescheduled. If the class is not rescheduled, or the student cannot attend the rescheduled offering, the student may claim reimbursement for the ticket by submitting FEMA Form 75-3a and the original ticket to the Admissions Office within 30 days of notifying NETC that he/she cannot be rescheduled.

h. The program area and Admissions Office are responsible for communicating the policies and procedures in this instruction to all students.

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