

FY 2021 - Vermont National Guard Language RE: New Enlisted Members Eligibility for Scholarship Funds

Issue: The military's basic training command has slowed the number of new trainees allowed to attend basic training due to Covid-19 by reducing the number of slots available nationally. This means that the VTNG has new enlisted members who cannot go to basic training this year to qualify themselves for the tuition benefit, however, they would like to attend college as planned.

Remedy: Language has been drafted (below) that will be in effect for a period longer than the duration of the Covid-19 State of Emergency to cover new enlisted members of the National Guard that are on the waiting list for training. The waiting list will need to be worked off before scheduled training returns to normal.

The statute that is being "notwithstanding" can be found in the following link:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/16/087/02857>

Sec. E.215(b) VERMONT NATIONAL GUARD NEW ENLISTEE ELIGIBILITY FOR SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

(a) Notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. § 2857(c)(2) new enlisted members of the Vermont National Guard that have not completed basic training due solely to the reduced number of available training slots resulting from safety measures put in place to address the Covid-19 epidemic, who would otherwise qualify for the National Guard tuition benefit, shall be entitled to use the benefit to attend college.

(b) Prior to the start of each semester the Deputy Adjutant General (TAG) shall provide verification to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) that the new enlistee has a reservation for a future basic training class before funds are allocated to the service member. The effective date of this sub section shall be retroactive from the start of the fall 2020 academic semester and shall remain in effect until the Vermont National Guard verifies that all impacted enlistees have received basic training or in the process of receiving basic training.

(c) In the event that a new enlistee who receives benefits from the National Guard tuition program fails to complete basic training in good standing the provisions of 16 V.S.A. § 2857(e) shall apply.