

LTG (R) Nathaniel R. Thompson Jr Career Skills Support Program (CSSP) Fact Sheet

Precedence of Information: In the event there is a conflict with the information contained in this Fact Sheet and HQ AER Assistance Bulletin 02-2021-1_ AER Army Career Skills Program Assistance Guidance, dated **1 October 2023** and any previous CSSP Fact Sheets, this Fact Sheet, dated 01 October 2023 will take precedence.

CSSP FACT SHEET UPDATES

- a. **All new updates will be highlighted in Green.**
- b. All information provided in this fact sheet applies to **ELIGIBLE** Soldiers and AER Officers. **Facts written in RED are specific to the American Red Cross when processing CSP requests.**
- c. Effective date of changes will be annotated at the top of the page in the above box and the top right corner of each of the following pages.
- d. For your convenience, the most current version of the CSSP Fact sheet, with all updates, will be posted on the AER Homepage at both of the following addresses.
 - <https://www.armyemergencyrelief.org/resources/>
 - <https://www.armyemergencyrelief.org/news/cspassistance/>

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible to participate in CSP training.

Who is eligible and not eligible to participate in the actual CSP training **is not** determined by AER, it is determined by the Soldier's Chain of Command.

Eligibility for the CSSP Grant.

The CSSP Grant is only for those Soldiers who have been approved by their Chain of Command to participate in a CSP during their last 6 months of service before transitioning out of the Army, are currently in the CSP, or have completed the CSP and have accepted an employment offer. The Soldier must provide a "**Soldier Participation Memorandum**" endorsed by their Commander or if the Soldier completed the CSP and accepted a job, will need to provide confirmation of accepting the offer. Soldiers, as mentioned in the above circumstances, are eligible to receive the CSSP Grant up until their last day in the ARMY.

- a. Active-Duty Soldiers (**E1-E9, O1-O3, W1-W5**)
- b. **Soldiers on Transition Leave prior to ETS/Retirement Date**
- c. Army National Guard/US Army Reserve Soldiers on Title 10 Orders. Soldier must be on Title 10 Orders throughout the CSP. This is the same standard DOD/Army policy requires for ARNG/USAR Soldiers to participate in the SkillBridge Program/CSP. These Soldiers are still eligible to receive the CSSP Grant based on the criteria that they have already completed TAP requirements and are preparing to come off active duty (Title 10 Orders). This is a DOD/Army requirement before they approve an ARNG/USAR Soldier to attend the CSP. Their ETS date is not a factor in determining eligibility for these programs. They are authorized to remain in the ARNG/USAR after their respective program has been completed.

Who is not eligible for the CSSP Grant.

- a. Army National Guard/U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers who are not on Title 10 orders, to include those on Title 32 Orders
- b. Service Members from other branches of service (Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard)
- c. Soldiers transitioning out of the Army and not participating in a CSP
- d. Soldiers who have already separated from the Army
- e. Retired Soldiers
- f. Military ID Card Holding Dependent Family Members

g. Field Grade Officers (O-4 and above)

Soldiers going through the medical separation process.

If the Soldier has been approved by their Chain of Command to participate in an Army approved CSP, confirmed by the Soldier submitting the Soldier Participation Memo and the CSSP memo signed by the CSP Regional Coordinator (CSP RC), Transition Service Manager (TSM), Transition Service Specialist (TSS), the Soldier is eligible. Please disregard the ETS date in this situation and process accordingly.

Soldiers on Transition Leave and signed out of their unit.

Please administer the following guidance when processing.

- a. Required Documents: Same as other requests with the following replacement or additional documents.
 - DD Form 214 in Lieu of the Soldier Participation Memo.
 - DA Form 31 (Transition Leave form).
- b. Local, non-local, and OCONUS status are determined by where the SM resides while on transition leave, not based on the duty station. The Army will have already paid for travel to where the SM lives. For example, if a Soldier was stationed in HI, went on transition leave, moved to Clarksville, TN, then signed up for a CSP located within 50 miles of his residence, this would be considered a local CSP, and the Soldier would be eligible to receive up to a \$250 grant.

*** The SM will still need to provide the *AER CSSP Memo*, this information will be annotated by the CSP RC, TSM, or TSS.

PROCESSING

When to submit the request.

Soldiers are eligible to apply for the CSSP grant up to two weeks prior to the CSP start date through the last day of active duty service. **No requests will be considered after separation.**

***Soldiers participating in a CSP, when OCONUS to CONUS, OCONUS to OCONUS, or CONUS to OCONUS travel is required, Soldiers are authorized to request assistance **more than 2 weeks out** from start of the CSP, for airfare only. *Must be approved to participate in the CSP before consideration.

Where to submit the request (5 scenarios).

- a. **Scenario 1:** If the Soldier is stationed on an Army installation that has an AER office and attending a CSP on that same installation, submit the request through that local AER office.
- b. **Scenario 2:** If the Soldier is stationed on an Army installation that has an AER office and attending a CSP on another installation that has an AER office, requests can be submitted through either the home installation AER office or the AER office on the installation where the CSP is being attended.
- c. **Scenario 3:** If the Soldier is stationed on an Army installation that has an AER office and attending a CSP in a location that does not have an AER office, submit the request through the home installation AER office.
- d. **Scenario 4:** If the Soldier is stationed on an installation that does not have an AER office or is not stationed on an installation (ie, recruiter) and attending a CSP on an installation that does have an AER office, submit the request through the AER office on the installation where the CSP is being attended.
- e. **Scenario 5:** If the Soldier is stationed on an installation that does not have an AER office, is not stationed on an installation (ie, recruiter), attending a CSP on an installation or in a location that does not have an AER office available, or is not within 50 miles of an AER section, contact the American Red Cross at 877-272-7337, then press 3 to open a new request.

- ***No CSSP assistance will be provided through Other Military Aid Societies (AFAS, NMCRS, CGMA).
 ***AER sections are **not authorized to process requests for Soldiers who are not assigned to their respective installation or participating in a CSP not located on and not within 50 miles of their respective installation. Please direct them to either their home station (if applicable) or the American Red Cross.**

Required documents and where to acquire them to request the CSSP Grant.

When the request is at or below the prescribed dollar caps:

- AER Form 101 (Application) *AER website/office
- AER Form 575 (Electronic Funds Transfer for Zelle/ACH)-as applicable *AER website/office
- LES *Soldier provides to confirm Pay Date (BASD) and ETS Date.
- Retirement orders if applicable. *Soldier provides to confirm retirement date.
- Soldier Participation Memorandum *Soldier provides signed by leadership/CSP RC, TSM, or TSS.
- AER CSSP Memorandum *Soldier provides signed by the CSP RC, TSM, or TSS.
- Title 10 Orders for USAR/ARNG Soldiers in an Active-Duty status. *Soldier provides. All members in AGR receive a REFRAD order. The order is usually issued as an amendment. Those who have been in the program for some time will get an "INDEF" REFRAD order. Those amendments can be found in IPERMS or from their branch manager. The REFRAD order is what determines when their pay moves from AD back to guard/reserve pay.

When the request is above the prescribed dollar caps/exceptions, and approval is recommended:

- All the above forms
- AER Form 57 (Budget Planning Sheet) *AER website/office
- Supporting document(s) *Soldier provides

Entering request in ARMS.

- Application Type: Enter CSSP requests under Direct Access. If the Soldier is not eligible for "Direct Access," the request should be entered under Routine.
- Disbursement Category: Use only one Disbursement Category when entering multiple Disbursement Sub-Categories. For example, do not enter a "(Local) CSP" for Food and "(PTDY-CONUS) CSP" for Tools/Supplies.
- Process CSPs as a stand-alone category. If a SM is requesting assistance for CSP related expenses and also expenses not related to the CSP, enter as 2 separate requests in ARMS; one for the CSP and one for expenses not related to the CSP.

Does a Soldier need to provide a budget and supporting documents when requesting the CSSP Grant?

The Soldier does not need to provide a budget if the requested/approved request is at or below the category dollar cap (\$250/Local, \$500/Non-Local, \$1000/OCONUS). A budget and supporting documents are only required if the request is above the prescribed dollar caps, and you are recommending approval.

Determining Local vs Non-Local CSP.

A Local CSP is based on the Soldier traveling less than 50 miles to attend the CSP. A Non-Local CSP is based on the Soldier traveling more than 50 miles to attend the CSP. Both can be confirmed by reviewing either of the following documents.

- Soldier Participation Memorandum. Question 15 asks, "Is the CSP Training location outside of the 50-mile radius from the current installation?" If "Yes" is selected, it is considered a Non-Local CSP, and Part V will be signed by the appropriate level of authority. If "No" is selected, it is considered a Local CSP.

- b. AER CSSP Memorandum. #3 on the memorandum confirms the Local, Non-Local, OCONUS CSP location.
- Local CSP (CONUS/OCONUS); Max: \$250
 - Non-Local CSP (CONUS); Max: \$500
 - Non-Local CSP (OCONUS); Max: \$1000

GENERAL CATEGORY INFORMATION/GUIDELINES

What are the category caps for the CSSP Grant?

- a. **Local CSP:** (Within 50 miles of installation) - \$250.
- b. **Non-Local CSP:** (Outside 50 miles from installation/confirmed on Soldier Participation Memo) \$500
- c. **OCONUS CSP:** (When traveling OCONUS to CONUS, OCONUS to OCONUS, or CONUS to OCONUS; Examples: OCONUS to CONUS (Germany to Ft Bragg); OCONUS to OCONUS (Germany to HI); CONUS to OCONUS (Ft Campbell to Alaska) - \$1000.

***The category caps are based on the **location of the CSP training**, not the location of the follow-on job (i.e., If a Soldier is stationed in Alaska and the training is in Alaska, this is considered a Local CSP with a \$250 category cap. The same goes for Hawaii and OCONUS countries).

- d. **Virtual Training:** Regardless of the location, when Soldiers are participating in a virtual CSP and no travel is required, the category cap is \$250.

***Regardless of how many requests a Soldier makes, the respective category cap is the total amount that can be received (For example, Local CSP: one request-\$250; 2 requests-\$125 each; 5 requests-\$50 each; Bottomline, they all total \$250).

***Please review each Soldier's assistance history to confirm if the Soldier has already received a CSSP grant and for how much, ensuring they have not exceeded the prescribed amount for the respective category cap based on location of the CSP.

Can a Soldier request the CSSP Grant for reimbursement of already spent funds?

No, reimbursements are not authorized.

What happens if a Soldier receives the CSSP Grant, then does not attend the CSP?

- a. The grant will be converted to a loan that the Soldier will have to repay before their separation date.
- b. To inform and to hold Soldiers accountable, the AER CSSP Memo has been updated with a new requirement (Paragraph 5). Please see the following as written on the AER CSSP Memo.

"For AER Action Only: Please advise the Soldier that if the CSSP Grant is approved and the Soldier does not attend the CSP, the grant will be converted to a loan that will be repaid before separation from the Army. **The Soldier must agree to this requirement for the CSSP Grant to be considered/approved.**

AERO Name/Initials: _____/____ Date: _____

Soldier Name/Initials: _____/____ Date: _____

***This will be actioned after the CSP RC/TSM/TSS has signed off on their part. AEROs, be sure to print your name and initial, then have the Soldier print their name and initial. **The grant will not be considered without the Soldier agreeing to this requirement.**

Approved CSP related expenses.

- a. Travel costs to training location (i.e., airfare, rental car, train, taxi, fuel...etc)
- b. Uniforms and business attire
- c. Tools and supplies (to include laptops/computers)
- d. Temporary lodging when barracks space is unavailable
- e. Initial Rent and Deposit at new job location
- f. Utility Deposits (Electricity, Gas, Internet, Water, Trash and Sewer)
- g. Food

Does the CSSP Grant cover any type of schooling/tuition/licensing/training costs?

No, the Grant applies only to the list of approved CSP related expenses.

Does there need to be a valid need confirmed to request the CSSP Grant?

Although Soldiers may have a decent budget, we still want to assist them due to the many unexpected associated costs that come with the CSP and transition to the new job based on the CSP training. If there are expenses related to the CSP, especially for your OCONUS Soldiers, we do not want them to have to spend all their savings to attend. For Soldiers who are requesting, and you are recommending assistance over the category cap, for example, a Soldier with a \$1000 a month budget surplus, would be required to provide information/supporting documentation confirming the valid need.

What is the required approval level for CSSP Grant requests?

Level I, unless an exception (unauthorized item/exceeding the dollar cap) is submitted, then it will be routed through Level I, II, and Level III for final approval.

Assistance for individual CSPs.

- a. Requests for the CSSP grant for individual CSPs are processed just like any other CSP.
- b. The process: Soldiers can request to be in an individual CSP, but there is a lot more leg work on their end. The SM submits a different type of application to the CSP RC and their leadership requesting to participate in an individual CSP, then work with the Installation Administrator/Regional Coordinator and the CSP company to establish a detailed scope of work outlining exactly what they will be doing. Once this is complete, there is a legal review.
- c. When the request is submitted, ensure the Soldier Participation Memo is signed by the appropriate leadership level and the CSSP memo is completed and signed by the CSP RC/TSM/TSS.

Are Soldiers from Hawaii and Alaska eligible for the OCONUS \$1000 CSSP Grant?

Yes, Installations in Hawaii and Alaska are considered OCONUS locations but are only eligible for the \$1000 grant if the Soldier travels to a CONUS or another OCONUS location to participate in the CSP. As stated under the category cap question, The category caps are based on the **location of the CSP training**, not the location of the follow-on job (i.e., If a Soldier is stationed in Alaska and the training is in Alaska, this is considered a Local CSP with a \$250 category cap. The same goes for Hawaii and OCONUS countries).