

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

Fact Sheet / Questions and Answers

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 2 December 2021 and any previous CSSP Fact Sheets, this Fact Sheet, dated 10 January 2023 will take precedence.

1. What is the official name of the CSP assistance Program?

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

2. Who is eligible to participate in the CSP?

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.

3. Who is eligible to be considered 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
- b. 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.

4. Who is currently NOT eligible for the CSSP Grant?

- a. Army National Guard/US Army Reserve Soldiers, 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. Retirees
- f. Family Members

5. 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 date of separation from the Army. No requests will be considered after separation.

***Soldiers participating in a CSP, as described in Fact 7.c., 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.

6. 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 or is NOT stationed on an installation (ie, recruiter) and attending a CSP on an installation or in a location that does NOT have an AER office available, submit the request through the American Red Cross.

*** In scenario 5, Soldiers will need to submit the *Soldier Participation Memo* signed by the approving authority and the *AER CSP Memo* signed by either the CSP Regional Coordinator or CSP Installation Administrator.

*** **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 or participating in a CSP located on their respective installations.**

7. What are the category caps for the CSSP Grant?

- a. **Local CSP:** (Within 50 miles of installation) - \$500

- b. **Non-Local CSP:** (Outside 50 miles from installation/confirmed on Soldier Participation Memo) - \$1000
- c. **OCONUS CSP:** (When traveling OCONUS to CONUS/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) - \$2000 (Increase from \$1500).

*** 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 \$500 category cap. The same goes for Hawaii and OCONUS countries).

*** 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-\$500; 2 requests-\$250 each; 3 requests-\$250, \$150, and \$100; or 4 requests-\$125 each; Bottomline, they all total \$500).

***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.

8. 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.

- a. 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 CSP Assistance Request Memorandum. #3 on the memorandum confirms the Local, Non-Local, OCONUS CSP location.
- c. CSP Location:
 - Local CSP (CONUS/OCONUS); Max: \$500
 - Non-Local CSP (CONUS); Max: \$1000
 - Non-Local CSP (OCONUS); Max: \$2000

9. Does a Soldier need to provide a budget/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 (\$500/Local, \$1000/Non-Local, \$2000/OCONUS). A budget/supporting documents are only required if the request is above the prescribed dollar caps, and you are recommending approval.

10. 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 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.

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

No, reimbursements are NOT authorized.

12. Are Soldiers from Hawaii and Alaska eligible for the OCONUS \$2000 CSSP Grant?

Yes, Installations in Hawaii and Alaska are considered OCONUS locations but are only eligible for the \$2000 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 \$500 category cap. The same goes for Hawaii and OCONUS countries).

13. 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.

14. Does the CSSP Grant cover any/all types of school/tuition/licensing fees?

No, the Grant applies only to those items listed in the bulletin that fall within the CSP Program.

- 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

***** AER Officers should always enter CSSP requests under Direct Access” as the Application Type in ARMS. If the Soldier is not eligible for “Direct Access”, the request should be entered under “Routine” as the Application Type.**

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

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

- a. AER Form 101 (Application) *AER website/office

- b. AER Form 575 (Electronic Funds Transfer)-as applicable *AER website/office
- c. LES *Soldier provides
- d. Soldier Participation Memorandum *CSP Regional Coordinators/Installation Administrators
- e. AER CSP Memorandum *CSP Regional Coordinators/Installation Administrators

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

- a. All the above forms
- b. AER Form 57 (Budget Planning Sheet) *AER website/office
- c. Supporting document *Soldier provides
- d.

16. 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 and is confirmed by providing the Soldier Participation Memo, the Soldier is eligible. Please disregard the ETS date in this situation and process accordingly.

17. With the increase of the CSSP category cap to \$2000, are Soldiers who applied for the \$1500 OCONUS CSSP grant before 01 Sep 2022 eligible to apply again to request the additional \$500?

The new OCONUS CSSP \$2000 category cap was established on 1 September 2022. It is not retroactive; there will be no favorable consideration for additional assistance under the AER CSSP. Soldiers who started the CSP before this increase became effective but have not requested any assistance to attend the CSP, are eligible to apply for the \$2000 CSSP grant.

18. Are Soldiers on Transition Leave and signed out of their unit, eligible to receive the CSSP Grant?

YES. Please administer the following guidance when processing.

- a. Required Documents: Same as other requests other than the following.
 - DD214 in Lieu of the Soldier Participation Memo.
 - DA31 (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 \$500 grant.

*Being the SM will still need to provide the *AER CSP Memo*, this information will be annotated by the CSP Regional Coordinator or the CSP Installation Administrator.

19. 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 4). 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: _____

c. This will be actioned after the CSP Coordinator 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 loan will not be considered without the Soldier agreeing to this requirement.**

20. CSSP Fact Sheet Updates

- a. All new updates will be highlighted in Green.
- b. Effective date of update will be annotated at the top of the page in the box and the bottom of each page.
- c. 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/>