

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Office of Fire and Aviation
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705-5354

March 23, 2000

In Reply Refer To:
1400-410 (FC-202)P

Director's Office Information Bulletin No. 2000-006

To: All FA, FC and WO 370 Employees
From: Director, Office of Fire and Aviation
Subject: Annual Education Award Program DD: 5/26/00

INTEREST ANNOUNCEMENT

Opening Date: 4/03/00

Closing Date: 5/26/00

I am pleased to announce an opportunity for employees to compete for government-paid training for career advancement through the Education Award Program. The objective of the program is to provide employees an opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge to help meet their career goals and from the Bureau's standpoint, to improve their skills in the BLM.

How Many Awards? At least four awards will be available. However, depending upon the cost of the training requested, more than four may be granted.

What is the amount of the award? The maximum amount for an individual award is \$650. The amount for each award will vary according to the cost of the awardee's approved course(s) and books. The employee does not receive cash; BLM-NIFC is billed by the educational or training institution.

Who may compete for the awards? Any Fire and Aviation and Law Enforcement employee who meets the following criteria:

1. Is serving under a career or career-conditional appointment (includes all WAEs).
2. Has an acceptable level of performance and upon approval of supervisor.

3. Is in a position with a full-performance level of GS-9 or wage grade equivalent.

Timeframe of award. Use of an Education Award must be initiated within six months from the date the award is granted. Training or study under an award must be completed within two calendar years from the date training or study began. An employee who has received a previous award must show that the education under the previous award will be completed before a new award can be granted.

How to apply. Employees interested in being considered for an Education Award should complete and return the attached application form to the Human Resources Management Group by May 26, 2000.

Rating process: A selection panel will be established to evaluate the applications. These will be rated on how the proposed training relates to the applicant's career goals and how these goals relate to a position within the BLM.

The Education Award Rules and Regulations are attached. Any questions concerning this program should be directed to Jo-Ann Jones, at 387-5518.

/s/Ron Dunton
Acting

2 Attachments

- 1 - Education Award Rules and Regulations (2 pp)
- 2 - Acceptance of Education Award (4pp)

EDUCATION AWARD RULES AND REGULATIONS

- A. Summary of Program Objectives: The objectives of this program are to provide BLM employees with educational assistance to help them meet their career goals, and to benefit the Bureau by improving employees' skills.

Employees identify the training needed to move toward their career goals. This often includes training in different fields of occupation from the ones currently held by the employees. Each training proposal is evaluated in terms of BLM careers and staffing needs. The proposals which provide the best potential for applying the acquired skills and knowledges with the BLM are approved.

- B. Program Administration: Human Resources Management Group (HRM) will be responsible for the overall coordination, administration and evaluation of the program.

- C. Eligibility:

1. An Education Award is granted to an employee in an amount not to exceed \$650. 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 employee does not receive the award as cash--the Bureau is billed by the educational or training vendor for the direct cost of tuition and books. The employee pays for additional fees. Courses may be substituted only by written request to the Personnel Awards Coordinator, who determines if the requested substitutions preserve the intent of the original approval. 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. An employee may compete for and be selected for the Education Award twice.
2. An awardee who accepts employment outside of BLM or who changes status so that he/she no longer meets entrance requirements, forfeits any unspent portion of an award.
3. All participants must:
 - a. be serving under a career or career-conditional appointment (includes WAE's);
 - b. be in a position with a full performance level of GS-9 or below or wage grade equivalent;
 - c. have completed one (1) year of service with the Federal Government by the due date of the application;
 - d. have an acceptable level of performance;
 - e. have not received the Education Award twice previously.

Attachment 1-1

- D. Application Process: In accordance with instructions in the announcement of the program,

interested employees should submit an application to the Human Resources Management Group (FC-202), Award Coordinator. The application will include the appropriate application form stating the employee's career goal, the training requested and a description of demonstrated efforts of self-development. Also required is a current EPPRR (Employee Performance Plan and Results Report) and the Supervisor Evaluation.

E. Selection Process: A selection panel will be established to evaluate the applications and determine the best qualified employees. Selected employees and their supervisors will be officially notified.

F. Use of the Award:

1. Use of an Education Award must be initiated within six months from the date the award is granted. Training or study under an award must be completed within two calendar years from the date training or study began.
2. Class attendance can occur outside the person's normal duty hours. If a course is conducted during an employee's normal duty hours, the employee may use administrative leave to attend the course. Requests for administrative leave must be approved in advance by the responsible supervisor. Employees will not be compensated for classroom time outside of their normal duty hours.
3. The course undertaken must be completed satisfactorily (grade C or above) by the employee; otherwise, the expenses of the particular training become the personal expense of the award recipient.
4. When each class or course of instruction is completed, the awardee must, within 30 days, present a copy of the grade to the Personnel Award Coordinator, who will then document that the training has been satisfactorily completed.
5. Provided the proposed training meets the identified career goal, the employee may request training from any institution or organization, government or nongovernment, within the commuting area of the employee's home or duty station. Commuting area restriction applies only to training that requires classroom attendance by employee; there is no like restriction on sources from which correspondence or self-study material is utilized. Grants under this program are separate from courses authorized and approved in the Annual Training Plan.
6. All above rules and regulations must be met or the remaining award may be terminated upon review by the Personnel Award Coordinator. When uncontrollable circumstances prevent the orderly completion of an award, these guidelines may be adjusted by the Personnel Award Coordinator, upon written request by an award recipient.

Attachment 1-2

EDUCATION AWARD APPLICATION

Name: _____

Position Title: _____

Series & Grade: _____ Date entered grade _____

Organization Location: _____ Mail Code _____

1. What are your short and long range goals?

2. What types of self-developmental activities have you undertaken to meet goals? Please include volunteer work, training, education or relevant experiences.

3. Please indicate the training courses you would like to take. In determining the cost, include tuition, books, and supplies. Activity fees can be included only when they are part of the tuition.

Attachment 2-1

NAME OF INSTITUTION	COURSE TITLE NUMBER	CREDIT HOURS	APPROXIMATE START/END DATE	COST

4. How will the requested education/training prepare you to meet your goals? Be specific about each course you have proposed.

5. How will you be able to use your acquired skills and knowledge in BLM?

Attachment 2-2

EDUCATION AWARD PROGRAM
SUPERVISOR EVALUATION

Applicant Name: _____

Supervisor, please answer the following regarding the applicant.

1) How has this employee demonstrated potential to perform work at a higher level?

2) Describe the candidate's ability to complete projects thoroughly and in a timely manner.

Attachment 2-3

3) Describe the employee's initiative on the job and willingness to perform work in difficult situations.

Supervisor's Signature

Date

When completed, please give the Supervisor Evaluation to the employee to return to HRM with their application package.

Attachment 2-4