

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How much is the stipend payment?

A: \$5,000 (Note that the Act allows for \$2,000 to an eligible officer employed by an eligible state agency unless the officer has the primary responsibility of supervising parolees and probationers, in which case those officers will receive \$5,000)

Q: Are taxes, FICA, social security, etc. held out of the stipend payment?

A: Act 224 requires the following to be withheld from the stipend payment to the officer: the employee's share of Social Security and Medicare taxes and any other withholding required by state or federal law or required by court order (Note that this may include child support, court ordered restitution, etc.)

Q: Who submits the information to CLEST for officers eligible for the stipend?

A: Act 224 requires the law enforcement agency to "proactively request to the Division (CLEST) for the salary stipend funds to be distributed" to the eligible officer. Required information and documents will be submitted on the ACADIS portal (see "Instructions for Submitting Eligible Officers to CLEST") by the agency's portal administrator.

Q: Who is responsible for signing the verification form for the agency?

A: Act 224 requires the "chief law enforcement officer" of the eligible agency to sign the verification forms.

Q: What if I hire an officer after January 31, 2023?

A: Act 224 requires CLEST to deny any forms received by an agency for an officer "first employed as a full-time law enforcement officer after January 31, 2023."

Q: How long do I have to submit the forms for eligible officers employed by the agency as of July 1, 2022?

A: Act 224 states "between July 1, 2022 and August 1, 2022" the agency shall provide a certification on a form provided by CLEST that identifies each eligible officer employed as of July 1, 2022.

Q: Who provides the information to DFA?

A: CLEST is responsible for providing all information to DFA once an officer's eligibility for the stipend payment has been verified.

Q: When should I submit the documents to CLEST for officers hired after July 1, 2022 but on or before January 31, 2023?

A: On or before June 1, 2023, but after the officer has successfully completed the basic academy. Act 224 requires CLEST to deny any forms received after June 1, 2023.

Q: If a School Resource Officer (SRO) is paid by the agency but the school later reimburses the agency, is the SRO eligible for the stipend?

A: Yes, if the SRO is an eligible full-time officer employed by the eligible agency. SRO's employed directly by a school are not eligible for the stipend payment.

Q: What are the ALETA basic academy dates for 2022 and 2023 that would qualify an officer for the stipend payment?

A:

| 2022 | 2023 |
|---|--|
| ALETA-Camden: 2022B 5/1/2022-7/29/2022 | ALETA-Camden: 2023A 1/8/2023-4/7/2023 |
| ALETA-Camden: 2022C 9/11/2022-12/9/2022 | ALETA-NW: 2023A 1/8/2023-4/6/2023 |
| ALETA-NW: 2022B 4/24/2022-7/21/2022 | ALETA-Central: 2023A 1/29/2023-4/28/2023 |
| ALETA-NW: 2022C 8/14/2022-11/10/2022 | |
| ALETA-Central: 2022B 7/17/2022-10/14/2022 | |

*For agencies that conduct their own, CLEST-approved, basic academy, the academy must end before June 1, 2023 in order for the officers in the academy class to be eligible for the stipend payment.

Q: What would require an eligible officer to repay the stipend payment?

A: Act 224 states that officers who receive the stipend payment but are decertified as a law enforcement officer within 180 days of receiving the payment are required to immediately return the stipend payment. Act 224 also requires repayment of the stipend payment (within 180 days of receiving the payment) if the officer resigns or ceases employment with the eligible agency, unless:

1. The officer immediately accepts employment as an eligible full-time law enforcement officer with another eligible agency;
2. The officer ceases employment as a result of death of the officer;
3. The officer ceases employment as a result of the retirement of the officer;
4. The officer ceases employment due to a medical necessity of the officer or a member of the officer's family; or
5. The officer ceases employment for reasons beyond the officer's control.

Q: Who receives the payments from DFA?

A: The agency will receive the payment from DFA

Q: Do elected officials qualify?

A: Yes, if the elected law enforcement officer is a certified law enforcement officer and employed more than twenty-four (24) hours per week.

Q: If an eligible officer leaves employment due to an administration change within the agency, does the officer have to repay the stipend?

A: Yes, unless the officer meets the criteria for one of the exceptions outlined in the Act.

Q: If an employee has to repay the stipend payment, who is responsible for collection?

A: Act 224 states that an officer that is required to repay the stipend payment shall return the stipend payment to the eligible agency. The agency that receives the repayment shall return the stipend payment to DFA.

Q: Is the payment divided into two payments?

A: No

Q: Do agencies issue separate checks or add the payment to the officers' regular payroll check?

A: Act 224 requires the agency to pay the salary stipend to the eligible officer in the officer's "next paycheck or as soon as practicable following receipt of funds"

Q: Can the agency submit the required documents prior to the officer completing the academy?

A: No, completion of the basic academy is required in order for an officer to be eligible for the stipend payment. Forms submitted for officers that do not meet all requirements to receive the payment will be rejected and returned to the agency.

Q: Will the agency be notified that the submission was correct and moved forward to DFA?

A: Yes, CLEST will notify the agency when its submission has been certified to DFA

Q: What if an officer is on military deployment?

A: As long as the officer is classified as a full-time officer with the eligible agency and meets all other eligibility criteria, the officer is eligible for the stipend payment.

Q: Can the department head sign off on their own form?

A: Yes

Q: What if an officer attended a basic academy outside of Arkansas?

A: As long as the officer's basic training has been approved under CLEST's reciprocity rule, the officer's out-of-state training will count as completion of a basic training program.

Q: Will a law enforcement agency receive a separate check for each eligible law enforcement officer approved by CLEST to receive the stipend or will a single payment be issued by DFA for all eligible officers approved by CLEST?

A: DFA intends to issue a single state warrant including amounts due for all eligible law enforcement officers included in a separate CLEST approval for a specific law enforcement agency. If only one officer is included in a CLEST approval forwarded to DFA, a separate state warrant may be issued related to that one officer.

Q: Will DFA provide information to the law enforcement agency identifying the officers covered by each stipend payment warrant the agency receives from DFA?

A: DFA intends to provide a list to the law enforcement agency identifying each officer's name and unique CLEST ID Number for each state warrant it issues paying the stipend.

Q: Will the salary stipend payment and the payment for the employer's share of Social Security and Medicare taxes be received from DFA in the same check or in separate checks?

A: DFA intends to combine the amounts into a single payment.

Q: Does the individual law enforcement agency need to provide any information to DFA before DFA may issue a state warrant to the agency?

A: Each law enforcement agency must provide DFA with a completed W-9 form for that agency. This W-9 form will allow DFA to create a vendor account for the agency which is needed prior to the issuance of a state warrant. The link to a copy of the W-9 on the IRS website is: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>.

Q: How will the payments be issued by DFA?

A: The payments will be issued either by electronic funds transfer directly into a bank account identified by the law enforcement agency or to the mailing address identified on the W-9 form provided by that agency. If the law enforcement agency desires that the payment be directly deposited, the agency must provide DFA with either a voided paper check identifying the bank routing number and bank account number or a letter from the bank on the bank's letterhead identifying the bank routing number and the account number into which the payment should be deposited.

Q: Will DFA mail the stipend payments to the law enforcement agency or to the appropriate City or County Treasurer?

A: Payment will be mailed to the law enforcement agency.