

CHAPTER 144C

AMBULANCE SERVICE PERSONNEL LONGEVITY
AWARD AND INCENTIVE PROGRAM

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| <p>144C.01 Ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive program.</p> <p>144C.02 Program eligibility; qualified ambulance service personnel.</p> <p>144C.03 Ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive trust; trust account.</p> | <p>144C.05 Distributions from account.</p> <p>144C.06 Trust account investment.</p> <p>144C.07 Crediting qualified ambulance personnel service.</p> <p>144C.08 Ambulance service personnel longevity award.</p> <p>144C.09 Effect of changes.</p> <p>144C.10 Scope of administrative duties.</p> |
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144C.01 AMBULANCE SERVICE PERSONNEL LONGEVITY AWARD AND INCENTIVE PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** An ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive program is established. The program is intended to recognize the service rendered to state and local government and the citizens of Minnesota by qualified ambulance service personnel, and to reward qualified ambulance service personnel for significant contributions to state and local government and to the public. The purpose of the ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive trust is to accumulate resources to allow for the payment of longevity awards to qualified ambulance service personnel upon the completion of a substantial ambulance service career.

Subd. 2. **Administration.** (a) Unless paragraph (c) applies, consistent with the responsibilities of the state board of investment and the various ambulance services, the ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive program must be administered by the commissioner of health. The administrative responsibilities of the commissioner of health for the program relate solely to the record keeping, award application, and award payment functions. The state board of investment is responsible for the investment of the ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive trust. The applicable ambulance service is responsible for determining, consistent with this chapter, who is a qualified ambulance service person, what constitutes a year of credited ambulance service, what constitutes sufficient documentation of a year of prior service, and for submission of all necessary data to the commissioner of health in a manner consistent with this chapter. Determinations of an ambulance service are final.

(b) The commissioner of health may administer the commissioner's assigned responsibilities regarding the program directly or may retain a qualified governmental or nongovernmental plan administrator under contract to administer those responsibilities regarding the program. A contract with a qualified plan administrator must be the result of an open competitive bidding process and must be reopened for competitive bidding at least once during every five-year period after July 1, 1993.

(c) The commissioner of employee relations shall review the options within state government for the most appropriate administration of pension plans or similar arrangements for emergency service personnel and recommend to the governor the most appropriate future pension plan or nonpension plan administrative arrangement for this chapter. If the governor concurs in the recommendation, the governor shall transfer the future administrative responsibilities relating to this chapter to that administrative agency.

History: *1Sp1993 c 1 art 9 s 54*

144C.02 PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY; QUALIFIED AMBULANCE SERVICE PERSONNEL.

(a) Persons eligible to participate in the ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive program are qualified ambulance service personnel.

MINNESOTA STATUTES 1994

(b) Qualified ambulance service personnel are ambulance attendants, ambulance drivers, and ambulance service medical directors or medical advisors who meet the following requirements:

(1) employment of the person by or provision by the person of service to an ambulance service that is licensed as such by the state of Minnesota and that provides ambulance services that are generally available to the public and are free of unfair discriminatory practices under chapter 363;

(2) performance by the person during the 12 months ending as of the immediately previous June 30 of all or a predominant portion of the person's services in the state of Minnesota or on behalf of Minnesota residents, as verified by August 1 annually in an affidavit from the chief administrative officer of the ambulance service;

(3) current certification of the person during the 12 months ending as of the immediately previous June 30 by the Minnesota department of health as an ambulance attendant, ambulance driver, or ambulance service medical director or medical advisor under section 144.804, and supporting rules, and current active ambulance service employment or service provision status of the person, as verified by August 1 annually in an affidavit from the chief administrative officer of the ambulance service; and

(4) conformance by the person with the definition of the phrase "volunteer ambulance attendant" under section 144.8091, subdivision 2, except that for the salary limit specified in that provision there must be substituted, for purposes of this section only, a limit of \$3,000 for calendar year 1993, and \$3,000 multiplied by the cumulative percentage increase in the national Consumer Price Index, all items, for urban wage earners and clerical workers, as published by the federal Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, since December 31, 1993, and for an ambulance service medical director, conformance based solely on the person's hourly stipends or salary for service as a medical director.

(c) The term "active ambulance service employment or service provision status" means being in good standing with and on the active roster of the ambulance service making the certification.

(d) The maximum period of ambulance service employment or service provision for which a person may receive credit towards an award under this chapter, including prior service credit under section 144C.07, subdivision 2, paragraph (c), is 20 years.

(e) For a person who is employed by or provides service to more than one ambulance service concurrently during any period during the 12-month period, credit towards an award under this chapter is limited to one ambulance service during any period. The creditable period is with the ambulance service for which the person undertakes the greatest portion of employment or service hours.

History: *1Sp1993 c 1 art 9 s 55*

144C.03 AMBULANCE SERVICE PERSONNEL LONGEVITY AWARD AND INCENTIVE TRUST; TRUST ACCOUNT.

Subdivision 1. **Trust.** There is established an ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive trust.

Subd. 2. **Trust account.** (a) There is established in the general fund an ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive trust account and an ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive suspense account.

(b) The trust account must be credited with:

(1) general fund appropriations for that purpose;

(2) transfers from the ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive suspense account; and

(3) investment earnings on those accumulated proceeds. The assets and income of the trust account must be held and managed by the commissioner of finance and the state board of investment for the benefit of the state of Minnesota and its general creditors.

MINNESOTA STATUTES 1994

911 AMBULANCE SERVICE PERSONNEL LONGEVITY AWARD AND INCENTIVE PROGRAM 144C.06

(c) The suspense account must be credited with transfers from the excess contributions holding account established in section 353.65, subdivision 7, any per-year-of-service allocation under section 144C.07, subdivision 2, paragraph (c), that was not made for an individual, and investment earnings on those accumulated proceeds. The suspense account must be managed by the commissioner of finance and the state board of investment. From the suspense account to the trust account there must be transferred to the ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive trust account, as the suspense account balance permits, the following amounts:

(1) an amount equal to any general fund appropriation to the ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive trust account for that fiscal year; and

(2) an amount equal to the percentage of the remaining balance in the account after the deduction of the amount under clause (1), as specified for the applicable fiscal year:

Fiscal year	Percentage
1995	20
1996	40
1997	50
1998	60
1999	70
2000	80
2001	90
2002 and thereafter	100

Subd. 3. Priority of claims. The state of Minnesota intends that this program, trust, and trust account not constitute a separate fund for any legal purpose, including the federal Internal Revenue Code, as amended, and the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended. Qualified ambulance service personnel have only an unsecured promise of the state of Minnesota to pay a longevity award upon meeting entitlement requirements set forth in section 144C.08, and qualified ambulance service personnel meeting those entitlement requirements have the status of general unsecured creditors with respect to an ambulance service personnel longevity award, if and when awarded.

History: *1Sp1993 c 1 art 9 s 56; 1994 c 632 art 3 s 50*

144C.05 DISTRIBUTIONS FROM ACCOUNT.

Subdivision 1. Award payments. (a) The commissioner of health or the commissioner's designee under section 144C.01, subdivision 2, shall pay ambulance service personnel longevity awards to qualified ambulance service personnel determined to be entitled to an award under section 144C.08 by the commissioner based on the submissions by the various ambulance services. Amounts necessary to pay the ambulance service personnel longevity award are appropriated from the ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive trust account to the commissioner of health.

(b) If the state of Minnesota is unable to meet its financial obligations as they become due, the commissioner of health shall undertake all necessary steps to discontinue paying ambulance service personnel longevity awards until the state of Minnesota is again able to meet its financial obligations as they become due.

Subd. 2. General creditors of the state. The trust account is at all times subject to a levy under an execution of any general creditor of the state of Minnesota, and if no other funds are available to satisfy that levy, the levy has priority for payment from the trust account before any ambulance service personnel longevity award.

History: *1Sp1993 c 1 art 9 s 57*

144C.06 TRUST ACCOUNT INVESTMENT.

The trust account must be invested by the state board of investment, as provided in section 11A.20.

History: *1Sp1993 c 1 art 9 s 58*

144C.07 CREDITING QUALIFIED AMBULANCE PERSONNEL SERVICE.

Subdivision 1. **Separate record keeping.** The commissioner of health or the commissioner's designee under section 144C.01, subdivision 2, shall maintain a separate record of potential award accumulations for each qualified ambulance service person under subdivision 2.

Subd. 2. **Potential allocations.** (a) On September 1, annually, the commissioner of health or the commissioner's designee under section 144C.01, subdivision 2, shall determine the amount of the allocation of the prior year's accumulation to each qualified ambulance service person. The prior year's net investment gain or loss under paragraph (b) must be allocated and that year's general fund appropriation, plus any transfer from the suspense account under section 144C.03, subdivision 2, and after deduction of administrative expenses, also must be allocated.

(b) The difference in the market value of the assets of the ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive trust account as of the immediately previous June 30 and the June 30 occurring 12 months earlier must be reported on or before August 15 by the state board of investment. The market value gain or loss must be expressed as a percentage of the total potential award accumulations as of the immediately previous June 30, and that positive or negative percentage must be applied to increase or decrease the recorded potential award accumulation of each qualified ambulance service person.

(c) The appropriation for this purpose, after deduction of administrative expenses, must be divided by the total number of additional ambulance service personnel years of service recognized since the last allocation or 1,000 years of service, whichever is greater. If the allocation is based on the 1,000 years of service, any allocation not made for a qualified ambulance service person must be credited to the suspense account under section 144C.03, subdivision 2. A qualified ambulance service person must be credited with a year of service if the person is certified by the chief administrative officer of the ambulance service as having rendered active ambulance service during the 12 months ending as of the immediately previous June 30. If the person has rendered prior active ambulance service, the person must be additionally credited with one-fifth of a year of service for each year of active ambulance service rendered before June 30, 1993, but not to exceed in any year one additional year of service or to exceed in total five years of prior service. Prior active ambulance service means employment by or the provision of service to a licensed ambulance service before June 30, 1993, as determined by the person's current ambulance service based on records provided by the person that were contemporaneous to the service. The prior ambulance service must be reported on or before August 15 to the commissioner of health in an affidavit from the chief administrative officer of the ambulance service.

History: 1Sp1993 c 1 art 9 s 59; 1994 c 632 art 3 s 51

144C.08 AMBULANCE SERVICE PERSONNEL LONGEVITY AWARD.

(a) A qualified ambulance service person who has terminated active ambulance service, who has at least five years of credited ambulance service, who is at least 50 years old, and who is among the 400 persons with the greatest amount of credited ambulance service applying for a longevity award during that year, is entitled, upon application, to an ambulance service personnel longevity award. An applicant whose application is not approved because of the limit on the number of annual awards may apply in a subsequent year.

(b) If a qualified ambulance service person who meets the age and service requirements specified in paragraph (a) dies before applying for a longevity award, the estate of the decedent is entitled, upon application, to the decedent's ambulance service personnel longevity award, without reference to the limit on the number of annual awards.

(c) An ambulance service personnel longevity award is the total amount of the person's accumulations indicated in the person's separate record under section 144C.07 as of the August 15 preceding the application. The amount is payable only in a lump sum.

MINNESOTA STATUTES 1994

913 AMBULANCE SERVICE PERSONNEL LONGEVITY AWARD AND INCENTIVE PROGRAM 144C.10

(d) Applications for an ambulance service personnel longevity award must be received by the commissioner of health or the commissioner's designee under section 144C.01, subdivision 2, by August 15, annually. Ambulance service personnel longevity awards are payable only as of the last business day in October annually.

History: *1Sp1993 c 1 art 9 s 60*

NOTE: This section, as added by Laws 1993, First Special Session chapter 1, article 9, section 60, is effective July 1, 1995. See Laws 1993, First Special Session chapter 1, article 9, section 76.

144C.09 EFFECT OF CHANGES.

Subdivision 1. **Modifications.** The ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive program is a gratuity established by the state of Minnesota and may be modified by subsequent legislative enactment at any time without creating any cause of action for any ambulance service personnel related to the program as a result. No provision of Laws 1993, First Special Session chapter 1, and no subsequent amendment may be interpreted as causing or resulting in the program to be funded for federal Internal Revenue Code or federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 purposes, or as causing or resulting in any contributions to or investment income earned by the ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive trust account to be subject to federal income tax to ambulance service personnel or their beneficiaries before actual receipt of a longevity award under section 144C.08.

Subd. 2. **Nonassignability.** No entitlement or claim of a qualified ambulance service person or the person's beneficiary to an ambulance service personnel longevity award is assignable, or subject to garnishment, attachment, execution, levy, or legal process of any kind, except as provided in section 518.58, 518.581, or 518.611. The commissioner of health may not recognize any attempted transfer, assignment, or pledge of an ambulance service personnel longevity award.

Subd. 3. **Public employee status.** Recognizing the important public function performed by ambulance service personnel, only for purposes of Laws 1993, First Special Session chapter 1, and the receipt of a state sponsored gratuity in the form of an ambulance service personnel longevity award, all qualified ambulance service personnel are considered to be public employees.

History: *1Sp1993 c 1 art 9 s 61*

144C.10 SCOPE OF ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES.

For purposes of administering the award and incentive program, the commissioner of health cannot hear appeals, direct ambulance services to take any specific actions, investigate or take action on individual complaints, or otherwise act on information beyond that submitted by the licensed ambulance services.

History: *1Sp1993 c 1 art 9 s 62*