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BADGER BENEFITS BRIEF



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RESERVE INCOME REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

The Defense Department this month kicked off a program to help prevent activated reservists and National Guardsmen from facing financial hardships. The Reserve Income Replacement Program will pay eligible National Guard and reserve members mobilized for extended or frequent periods the difference between their monthly civilian pre-mobilization income and their current total monthly military compensation. "RIRP is designed to assist those mobilized Guard and reserve members that are experiencing a loss of income while mobilized," said Tom Bush, principal director of manpower and reserve affairs for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. Program payments are not automatic. Guard and reserve members must apply for the RIRP payments through their service personnel offices.

To qualify for RIRP, service members must:

- * Be serving on active duty in an involuntary status and have completed 18 continuous months of involuntary active duty, or
- * Have completed 24 cumulative months of involuntary active duty within the last 60 months, or
- * Be serving on involuntary active duty for a period of 180 days or more that starts within six months of separation from a previous period on involuntary active duty for at least 180 days.

Guard and reserve members serving on involuntary active duty and earning at least \$50 less than their normal civilian income each month must verify eligibility for this benefit through their military service's personnel system, using a new DD form created for this program, DoD officials said. Financial records submitted with the RIRP application must include the member's most recent federal income tax return or other record of earnings that shows gross income during the 12 months before the member's mobilization, officials said. The first payments under the program will be made at the end of August for members who have completed the application and meet all eligibility criteria.

Congress authorized the Reserve Income Replacement Program as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2006. The authority for RIRP will expire Dec. 31, 2008.

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