

Cooper/Sams Award Incentive FAQ

(The information provided below is a summary for your convenience. For further details, please refer to Minnesota Statutes Section 144E.40-.48 at: [Minnesota Statutes Chapter 144E](#))

Cooper / Sams Incentive Award Program

What is Cooper/Sams Incentive Award Program?

Answer: Administered by the EMSRB, Minnesota's Cooper/Sams Volunteer Ambulance Award and Incentive Program is designed to recognize and reward volunteer ambulance service personnel and provide incentive for volunteers to enter emergency medical services.

Please refer to the Cooper/Sams Volunteer Ambulance Program statute [Copper / Sams Incentive Award Program](#) for additional information.

Qualifications for Program Participation

When completing the current service credit application, how does an ambulance service know who qualifies to receive service credit?

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

- be an active volunteer ambulance attendant or driver (without the expectation of pay and without depending on the work for a livelihood, although modest hourly stipends for work-time are permitted by law, capped at \$6,000 in 2004 and adjusted by the Consumer Price Index annually, or approximately \$7,491 in 2016) or ambulance service medical director or advisor (limited to hourly stipends or salary for services as medical director) in good standing ;
- currently enrolled to work for or provide service to an ambulance service licensed by the state of Minnesota that provides ambulance services that are generally available to the public; and
- perform all or substantially all services in the state of Minnesota or on behalf of Minnesota residents and have a current certification as an ambulance attendant, driver or ambulance service medical director or advisor during the 12 month period ending June 30 immediately prior to the award;

For more information on crediting qualified ambulance personnel service, please refer to: [MS section 144E.41](#)

What qualifications have to be met to claim the incentive award?

Answer: Persons who meet the requirements set forth in Minn. Stat. 144E.41 may apply for their cash award by October 1 of each year. The qualifications are *summarized* as follows:

Applicants for the award must:

- be at least 50 years of age;
- have accrued at least 5 service credits;
- have resigned from active volunteer service on the ambulance; and
- complete and postmark an application form by October 1, of the year in which the award is claimed
- Awards will be mailed out around April 1 of the following year.

*Note: To be entitled to an award, qualified award claimants must be among the 400 persons with the greatest amount of credited ambulance service applying for the longevity award during the year of termination from service. For more information please refer to: [MS section 144E.46](#). When claiming the award each service credit accrued by a volunteer is valued at **\$447.19**.*

Ambulance Service Participation

How does an ambulance service participate?

Answer: Annually the EMSRB sends an application packet to Minnesota licensed ambulance services. The ambulance services must complete the application packet for their volunteers each year. Directions for completing the application are included in the application information. Key features of completing the current service credit form are to verify that volunteers meet qualifications (see qualifications above) to receive service credit. *The application packet must be returned by US Mail, fax or e-mail and received by the EMSRB with a postmark no later than August 1 of each year. The deadline of August 1 of each year is set by law. The EMSRB therefore cannot make any exceptions.*

How does an ambulance service receive the annual participation application packet?

Answer: The EMSRB will send the packet out via e-mail to each Minnesota licensed ambulance service around the first week of June each year. The application packet information is also available on the EMSRB web-site at: [Cooper / Sams EMSRB Web-Site Information](#)

Note: EMSRB Communication: *The EMSRB will use e-mail as the primary means of communicating licensing information and other important information to Ambulance Services. It is the responsibility of Ambulance Service Managers to update the EMSRB if e-mail addresses change or important contact information changes for the ambulance service. E-mail address information must be up-to-date in the e-licensing system at your service site.*

How does the ambulance service submit the completed current service credit application forms?

Answer: ALL forms must be submitted to the EMSRB through the U.S. Mail by fax or e-mail.

Important Deadlines

What is the deadline for submission of the “Current Service Credit” application form?

Answer: In compliance with the Legislative Auditor’s requirements and Minnesota Statute, **ABSOLUTELY NO** current service credit forms can be accepted with a postmark later than **August 1, each year**. Please plan accordingly.

What is the deadline for submission if an individual is claiming the “Incentive Award” payment?

Answer: In compliance with the Legislative Auditor’s requirements and Minnesota Statute, **ABSOLUTELY NO** incentive award claim forms from those persons that have resigned from active volunteer service and are 50 years of age and have 5 service credits can be accepted for payment with a postmark later than **October 1, each year**. Please plan accordingly.

How will the ambulance service or individual know the EMSRB has received the annual Current Service Credit application or the Incentive Award claim application?

Answer: The EMSRB will reply by e-mail to confirm receipt of the Service Credit Claim Form (application) and/or Award Claim Form (application) within approximately 2 weeks of receipt. If you do not receive confirmation, the EMSRB did not receive the application(s). Please note the deadline for the current service credit application is **August 1, of each year** (ambulance services)

and **October 1, of each year** for individuals applying for an incentive award payment. It is ambulance services responsibility to make sure the applications reach the EMSRB office by the above deadline dates each year or are postmarked by August 1. Again, the EMSRB cannot make exceptions to this deadline. If applications are not received by the EMSRB the volunteers **will not** get “Service Credit” for the program year. The individual applying for the “Incentive Award Payment” will have to submit a new application the following year by the deadline date.

Ambulance Service Records

What should the ambulance service do for Cooper/Sams record keeping?

Answer: Ambulance Services are responsible for keeping records of their Service Credit Claim applications for their volunteer EMS personnel. The ambulance service should keep a copy of all information submitted to the EMSRB each program year. In the event the EMSRB gets a request from a volunteer on what was submitted by the ambulance service, the volunteer will be referred to the Ambulance Service Director as a first step to inquire about what was submitted on their behalf and confirm the date received by the EMSRB.

What the Cooper / Sams Incentive Award Program Is Not

Is the award payment a retirement or pension payment?

Answer: **NO.** An award payment is not a retirement or pension payment; it is a lump sum payment provided through a state appropriation to help recruitment and retention of volunteer ambulance EMS personnel. The EMSRB is not qualified to provide tax or financial advice. Please be sure you understand the tax and investment implications when receiving this award. You are urged to consult with your tax/accountant and financial advisor if necessary.