

July 28, 2021

SUBJECT: West Virginia Future Leaders Program (FLP) Information Paper

1. **Summary**: The West Virginia Future Leaders Program (FLP) is a high school leadership curriculum instilling leadership, promoting citizenship, and teaching life skills. The program is a low cost alternative to Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) and created by the West Virginia National Guard (WVNG), a community-based organization. The program curriculum consists of four broad areas: leadership, citizenship, life skills, and military science. FLP is *not* a recruiting program although some recruiting benefits may result.
2. **Facts**:
   1. Army JROTC is a congressionally funded civics class offered at high schools. Schools deliver the program in a military setting taught by retired service members. Army JROTC programs may schools up to approximately $188,000 per school year for instructor salaries, requires the hiring of retired active duty service members, and follows a national curriculum with limited flexibility.
   2. In recent years the JROTC trends include no growth and a shifting of programs to urban areas. Given the program cost and the long waiting list, many rural or less populated schools are unable to receive a program.
   3. West Virginia currently has 29 JROTC programs located throughout the state. The programs include 19 Army, 2 Marine, 2 Navy, and 6 Air Force programs.
   4. Many WV school districts have asked the Adjutant General for a JROTC or “JROTC-like” program, with a lower cost alternative preferred.
   5. FLP began in August 2019 with the introduction of FLP 1 (course code 7795), with a planned roll-out of FLP 2 – 4 (course codes 7796-7798, respectively) over the next three years. FLP years 2 – 4 are not progressive and students may enroll in the classes in any order upon completing FLP 1 (FLP Foundations).
   6. FLP instructors are military veterans trained by the WVNG and have completed the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) substitute teacher training course. The WVDE designed a training program for FLP instructors that includes six hours of teaching pedagogy (currently offered by Marshall University), and twelve hours of WVDE eLearning modules. FLP instructors are subject matter experts in leadership, personal development, and military science.
   7. For the fall 2021 school year, seven counties and fourteen schools are enrolled in FLP and offering the class as a local concentration.
   8. According to the United States 2020 Census, WV’s population declined to just under 1.8 million people. The population decrease resulted in WV losing one U.S. Representative in Congress.
   9. The WV Department of Education (WVDE) reported 10,000+ school children as “homeless” for the 2018-2019 school year[[1]](#footnote-1). This implies that many, if not most, of them do not have a structured routine in their daily lives and are subject to frequent changes.
   10. Younger adults are either leaving WV in large numbers, becoming incarcerated, or remain “homeless” due to the opioid epidemic, natural disasters (most notably the 2016 floods), and a shortage of good employment opportunities due to a lack of training and/or knowledge on how to obtain these jobs. In July 2019, WVU reported the state’s labor force participation rate at 54.8 percent, meaning almost half of West Virginians are unable to work or have stopped looking for work.
3. **Important Program Concepts**:
   1. FLP’s mission is to provide WV students with a quality educational program emphasizing skills needed to succeed in life and to connect them with their community by providing service and mentorship opportunities.
   2. Of secondary importance is teaching students the economic opportunities in WV, to help them create a plan for the future, and to entice them to remain in the Mountain State.
   3. FLP requires school or community service hours. Although students may complete those hours with other organizations, the program strongly encourages activities that require social interaction and that has an impact on someone’s life.
   4. FLP students may serve the school as a member of the Color Guard team, raising and retiring school flags daily, and assisting in clean-up or beautification projects.
   5. Instructors have completed the WVDE substitute teacher training or and equivalent teaching program that provides an FLP authorization. FLP instructors are subject matter experts in leadership, life skills, and military science.
   6. The curriculum uses teacher-style lesson plans and incorporates many hand-on activities. The curriculum topics fall into our broad categories: leadership, citizenship, life skills, and military science.
   7. The curriculum is built around nine core topics taught twice a year in all four years of the program. The nine core topics are: Career Direction, Citizenship, Communications, Emergency Preparedness, Financial Literacy, First Aid, Healthy Lifestyle, Leadership and Military Science.
   8. Examples of leadership topics include Introduction to Leadership Principles, Leadership Case Studies, Medal of Honor Recipients, Public Speaking, Public Presentation, and Leadership Roles.
   9. Examples of citizenship topics include Flag Etiquette, Types of Government, Types of Economies, examination of America’s founding documents (Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and all amendments), and a review of American Symbols and Values.
   10. Examples of life skills topics include Anti-Bullying, Resiliency, Substance Abuse, Suicide Prevention, Financial Literacy, Time Management, Study Habits, and Career Direction.
   11. Examples of military science topics includes Customs and Courtesies, Drill and Ceremony, Physical Fitness, Military Hierarchy, and skillsets students may learn in Scouting or other outdoor programs like First Aid, Map Reading, and Land Navigation.
   12. The FLP has a uniform for advanced students which improves esprit de corps, identifies students as program members, resembles first responders, and is functional. The uniform consists of a FLP logo embroidered polo shirt, khaki cargo pants, black belt, “coyote” brown socks and boots. There is also an athletic uniform consisting of a FLP t-shirt, shorts, socks, and athletic shoes.
   13. The FLP curriculum is modular based and allows counties the flexibility to tailor the program to meet individual school needs and preferences.
   14. In keeping with the spirit of flexibility and responsiveness, counties may split an instructor between two schools provided the schools are close together, that the instructor has an instructional period, and has sufficient commute time.
   15. The program cost is $75,000 per year per instructor with reimbursement of up to $5,000 per year for travel expenses. Counties transfer funds to the WVNG monthly. The WVNG is responsible for all instructor pay, benefits, and program equipment (i.e. uniforms, guidons, color guard equipment, and instructional-specific equipment). Instructors are WVNG employees.
   16. Grants *may* be available for one – two years for counties with economic challenges. Counties must commit to finding a funding source (i.e. grants, local revenue) to continue the program.
4. **Establishing a Program and Timeline**:
   1. The first step in joining FLP is gauging interest from faculty, students, parents, and school board members. Schools have started the program with offering as few as one class, or as many as six classes.
   2. Given sufficient interest, the County Board of Education must approve the FLP classes as a local concentration (elective) and sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the WVNG. The FLP staff is happy to brief faculty, school boards, parents, students, or other interested parties.
   3. Establishing a program may be done in as little as two months if the process runs smoothly, although five-six months is preferred. The greatest time demand is finding the right instructor. FLP would rather postpone the start of a program rather than select a qualified instructor who is not a good fit for the school.
5. **Program information:** For more information, contact one of the program managers at [WVFLP1@gmail.com](mailto:WVFLP1@gmail.com) or visit the program website at <https://www.wv.ng.mil/Future-Leaders-Program/>.

1. This number reflects the federal “McKinney-Vento” definition: students living in shelters, hotels/motels, cars, RVs, or with family members away from their primary residence. Foster care students are not counted as “homeless.” included in these numbers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)