

United States *Luge* Association

NGB ATHLETE STIPEND PROGRAM

Luge athletes must be on the Sr. National Team, Sr. National Team Select, or Jr. National Team to be eligible for this program. The NGB Stipend Program resets at the end of every Olympic season in order to start the new four-year cycle.

STIPENDS

Those athletes who qualify for this program will start with a stipend determined by the Olympic season's results. There will be two stipend levels. The first level will include Olympic medallists; the second level will include Potential Olympic Medallists (those that qualify for categories 1, 2, or 3 as defined below). The stipends below are what an athlete could potentially receive in the year following the Olympics. Money from other programs is not included in the numbers below.

LEVEL 1

Gold Medallist	\$16,000
Silver Medallist	\$14,000
Bronze Medallist	\$12,000

LEVEL 2

Potential Olympic Medallist	\$8,000
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Percentage of Stipend Received

Stipends are evaluated every spring and updated according to the most recent season's results. The percentage of the stipend received will be determined by categories. Different categories will include different athlete ranks. Athlete ranks will be computed by using the better result from the Overall (Senior) World Cup standings or the (Senior) World Championships. In an Olympic season, the Olympic result will be used in lieu of the (Senior) World Championships. When a decimal place occurs, the rank will be rounded up to the nearest whole number. If an athlete does not race in the World Championship or Olympic Games due to any reason, other than injury, then the athlete will receive no rank and is not eligible for any stipend. The ranks are divided into these categories:

Category	Women Ranks	Men Ranks	Doubles Ranks
1	1-3	1-3	1-3
2	4-6	4-7	4-5
3	7-9	8-11	6-8
4	10 or higher	12 or higher	9 or higher

The stipulations for the amount of the stipend received are as follows:

1. A Category 1 athlete receives 100% of their stipend, or any USOC level payment, whichever is higher.
2. A Category 2 athlete receives 85% of their stipend, or any USOC level payment, whichever is higher.
3. A Category 3 athlete receives 50% of their stipend, or any USOC level payment, which is higher.
4. A Category 4 athlete is not qualified to receive any money from the NGB Stipend Program. If an Olympic medallist drops to Category 4, they are no longer eligible to return to a Level 1 stipend. To start receiving money again, they must qualify through the Level 2 part of the program.
5. An athlete's stipend increases 5% for each consecutive season an athlete remains in Category 1. This point takes effect after the first year following the Olympics.
6. In Categories 2 and 3 an athlete's stipend does not change if they remain in the same category for consecutive seasons.
7. An injured athlete's rank will be computed using only those competitions in which the athlete competed. If the athlete missed all international competitions, then the previous season's rank will be used. For an athlete to be defined as an injured athlete, the following points must be satisfied.
 - A medical doctor with experience in sports injuries must have evaluated the athlete. The USLA's Executive Director and Head Team Physician (collectively referred to as the USLA for this paragraph) and the athlete must agree on which doctor is to do the evaluation. If the USLA and the athlete can not agree after a period of fifteen days, then the USLA's Head Team Physician will have the right to request the athlete to see a doctor of his/her choice. The athlete will have fifteen days in which to fulfill the request of the USLA. If the athlete does not fulfill the request, the USLA's Executive Director will have the right to immediately terminate payment to the athlete. If the athlete agrees to see the USLA's doctor, the USLA's doctor's decision will be final. The injury must be declared by the medical doctor to be of a nature that will interfere with top level performance.
 - The athlete must be rehabilitating in a rehabilitation program developed by either a USLA approved medical doctor with sports injury experience or a USLA approved certified athletic trainer (A.T.C.) to return to top-level performance.

If an athlete decides to take a season off and then qualifies for the National Team again, that athlete forfeits their prior stipend level from this program. Keeping with USLA policy, if a doubles team split up, they do not bring their status in this program to their new luge endeavors. In this situation, these athletes must qualify under the Potential Olympic Medalist part of the program to be eligible to receive money from the NGB Stipend Program again.

Stipend Reduction Clause

For this clause, the USLA will calculate the athlete's income using the USLA athlete income programs and income from the USOC direct athlete support program. Once an athlete's income has reached \$50,000, each additional dollar received from this program above \$50,000 will be halved (fifty cents on the dollar). If this program is funded through the USOC, then this clause will **not** take effect.

Statement of Intent

Before athletes participate in this program, they will be required to sign an agreement. The agreement will include among other things, a pledge by the athlete to maintain a high level of physical condition, as well as state that the athlete is not contemplating retirement. If the agreement is broken, then the USLA will require the reimbursement of the money received in the year in which the agreement was broken.

Two situations may occur in which the agreement will not be considered broken. First, an athlete announcing retirement may do so after the fall trip, or after the winter trip, without any penalty. Second, any career ending injury would also warrant no penalty. In the case of a career ending injury, payment from this program will stop from the day a medical doctor, with experience in sports injuries, declares the injury to be career ending. Both the USLA and the athlete must agree which medical doctor will perform the evaluation.

As per Stipulation Seven found previously in this policy, if the USLA and the athlete can not agree after a period of fifteen days, then the USLA will have the right to request the athlete to see a doctor of its choice. The athlete will have fifteen days in which to fulfill the request of the USLA. If the athlete does not fulfill the request, the USLA will have the right to immediately terminate payment to the athlete. If the athlete agrees to see the USLA's doctor, the USLA's doctor's decision will be final.

Closing

The hope of the USLA is to fund this program through the USOC. If this occurs, the USLA may be required to modify this program in part, or in whole, to conform to USOC requirements. If changes occur, all parties must agree that all previous commitments made under this policy would become null and void. If this stipend program is not funded through the USOC program, the USLA will fund the program from its own reserve funds.

The USLA reserves the right to review, change or cancel the USLA NGB Stipend Program at **any time**.