



Athlete Stipend Policy

Effective August 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024

Published: February 28, 2024

Purpose:

The USA Weightlifting (USAW) Stipend System provides funding to elite athletes to support their training and international competition expenses, with an emphasis on those athletes who are likely to represent Team USA in the Olympic Games. This Stipend System is designed specifically to support qualified athletes during the period after the 2024 Paris Olympic Games through December 31, 2024. We expect to release a new stipend system on or before July 1, 2024 that begins January 1, 2025.

Philosophy:

USAW's stipend system emphasizes support for those athletes most likely to participate at the Olympic Games, those athletes most likely to win medals at major IWF sanctioned international events, especially at the senior level, and those most likely to participate at Olympic qualifying events.

Right to Review and Adjust:

To ensure USAW operates responsibly within its annual operational budget, expenses associated with this system are evaluated on an ongoing basis. USAW reserves the right to adjust this system (including qualification criteria and stipend and expense amounts) with immediate effect; provided, however, that USAW will provide no less than 90 days' notice of any adjustment to athletes enrolled in the stipend system at the time such adjustments are made.

Minimum Qualifications

To qualify for funding, an athlete must meet the following minimum requirements:

- **Must be a citizen of the United States of America.**
Athletes must be citizens of the United States to be eligible to compete for Team USA and receive a stipend. If dual citizenship is held, your sport nationality must be registered as the United States with the IWF/PAWF.
- **Athletes must have a current background screen and U.S. Center for SafeSport certification.**
- **Athletes must complete the USADA Athlete Advantage training.**
- **Athletes must be a current member of USAW and in good standing.**
- **Athletes must agree to the USAW Stipend Agreement and all mandatory requirements contained in such agreement.**

USAW's High Performance team supports athlete performance in cooperation with the athlete and their personal coach. This cooperation includes regular communication, personal visits, assistance with questions/concerns and providing performance assistance via specialists, equipment, and camps.

Direct Athlete Support Stipend and Athlete Support Funding

Payment Levels and Periods (Direct Athlete Support Stipend Payments)

- **Olympian:** November 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024
- **Tier 2:** August 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024
- **Tier 3:** August 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024

Payment Timing

Monthly Stipend payments are paid on the first business day of each month.

Definition of Direct Athlete Support Stipend Payments

Monthly payments to offset expenses related to training, competition preparation and the maintenance of a performance environment commensurate with an elite athlete.

Definition of Athlete Support Funding

USAW's reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred by the athlete and associated with recovery services for the athlete and/or monthly personal coach payments. Such reimbursable expenses include, but are not limited to, massage, sport psychology, sport medicine, and other services approved in advance by the USAW High Performance team. Not all items submitted will be eligible for reimbursement.

International Competition Requirement

To qualify for the stipend system, an athlete must achieve a qualifying total at an IWF-sanctioned event within the given time frame. Qualifying totals are established according to the IWF OQR, or in the case of developmental athletes, explicitly stated USAW-sanctioned national events.

60 Day Removal Notice

If an athlete is no longer eligible for a stipend, USAW will use reasonable efforts to provide the athlete with 60 days' notice of removal. However, USAW may remove an athlete from the stipend system with immediate effect pursuant to the next section regarding Anti-Doping Rule Violations, or should the athlete willfully violate (as determined by USAW) the terms of this document or the USAW Stipend Agreement.

Anti-Doping Rule Violations

If an athlete receives any sanction of ineligibility through the results management process of an anti-doping organization (including but not limited to the United States Anti-Doping Agency or the International Testing Agency), specifically as a result of a hearing panel ruling, an acceptance of sanction, or failure to timely challenge an assertion of an anti-doping rule violation, then the athlete shall not receive any stipend or athlete support funding from USAW for the period of ineligibility. If USAW has made a payment after the anti-doping violation occurred but before the sanction was imposed, the athlete shall be required to repay any stipend or athlete support funding received from USAW during the period of ineligibility. If (1) a stipend or athlete support funding is terminated as a result of a sanction, (2) the sanction decision is appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), and (3) the arbitrator(s) vacates or reduces the period of

ineligibility, then USAW will use reasonable means to compensate the athlete appropriately and proportionately to the loss of stipend or athlete support funding during the period the athlete would have received the funding.

If an athlete receives a provisional suspension in a pending anti-doping matter, then any USAW stipend or athlete support funding will be suspended and accrued. If the athlete is subsequently found not to have committed an anti-doping violation or receives a sanction less than a period of ineligibility, the payment accrued will be paid to the athlete. If that determination is appealed to CAS and the arbitrator(s) imposes a sanction of ineligibility on the athlete, the athlete shall be required to repay any stipend or athlete support funding received from USAW during the period of ineligibility.

Injury Clause

For the purposes of this document, an “injury” is any condition (physical or mental) which affects an athlete’s ability to train at a level appropriate for elite international performance. Any physical injury that may limit an athlete’s ability to train must be promptly reported to the High Performance team with supporting documentation from a certified medical professional. Any mental health condition that may limit the athlete’s ability to train must be promptly reported to USAW *and* USAW’s designated Sport Psychologist and must include supporting documentation from a certified mental health professional.

If an athlete is injured while receiving a stipend, they may continue to receive the stipend under the following circumstances:

- The athlete and personal coach promptly report the injury to the High Performance team, especially in cases where it would affect ability to post readiness videos or alter posted program; and
- The athlete and coach cooperate with the High Performance team in recovery and therapy plans; and,
- The athlete promptly requests an extension of their stipend during recovery from injury by submitting a written (email shall suffice) request to the USAW High Performance team.

Pregnancy Clause

An athlete who meets the USAW Stipend System criteria as of the date of notification to USAW of her pregnancy will continue to receive the same amount of qualified stipend payment for the duration of the pregnancy plus an additional one-year period from the date of birth of the child or end of pregnancy, provided the athlete agrees that it is her intent to return to competition at an elite level and has fully complied with the [Pregnancy Support Terms and Conditions](#). If the athlete re-qualifies for the USAW Stipend System at any point during pregnancy or within the year after the end of her pregnancy, USAW will honor any higher amount for which she qualified. Receipt of Stipend System benefits does not require that the athlete continue to train during pregnancy or for the one-year period subsequent to pregnancy. Upon the conclusion of the one-year period post-pregnancy, the athlete must then re-qualify for the Stipend System. USAW will keep an athlete’s pregnancy status confidential and will not discriminate or retaliate against the athlete for being pregnant.

Maximum Number of Athletes

There is no limit of athletes per bodyweight category during this funding period. Any athlete, regardless of weight category, that achieves Olympian, Tier 2, or Tier 3 standards will receive stipend funding. Youth and junior categories are grouped separately according to the Development Level funding (see below) and are limited to three athletes per category.

Payment of Personal Coaches

If an Olympian, Tier 2 or Tier 3 stipend level athlete wishes to pay their personal coach 1 of record, they may do so from their support funding. The coach must be their coach 1 of record in their USAW membership profile *and* have been the coach 1 of record for at least 12 months. The coach payment cannot exceed \$150 per month. Coach payments will be deducted from the athlete's support funding and are contingent on the coach meeting the following requirements:

- The coach must be a current member of USAW and in good standing.
- The coach must have a current background screen, SafeSport certification, USADA Coach Advantage certification and USAW coach certification of any level.
- The coach must meet with the Senior Director of Sport Performance (and other High Performance team members as determined by USAW in its sole discretion) monthly to discuss overall training plan and goals.

Olympian

Monthly Stipend Payment	\$2,500 per month
Athlete Support Funding	\$ 800/month (Services Only)

Definition

Athletes who were selected by USAW to the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

Qualification Criteria

Athletes achieve Olympian level stipend by being named to the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Olympian level funding is limited to 3 women and 3 men.

***IMPORTANT NOTE:** Athletes receiving this level of funding must continue to be eligible to represent the U.S., including any IWF, USADA, USOPC or USAW requirements to continue eligibility. If an athlete officially retires (which requires formally notifying USADA of such retirement), they will immediately be given a 60-day notice of removal from the stipend program.*

Tier 2

Monthly Stipend Payment	\$2,000 per month
Athlete Support Funding	\$500/month (Services only)

Definition

Athletes who retained Olympic eligibility through May 24, 2024 and were receiving Paris A funding at that time, and were not selected for the 2024 Paris Olympic Team.

Qualification Criteria

- Maintained Paris 2024 Olympic Eligibility through May 24, 2024; and,
- Completed Olympic Qualifying at the Paris A level of funding but were not selected to the 2024 Olympic Team; and,
- Qualify for the 2024 IWF World Championships.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Athletes receiving this level of funding must continue to be eligible to represent the U.S. in the upcoming 2024 IWF World Championships, including any IWF, USADA, USOPC or USAW requirements to continue eligibility. If any athlete at this level is selected for the 2024 IWF World Championships and, except for cases of injury, declines the invitation to be on the team, USAW will begin a 60 day stipend removal period. Athletes at this level must demonstrate by September 4, 2024 that they can do at least 85% of their qualifying total for the 2024 IWF World Championships. No later than November 4, 2024, athletes at this level must demonstrate that they can do at least 90% of their qualifying total for the 2024 IWF World Championships.

Tier 3

Monthly Stipend Payment	\$1,000 per month
Athlete Support Funding	\$200/month (Services Only)

Definition

Athletes who retained Olympic eligibility through May 24, 2024 and were receiving Paris B funding at that time, and were not selected to the 2024 Paris Olympic Team. Also, athletes that were not Olympic eligible through May 24, 2024 but achieved a total during the period (September 1, 2023 through May 1, 2024) at an IWF-sanctioned event, which would have put them in the top 10 of the OQR (as of February 1, 2024) or made them the number 1 athlete in the Pan Am Federation in their bodyweight category (as of February 1, 2024).

Qualification Criteria

- Are receiving Paris B stipend as of May 24, 2024; or
- Achieved a total during the qualifying period (September 1, 2023 through May 1, 2024), at an IWF-sanctioned event, that would have placed them in the top 10 of the OQR (as of February 1, 2024), or made them the number 1 athlete in the Pan Am Federation in their bodyweight category (as of February 1, 2024); and,
- Qualify for the 2024 IWF World Championships.

OQR (as of February 1, 2024):

Women

	W49kg	W59kg	71kg	W81kg	W+81kg
1.	216	247	273	284	315
2.	200	236	262	268	295
3.	200	234	261	266	287
4.	200	233	256	265	286
5.	198	232	249	261	283
6.	194	225	246	254	276
7.	193	224	244	253	275
8.	191	223	243	252	272
9.	191	222	242	252	264
10.	190	221	241	247	263

Men

	M61kg	M73kg	M89kg	M102kg	M+102kg
1.	314	352	396	404	474
2.	302	349	395	400	464
3.	300	344	390	399	462
4.	299	341	385	397	452
5.	298	340	384	394	445

6.	298	340	380	394	437
7.	296	338	377	391	433
8.	293	335	375	390	431
9.	292	335	372	390	420
10.	292	334	371	388	419

Top Pan Am (as of February 1, 2024):

Women

49kg	59kg	71kg	81kg	+81kg
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Men

61kg	73kg	89kg	102kg	+102kg
N/A	333	N/A	388	387

IMPORTANT NOTE: Athletes receiving this level of funding must continue to be eligible to represent the U.S. in the upcoming 2024 IWF World Championships, including any IWF, USADA, USOPC or USAW requirements to continue eligibility. If any athlete at this level is selected for the 2024 IWF World Championships and, except for cases of injury, declines the invitation to be on the team, USAW will begin a 60 day stipend removal period. Athletes at this level must demonstrate by September 4, 2024 that they can do at least 85% of their qualifying total for the 2024 IWF World Championships. No later than November 4, 2024, athletes at this level must demonstrate that they can do at least 90% of their qualifying total for the 2024 IWF World Championships.

Developmental

Definition

Athletes at the youth, junior and U23 (transitioning out of the junior) levels with prospects of competing at future Olympic Games and the IWF World Championships. Any athlete that qualifies for Olympian, Tier 2 or Tier 3 is ineligible for this level.

Athletes who qualified for the Developmental level prior to August 1, 2024 will remain at this level through December 31, 2024. No new athletes can qualify for Developmental level from August 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024. For explanation on how Developmental level athletes qualified please refer to archived USAW Stipend System (see <https://www.usaweighting.org/resources/athlete-information-and-programs/international-team-and-athlete-funding-information>).