

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 1525

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE CHRIST.

3073H.02I

JOSEPH ENGLER, Chief Clerk

AN ACT

To amend chapter 173, RSMo, by adding thereto two new sections relating to college tuition for public safety personnel.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 173, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto two new sections, to be
2 known as sections 173.2655 and 173.2660, to read as follows:

**173.2655. 1. This section and section 173.2660 shall be known and may be cited
2 as the "Public Safety Recruitment and Retention Act".**

**3 2. For purposes of this section and section 173.2660, unless the context clearly
4 indicates otherwise, the following terms mean:**

**5 (1) "Advanced emergency medical technician", as such term is defined in section
6 190.100;**

**7 (2) "Department", the department of higher education and workforce
8 development;**

9 (3) "Emergency medical dispatcher", as such term is defined in section 190.100;

10 (4) "Emergency medical technician", as such term is defined in section 190.100;

**11 (5) "Firefighter", any officer or employee of a fire department who is employed
12 for the purpose of fighting fires, excluding volunteer firefighters and anyone employed
13 in a clerical or other capacity not involving fire-fighting duties;**

**14 (6) "Legal dependent", as such term is defined by the United States Department
15 of Education for purposes of the Free Application for Student Financial Aid;**

EXPLANATION — Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets ~~thus~~ in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted from the law. Matter in **bold-face** type in the above bill is proposed language.

16 (7) "Line of duty", any action that public safety personnel is authorized or
17 obligated by law, rule, or regulation to perform, related to or as a condition of
18 employment or service;

19 (8) "Open seat", a vacant position in a class, course, or program that is available
20 for enrollment, and which may become available when a student drops out or transfers,
21 or when a class, course, or program has unused capacity, allowing new students to
22 register or enroll;

23 (9) "Paramedic", as such term is defined in section 190.100;

24 (10) "Police officer", any person who, by virtue of office or public employment,
25 is vested by law with the power and duty to make arrests for violation of the laws of the
26 state of Missouri or ordinances of any municipality thereof, while acting within the
27 scope of his or her authority as an employee of a public law enforcement agency, as such
28 term is defined in section 590.1040;

29 (11) "Public institution of higher education", a public community college, state
30 college, or state university;

31 (12) "Public safety personnel", includes any police officer, firefighter,
32 paramedic, emergency medical dispatcher, emergency medical technician, or
33 advanced emergency medical technician who is trained and authorized by law or rule
34 to render emergency medical assistance or treatment;

35 (13) "Tuition", the charges and cost of tuition as set by the governing body of a
36 public institution of higher education, including fees such as course fees, activity fees,
37 technology fees, and mandatory fees charged by such institution to all full-time students
38 as a condition of enrollment, but excluding the costs of room, board, books, and any
39 other educational materials, equipment, or supplies.

40 3. Subject to appropriation, public safety personnel with at least six years of
41 service shall be entitled to an award worth up to one hundred percent of the resident
42 tuition charges of a public institution of higher education if the individual:

43 (1) Possesses one of the following:

44 (a) A current, valid license issued by the department of health and senior
45 services authorizing such person to serve as an emergency medical technician, advanced
46 emergency medical technician, or paramedic;

47 (b) A current, valid license issued by the peace officer standards and training
48 commission authorizing such person to serve as a peace officer pursuant to the
49 provisions of chapter 590;

50 (c) A current, valid certificate issued by the division of fire safety authorizing
51 such person to serve as a firefighter; or

52 (d) A current, valid certificate confirming successful completion of an
53 emergency medical dispatcher course and any ongoing training requirements
54 pursuant to section 650.340; and

55 (e) For all public safety personnel, a certificate of verification signed by the
56 individual's supervisor or employer verifying that such individual is currently employed
57 full-time as public safety personnel and trained and authorized by law or rule to render
58 emergency medical assistance or treatment;

59 (2) Meets all admission requirements of the public institution of higher
60 education;

61 (3) Has not already earned a baccalaureate degree;

62 (4) Pursues studies leading to an associate degree or baccalaureate degree in one
63 of the following academic subject areas:

64 (a) For police officers, eligible subjects include forensic science, fisheries and
65 wildlife, political science, psychology, history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology,
66 global studies, Spanish, journalism, advertising, public relations, nutrition and health
67 sciences, communication sciences and disorders, and criminal justice;

68 (b) For firefighters, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, and advanced
69 emergency medical technicians, eligible subjects include biology, chemistry,
70 biochemistry, microbiology, nutrition and health sciences, communication sciences
71 and disorders, Spanish, advertising, public relations, paramedicine, fire science, fire
72 technology, fire administration, fire management, communications, homeland security,
73 emergency management, disaster management, and crisis management; and

74 (c) For emergency medical dispatchers, eligible subjects include any subject
75 specified in paragraph (a) or (b) of this subdivision;

76 (5) Submits verification of the professional license or certificate and the
77 certificate of verification required by subdivision (1) of this subsection to the
78 department, in a form and manner as prescribed by the department;

79 (6) Files with the department documentation showing proof of employment as
80 public safety personnel and proof of residence in Missouri each year such individual or
81 such individual's legal dependent applies for and receives the tuition award;

82 (7) First applies for all other forms of federal and state student financial aid
83 before applying for a tuition award, including, but not limited to, filing the United States
84 Department of Education Free Application for Federal Student Aid and, if applicable,
85 applying for financial assistance pursuant to the provisions of 38 U.S.C. Section 3301 et
86 seq.; and

87 **(8) Submits a document to the department confirming that the public safety**
88 **personnel has satisfied the provisions of subdivision (7) of this subsection, to be**
89 **submitted in a form and manner as prescribed by the department.**

90 **4. Public safety personnel may receive the tuition award pursuant to subsection**
91 **3 of this section for up to five years if they otherwise continue to be eligible for the**
92 **tuition award. The five years of tuition award eligibility starts once the individual**
93 **applies for and receives the tuition award for the first time and is available to such**
94 **individual for the next five consecutive years or the individual's achievement of one**
95 **hundred twenty credit hours, whichever occurs first.**

96 **5. Subject to appropriation, a legal dependent of public safety personnel with at**
97 **least ten years of service shall be entitled to a tuition award worth up to one hundred**
98 **percent of the resident tuition charges of any public institution of higher education for**
99 **an associate or baccalaureate degree program if such public safety personnel satisfies**
100 **the provisions of subdivisions (1), (5), and (6) of subsection 3 of this section and the legal**
101 **dependent:**

102 **(1) Executes an agreement with the department in accordance with the**
103 **provisions of section 173.2660;**

104 **(2) Has not previously earned a baccalaureate degree;**

105 **(3) Meets all admission requirements of the public institution of higher**
106 **education;**

107 **(4) First applies for all other forms of federal and state student financial aid**
108 **before applying for a tuition award, including, but not limited to, filing the United States**
109 **Department of Education Free Application for Federal Student Aid and, if applicable,**
110 **applying for financial assistance pursuant to the provisions of 38 U.S.C. Section 3301 et**
111 **seq.;**

112 **(5) Submits a document to the department confirming that the legal dependent**
113 **has satisfied subdivision (4) of this subsection, to be submitted in a form and manner as**
114 **prescribed by the department;**

115 **(6) Submits the verification required pursuant to subsection 8 of this section to**
116 **the department; and**

117 **(7) Pursues studies leading to an associate degree or baccalaureate degree in any**
118 **one of the subject areas specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) subdivision (4) of subsection 3**
119 **of this section.**

120 **6. A legal dependent may receive the tuition award for up to five years if the**
121 **public safety personnel and the legal dependent continue to be eligible for such tuition**
122 **award. The five years of tuition award eligibility starts once the legal dependent applies**
123 **for and receives the tuition award for the first time and is available to such legal**

124 dependent for the next five consecutive years or the legal dependent's achievement of
125 one hundred twenty credit hours, whichever occurs first.

126 7. The tuition award shall be worth up to one hundred percent of the public
127 safety personnel's or the legal dependent's tuition remaining due after subtracting
128 awarded federal financial aid grants and state scholarships and grants for the eligible
129 public safety personnel or legal dependent during the time the public safety personnel or
130 legal dependent is enrolled. To remain eligible, the public safety personnel or legal
131 dependent shall comply with all requirements of the institution for continued attendance
132 and award of an associate degree or a baccalaureate degree.

133 8. (1) An application for a tuition award shall include a verification of the public
134 safety personnel's satisfaction of the requirements of subdivisions (1), (5), and (6) of
135 subsection 3 of this section. The public safety personnel shall include such verification
136 when he or she or his or her legal dependent is applying to the department for a tuition
137 waiver.

138 (2) The death of public safety personnel in the line of duty which occurs after
139 submission of an application for a tuition award shall not disqualify such individual's
140 otherwise eligible legal dependent from receiving the tuition award. In such case, in lieu
141 of submitting the certificate of verification provided for in subdivision (1) of this
142 subsection, the legal dependent shall submit a statement attesting that:

143 (a) At the time of death, such public safety personnel satisfied the requirements
144 of subdivision (1) of this subsection; and

145 (b) Such public safety personnel died in the line of duty.

146 9. The department shall provide a tuition award to public safety personnel and
147 legal dependents who satisfy the provisions of this section and section 173.2660, if
148 applicable, and apply for an open seat at a public institution of higher education, but
149 shall not provide a tuition award if doing so would require the institution to create
150 additional seats exceeding class, course, or program capacity.

151 10. All applicants for a tuition award shall submit their applications to the
152 department no later than December fifteenth annually. No later than March first
153 annually, the department shall send written notice of the applicant's eligibility or
154 ineligibility for the tuition award and state whether the application has been approved
155 or denied. If the applicant is determined not to be eligible for the tuition award, the
156 notice shall include the reason or reasons for such determination. If the application is
157 denied, the notice shall include the reason or reasons for the denial.

158 11. The department shall promulgate rules to implement the provisions of this
159 section and section 173.2660. Any rule or portion of a rule, as that term is defined in
160 section 536.010, that is created under the authority delegated in this section shall

161 become effective only if it complies with and is subject to all of the provisions of chapter
162 536 and, if applicable, section 536.028. This section and chapter 536 are nonseverable
163 and if any of the powers vested with the general assembly pursuant to chapter 536 to
164 review, to delay the effective date, or to disapprove and annul a rule are subsequently
165 held unconstitutional, then the grant of rulemaking authority and any rule proposed or
166 adopted after August 28, 2025, shall be invalid and void.

167 12. (1) There is hereby created in the state treasury the "Public Safety
168 Recruitment and Retention Fund", which shall consist of moneys appropriated by the
169 general assembly for the purpose of implementing the provisions of this section and
170 section 173.2660. The state treasurer shall be custodian of the fund. In accordance with
171 sections 30.170 and 30.180, the state treasurer may approve disbursements. The fund
172 shall be a dedicated fund and money in the fund shall be used solely by the department
173 of higher education and workforce development for the purpose of granting tuition
174 awards as provided in this section and 173.2660.

175 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 33.080 to the contrary, any moneys
176 remaining in the fund at the end of the biennium shall not revert to the credit of the
177 general revenue fund.

178 (3) The state treasurer shall invest moneys in the fund in the same manner as
179 other funds are invested. Any interest and moneys earned on such investments shall be
180 credited to the fund.

181 13. In any year in which moneys in the public safety recruitment and retention
182 fund are insufficient to fully fund tuition awards for all eligible applicants, tuition
183 awards shall be awarded in the following order of priority; provided that, in the event of
184 a tie in eligibility, available funds shall be distributed on a pro rata basis:

185 (1) Priority class one shall include public safety personnel, in the following
186 order:

187 (a) Public safety personnel in departments located wholly or partially in counties
188 or cities not within a county with the highest crime rate per capita, as determined by the
189 most recent uniform crime reporting statistics from the Federal Bureau of
190 Investigation; and

191 (b) Public safety personnel with the most years of service; and

192 (2) Priority class two shall include dependents of public safety personnel, in the
193 following order:

194 (a) Dependents of public safety personnel in departments located wholly or
195 partially in counties or cities not within a county with the highest crime rate per capita,
196 as determined by the most recent uniform crime reporting statistics from the Federal
197 Bureau of Investigation; and

198 (b) Dependents of public safety personnel with the most years of service.

199 14. The tuition awards provided for in this section and section 173.2660 are
200 subject to appropriation. If there are no moneys in the fund established in subsection 12
201 of this section, no tuition awards shall be granted.

173.2660. 1. Each legal dependent who is a tuition award recipient pursuant to
2 the provisions of section 173.2655 shall execute an agreement as provided in this section.
3 Such agreement shall include the following terms, as appropriate:

4 (1) The tuition award recipient agrees to reside within the state of Missouri for a
5 period of five years following the use of the tuition award;

6 (2) Each year during the five-year period following use of the tuition award, the
7 tuition award recipient agrees to file a state income tax return and provide a copy of
8 such tax return to the department to document that such recipient still resides in the
9 state of Missouri;

10 (3) If the tuition award recipient fails to annually file a tax return to prove
11 residency in the state of Missouri for the five-year period following the use of the tuition
12 award or fails to remain a resident of Missouri for the five-year period following the use
13 of the tuition award, the tuition award recipient agrees that the tuition award shall be
14 treated as a loan to such recipient, subject to the following conditions:

15 (a) Interest shall be charged on the unpaid balance of the amount received from
16 the date the recipient ceases to reside in Missouri until the amount received is paid back
17 to the state. The interest rate shall be adjusted annually and shall be equal to one
18 percentage point over the prevailing United States prime rate in effect on January first
19 of such year; and

20 (b) The servicer of such loans shall be the higher education loan authority of the
21 state of Missouri created pursuant to sections 173.350 to 173.445; and

22 (4) Any residency, filing, or payment obligation incurred by the tuition award
23 recipient under section 173.2655 is canceled in the event of the tuition award recipient's
24 total and permanent disability or death.

25 2. The five-year residency requirement begins once the legal dependent applies
26 for and receives the tuition award for the first time and continues until the tuition award
27 recipient's:

28 (1) Completion of the five-year tuition award eligibility period;

29 (2) Completion of a baccalaureate degree at a public institution of higher
30 education;

31 (3) Completion of an associate degree at a public community college and
32 notification to the department that such recipient does not intend to pursue a

33 **baccalaureate degree or additional associate degree using tuition awards pursuant to the**
34 **public safety recruitment and retention act; or**
35 **(4) Notification to the department that such recipient does not plan to use**
36 **additional tuition awards pursuant to the public safety recruitment and retention act.**

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