

# HOUSE BILL NO. 3439

## 103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE MCGAUGH.

7269H.011

JOSEPH ENGLER, Chief Clerk

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### AN ACT

To repeal section 173.2655, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof one new section relating to college tuition for public safety personnel.

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

Section A. Section 173.2655, RSMo, is repealed and one new section enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as section 173.2655, to read as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

(5) "Institution of higher education", a public community college, state college, or state university located in Missouri; or an approved private institution, as such term is defined in section 173.1102, that chooses to accept any tuition award money pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection 7 of this section; or an emergency medical services training entity accredited

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.

17 or certified by the Missouri department of health and senior services pursuant to the  
18 provisions of section 190.131;

19 (6) "Legal dependent", as such term is defined by the United States Department of  
20 Education for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid;

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

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

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

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

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

36 (12) "Telecommunicator first responder", as such term is defined in section 650.320;

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

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

45 (1) Possesses one of the following:

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

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

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

54 (d) A current, valid certificate confirming successful completion of any ongoing  
55 training requirements pursuant to section 650.340; and

56 (e) For all public safety personnel, a certificate of verification signed by the  
57 individual's supervisor or employer verifying that such individual is:

58 **a. Either** currently employed full-time as public safety personnel **or, for a volunteer**  
59 **firefighter, currently carried on the rolls of a fire department for the purpose of fighting**  
60 **fires;** and

61 **b.** Trained and authorized by law or rule to render emergency medical assistance or  
62 treatment;

63 (2) Meets all admission requirements of the institution of higher education;

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

65 (4) Pursues studies leading to a license or certification issued by a training entity  
66 accredited or certified pursuant to the provisions of section 190.131, an associate degree or  
67 baccalaureate degree in one of the following academic subject areas:

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

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

78 (c) For telecommunicator first responders, eligible subjects include any subject  
79 specified in paragraph (a) or (b) of this subdivision;

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

83 (6) Files with the department documentation showing proof of employment as public  
84 safety personnel **or status as a volunteer firefighter** and proof of residence in Missouri each  
85 year such individual or such individual's legal dependent applies for and receives the tuition  
86 award;

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

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

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

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

105 (1) Executes an agreement with the department in accordance with the provisions of  
106 section 173.2660;

107 (2) Has not previously earned a baccalaureate degree;

108 (3) Meets all admission requirements of the institution of higher education;

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

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

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

118 (7) Pursues studies leading to a license or certification issued by a training entity  
119 accredited or certified pursuant to the provisions of section 190.131, an associate degree or  
120 baccalaureate degree in any one of the subject areas specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of  
121 subdivision (4) of subsection 3 of this section.

122 6. A legal dependent may receive the tuition award for up to five years if the public  
123 safety personnel and the legal dependent continue to be eligible for such tuition award. The  
124 five years of tuition award eligibility starts once the legal dependent applies for and receives  
125 the tuition award for the first time and is available to such legal dependent for the next five  
126 consecutive years or the legal dependent's achievement of one hundred twenty credit hours,  
127 whichever occurs first.

128 7. The tuition award shall be worth:

129 (1) Up to one hundred percent of the public safety personnel's or the legal dependent's  
130 tuition remaining due after subtracting awarded federal financial aid grants and state  
131 scholarships and grants for the eligible public safety personnel or legal dependent during the  
132 time the public safety personnel or legal dependent is enrolled. To remain eligible, the public  
133 safety personnel or legal dependent shall comply with all requirements of the institution for  
134 continued attendance and award of an associate degree or a baccalaureate degree; or

135 (2) In the case of tuition at an approved private institution, up to one hundred percent  
136 of the public safety personnel's or the legal dependent's tuition remaining due after subtracting  
137 awarded federal financial aid grants and state scholarships and grants for the eligible public  
138 safety personnel or legal dependent during the time the public safety personnel or legal  
139 dependent is enrolled, up to a maximum amount that is equal to the total cost of tuition and  
140 mandatory fees charged to a Missouri resident at the public community college, state college,  
141 or state university with the highest combined tuition and mandatory fee cost in the state at the  
142 time a tuition grant is awarded, as determined by the department. A private institution that  
143 chooses to accept as a tuition payment any tuition award money pursuant to this subdivision  
144 shall not charge the recipient of the tuition award any tuition that exceeds the maximum  
145 combined tuition and mandatory fee cost as determined by the department prior to the  
146 application of the tuition award.

147 8. (1) An application for a tuition award shall include a verification of the public  
148 safety personnel's satisfaction of the requirements of subdivisions (1), (5), and (6) of  
149 subsection 3 of this section. The public safety personnel shall include such verification when  
150 he or she or his or her legal dependent is applying to the department for a tuition waiver.

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

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

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

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

164           10. All applicants for a tuition award shall submit their applications to the department  
165 no later than December fifteenth annually. No later than March first annually, the department  
166 shall send written notice of the applicant's eligibility or ineligibility for the tuition award and  
167 state whether the application has been approved or denied. If the applicant is determined not  
168 to be eligible for the tuition award, the notice shall include the reason or reasons for such  
169 determination. If the application is denied, the notice shall include the reason or reasons for  
170 the denial.

171           11. The department shall promulgate rules to implement the provisions of this section  
172 and section 173.2660. Any rule or portion of a rule, as that term is defined in section 536.010,  
173 that is created under the authority delegated in this section shall become effective only if it  
174 complies with and is subject to all of the provisions of chapter 536 and, if applicable, section  
175 536.028. This section and chapter 536 are nonseverable and if any of the powers vested with  
176 the general assembly pursuant to chapter 536 to review, to delay the effective date, or to  
177 disapprove and annul a rule are subsequently held unconstitutional, then the grant of  
178 rulemaking authority and any rule proposed or adopted after August 28, 2025, shall be invalid  
179 and void.

180           12. (1) There is hereby created in the state treasury the "Public Safety Recruitment  
181 and Retention Fund", which shall consist of moneys appropriated by the general assembly or  
182 any gifts, donations, or bequests for the purpose of implementing the provisions of this  
183 section and section 173.2660. The state treasurer shall be custodian of the fund. In  
184 accordance with sections 30.170 and 30.180, the state treasurer may approve disbursements.  
185 The fund shall be a dedicated fund and money in the fund shall be used solely by the  
186 department of higher education and workforce development for the purpose of granting  
187 tuition awards as provided in this section and section 173.2660.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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