

HOUSE BILL NO. 3461

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE KIMBLE.

7356H.011

JOSEPH ENGLER, Chief Clerk

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.

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Section A. Section 173.2655, RSMo, is repealed and one new section enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as section 173.2655, to read as follows: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) "Crime laboratory", **any crime laboratory, as defined in section 650.059, that is in good standing with the crime laboratory review commission and that is not suspended or otherwise prohibited from receiving grant funding under section 650.059;**

(3) "Crime laboratory technician", **any person who is employed by a crime laboratory for the purpose of examining physical evidence in criminal matters;**

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

~~(3)~~ (5) "Emergency medical technician", as such term is defined in section 190.100;

~~(4)~~ (6) "Firefighter", any officer or employee of a fire department who is employed for the purpose of fighting fires, excluding volunteer firefighters and anyone employed in a clerical or other capacity not involving fire-fighting duties;

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 ~~[(5)]~~ (7) "Institution of higher education", a public community college, state college,
18 or state university located in Missouri; or an approved private institution, as such term is
19 defined in section 173.1102, that chooses to accept any tuition award money pursuant to
20 subdivision (2) of subsection 7 of this section; or an emergency medical services training
21 entity accredited or certified by the Missouri department of health and senior services
22 pursuant to the provisions of section 190.131;

23 ~~[(6)]~~ (8) "Legal dependent", as such term is defined by the United States Department
24 of Education for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid;

25 ~~[(7)]~~ (9) "Line of duty", any action that public safety personnel is authorized or
26 obligated by law, rule, or regulation to perform, related to or as a condition of employment or
27 service;

28 ~~[(8)]~~ (10) "Open seat", a vacant position in a class, course, or program that is
29 available for enrollment, and which may become available when a student drops out or
30 transfers, or when a class, course, or program has unused capacity, allowing new students to
31 register or enroll;

32 ~~[(9)]~~ (11) "Paramedic", as such term is defined in section 190.100;

33 ~~[(10)]~~ (12) "Police officer", any person who, by virtue of office or public
34 employment, is vested by law with the power and duty to make arrests for violation of the
35 laws of the state of Missouri or ordinances of any municipality thereof, while acting within
36 the scope of his or her authority as an employee of a public law enforcement agency, as such
37 term is defined in section 590.1040;

38 ~~[(11)]~~ (13) "Public safety personnel", includes any police officer, firefighter,
39 paramedic, telecommunicator first responder, emergency medical technician, or advanced
40 emergency medical technician who is trained and authorized by law or rule to render
41 emergency medical assistance or treatment, **and any crime laboratory technician**;

42 ~~[(12)]~~ (14) "Telecommunicator first responder", as such term is defined in section
43 650.320;

44 ~~[(13)]~~ (15) "Tuition", the charges and cost of tuition as set by the governing body of
45 an institution of higher education, including fees such as course fees, activity fees, technology
46 fees, and mandatory fees charged by such institution to all full-time students as a condition of
47 enrollment, but excluding the costs of room, board, books, and any other educational
48 materials, equipment, or supplies.

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

52 (1) Possesses one of the following:

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

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

59 (c) **A current, valid certificate of verification signed by the individual's**
60 **supervisor or employer verifying that such individual is currently employed full-time as**
61 **a crime laboratory technician;**

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

64 ~~[(d)]~~ (e) A current, valid certificate confirming successful completion of any ongoing
65 training requirements pursuant to section 650.340; and

66 ~~[(e)]~~ (f) For all public safety personnel, a certificate of verification signed by the
67 individual's supervisor or employer verifying that such individual is currently employed full-
68 time as public safety personnel and trained and authorized by law or rule to render emergency
69 medical assistance or treatment. **For crime laboratory technicians, the certificate of**
70 **verification described under paragraph (c) of this subdivision meets the requirements of**
71 **this paragraph;**

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

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

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

77 (a) For police officers **and crime laboratory technicians**, eligible subjects include
78 forensic science, fisheries and wildlife, political science, psychology, history, philosophy,
79 sociology, anthropology, global studies, Spanish, journalism, advertising, public relations,
80 nutrition and health sciences, communication sciences and disorders, and criminal justice;

81 (b) For firefighters, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, and advanced
82 emergency medical technicians, eligible subjects include biology, chemistry, biochemistry,
83 microbiology, nutrition and health sciences, communication sciences and disorders, Spanish,
84 advertising, public relations, paramedicine, fire science, fire technology, fire administration,
85 fire management, communications, homeland security, emergency management, disaster
86 management, and crisis management; and

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

89 (5) Submits verification of the professional license or certificate, **if applicable**, and
90 the certificate of verification required by subdivision (1) of this subsection to the department,
91 in a form and manner as prescribed by the department;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

136 7. The tuition award shall be worth:

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

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

155 8. (1) An application for a tuition award shall include a verification of the public
156 safety personnel's satisfaction of the requirements of subdivisions (1), (5), and (6) of
157 subsection 3 of this section. The public safety personnel shall include such verification when
158 he or she or his or her legal dependent is applying to the department for a tuition waiver.

159 (2) The death of public safety personnel in the line of duty which occurs after
160 submission of an application for a tuition award shall not disqualify such individual's
161 otherwise eligible legal dependent from receiving the tuition award. In such case, in lieu of

162 submitting the certificate of verification provided for in subdivision (1) of this subsection, the
163 legal dependent shall submit a statement attesting that:

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

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

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

172 10. All applicants for a tuition award shall submit their applications to the department
173 no later than December fifteenth annually. No later than March first annually, the department
174 shall send written notice of the applicant's eligibility or ineligibility for the tuition award and
175 state whether the application has been approved or denied. If the applicant is determined not
176 to be eligible for the tuition award, the notice shall include the reason or reasons for such
177 determination. If the application is denied, the notice shall include the reason or reasons for
178 the denial.

179 11. The department shall promulgate rules to implement the provisions of this section
180 and section 173.2660. Any rule or portion of a rule, as that term is defined in section 536.010,
181 that is created under the authority delegated in this section shall become effective only if it
182 complies with and is subject to all of the provisions of chapter 536 and, if applicable, section
183 536.028. This section and chapter 536 are nonseverable and if any of the powers vested with
184 the general assembly pursuant to chapter 536 to review, to delay the effective date, or to
185 disapprove and annul a rule are subsequently held unconstitutional, then the grant of
186 rulemaking authority and any rule proposed or adopted after August 28, 2025, shall be invalid
187 and void.

188 12. (1) There is hereby created in the state treasury the "Public Safety Recruitment
189 and Retention Fund", which shall consist of moneys appropriated by the general assembly or
190 any gifts, donations, or bequests for the purpose of implementing the provisions of this
191 section and section 173.2660. The state treasurer shall be custodian of the fund. In
192 accordance with sections 30.170 and 30.180, the state treasurer may approve disbursements.
193 The fund shall be a dedicated fund and money in the fund shall be used solely by the
194 department of higher education and workforce development for the purpose of granting
195 tuition awards as provided in this section and section 173.2660.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

✓