
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 976 Session of
2005

INTRODUCED BY WAUGH, D. WHITE, PIPPY, ROBBINS, WENGER, MADIGAN,
O'PAKE, BOSCOLA, PUNT, FERLO, CORMAN, ERICKSON, ARMSTRONG,
RAFFERTY, EARLL, LOGAN, WOZNIAK, COSTA, GREENLEAF, FONTANA,
ORIE, WONDERLING, MUSTO, KASUNIC, RHOADES AND KITCHEN,
OCTOBER 27, 2005

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, OCTOBER 27, 2005

AN ACT

1 Establishing a tuition credit program for certain members of
2 volunteer fire companies, volunteer ambulance services and
3 volunteer rescue squads and their dependent children and
4 spouses; and providing for the powers and duties of the
5 Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

6 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
7 hereby enacts as follows:

8 Section 1. Short title.

9 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Volunteer
10 Emergency Service Tuition Credit Act.

11 Section 2. Definitions.

12 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
13 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
14 context clearly indicates otherwise:

15 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance
16 Agency.

17 "Community college." A public college or technical institute
18 which is established and operated under Article XIX-A of the act

1 of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School
2 Code of 1949, and all branches or campuses of a community
3 college.

4 "Deceased volunteer." A volunteer who died in the
5 performance of that volunteer's official duties and who, at the
6 time of death, was in good standing with the applicable
7 volunteer ambulance service, volunteer fire company or volunteer
8 rescue squad.

9 "Family member." The surviving spouse or dependent child of
10 a deceased volunteer and the spouse or dependent child of a
11 volunteer permanently disabled in the performance of the
12 volunteer's official duties.

13 "Firefighter." A member of a volunteer fire company.

14 "Institution of higher education." Any of the following:

15 (1) A community college operating under Article XIX-A of
16 the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the
17 Public School Code of 1949.

18 (2) A university comprising the State System of Higher
19 Education.

20 (3) Any of the following State-related institutions:

21 (i) The Pennsylvania State University.

22 (ii) University of Pittsburgh.

23 (iii) Temple University.

24 (iv) Lincoln University.

25 (4) Any institution which is designated after the
26 effective date of this section as "State-related" by the
27 Commonwealth.

28 (5) A private college, university, vocational or other
29 postsecondary educational institution authorized under the
30 laws of this Commonwealth to grant degrees.

1 "State Fire Commissioner" or "commissioner." The
2 Pennsylvania State Fire Commissioner appointed under section 3
3 of the act of November 13, 1995 (P.L.604, No.61), known as the
4 State Fire Commissioner Act.

5 "Volunteer." A firefighter or member of a volunteer
6 ambulance service or volunteer rescue squad.

7 "Volunteer ambulance service." A nonprofit chartered
8 corporation, association or organization located in this
9 Commonwealth and regularly engaged in the service of providing
10 emergency medical care and transportation of patients.

11 "Volunteer emergency service." A volunteer ambulance
12 service, volunteer fire company or volunteer rescue squad.

13 "Volunteer fire company." A nonprofit chartered corporation,
14 association or organization located in this Commonwealth that
15 provides fire protection services and may offer other voluntary
16 emergency services within this Commonwealth. Voluntary emergency
17 services may include voluntary ambulance and voluntary rescue
18 services.

19 "Volunteer rescue squad." A nonprofit chartered corporation,
20 association or organization located in this Commonwealth which
21 provides rescue services in this Commonwealth.

22 Section 3. Tuition credits for volunteers and family members.

23 (a) General.--A person who is a volunteer in good standing
24 or a family member shall be eligible to enroll in postsecondary
25 courses on a tuition-credit basis in an institution of higher
26 education.

27 (b) Amount.--Any person eligible under subsection (a) may
28 receive tuition credit in the aggregate amount of \$2,500 per
29 year, not to exceed an aggregate maximum of \$10,000 over a four-
30 year service period.

1 (c) Availability.--The tuition credit may be utilized for a
2 course offered by any institution of higher education provided
3 that available classroom space permits and that tuition-paying
4 students constitute the minimum number required for the course.

5 (d) Fees.--Nothing in this act shall be construed to
6 prohibit any institution of higher education from requiring
7 registration and lab fees for individuals attending courses
8 under this act.

9 Section 4. Service obligation for volunteers and family
10 members.

11 In order to receive tuition credit, the volunteer shall agree
12 or the surviving spouse or dependent child of a deceased
13 volunteer shall agree to serve as a member of a volunteer
14 emergency service for a minimum of four years and sign an
15 agreement with the volunteer emergency service pledging four
16 years of service in exchange for the tuition credit. Following
17 each year of active volunteer services, the volunteer emergency
18 service shall provide the agency with a letter verifying that
19 the volunteer, dependent child or surviving spouse of a deceased
20 volunteer has been a member in good standing for the past 12
21 months and has performed the service required.

22 Section 5. Verification of academic requirement.

23 Upon completion of each semester, the volunteer or family
24 member shall submit a transcript to the agency to be maintained
25 in a permanent record. The volunteer or family member shall
26 maintain a "C" grade average in order to continue eligibility
27 for the tuition credit program.

28 Section 6. Agency duties.

29 The agency, in consultation with the Office of the State Fire
30 Commissioner, shall develop such procedures and forms as it

- 1 deems necessary to carry out the provisions of this act.
- 2 Section 7. Effective date.
- 3 This act shall take effect in 30 days.