

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2259 Session of
2010

INTRODUCED BY BURNS, BELFANTI, BRADFORD, BRENNAN, CALTAGIRONE,
CONKLIN, DALEY, DeWEESE, FABRIZIO, FAIRCHILD, FARRY, GABLER,
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SIPTROTH, SWANGER, TALLMAN, THOMAS, VULAKOVICH, WATERS,
WHITE, O'NEILL AND CASORIO, FEBRUARY 18, 2010

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS, FEBRUARY 18, 2010

AN ACT

1 Establishing a recruitment scholarship program for volunteer
2 fire companies, volunteer ambulance services and volunteer
3 rescue squads; providing for duties of the Pennsylvania
4 Higher Education Assistance Agency; and making an
5 appropriation.

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 Recruitment Service Scholarship 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.

1 "Degree-producing curriculum." A series of courses
2 programmed to culminate in a specific postsecondary degree or
3 diploma when successfully completed.

4 "Full-time study." Enrollment in an approved postsecondary
5 degree program for at least 12 credit hours per semester or at
6 least eight credit hours per quarter in an institution of higher
7 education.

8 "Institution of higher education." An accredited
9 postsecondary institution of higher education which provides a
10 course of study leading to the granting of a postsecondary
11 degree or diploma.

12 "Legal resident." A person whose principal domicile is
13 located within this Commonwealth in excess of one year.

14 "Part-time study." Enrollment in an approved postsecondary
15 degree program for at least six but less than 12 credit hours
16 per semester or at least four but less than eight credit hours
17 per quarter in an institution of higher education.

18 "Tuition." The total semester, quarter or credit hour cost
19 of instruction to the student as periodically published in the
20 catalog of the institution of higher education, excluding
21 mandatory fees, book charges and room and board.

22 "Tuition benefit." The payment of whatever cost is
23 attributable to the cost of tuition after the deduction of any
24 other available educational grant aid, not to exceed an amount
25 equal to the annual tuition charged by the State System of
26 Higher Education.

27 "Volunteer ambulance service." Any nonprofit chartered
28 corporation, association or organization located in this
29 Commonwealth and regularly engaged in the service of providing
30 emergency medical care and transportation of patients.

1 "Volunteer fire company." A nonprofit chartered corporation,
2 association or organization located in this Commonwealth that
3 provides fire protection services and may offer other voluntary
4 emergency services within this Commonwealth. Voluntary emergency
5 services may include voluntary ambulance and voluntary rescue
6 services.

7 "Volunteer rescue squad." Any nonprofit chartered
8 corporation, association or organization located in this
9 Commonwealth which provides rescue services in this
10 Commonwealth.

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

13 Section 3. Volunteer recruitment service scholarships.

14 (a) Program.--The agency is authorized, within amounts
15 appropriated or otherwise lawfully available from any other
16 source, to establish a recruitment scholarship program for
17 volunteer organizations.

18 (b) Award.--Notwithstanding any law, rule or regulation to
19 the contrary, the agency is authorized to grant, based upon
20 available funding, volunteer recruitment service scholarships
21 which shall be awarded in the following manner:

22 (1) Volunteer organizations may annually submit one
23 application to the agency.

24 (2) Volunteer organizations submitting an application
25 shall develop a policy for selecting the candidate that will
26 be forwarded to the agency.

27 (3) The agency shall designate a date by which all
28 applications shall be received by the agency.

29 (4) The agency shall award a volunteer recruitment
30 service scholarship to all eligible applicants unless the

1 number of applications received is greater than the funding
2 available for the program, in which case the agency shall
3 develop a random system for selecting the recipients.

4 (5) A recipient of the volunteer recruitment service
5 scholarship shall automatically continue to receive the
6 scholarship once awarded, provided that the recipient remains
7 compliant with the provisions of this section, the recipient
8 is continuously enrolled in a degree-producing curriculum at
9 an institution of higher education and funding is available.

10 (6) The agency shall develop a system for certifying
11 each semester or quarter that the recipient is compliant
12 with the conditions enumerated in section 4 prior to
13 receiving the tuition benefit.

14 Section 4. Qualifications.

15 Recipients of the volunteer recruitment service scholarships
16 shall:

17 (1) Have been a member of the volunteer organization for
18 less than six months at the time of the initial award,
19 provided that this paragraph shall not apply to any
20 individual under 23 years of age.

21 (2) Maintain an active volunteer status, as determined
22 by the volunteer organization, for the duration of the
23 scholarship.

24 (3) Have graduated from high school or have received a
25 high school equivalency diploma and shall not possess a
26 bachelor's degree or higher.

27 (4) Be enrolled in a degree-producing curriculum at an
28 institution of higher education located within a 50-mile
29 radius of the volunteer organization, or, provided that no
30 such institution exists, the next closest institution.

(5) Maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0.

(6) Be a legal resident of this Commonwealth.

(7) Apply for all other available Federal, State or other educational grant aid at the time of enrollment. Any grant aid or financial assistance received shall be utilized to offset the cost of tuition to the maximum extent possible, except that nothing shall require that aid or assistance received which may be used toward costs other than that of tuition shall be applied toward the cost of tuition.

Section 5. Use.

The tuition benefit provided by this act may be used for either part-time or full-time study.

Section 6. Discontinuance.

Upon the recipient's attainment of a bachelor's degree or cessation of status as a volunteer with the volunteer organization, whichever occurs first, the tuition benefit provided by this act shall be discontinued. The tuition benefit provided by this act shall be suspended at the direction of the agency for:

(1) A recipient's failure to continue to serve as a volunteer with the volunteer organization.

(2) The failure to maintain good academic progress and program pursuit.

(3) The failure to maintain sufficient academic standing to retain eligibility for any other financial assistance the recipient may be receiving.

(4) The failure to comply with any provision of this act.

Section 7. Limitations.

1 Unless otherwise provided for in this section, the tuition
2 benefit for the volunteer recruitment service scholarships shall
3 be on the terms and conditions set by the agency, provided that
4 any tuition benefit for:

5 (1) Full-time study shall not exceed an amount equal to
6 the annual tuition charged to the recipient or the tuition
7 charged by the State System of Higher Education, whichever is
8 less.

9 (2) Part-time study shall not exceed an amount equal to
10 the part-time tuition charged to the recipient or the per
11 credit hour tuition charged by the State System of Higher
12 Education multiplied by the number of credit hours taken,
13 whichever is less.

14 Section 8. Regulations.

15 The agency may promulgate regulations necessary for the
16 implementation of this act.

17 Section 9. Appropriation.

18 The sum of \$2,000,000, or as much thereof as may be
19 necessary, is hereby appropriated to the Pennsylvania Higher
20 Education Assistance Agency for the fiscal year July 1, 2010, to
21 June 30, 2011, to carry out the purposes of this act.

22 Section 10. Effective date.

23 This act shall take effect in 60 days.