
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2782 Session of
2020

INTRODUCED BY BURNS, KULIK, HILL-EVANS, YOUNGBLOOD, ROZZI,
SCHLOSSBERG, FREEMAN, HARKINS, READSHAW, DeLUCA, CIRESI AND
ZIMMERMAN, AUGUST 13, 2020

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS, AUGUST 13, 2020

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.

17 "Degree-producing curriculum." A series of courses designed
18 to culminate in a specific postsecondary degree or diploma when

1 successfully completed.

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

6 "Institution of higher education." An accredited
7 postsecondary institution of higher education that provides a
8 course of study leading to the granting of a postsecondary
9 degree or diploma.

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

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

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

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

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

29 "Volunteer fire company." A nonprofit chartered corporation,
30 association or organization located in this Commonwealth that

1 provides fire protection services and may offer other voluntary
2 emergency services within this Commonwealth. Voluntary emergency
3 services may include voluntary ambulance and voluntary rescue
4 services.

5 "Volunteer organization." A volunteer fire company,
6 volunteer ambulance service or volunteer rescue squad.

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

10 Section 3. Volunteer recruitment service scholarships.

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

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

19 (1) Volunteer organizations may annually submit one
20 application to the agency.

21 (2) Volunteer organizations submitting an application
22 shall develop a policy for selecting the candidate that will
23 be forwarded to the agency.

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

26 (4) The agency shall award a volunteer recruitment
27 service scholarship to all eligible applicants unless the
28 number of applications received is greater than the funding
29 available for the program, in which case the agency shall
30 develop a random system for selecting the recipients.

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

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

11 Section 4. Qualifications.

12 Recipients of the volunteer recruitment service scholarships
13 must:

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

18 (2) Maintain an active volunteer status, as determined
19 by the volunteer organization, for the duration of the
20 scholarship.

21 (3) Have graduated from high school or have received a
22 high school equivalency diploma and not possess a bachelor's
23 degree or higher.

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

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

30 (6) Be a legal resident of this Commonwealth.

1 (7) Apply for all other available Federal, State or
2 other educational grant aid at the time of enrollment. Any
3 grant aid or financial assistance received shall be utilized
4 to offset the cost of tuition to the maximum extent possible,
5 except that aid or assistance received which may be used
6 toward costs other than that of tuition need not be applied
7 toward the cost of tuition.

8 Section 5. Use.

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

11 Section 6. Discontinuance.

12 Upon the recipient's attainment of a bachelor's degree or
13 cessation of status as a volunteer with the volunteer
14 organization, whichever occurs first, the tuition benefit
15 provided by this act shall be discontinued. The tuition benefit
16 provided by this act shall be suspended at the direction of the
17 agency if the recipient fails to:

18 (1) Continue to serve as a volunteer with the volunteer
19 organization.

20 (2) Maintain good academic progress and program pursuit.

21 (3) Maintain sufficient academic standing to retain
22 eligibility for any other financial assistance the recipient
23 may be receiving.

24 (4) Comply with any provision of this act.

25 Section 7. Limitations.

26 Unless otherwise provided for in this section, the tuition
27 benefit for the volunteer recruitment service scholarships shall
28 be on the terms and conditions set by the agency, provided that
29 any tuition benefit for:

30 (1) Full-time study shall not exceed an amount equal to

1 the annual tuition charged to the recipient or the tuition
2 charged by the State System of Higher Education, whichever is
3 less.

4 (2) Part-time study shall not exceed an amount equal to
5 the part-time tuition charged to the recipient or the per
6 credit hour tuition charged by the State System of Higher
7 Education multiplied by the number of credit hours taken,
8 whichever is less.

9 Section 8. Regulations.

10 The agency may promulgate regulations necessary for the
11 implementation of this act.

12 Section 9. Appropriation.

13 The sum of \$2,000,000, or as much thereof as may be
14 necessary, is hereby appropriated to the Pennsylvania Higher
15 Education Assistance Agency for the fiscal year July 1, 2020, to
16 June 30, 2021, to carry out the purposes of this act.

17 Section 10. Effective date.

18 This act shall take effect in 60 days.