
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 149 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY J. WARD, PHILLIPS-HILL, K. WARD, BLAKE, COLLETT,
PITTMAN AND REGAN, FEBRUARY 1, 2021

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 1, 2021

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.

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

7 Section 1. Short title.

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

10 Section 2. Definitions.

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

14 "Community college." A public college or technical institute
15 which is established and operated under Article XIX-A of the act
16 of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School
17 Code of 1949, and all branches or campuses of a community
18 college.

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

1 "State Fire Commissioner" or "commissioner." The State Fire
2 Commissioner appointed under 35 Pa.C.S. § 7383 (relating to
3 State Fire Commissioner).

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

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

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

16 "Volunteer rescue squad." Any nonprofit chartered
17 corporation, association or organization located in this
18 Commonwealth which provides rescue services in this
19 Commonwealth.

20 Section 3. Tuition credit program.

21 (a) General rule.--A person who is an active member of a
22 volunteer fire company, volunteer ambulance service or volunteer
23 rescue squad in good standing and the dependent children and
24 spouse of such volunteer shall be eligible to enroll in
25 postsecondary courses on a tuition-credit basis in a community
26 college.

27 (b) Amount.--A volunteer and the volunteer's dependent
28 children and spouse shall be eligible to receive tuition credit
29 in the aggregate amount of \$600 per year, not to exceed an
30 aggregate maximum of \$2,400 over a four-year service period.

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

5 (d) Construction.--Nothing in this act shall be construed to
6 prohibit a community college from requiring registration and lab
7 fees for individuals attending courses under this act.

8 Section 4. Eligibility.

9 In order for a volunteer or a volunteer's dependent child or
10 spouse to be eligible to receive tuition credit, the volunteer
11 must agree to serve as a member of a volunteer fire company,
12 volunteer ambulance service or volunteer rescue squad for a
13 minimum of four years and sign an agreement with the volunteer
14 organization pledging four years of service in exchange for the
15 tuition credit. Following each year of active volunteer
16 services, the volunteer organization shall provide the State
17 Fire Commissioner with a letter verifying that the volunteer has
18 been a member in good standing for the past 12 months.

19 Section 5. Verification of service.

20 Upon being accepted and enrolled in a community college, the
21 volunteer, dependent child or spouse shall provide the community
22 college with a sworn or official statement of fact by the
23 commissioner attesting that the volunteer has performed the
24 service required for the tuition credit. Upon completion of each
25 semester, the volunteer shall submit a transcript to the
26 commissioner to be maintained in a permanent record. The
27 volunteer, dependent child or spouse must maintain a "C" grade
28 average in order to continue eligibility for the tuition credit
29 program.

30 Section 6. Issuance of certificate of authorization.

1 The commissioner shall issue a certificate of authorization
2 to the volunteer, dependent child or spouse to be presented to
3 the community college, stating that the volunteer, parent or
4 spouse is a member in good standing of a volunteer fire company,
5 volunteer ambulance service or volunteer rescue squad.

6 Section 7. State Fire Commissioner duties.

7 The Office of the State Fire Commissioner shall develop such
8 procedures and forms as it deems necessary to carry out the
9 provisions of this act.

10 Section 8. Effective date.

11 This act shall take effect in 30 days.