



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

SYNOPSIS:

Existing law provides that in certain circumstances a child or a spouse of a law enforcement officer who is killed or totally disabled in the line of duty may receive financial assistance to pay college tuition.

This bill would establish a program to pay tuition and mandatory fees on behalf of children and spouses of long-term city, county, and state law enforcement officers. This bill would provide that the scholarship money may be used for an undergraduate course of study offered by a public technical school, college, or university in the State of Alabama.

This bill would further provide for the administration of this scholarship by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education; require annual reporting on the program to the Legislature; and establish the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship Fund.

This bill would also authorize creation by the Department of Revenue of a blackout license plate, proceeds for which would be used to fund the scholarship.



29 A BILL
30 TO BE ENTITLED
31 AN ACT

32
33 Relating to scholarships; to establish a program to
34 grant tuition money to dependents of law enforcement officers
35 for use in participating public institutions of higher
36 education in the State of Alabama; to provide requirements for
37 scholarship eligibility; to provide scholarship conditions and
38 terms; to provide for administration of the program by the
39 Alabama Commission on Higher Education; to establish the
40 Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship Fund; and
41 to establish a distinctive blackout license plate to fund the
42 scholarship program.

43 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

44 Section 1. Article 11, commencing with Section
45 36-21-220, is added to Chapter 21 of Title 36, Code of Alabama
46 1975, to read as follows:

47 Article 11.

48 §36-21-220

49 This article shall be known and cited as the Alabama
50 Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship Program.

51 §36-21-221

52 As used in this article, the following terms have the
53 following meanings:

54 (1) ACADEMIC PERIOD. A semester or quarter.

55 (2) APPROVED POSTSECONDARY PROGRAM. Any for-credit or
56 noncredit workforce or career training program or course of



57 study at the undergraduate level directed toward a vocational
58 certification, an associate degree, or a baccalaureate degree
59 offered by a participating institution. The term includes an
60 academic major.

61 (3) COMMISSION. The Alabama Commission on Higher
62 Education, including the commission's Office of Student
63 Assistance.

64 (4) ELIGIBLE DEPENDENT. An individual who, on the date
65 of applying for the scholarship provided under this article,
66 is:

67 a. Not eligible for the police officers' survivors
68 educational assistance provided under Article 5 of this
69 chapter; and

70 b. Either of the following:

71 1. A natural or adopted child of a qualifying law
72 enforcement officer, who is under 24 years of age, and who has
73 resided in the state for at least the five preceding years.

74 2. The current or surviving spouse of a qualifying law
75 enforcement officer who has resided in the state for at least
76 the five preceding years.

77 (5) LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY. Any law enforcement
78 department or agency that serves the state, a municipality, a
79 county, or a postsecondary educational institution.

80 (6) PARTICIPATING INSTITUTION. An accredited public
81 postsecondary vocational school, technical school, community
82 or junior college, college, or university that enters into a
83 contract with the board to accept reimbursement for a
84 scholarship awarded to an eligible dependent.



85 (7) QUALIFYING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER. The term
86 includes any law enforcement officer, as defined in Section
87 13A-11-38:

88 a. Who, on or after January 1, 2026, is employed
89 full-time for at least 15 years by a law enforcement agency in
90 the state; or

91 b. Who is no longer employed in law enforcement due to
92 retirement or death, unless the individual was terminated from
93 the most recent employment as a law enforcement officer
94 pursuant to a disciplinary action.

95 (8) TUITION AND MANDATORY FEES. Costs charged for
96 tuition and mandatory fees that are assessed for all students
97 at the participating institution. The term does not include
98 differential tuition or department-specific or course-specific
99 fees, or books, equipment, or supplies.

100 §36-21-222

101 (a) The Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family
102 Scholarship is established to pay on behalf of eligible
103 dependents the cost of tuition and mandatory fees for up to
104 eight semesters or 16 quarters in an approved postsecondary
105 program.

106 (b) (1) The scholarship shall pay tuition and mandatory
107 fees after any other amounts from public or private
108 scholarships, grants, aid, or gifts awarded by third parties
109 to the eligible dependent for the academic period have been
110 applied.

111 (2)a. The amount for each recipient shall be capped at
112 three thousand dollars (\$3,000) for each academic period.



113 b. Notwithstanding paragraph a., if the recipient
114 qualifies for a discount on tuition and mandatory fees because
115 the recipient's eligibility is based upon the qualifying law
116 enforcement officer's employment by a law enforcement agency
117 that serves a postsecondary institution, the amount shall be
118 capped at one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500) for each
119 academic period. This amount may be used for tuition and
120 mandatory fees at any participating institution.

121 (c) The scholarship may be granted to as many
122 dependents of one qualifying law enforcement officer as are
123 eligible and who comply with the requirements of this article.

124 (d) The scholarship shall be administered by the
125 commission.

126 (e) (1) Availability of the scholarship to eligible
127 dependents is conditioned, pursuant to Section 36-21-227, on
128 funds available in the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers'
129 Family Scholarship Fund.

130 (2) Reimbursement from the Alabama Law Enforcement
131 Officers' Family Scholarship Fund shall be made at the end of
132 each academic period by the commission to a participating
133 institution by certified invoice submitted by the institution
134 that is substantiated by the name of each student receiving
135 the scholarship, with the amount claimed for each student.

136 (f) Participating institutions shall enter into a
137 contract with the commission and agree to provide any records
138 to the commission upon request.

139 §36-21-223

140 The scholarship application by an eligible dependent



141 shall be submitted to the commission and include, but not be
142 limited to, the following:

143 (1) Documentation from the participating institution
144 that the applicant has been accepted for admission and is
145 enrolled as a student.

146 (2) A copy of a completed Free Application for Federal
147 Student Aid (FAFSA) submitted to the United States Department
148 of Education, or documentation from the participating
149 institution that the applicant has completed a FAFSA.

150 (3) Documentation, as determined by rules adopted by
151 the commission, that a spouse or parent is a qualifying law
152 enforcement officer.

153 (4) In the case of a dependent who is a current or
154 surviving spouse, a certified copy of the marriage certificate
155 to a qualifying law enforcement officer.

156 (5) In the case of a dependent who is a natural or
157 adoptive child, a certified copy of the birth certificate or
158 the decree of adoption showing the parental relationship to a
159 qualifying law enforcement officer.

160 (6) A signed Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
161 (FERPA) release form.

162 §36-21-224

163 (a) Approval for the scholarship shall be granted to an
164 eligible dependent upon submission of the documentation
165 required under Section 36-21-223 and shall continue for each
166 academic period for which the scholarship may be available as
167 defined in Section 36-21-222(a):

168 (1) That the recipient complies with the Standards of



169 Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as required for Title IV
170 benefits under the federal Higher Education Act and as defined
171 by the participating institution for each academic period for
172 which the recipient is enrolled.

173 (2) That the recipient maintain his or her full-time
174 residency in the state.

175 (3) That the recipient completes the academic terms for
176 which the scholarship is available within 66 months of the
177 approval of the application, in the absence of a formal waiver
178 of this condition by the commission due to injury, illness,
179 the necessity of part-time enrollment, or some other
180 extraordinary circumstance.

181 (b) If the recipient's eligibility is based on spousal
182 status, eligibility shall end if the marriage to the
183 qualifying law enforcement officer is terminated by a decree
184 of divorce or, in the case of a recipient who is a surviving
185 spouse, remarriage.

186 (c) A recipient may maintain eligibility for the
187 scholarship while changing his or her approved postsecondary
188 program or transferring to another participating institution,
189 or both, only if the change or transfer is approved by the
190 appropriate participating institution no later than the
191 beginning of the fifth semester or the ninth quarter for which
192 the scholarship would be available.

193 §36-21-225

194 (a) The responsibilities of the commission include, but
195 may not be limited to, the following:

196 (1) Receive scholarship applications.



197 (2) Make determinations on scholarship eligibility.

198 (3) Waive scholarship requirements as provided in this
199 article.

200 (4) Enter into and administer contracts with
201 participating institutions.

202 (5) Develop the necessary forms to administer the
203 program.

204 (6) Publicize the scholarship by written materials or
205 electronic means and accept donations.

206 (b) The commission is authorized to adopt rules to
207 implement, administer, and interpret the requirements of this
208 article.

209 §36-21-226

210 The commission shall report to the Legislature, by
211 January 1 of each year, all of the following:

212 (1) The number of applicants approved in the previous
213 fiscal year.

214 (2) The number of applicants approved as of the
215 reporting date of the current fiscal year.

216 (3) The number of recipients, by the number of
217 remaining academic terms for which they may be eligible for
218 the scholarship.

219 (4) The cost of the previous fiscal year's expenditures
220 to the program, arranged by each participating institution and
221 the number of recipients who are enrolled with each
222 participating institution.

223 (5) The number of recipients in the previous fiscal
224 year who completed an approved postsecondary program by being



225 awarded a certificate or a degree.

226 §36-21-227

227 (a) The Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family
228 Scholarship Fund is created in the State Treasury. All monies
229 received by the commission pursuant to Section 2 or otherwise
230 made available from any source permitted by subsection (b)
231 shall be deposited into the State Treasury to the credit of
232 the fund. Amounts deposited into the fund shall be budgeted
233 and allotted in accordance with Sections 41-4-80 through
234 41-4-96 and Sections 41-19-1 through 41-19-12.

235 (b) The commission may accept additional funding for
236 the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship
237 Program from public and private sources, including
238 appropriations, loans, federal gifts, grants, corporate
239 sponsorships, and individual donations.

240 (c) No additional funding for the Alabama Law
241 Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship Fund shall be
242 appropriated from the Education Trust Fund.

243 Section 2. (a) Notwithstanding Sections 32-6-64,
244 32-6-67, and 32-6-68, Code of Alabama 1975, upon application
245 to the judge of probate or license commissioner, compliance
246 with motor vehicle registration and licensing laws, payment of
247 regular fees required by law for license plates for private
248 passenger or pleasure motor vehicles or motorcycles, and
249 payment of an additional annual fee of fifty dollars (\$50),
250 owners of motor vehicles or motorcycles who are residents of
251 Alabama shall upon request be issued a blackout license plate.

252 (b) The additional blackout license plate fee shall be



253 distributed in the following manner:

254 (1) Two and one-half percent commission, provided by
255 Section 40-12-269(a)(1), Code of Alabama 1975.

256 (2) Manufacturing costs of one dollar and fifty cents
257 (\$1.50) to the Department of Corrections.

258 (3) Administrative costs of one dollar (\$1) to the
259 Department of Revenue.

260 (4) The remainder of the additional fee shall be
261 deposited into the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family
262 Scholarship Fund.

263 (c) The Commissioner of Revenue shall prescribe a
264 suitable plate design that includes a black background with
265 white text.

266 (d) The blackout plates shall be issued, printed, and
267 processed like other plates provided for by law, may be
268 personalized, and shall be furnished for the licensing year
269 commencing January 1, 2027.

270 (e) The Department of Revenue may adopt any rules
271 necessary to administer this section.

272 Section 3. This act shall become effective on October
273 1, 2026.