



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

44 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

45 Section 1. Article 11, commencing with Section
46 36-21-220, is added to Chapter 21 of Title 36, Code of Alabama
47 1975, to read as follows:

48 Article 11.

49 §36-21-220

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

52 §36-21-221

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

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

56 (2) APPROVED POSTSECONDARY PROGRAM. Any for-credit or



57 noncredit workforce or career training program or course of
58 study at the undergraduate level directed toward a vocational
59 certification, an associate degree, or a bachelor's degree
60 offered by a participating institution. The term includes an
61 academic major.

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

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

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

71 b. Either of the following:

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

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

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

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



85 scholarship awarded to an eligible dependent.

86 (7) QUALIFYING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER. The term
87 includes any law enforcement officer, as defined in Section
88 13A-11-38:

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

92 b. Who, having been employed full-time for at least 15
93 years by a law enforcement agency in the state, has been
94 separated for no more than 10 years from full-time employment
95 as a law enforcement officer due to resignation, retirement,
96 or death, unless the individual was terminated from final
97 employment as a law enforcement officer pursuant to a
98 disciplinary action.

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

104 §36-21-222

105 (a) The Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family
106 Scholarship is established to pay on behalf of eligible
107 dependents the cost of tuition and mandatory fees for up to
108 eight semesters or 12 quarters in an approved postsecondary
109 program.

110 (b) (1) The scholarship shall pay tuition and mandatory
111 fees after any other amounts from public or private
112 scholarships, grants, aid, or gifts awarded by third parties



113 to the eligible dependent for the academic period have been
114 applied.

115 (2)a. The amount for each recipient shall be capped at
116 two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) for each academic
117 period.

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

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

129 (d) The scholarship shall be administered by the
130 commission.

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

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



141 (f) Participating institutions shall enter into a
142 contract with the commission and agree to provide any records
143 to the commission upon request.

144 §36-21-223

145 The scholarship application by an eligible dependent
146 shall be submitted to the commission and include, but not be
147 limited to, the following:

148 (1) Documentation from the participating institution
149 that the applicant has been accepted for admission and is
150 enrolled as a student.

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

155 (3) Documentation, as determined by rules adopted by
156 the commission, that a spouse or parent is a qualifying law
157 enforcement officer.

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

161 (5) In the case of a dependent who is a natural or
162 adopted child, a certified copy of the birth certificate or
163 the decree of adoption showing the parental relationship to a
164 qualifying law enforcement officer.

165 (6) A signed Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
166 (FERPA) release form.

167 §36-21-224

168 (a) Approval for the scholarship shall be granted to an



169 eligible dependent upon submission of the documentation
170 required under Section 36-21-223 and shall continue for the
171 number of academic periods for which the scholarship may be
172 available as provided in Section 36-21-222(a) upon meeting the
173 following conditions:

174 (1) That the recipient complies with the Standards of
175 Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as required for Title IV
176 benefits under the federal Higher Education Act and as defined
177 by the participating institution for each academic period for
178 which the recipient is enrolled.

179 (2) That the recipient maintains his or her full-time
180 residency in the state.

181 (3) That the recipient completes the academic terms for
182 which the scholarship is available within 66 months of the
183 approval of the application, in the absence of a formal waiver
184 of this condition by the commission due to injury, illness,
185 the necessity of part-time enrollment, or some other
186 extraordinary circumstance.

187 (b) If the recipient's eligibility is based on spousal
188 status, eligibility shall end if the marriage to the
189 qualifying law enforcement officer is terminated by a decree
190 of divorce or, in the case of a recipient who is a surviving
191 spouse, remarriage.

192 (c) A recipient may maintain eligibility for the
193 scholarship while changing his or her approved postsecondary
194 program or transferring to another participating institution,
195 or both, only if the change or transfer is approved by the
196 appropriate participating institution no later than the



197 beginning of the fifth semester or the ninth quarter for which
198 the scholarship would be available.

199 §36-21-225

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

202 (1) Receive scholarship applications.

203 (2) Make determinations on scholarship eligibility.

204 (3) Waive scholarship requirements as provided in this
205 article.

206 (4) Enter into and administer contracts with
207 participating institutions.

208 (5) Develop the necessary forms to administer the
209 program.

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

212 (b) The commission is authorized to charge a fee of no
213 more than three percent of the monies deposited to the credit
214 of the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship
215 Fund in a fiscal year for administering this article.

216 (c) The commission is authorized to adopt rules to
217 implement, administer, and interpret the requirements of this
218 article.

219 §36-21-226

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

222 (1) The number of applicants approved in the previous
223 fiscal year.

224 (2) The number of applicants approved as of the



225 reporting date of the current fiscal year.

226 (3) The number of recipients, by the number of
227 remaining academic terms for which they may be eligible for
228 the scholarship.

229 (4) The cost of the previous fiscal year's expenditures
230 to the program, arranged by each participating institution and
231 the number of recipients who are enrolled with each
232 participating institution.

233 (5) The number of recipients in the previous fiscal
234 year who completed an approved postsecondary program by being
235 awarded a certificate or a degree.

236 §36-21-227

237 (a) The Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family
238 Scholarship Fund is created in the State Treasury. All monies
239 received by the commission from any source as provided in
240 subsections (b) or (c) or pursuant to Section 2 shall be
241 deposited into the State Treasury to the credit of the fund.
242 Amounts deposited into the fund shall be budgeted and allotted
243 in accordance with Sections 41-4-80 through 41-4-96 and
244 Sections 41-19-1 through 41-19-12.

245 (b)(1) Availability of the scholarship to eligible
246 dependents, beginning with the fiscal year that starts on
247 October 1, 2027, shall be subject to an annual appropriation
248 in the Education Trust Fund Appropriation Act which shall not
249 exceed ten million dollars (\$10,000,000). This provision does
250 not affect the availability of scholarships from funds
251 provided on hand prior to October 1, 2027.

252 (2) The annual appropriation provided in subdivision



253 (1) shall cease when monies received to the credit of the
254 Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship Fund in
255 the preceding fiscal year pursuant to Section 2 are no less
256 than ten million dollars (\$10,000,000).

257 (c) The commission may accept additional funding for
258 the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship
259 Program from public and private sources, including
260 appropriations, loans, federal gifts, grants, corporate
261 sponsorships, and individual donations.

262 Section 2. (a) Notwithstanding Sections 32-6-64,
263 32-6-67, and 32-6-68, Code of Alabama 1975, upon application
264 to the judge of probate or license commissioner, compliance
265 with motor vehicle registration and licensing laws, payment of
266 regular fees required by law for license plates for private
267 passenger or pleasure motor vehicles or motorcycles, and
268 payment of an additional annual fee of fifty dollars (\$50),
269 owners of motor vehicles or motorcycles who are residents of
270 Alabama, upon request, shall be issued a blackout license
271 plate.

272 (b) The additional blackout license plate fee shall be
273 distributed in the following manner:

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

276 (2) Manufacturing costs of one dollar and fifty cents
277 (\$1.50) to the Department of Corrections.

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

280 (4) The remainder of the additional fee shall be



281 deposited into the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family
282 Scholarship Fund.

283 (c) The Commissioner of Revenue shall prescribe a
284 suitable plate design that includes a black background with
285 white text.

286 (d) The blackout plates shall be issued, printed, and
287 processed like other plates provided for by law, may be
288 personalized, and shall be furnished for the licensing year
289 commencing January 1, 2027.

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

292 Section 3. This act shall become effective on October
293 1, 2026.