

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

3 SENATE BILL 58

By: Weaver

4
5 AS INTRODUCED

6 An Act relating to higher education; creating the
7 First Responder Recruitment and Retention Act;
8 providing short title; defining terms; creating the
9 First Responder Recruitment and Retention Program;
10 providing purpose; providing eligibility criteria;
11 requiring submission of application; providing
12 contents of application; providing eligibility
13 retention criteria; allowing program tuition waiver
14 for certain time period; directing program tuition
15 waivers to be applied after exhaustion of certain
16 other assistance; providing for promulgation of
17 rules; providing for codification; providing an
18 effective date; and declaring an emergency.

19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

20 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
21 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3260 of Title 70, unless there
22 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

23 A. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "First
24 Responder Recruitment and Retention Act".

B. As used in this act:

1. "Degree program" means a program offered at an Oklahoma
25 educational institution that leads to the award of an associate's
26 degree or a baccalaureate degree;

2. "Eligible student" means:

- a. a peace officer as defined by Section 648 of Title 21 of the Oklahoma Statutes,
- b. a volunteer or a permanent salaried professional member of any fire department in this state, and
- c. a volunteer or employed emergency medical technician who is licensed pursuant to Section 1-2505 of Title 63 of the Oklahoma Statutes;

3. "Oklahoma educational institution" means an institution of higher education within The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education; and

4. "Program" means the First Responder Recruitment and Retention Program.

C. There is hereby created the First Responder Recruitment and Retention Program to provide a waiver of resident tuition for eligible students who meet the requirements of subsection D of this section.

D. To be eligible to apply for the program, an eligible student shall:

1. Have satisfied admission standards as determined by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for first-time entering students for the appropriate type of institution;
2. Have secured admission to and enrolled in an Oklahoma educational institution; and

1 3. Pursue a degree program that relates to a career as a peace
2 officer as defined by Section 648 of Title 21 of the Oklahoma
3 Statutes, a salaried professional member of any fire department in
4 this state, or an employed emergency medical technician who is
5 licensed pursuant to Section 1-2505 of Title 63 of the Oklahoma
6 Statutes.

7 E. An eligible student seeking a program tuition waiver shall
8 submit an application on a form prescribed by the Oklahoma State
9 Regents for Higher Education. The application shall include:

10 1. A verification that the person applying meets the definition
11 of eligible student as provided for in subsection B of this section;
12 and

13 2. Proof that the individual is:

14 a. a peace officer as defined by Section 648 of Title 21
15 of the Oklahoma Statutes,

16 b. a volunteer or a permanent salaried professional
17 member of any fire department in this state, or

18 c. a volunteer or employed emergency medical technician
19 who is licensed pursuant to Section 1-2505 of Title 63
20 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

21 F. To retain eligibility for the program, a student shall:

22 1. Maintain good academic standing and satisfactory academic
23 progress according to standards of the Oklahoma educational
24 institution in which the eligible student is enrolled; and

1 2. Maintain the requirements for retention and degree
2 completion as established by the Oklahoma educational institution in
3 which the eligible student is enrolled.

4 G. An eligible student may receive a program tuition waiver for
5 up to five (5) years or until completion of the degree program,
6 whichever occurs first.

7 H. Program tuition waivers awarded pursuant to this act shall
8 apply after all other state or federal assistance has been
9 exhausted.

10 I. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall
11 promulgate rules to implement the provisions of this act.

12 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2025.

13 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
14 of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby
15 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
16 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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