

HB213 ENROLLED



1 5LJ8M3-3
2 By Representative Lovvorn
3 RFD: Ways and Means Education
4 First Read: 23-Mar-23
5 2023 Regular Session



Enrolled, An Act,

3

Relating to the Volunteer Rescue Squad Tuition Reimbursement Act of 2018; to amend Sections 22-18-60, 22-18-61, 22-18-63, and 22-18-64, Code of Alabama 1975, to decrease the required contracted for service time after graduation and licensing from three years to two years; to expand the program to include students who contract and provide service to ambulance services; to provide exclusions from reimbursement; and to increase the amount of operational expenses reimbursed to the Alabama Community College System; and to add Section 22-18-61.1 to the Code of Alabama 1975, to provide for the retroactive reimbursement of certain fees and expenses.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. Sections 22-18-60, 22-18-61, 22-18-63, and 22-18-64 of the Code of Alabama 1975, are amended to read as follows:

"§22-18-60

For the purposes of this article, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(1) ACCS. The Alabama Community College System.

(2) AMBULANCE SERVICE. An ambulance service located in this state which is a member of the Alabama Association of Ambulance Services.

(2) (3) ASSOCIATIONS. The Alabama Association of Rescue Squads ~~or~~, the Alabama Association of Volunteer Fire



29 Departments, or the Alabama Association of Ambulance Services.

30 ~~(3)~~(4) EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PERSONNEL (EMSP). All
31 recognized levels of personnel licensed by the Alabama
32 Department of Public Health, who have met all primary ~~and/or~~
33 or renewal educational requirements, or both, set by the
34 Alabama Department of Public Health, and who are allowed to
35 provide medical care within the level of their scope of
36 practice granted by the Office of Emergency Medical Services
37 ~~(OEMS)~~ within the Alabama Department of Public Health.

38 ~~(4)~~(5) FIRE COLLEGE. The Alabama Fire College.

39 ~~(5)~~(6) STUDENT. A student enrolled in an emergency
40 medical services certification program at a member institution
41 of the ~~Alabama Community College System~~ ACCS, the ~~Alabama Fire~~
42 ~~College~~ fire college, or the University of South Alabama.

43 (7) TUITION COSTS. Includes the actual cost of tuition
44 and fees required to complete an approved course of
45 instruction for EMSP certification, as determined by each
46 eligible educational institution.

47 ~~(6)~~(8) VOLUNTEER RESCUE SQUAD. A volunteer rescue squad
48 located in the State of Alabama and is a member of the Alabama
49 Association of Rescue Squads.

50 ~~(7)~~(9) VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT. A volunteer fire
51 department located in ~~the State of Alabama and is a member of~~
52 ~~the Alabama Association of Volunteer Fire Departments~~ this
53 state."

54 "§22-18-61

55 (a) The ~~Alabama Community College System~~ ACCS, the
56 ~~Alabama Fire College~~ fire college, and the University of South



57 Alabama, in consultation with the associations, shall jointly
58 develop and administer a student tuition reimbursement program
59 for students ~~that agree in the form of an enforceable who~~
60 contract ~~agreement~~, to provide two years of emergency medical
61 services for volunteer rescue squads~~or~~, volunteer fire
62 departments ~~in Alabama, or ambulance services~~ after becoming a
63 licensed EMSP ~~subject to the student agreeing to provide three~~
64 ~~years of service to a volunteer rescue squad or volunteer fire~~
65 ~~department~~.

66 (b) (1) Tuition reimbursement under this article shall
67 ~~be the actual cover~~ tuition costs paid by the student
68 ~~associated with obtaining certification or the volunteer~~
69 ~~rescue squad, volunteer fire department, ambulance service, or~~
70 ~~an association on behalf of the student of which the student~~
71 ~~is a member. Tuition paid by the volunteer rescue squad,~~
72 ~~volunteer fire department, ambulance service, or association~~
73 ~~shall be reimbursed directly to the volunteer rescue squad,~~
74 ~~volunteer fire department, ambulance service, or association.~~

75 (2) Tuition reimbursement under this article shall not
76 include any tuition costs covered by grants or other monetary
77 awards provided to a student including, but not limited to,
78 federal education grants and scholarships, as determined by
79 the ACCS.

80 (3) Tuition costs shall not be reimbursed until the
81 student provides ACCS and the associations with documentation
82 that he or she has successfully completed the approved course
83 of instruction, proof of passing the certification exam,
84 production of a valid EMSP license from the Alabama Department



85 of Public Health and a contractual agreement to comply with
86 the service requirements.

87 (c) In the event that a tuition reimbursement recipient
88 fails to meet the service requirements for any reason other
89 than extreme hardship as defined within the joint agreement
90 required in Section 22-18-64(b), the individual shall be
91 deemed to have breached the underlying contract and shall be
92 liable in the form of monetary damages to the state for the
93 immediate repayment of the total tuition-~~amount~~ costs
94 reimbursed, plus interest at the rate of eight percent. The
95 associations shall notify ACCS of recipients who fail to meet
96 the service requirements.

97 (d) Beginning with the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the
98 amount of tuition reimbursement available to students shall be
99 divided among volunteer fire departments, rescue squads, and
100 ambulance services based on available appropriations. The ACCS
101 shall create operational procedures to ensure that funds and
102 volunteer service commitments are split equitably among
103 volunteer fire departments, rescue squads, and ambulance
104 services. Notwithstanding the foregoing, priority shall be
105 given to volunteer fire departments, rescue squads, and
106 nonprofit ambulance services."

107 "§22-18-63

108 (a) The tuition reimbursement program is subject to
109 direct appropriations from the Education Trust Fund.

110 (b) Any monies appropriated for the program that are
111 unexpended at the end of a fiscal year shall not revert, but
112 shall be carried forward for use of the program in the next



113 fiscal year.

114 (c) Beginning in the 2024-2025 fiscal year, any
115 unexpended funds in excess of five hundred thousand dollars
116 (\$500,000) shall be transferred to the fire college to provide
117 emergency medical services equipment and operations grants to
118 volunteer fire departments and rescue squads. Grants shall be
119 approved by the Alabama Joint Fire Council."

120 "§22-18-64

121 (a) The ACCS shall annually report on the condition and
122 accomplishments of the tuition reimbursement program to the
123 Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives, President
124 Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Chair of the House Ways and
125 Means Education Committee, the Chair of the Senate Finance and
126 Taxation Education Committee, and the Deputy Director of the
127 Legislative Services Agency, Fiscal Division. The report shall
128 include the number of students participating in the program
129 and the amount of tuition reimbursed for the reporting year.
130 The member institutions of the ACCS, the ~~Fire College~~ fire
131 college, and the University of South Alabama shall provide
132 this information to ACCS for inclusion in the annual report.
133 The report shall be submitted by the fifth legislative day of
134 each regular session of the Legislature.

135 (b) The ACCS, the ~~Fire College~~ fire college, and the
136 University of South Alabama shall enter into a joint agreement
137 to implement and administer the tuition reimbursement program,
138 which shall include provisions for ensuring that operational
139 expenses for the program in a fiscal year do not exceed ~~two~~ 10
140 percent of the funding for the program in that fiscal year.



141 The joint agreement shall provide for limiting the acceptance
142 of applications for the program or limiting tuition
143 reimbursements when necessary, or both.

144 (c) Any monies received for the operations of the
145 tuition reimbursement program, including repayments, interest,
146 and penalties paid because of failure to honor service
147 requirements, shall be used to fund tuition reimbursements."

148 Section 2. Section 22-18-61.1 is added to the Code of
149 Alabama 1975, to read as follows:

150 §22-18-61.1

151 Upon written request by an association or a member of
152 an association, the ACCS may retroactively consider
153 reimbursement of actual tuition costs, excluding required
154 fees, provided by the association or its members to a student
155 to pay his or her eligible tuition costs.

156 Section 3. Section 1 of this act shall become effective
157 on the first day of the third month following its passage and
158 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.

159 Section 2 of this act shall become effective immediately
160 following its passage and approval by the Governor, or its
161 otherwise becoming law.



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165 Speaker of the House of Representatives

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170 President and Presiding Officer of the Senate

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173 House of Representatives

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175 I hereby certify that the within Act originated in and
176 was passed by the House 02-May-23, as amended.

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178 John Treadwell

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Clerk

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Senate

24-May-23

Passed