

HB377 INTRODUCED



1 HB377
2 FYQF5C5-1
3 By Representative Treadaway
4 RFD: Ways and Means Education
5 First Read: 21-Mar-24



SYNOPSIS:

This bill would create the Spouses and Dependents of Law Enforcement Officers Tuition Scholarship Fund, to be administered by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE), to provide tuition scholarships to spouses and certain dependents of law enforcement officers.

This bill would provide application criteria.

This bill would authorize scholarships to successful applicants enrolled in public and private institutions of higher education and would provide for the calculation of scholarships from the fund.

This bill would require ACHE to adopt rules to implement and administer the fund and scholarships.

This bill would also require ACHE to submit an annual report to certain individuals about the expenditures of the fund.

A BILL

TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

Relating to public and private institutions of higher education; to create the Spouses and Dependents of Law



HB377 INTRODUCED

Enforcement Officers Tuition Scholarship Fund; to provide for tuition scholarships to spouses and certain dependents of law enforcement officers; to require the Alabama Commission on Higher Education to adopt rules; and to require ACHE to submit an annual report.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. For the purposes of this act, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) APPROVED INSTITUTION. A public institution of higher education, as defined by Section 16-5-1, Code of Alabama 1975, or a private nonprofit institution of higher education that: (i) is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges or the Council on Occupational Education; and (ii) maintains its primary headquarters in Alabama.

(2) COMMISSION or ACHE. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

(3) FUND. The Spouses and Dependents of Law Enforcement Officers Tuition Scholarship Fund created in Section 2.

(4) LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER. An officer employed by the state, a county, or a municipality who is certified by the Alabama Police Officers' Standards and Training Commission and who has the power of arrest.

(5) SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT. An individual who is eligible for a scholarship from the fund pursuant to Section 3.

Section 2. (a) The Spouses and Dependents of Law Enforcement Officers Tuition Scholarship Fund is established within the State Treasury to provide scholarships to spouses



HB377 INTRODUCED

57 and certain dependents of law enforcement officers. The fund
58 shall be administered by the Alabama Commission on Higher
59 Education.

60 (b) Any monies appropriated shall be budgeted and
61 allotted pursuant to the Budget Management Act in accordance
62 with Article 4, commencing with Section 41-4-80 of Chapter 4
63 of Title 41, Code of Alabama 1975, and only in the amounts
64 provided by the Legislature in the general appropriations act
65 or other appropriations act.

66 Section 3. (a) ACHE shall adopt rules creating and
67 implementing an application process for tuition scholarships
68 from the fund. Each application shall be reviewed, in a manner
69 determined by ACHE, to ensure that the applicant meets
70 criteria for a scholarship pursuant to this act, including,
71 but not limited to:

72 (1) That he or she is enrolled in, or has been accepted
73 to and intends to enroll in, an approved institution in this
74 state.

75 (2) That he or she is either: (i) under 27 years of age
76 and a dependent of a law enforcement officer; or (ii) the
77 spouse of a law enforcement officer. ACHE shall verify the
78 employment status of the law enforcement officer by relying on
79 a copy of the law enforcement officer's commission card or a
80 current employment verification letter from his or her
81 employer.

82 (b) Each applicant who successfully completes an
83 application and meets all of the criteria established in
84 subsection (a) is eligible to receive a tuition scholarship



HB377 INTRODUCED

from the fund pursuant to Section 4.

(c) Tuition scholarships shall be awarded from the fund on a first come, first served basis, based on the availability of funds.

Section 4. (a) (1) Pursuant to the availability of funds, ACHE shall award each successful applicant a tuition scholarship from the fund that is equal to the amount of tuition and mandatory fees charged by the approved institution in which the successful applicant is enrolled, reduced by the amount of any other federal aid scholarships, public grants, or financial gifts that the successful applicant has received.

(2) If the successful applicant is enrolled in a private institution of higher education, the tuition scholarship awarded from the fund may not exceed the remainder of the average in-state tuition and fees charged by public institutions of higher education in the state, minus any other federal aid scholarships, public grants, or financial gifts that the eligible individual has received.

(3) ACHE shall determine the average cost of tuition and fees charged by public institutions of higher education.

(b) A tuition scholarship awarded from the fund shall be:

(1) Limited to no more than four academic years, or eight semesters;

(2) Awarded only to applicants seeking a certificate, license, associate degree, or bachelor degree from an approved institution; and

(3) Used only to pay the tuition and mandatory fees at



HB377 INTRODUCED

an approved institution.

(c) In the event that ACHE determines that a scholarship recipient no longer satisfies the requirements of this act, ACHE may not award any additional scholarship amount from the fund to the individual until he or she submits adequate documentation indicating his or her compliance with the scholarship requirements under this act.

Section 5. No later than March 1, 2026, and each March 1 thereafter, ACHE shall provide to the Governor, the Chair of the Senate Finance and Taxation Education Committee, and the Chair of the House of Representatives Ways and Means Education Committee a report including, but not limited to the following:

(1) The total number of students who received a tuition scholarship from the fund in the current academic year.

(2) The total scholarship amounts awarded and the average scholarship amounts awarded from the fund in the current academic year.

(3) The total number of students who received a tuition scholarship from the fund and who graduated or completed a program of study at an approved institution.

(4) The name of each law enforcement agency that employs a law enforcement officer whose spouse or dependent receives a tuition scholarship from the fund.

Section 6. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education shall adopt rules to implement and administer this act.

Section 7. This act shall become effective on October 1, 2024.