

SENATE, No. 3554

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 15, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator PATRICK J. DIEGNAN, JR.

District 18 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Expands volunteer tuition credit program to volunteers and eligible dependents enrolled in four-year public institutions of higher education and increases maximum value of tuition credit.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning the volunteer tuition credit program and
2 amending P.L.1998, c.145.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. Section 1 of P.L.1998, c.145 (C.18A:71-78.1) is amended to
8 read as follows:

9 1. A person who is an active member of a volunteer fire
10 company or volunteer first aid or rescue squad or association in
11 good standing and the dependent children and spouse of a volunteer
12 shall be allowed to enroll in a postsecondary program on a tuition-
13 free basis in a county college, county vocational school **【or】**,
14 county technical institute, or four-year public institution of higher
15 education and be eligible to receive tuition credit in an amount not
16 to exceed a maximum of **【\$2,400】** \$4,000 for the member, children
17 and spouse; provided that available classroom space permits and
18 that tuition paying students constitute the minimum number
19 required for the course. Nothing herein shall preclude a county
20 college, county vocational school **【or】**, county technical institute ,
21 or four-year public institution of higher education from requiring
22 registration and lab fees for individuals attending courses pursuant
23 to this act.

24 (cf: P.L.1998, c.145, s.1)

25

26 2. Section 2 of P.L.1998, c.145 (C.18A:71-78.2) is amended to
27 read as follows:

28 2. In order to be eligible to receive tuition credit at a county
29 college, county vocational school **【or】**, county technical institute,
30 or four-year public institution of higher education, a person shall
31 agree to serve as a member of a volunteer fire company or volunteer
32 first aid or rescue squad or association for a minimum of four years
33 and sign an agreement with the municipality in which the squad or
34 association is located pledging four years of service in exchange for
35 the tuition credit. Following each year of volunteer service
36 performed, the volunteer or the spouse or dependent child shall be
37 entitled to receive tuition credit of up to **【\$600】** \$1,000, not to
38 exceed a maximum of **【\$2,400】** \$4,000 for the member, children
39 and spouse over a four-year service period.

40 (cf: P.L.1998, c.145, s.2)

41

42 3. Section 3 of P.L.1998, c.145 (C.18A:71-78.3) is amended to
43 read as follows:

44 3. Upon being accepted and enrolled in a county college,
45 county vocational school **【or】**, county technical institute , or four-

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **【thus】** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 year public institution of higher education, the volunteer, dependent
2 child or spouse shall provide verification to the institution that the
3 volunteer has performed the service required for the tuition credit.
4 Upon completion of each semester, the volunteer shall submit a
5 transcript to the municipality to be maintained in a permanent
6 record. The volunteer or the dependent child or spouse shall
7 maintain a "C" grade average in order to continue eligibility for the
8 tuition credit program.

9 (cf: P.L.1998, c.145, s.3)

10

11 4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
12 the first full academic year following the date of enactment.

13

14

15

STATEMENT

16

17 Through the Volunteer Tuition Credit Program, an active
18 member of a volunteer fire company or volunteer first aid or rescue
19 squad, and the dependent children and spouse of a volunteer, may
20 enroll in a postsecondary program on a tuition-free basis in a county
21 college, county vocational school, or county technical institute and
22 be eligible to receive tuition credit in an amount not to exceed \$600
23 per year, provided that available classroom space permits and that
24 tuition paying students constitute the minimum number required for
25 the course. The maximum value of the tuition credit available
26 through the program is currently set at \$2,400 over a four-year
27 period of eligibility.

28 This bill expands the program to volunteers, and their dependent
29 children and spouses, who enroll in a four-year public institution of
30 higher education. This bill also increases the maximum value of the
31 tuition credit available through the program to \$1,000 per year, for
32 a maximum total tuition credit of \$4,000 over four years of
33 eligibility.