

# **Guidelines: Peace Officers and Firefighters Disabled in the Line of Duty**



**Student Financial Aid Programs  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PEACE OFFICERS AND FIREFIGHTERS DISABLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY .....	1
Program Authority and Purpose .....	1
Eligible Institutions .....	1
ELIGIBILITY .....	2
Eligibility Requirements TEC, Section 54.352(e) .....	2
Continuation of Eligibility .....	3
Discontinuation of Eligibility .....	3
Hardship Provisions .....	3
AWARDING .....	3
Selective Service Statement .....	4
APPENDIX 1: QUICK REFERENCES .....	5



# PEACE OFFICERS AND FIREFIGHTERS DISABLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Program Guidelines are intended to support institutions by highlighting requirements that appear in the Texas Education Code (TEC). When administering this program, institutions should always refer to the applicable statutes. The information provided in this document is to be used solely as a resource and does not supersede the statute for this program.

---


## PROGRAM AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

The exemption for Peace Officers and Firefighters Disabled in the Line of Duty is authorized by [TEC, Chapter 54, Subchapter D, Section 54.352](#). The program provides an exemption from tuition and fees to eligible peace officers and firefighters who are permanently disabled as a result of an injury sustained in the line of duty.

---

## ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS

Texas public institutions as defined in [TEC, Section 61.003\(8\)](#), are **required** to participate in the Peace Officers and Firefighters Disabled in the Line of Duty program.

 **STOP:** House Bill 766 of the 86th Legislative Session added disabled firefighters as eligible recipients of this program. The exemption for both peace officers and firefighters is **now mandatory** for the institution beginning fall 2019.

## ELIGIBILITY

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS [TEC, SECTION 54.352\(E\)](#)

The institution will decide what documentation is necessary to determine whether the student was an eligible peace officer or firefighter who suffered an eligible injury that resulted in his or her permanent disability.

#### DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED MUST PROVE THE FOLLOWING:

Student was an eligible peace officer or firefighter.	Student suffered an eligible injury.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An eligible peace officer is defined as an:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Individual elected, appointed, or employed to serve as a peace officer for a governmental entity under Article <a href="#">2.12</a>, Code of Criminal Procedure, or other law.</li></ul></li><li>• An eligible firefighter is defined as a:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Member of a fire department who performs a function listed in Section <a href="#">143.003(4)</a>, Local Government Code, without regard to whether the individual is subject to a civil service system or program.</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Peace officers must have suffered their injury while performing any of the following duties:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Traffic enforcement or traffic control duties, including enforcement of traffic laws, investigation of vehicle accidents, or directing traffic;</li><li>○ Pursuit, arrest, or search of a person reasonably believed to have violated a law;</li><li>○ Investigation, including undercover investigation, of a criminal act;</li><li>○ Patrol duties, including automobile, bicycle, foot, air, or horse patrol;</li><li>○ Duties related to the transfer of prisoners; or</li><li>○ Training duties, including participation in any training required by the officer's employer or supervisor or by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement.</li></ul></li><li>• Firefighter duties are not defined.</li></ul>

#### Student is considered permanently disabled.

Permanent disability can only be determined by the chief administrative officer of the law enforcement agency, fire department, or other entity that employed the student at the time of the injury. The determination must serve as sufficient evidence that the student is no longer able to continue employment as a peace officer or firefighter as a result of the disability.

#### ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS:

- Be enrolled as an undergraduate student or be attending only undergraduate courses.
- Be enrolled as a graduate student, having never been awarded the exemption for the completion of a master's degree.
- Be enrolled as a doctoral student, having never been awarded the exemption for the completion of a doctoral degree.
- Be registered with Selective Service or be exempt (see [Selective Service Statement Requirements](#)).

## CONTINUATION OF ELIGIBILITY

A student can continue to receive this exemption in subsequent semesters or terms if the student:

- Meets the institution's grade point average (GPA) requirement for financial aid.
- Is attempting to complete a degree, having never been awarded the exemption for the completion of that degree.

**NOTE:** A student who fails to meet the institutional GPA requirement may have the ability to regain eligibility for this exemption if he or she meets the GPA requirement during an upcoming term or semester in which the exemption was not awarded. The student may also be granted a hardship **exception** by the institution.

## DISCONTINUATION OF ELIGIBILITY

A student may *not* continue to receive this exemption in a subsequent semester or term while enrolled as an undergraduate if the student:

- Has enrolled in undergraduate hours considered to be excessive under [TEC, Section 54.2001\(a\)\(2\)](#).
- Has received the exemption for a total of 12 undergraduate semesters.

**NOTE:** At the start of a semester or term, if a student is attempting undergraduate hours considered to be excessive, the student may continue to receive this exemption if he or she is granted a hardship **extension** by the institution.

## HARDSHIP PROVISIONS

Institutions must adopt a hardship policy that may grant a student an **exception** from meeting the institution's GPA requirement, or an **extension** of eligibility for undergraduate excess hours, when a student has a showing of a hardship or other good cause, including:

- A showing of a severe illness or other debilitating condition that could affect the student's academic performance;
- An indication that the student is responsible for the care of a sick, injured, or needy person and that the student's provision of care could affect the student's academic performance;
- The student's active duty or other service in the United States armed forces or the student's active duty in the Texas National Guard; or
- Any other cause considered acceptable by the institution.

All hardship decisions must be documented in the student's record and be available for submission to the THECB, if requested.

## AWARDING

Institutions **must exempt** the cost of all tuition and fees for **eligible** undergraduate or graduate courses attempted by the student for which space is available (space for this exemption is limited to 20 percent of the maximum enrollment for each eligible course). Eligible courses are those for which an institution receives formula funding ([TEC, Section 54.2002](#)).

**NOTE: Formula funding** is defined as the method used to allocate appropriated sources of funds among institutions of higher education. Formula-funded courses are those that do not depend solely on student tuition and fees to cover their costs.



## SELECTIVE SERVICE STATEMENT

Male students must be registered with or exempt from Selective Service (SS) in order to be eligible to receive federal or state financial assistance. In accordance with [TEC, Section 51.9095](#), male students must file the required **Selective Service Statement of Registration Status** (found below) with their institution or other entity granting or guaranteeing financial assistance. This includes grants, scholarships, loans, or other assistance funded by state revenue, including federal funds or gifts and grants accepted by the state.

### When is the statement NOT Required?

- **When the SS registration is confirmed through the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR):** The ISIR confirmation serves as the student’s official, signed statement because the Department of Education validates registration directly with the Selective Service System (SSS).
- **NEW** **When the SS registration is confirmed through the [SSS.gov website](#):** The institution can save the confirmation directly from the website to serve as the student’s official, signed statement on record.
- **NEW** **When the ISIR confirms that a student is under the age of 18:** No statement or documentation is needed for the applicable award year, even if the student turns 18 during that year.

### When is the statement REQUIRED, including all supporting documentation?

- When the student completes a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) but is flagged “not registered” on the ISIR and SS status **cannot** be confirmed on the [SSS.gov website](#).
- **NEW** **When the student completes a Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA):** The required statement is embedded in the 2020-21 TASFA and must be completed by the student.
- **NEW** **When the student does not complete a FAFSA or TASFA but applies for state financial aid, such as through exemptions or waivers, and SS status cannot be confirmed on the [SSS.gov website](#).**

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### FREQUENCY COLLECTING THE STATEMENT

If the student’s status will NOT change, the statement and supporting documentation can be used for subsequent semesters. (Example: The student entered the U.S. after the eligible age to register.)

If the student’s status is temporary, the statement must be collected each academic year until the student is registered or determined exempt. (Example: Student is under age 18 but did not complete a FAFSA or TASFA.)

### RETENTION SCHEDULE

The status statement and all documentation must be retained in the student’s record for 7 years after the date of completion of the award period ([TEC, Section 441.1855](#)).

### REPROCESSED ISIRS

If the student’s most recent ISIR transaction has been reprocessed by the Central Processing System (CPS) and the registration with the SSS was confirmed, the institution does not need to collect the status statement or any documentation.

**Institutions may collect the required status statement and documentation either electronically or on paper.**

**([English Statement](#) or [Spanish Statement](#))**

SELECTIVE SERVICE STATEMENT OF REGISTRATION STATUS	
Male students must verify their current Selective Service registration status by marking one of the statements below and providing proof of their registration status to their current institution. Failure to do so may result in the loss of eligibility for state financial aid.	
_____ I am under the age of 18 and not currently required to register.	
_____ I am <b>REGISTERED</b> with the Selective Service and, <i>Check the following box that applies:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> I have already submitted proof of registration to my current institution. <input type="checkbox"/> Proof of registration is included with this statement. <input type="checkbox"/> I will submit proof of my registration. <b>NOTE:</b> Proof is required to be considered eligible for financial aid.	_____ I am <b>EXEMPT</b> from registration and, <i>Check the following box that applies:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> I have already submitted proof of my exemption to my current institution. <input type="checkbox"/> Proof of my exemption is included with this statement. <input type="checkbox"/> I will submit proof of my exemption. <b>NOTE:</b> Proof is required to be considered eligible for financial aid.
_____ I am over the age of 18. I am not registered with Selective Service and I am not exempt from registration with Selective Service.	
I, _____, hereby certify that the Selective Service status statement provided above is true and accurate.	
Student ID: _____	Signature: _____ Date: _____

# APPENDIX 1: QUICK REFERENCES

## CONTACT FINANCIAL AID SERVICES

By phone: (844) 792-2640

Contact us by completing an [online inquiry form](#) and select “Financial Aid Question” as the Contact Reason.

## OTHER RESOURCES FOR INSTITUTIONS

General program information for institutions	<a href="#">Student Financial Aid Programs Information Webpage</a>
Texas Program Statutes	<a href="#">Texas Education Code</a>
Texas Program Rules	<a href="#">Texas Administrative Code</a>
Information concerning programs, procedures, allocations, and other topics will be communicated to institutions through the GovDelivery system. To receive these communications, interested individuals must subscribe.	<a href="#">GovDelivery</a>
Federal Selective Service Requirement Guide	<a href="#">Who Must Register Chart</a>