



EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



U.S. Department of Justice



The Federal Law Enforcement Dependents Assistance (FLEDA) Act was enacted in October 1996 to enhance the appeal of service in civilian federal law enforcement agencies by providing financial assistance for higher education to spouses and children of federal law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. Congress and the President amended the Act in 1998 to provide educational assistance to spouses and children of police, fire, and emergency public safety officers killed in the line of duty, thus creating the Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance (PSOEA) Program. The PSOEA Program also makes assistance available to eligible spouses and children of public safety officers permanently and totally disabled by catastrophic injuries sustained in the line of duty.

Background

By amending the FLEDA Act, Congress and the President extended educational assistance to include not only the families of federal law enforcement officers but all public safety officers. In so doing, they made an important statement about how vital our public safety officers are to our nation's safety.

The PSOEA Program recognizes that the benefits available to these families through the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program, administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, are often consumed by basic needs and are not sufficient to support the costs of higher education. For many families, however, access to higher education is instrumental in their ability to move forward in the aftermath of a line-of-duty tragedy.

PSOEA Program Benefits

The PSOEA Program provides an educational assistance allowance to eligible survivors of public safety officers whose deaths or permanent and total disabilities are the direct and proximate result of an injury sustained in the line of duty.

PSOEA benefits may be used to defray educational expenses, including tuition, room and board, books, supplies, and education-related fees. The amount of assistance is determined by the length of the term and whether the student attends school as a full-time, three-quarter-time, half-time, or less-than-half-time student.

Also, the amount of assistance is subject to change consistent with the current computation of the educational assistance allowance set forth in Title IV of the Higher Education Act, Section 3532 of Title 38, United States Code.

Assistance under the PSOEA Program is available to both public safety officers' spouses and children for 45 months of full-time education or training or for a proportional period of time for a part-time program.

PSOEA Program Effective Dates

Under the PSOEA Program, the families of federal, state, local and tribal police, fire, and emergency public safety officers are covered for line-of-duty deaths that occurred on or after January 1, 1978. The effective date for families of permanently and totally disabled federal law enforcement officers is October 3, 1996. Families of state and local police, fire, and emergency public safety officers are covered for line-of-duty permanent and totally disabling injuries that occurred on or after November 13, 1998. Families of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) personnel and state, local, and tribal emergency management and civil defense agency employees are covered for such injuries sustained on or after October 30, 2000.

Eligibility for PSOEA Benefits

The PSOEA Program stipulates that PSOEA benefits are to be provided directly to students who attend a degree or certification program at an institution of higher learning and are the spouses or children of federal, police, fire, and emergency public safety officers whose deaths or permanent and total disabilities are covered by the PSOB Program (34 U.S.C. 10281 et seq.). While public safety officers' children are generally no longer eligible for assistance for classes attended after their 27th birthday, there is no age restriction as to when they can apply for assistance for those classes.

Required Documents

For more information about the PSOEA Program, and the documents required to submit a PSOEA claim, please visit www.psob.gov.