



BJA Bureau of Justice Assistance Fact Sheet

Nancy E. Gist, Director

Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance Program

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 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 benefits available to these families through the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program, administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, are often consumed by basic needs and are not sufficient to support 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 a traumatic injury sustained in the line of duty.

PSOEA benefits may be used solely to defray educational expenses, including tuition, room and board, books, supplies, and education-related fees. The allowance is \$404 per month for full-time students, \$304 for three-quarter-time students, and \$202 for half-time students. The amount of assistance is subject to change consistent with the current computation of educational assistance allowance set forth in Title IV of the Higher Education Act, Section 3532 of Title 38, United States Code.

PSOEA Program Effective Dates

Under the PSOEA Program, police, fire, and emergency public safety officers are covered for line-of-duty deaths or permanent and totally disabling injuries that occurred on or after October 1, 1997. The FLEDA Act makes program benefits available retroactively to families of federal law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty on or after May 1, 1992. The effective date for families of permanently and totally disabled federal law enforcement officers is October 3, 1996.

Eligibility for PSOEA Benefits

The PSOEA Program stipulates that PSOEA benefits are to be provided directly to dependents who attend a

program of education at an eligible educational institution 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 (42 U.S.C. 3796 et seq.). Public safety officers' children are no longer eligible for assistance, however, after their 27th birthday, absent a finding by the Attorney General of extraordinary circumstances. Assistance under the PSOEIA Program is available for 48 months of full-time education or training or for a proportional period of time for a part-time program.

For Further Information

For more information about the PSOEIA Program, to obtain a copy of the PSOEIA regulations and application form, or to submit your observations and recommendations, please contact:

Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance Program

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program
Bureau of Justice Assistance
810 Seventh Street NW
Washington, DC 20531

T 888 SIGNL13 (744 6513)

Fax: 202-307-3373

World Wide Web: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA

Bureau of Justice Assistance Clearinghouse

P.O. Box 6000

Rockville, MD 20849-6000

T 800-688-4252

World Wide Web: www.ncjrs.org

Clearinghouse staff are available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. eastern time. Ask them to place you on the BJA mailing list.

Department of Justice Response Center

T 800-421-6770 or 202-307-1400

Response Center staff are available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. eastern time.

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