

On March 23, 2018, the President signed Public Law 115-141, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, which included an amendment to Section 473(b) of the Higher Education Act, authorizing the Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship. Under this scholarship, a Pell-eligible student whose parent or guardian died in the line of duty while performing as a public safety officer is eligible to receive a maximum Pell Grant for the award year for which the determination of eligibility is made. To qualify for this scholarship, a student must be Pell-eligible and have a Pell-eligible EFC and be less than 24 years of age or enrolled at an institution of higher education at the time of his or her parent's or guardian's death. In subsequent award years, the student continues to be eligible for the scholarship, as long as the student has a Pell-eligible EFC and continues to be an eligible student.

For purposes of the Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship, a public safety officer is:

As defined in section 1204 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796b); or

A fire police officer, defined as an individual who is serving in accordance with State or local law as an officially recognized or designated member of a legally organized public safety agency and provides scene security or directs traffic in response to any fire drill, fire call, or other fire, rescue, or police emergency, or at a planned special event.

The Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship requires the institution's financial aid administrator (FAA) to determine and document, in collaboration with the student, that the student was less than 24 years of age or enrolled at an institution of higher education at the time of his or her parent's or guardian's death. A single, national data source of individuals who died in the line of duty while serving as a public safety officer does not exist. While the Department does not specify all of the acceptable documentation that may be used to determine eligibility for this scholarship, here are some documents that schools may consider:

A determination letter acknowledging eligibility for certain federal benefits under the Public Safety Officers Benefit (PSOB) program administered by the Department of Justice;

A written letter of attestation or determination made by a state or local government official with supervisory or other relevant oversight authority of an individual who died in the line of duty while serving as a public safety officer as defined above;

Documentation of the student qualifying for a state tuition or other state benefit accorded to the children or other family members of a public safety officer consistent with the definition in 42 U.S.C. 3796b, or as a fire police officer as noted above; or

Other documentation the school determines to be from a credible source that describes or reports the circumstances of the death and the occupation of the parent or guardian.

If you believe you may qualify for this scholarship please reach out to the financial aid office with the documentation you have to proceed.