

New law creates a Volunteer Firefighters' Tuition Reimbursement program to provide tuition reimbursement to an eligible volunteer firefighter attending a public college, university, or vocational or technical school.

New law creates the Volunteer Firefighters' Tuition Reimbursement Fund in the state treasury for the deposit of state general fund monies, if available and appropriated by the legislature, and any federal funds, donations, or other monies that may be provided. Requires that state general fund monies be used first to pay all obligations owed from the Bond Security and Redemption Fund and remaining monies be paid into the fund and used solely for providing tuition reimbursement as provided in new law. Requires the state treasurer to invest the monies in the fund in the same manner as monies in the state general fund. Further provides that no monies from the state general fund (direct) can be deposited or appropriated into the fund unless and until 2/3 of the elected members of each house of the legislature consent to such deposit or appropriation.

New law creates the Volunteer Firefighters' Tuition Reimbursement Board within the Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections, office of state fire marshal. Provides that the board is composed of seven members, who serve without compensation, as follows: the state fire marshal, the president of the Senate, and the speaker of the House of Representatives, or their respective designees, one member appointed by the governor, one member appointed by the La. State Firemen's Association, and two members appointed by the La. Fire Chiefs Association, one of whom shall be the chief of a predominantly volunteer fire department.

New law requires the board to adopt rules and regulations for the governance of the board. Further requires the board to create an application and develop application procedures, determine applicant eligibility, disburse tuition reimbursements, require status reports on voluntary firefighter status, and require education progress reports.

New law requires eligible applicants to, at a minimum, reside in the state for at least one year prior to application, complete a two-year associate degree program or two years of a four-year degree program or one year of a vocational or technical school, and volunteer for at least two years with a fire department and be a volunteer firefighter at the time of application. Disqualifies a recipient from receiving the tuition reimbursement if the board determines that the recipient has failed to maintain good standing with the attending school or has discontinued service as a volunteer firefighter.

New law requires the board to adopt, in accordance with the APA, rules and regulations necessary to implement the program.

Effective August 1, 2013.

(Adds R.S. 36:409(C)(6) and R.S. 40:1558.1-1558.7)