



# SENATE BILL 99: Appropriations Act of 2018, Sec. 17.1: Criminal Justice Fellows Program

2017-2018 General Assembly

---

<b>Committee:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	August 15, 2018
<b>Introduced by:</b>		<b>Prepared by:</b>	Susan Sitze
<b>Analysis of:</b>	Sec. 17.1 of S.L. 2018-5		Staff Attorney

---

**OVERVIEW:** *Sec. 17.1 of S.L. 2018-5, as amended by Sec. 5.1 of S.L. 2018-97, establishes under the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Commission (Commission), the Criminal Justice Fellows Program to provide forgivable loans to exceptional individuals in order to increase the number of criminal justice professionals in counties with smaller populations.*

*This section became effective July 1, 2018.*

## **BILL ANALYSIS:**

Sec. 17.1 of S.L. 2018-5, as amended by Sec. 5.1 of S.L. 2018-97, establishes the Criminal Justice Fellows Program (Fellows Program) administered by the Commission. This section establishes the North Carolina Criminal Justice Fellows Committee as a Special Committee of the Commission. The Committee must establish the program criteria and selection procedures, and select the recipients for forgivable loans under the program.

The program's purpose is to increase the number of criminal justice professionals by providing forgivable loans to exceptional individuals to obtain an Applied Associate Degree in Criminal Justice or other Committee-approved related field of study as preparation to enter a criminal justice profession.

The program provides loans of up to \$3,152 per year for up to two years at a rate not to exceed 10% interest. No more than 100 loans may be awarded annually and the total number of recipients in the program each year must not exceed 200. Loans may be used to pay for tuition, fees, and the cost of books.

An "eligible county" is a county with a population of less than 75,000 according to the latest federal decennial census. An "eligible criminal justice profession" includes State and local sworn law enforcement officers, State correctional officers, other correctional officers maintained by local governments and juvenile justice agencies, sworn sheriffs and deputy sheriffs, detention officers, and telecommunicators under the direct supervision of a law enforcement agency.

Loan awards are based on the following eligibility criteria:

- Applicant must be domiciled in an eligible county at the time of application, a resident for tuition purposes, a high school graduate or a high school senior who will graduate from high school by the end of the current academic year.
- Applicant must demonstrate the intent upon completion of the program to be employed as a criminal justice professional in an eligible county.
- Applicant must have no convictions for a felony or certain listed misdemeanors or combination of misdemeanors.

Karen Cochrane-Brown  
Director



Legislative Analysis  
Division  
919-733-2578

# Senate Bill 99

Page 2

- Applicant must submit all required application materials including a criminal background check, if requested.

A recipient must become and remain a full-time student at a North Carolina community college in an Applied Associate Degree in Criminal Justice or in a Committee-approved related field of study at all times during the two years and maintain a course load to qualify for graduation within two years maintaining a minimum 2.0 GPA.

Loans will be forgiven for recipients that work at least four years within the first five years after graduation in a full-time position in an eligible county in an eligible criminal justice profession. The Committee may also forgive the loan if it finds that it is impossible for the recipient to meet the terms of the loan due to death or permanent disability of the recipient.

Recipients that do not meet the conditions of the loan must repay the loan under conditions and procedures established by the Committee.

The Committee must submit a report by January 1, 2020, and annually thereafter to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety (JPS Oversight) containing information on the number of loans granted; geographic and demographic information on the recipients; student performance; employment of participants; loan forgiveness, termination, default, and repayment rates; and retention rates of recipients within eligible criminal justice professions.

This section authorizes the waiver of tuition and registration fees for courses requested by the Criminal Justice Standards Division of the Department of Justice for the training of criminal justice professionals. The waivers apply to participants and recent graduates of the Fellows Program.

The Criminal Justice Standards Division of the Department of Justice must report to the Chairs of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees on Justice and Public Safety no later than April 1, 2019, regarding the implementation of this section, including the number of recipients the Committee anticipates will participate in the Fellows Program during the 2019-2020 academic year.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This section became effective July 1, 2018.