



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

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DATE: February 7, 2018

TO: The Honorable Members of the Oregon State Legislature

FROM: Linsay Hale, Professional Standards Division Director

SUBJECT: House Bill 4056: Oregon's Public Safety Memorial Fund
INFORMATION ONLY

The Public Safety Memorial Fund (PSMF) was established in 1999 to provide immediate, temporary financial assistance to the families of public safety officers¹ who suffer a qualifying death or to officers suffering a permanent, total disability in the line of duty. This temporary and immediate support is intended to "bridge the gap" for those who were reliant on the salary and benefits of the public safety officer, allowing the officer or the officer's family time to recover financially following a tragic line-of-duty event.

This program is administered by the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training in consultation with a six-member PSMF Board. The PSMF Board has the sole responsibility for making benefit eligibility determinations.

Upon determination by the PSMF Board that a death or disability qualifies for PSMF benefits, a one-time lump sum payment of \$25,000 is required to be paid within 14 days (in recognition of the months or years it may take for other benefits to set in). In addition, the PSMF Board may award benefits to assist with health/dental benefits, mortgage payments and, in very narrow situations, scholarships. Under the current law these benefits are discretionary and are awarded based on need, available PSMF funds and anticipated demands on the PSMF.

The PSMF was not established in Oregon law as a scholarship fund. As mentioned above, its primary purpose is to provide temporary and immediate financial assistance following a tragedy. The PSMF scholarship benefit was established to be secondary to all of the other educational benefits available to the families of fallen officers, specifically those provided by the US Dept. of Education, the Public Safety Officer Benefit program administered by the US Department of Justice, and the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Because each of these programs is designed to assist with the college tuition of survivors, the law precludes the PSMF Board from considering applications for scholarship benefits unless each of these benefits have been applied for and exhausted.

Since its inception, the PSMF has assisted the families of more than 50 public safety officers and has awarded over \$2 million dollars to eligible beneficiaries. In the previous biennium, the PSMF has awarded benefits to the families of nine officers tragically killed in the line of duty, paying out \$143,733. Again, due to the narrow construct of the parameters which would make a beneficiary eligible for a scholarship through the PSMF, there have been no scholarship awards paid by the PSMF to date.

¹ For the purposes of PSMF eligibility, "public safety officer" includes corrections officers, career and volunteer fire service professionals, parole and probation officers, police officers, reserve officers, and youth corrections officers.

