

## **R627, First Responder Mental Health Services Grant<sup>1</sup>**

**R627-1** The following policy has been codified as Utah Administrative Code R765-627.

### **R627-2 References**

**2.1** Utah Code § 53B-8-117, First Responder Mental Health Services Grant Program

**2.2** Utah Code Title 49, Chapter 11, Utah State Retirement Systems Administration

**2.3** Utah Code Title 58, Chapter 60, Mental Health Professional Practice Act

**2.4** Utah Code § 53B-1-102, Utah System of Higher Education

**2.5** Utah Code § 63G-4-402, Judicial Review – Informal Adjudicative Proceedings

**R765. Higher Education (Utah Board of), Administration.**

**R765-627. First Responder Mental Health Services Grant.**

**R765-627.1. Purpose.**

This rule outlines the requirements of and application process for First Responder Mental Health Services Grant Program.

**R765-627-2. Authority.**

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted May 18, 2023; amended March 1, 2024, and June 6, 2024.

Section 53B-8-117 authorizes this rule.

**R765-627-3. Definitions.**

(1) "Academic year" means the calendar year starting July 1 and ending June 30. For degree-granting institutions, this includes Fall, Summer, and Spring semesters of the corresponding academic year.

(2) "Board" means the Utah Board of Higher Education described in Section 53B-1-402.

(3) "Eligible institution" means an institution of higher education as defined in Section 53B-1-102 or a private, nonprofit institution of higher education in Utah that is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

(4) "First Responder" means an individual who works in Utah as:

- (a) a law enforcement officer, as defined in Section 53-13-103;
- (b) an emergency medical technician, as defined in Section 53-2e-101;
- (c) an advanced emergency medical technician, as defined in Section 53-2e-101;
- (d) a paramedic, as defined in Section 53-2e-101;
- (e) a firefighter, as defined in Section 34A-3-113;
- (f) a dispatcher, as defined in Section 53-6-102;
- (g) a correctional officer, as defined in Section 53-13-104;
- (h) a special function officer, as defined in Section 53-13-105, employed by a local sheriff;
- (i) a search and rescue worker under the supervision of a local sheriff;
- (j) a forensic interviewer or victim advocate employed by a children's justice center established in accordance with Section 67-5b-102;
- (k) a credentialed criminal justice system victim advocate as defined in Section 77-38-403 who responds to incidents with a law enforcement officer;

(l) a crime scene investigator technician;

(m) a wildland firefighter;

(n) an investigator or prosecutor of cases involving sexual crimes against children; or

(o) a civilian employee of a first responder agency who has been authorized to view or otherwise access information concerning crimes, accidents, or other traumatic events.

(5) “First responder agency” means the same as that term is defined in Section 53-21-101.

(6) “First responder volunteer” means:

(a) an individual who donates services as a first responder to a first responder agency located in Utah without pay or other compensation except:

(i) expenses that the individual actually and reasonably incurs as the supervising first responder agency approves; and

(ii) health insurance that a participant in the Volunteer Emergency Medical Service Personnel Health Insurance Program described in Section 26-8a-603 receives; or

(b) a volunteer firefighter who is not regularly employed as a firefighter service employee, but who:

(i) has received training in firefighter techniques and skills;

(ii) continues to receive regular firefighter training; and

(iii) is on the rolls of a legally organized volunteer fire department that provides ongoing training and serves a political subdivision of the state.

(7) "Retiree" means the same as that term is defined in Section 49-11-102.

(8) "OCHE" means the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education.

(9) "Scholarship staff" means OCHE staff assigned to administer state scholarships on behalf of the board.

#### **R765-627-4. Award Requirements.**

(1) To qualify for the First Responder Mental Health Services Grant, an applicant shall:

(a) be a first responder, a first responder volunteer, or a retiree who worked as a first responder in Utah; and

(b) be seeking a post-secondary degree or certification to become a mental health therapist, as Section 58-60-102 defines that term, at an eligible institution.

#### **R765-627-5. Application Process.**

(1) Each applicant shall submit a grant application no later than June 30 before the fiscal year during which awards are made.

(a) The board shall annually select and publish two periods of at least 30 days in which it will accept applications for the program.

(2) Each applicant shall submit the following documents:

(a) the completed First Responder Mental Health Services Grant application published by OCHE;

(b) documentation demonstrating the applicant's status as a first responder, first responder volunteer, or a retiree who worked as a first responder in the state;

(c) a description of the applicant's mental health services career objectives;

(d) a declaration of the applicant's intention to enroll in a program that leads to certification as a mental health professional at an eligible institution; and

(e) other documents as outlined on the annual grant application or as requested by scholarship staff.

(3) The applicant may include the documents described Subsections (2)(b) through (2)(e) in the grant application described in Subsection (2)(a).

(4) Each applicant shall reapply annually to be considered for the award each year.

#### **R765-627-6. Grant Amounts.**

(1) Subject to available funding, OCHE may award each qualified applicant a grant in an amount that is equal to or less than the difference between:

(a) the total cost of tuition and fees for the program in which the recipient is enrolled; and

(b) the total value of all other grants, tuition waivers, fee waivers, and scholarships that the recipient receives to attend the institution.

(2) A grant award under Subsection 765-627-6(1) is limited to \$6,000 each academic year.

(2) Each student may participate in First Responder Mental Health Services Grant for a maximum of four academic years.

(3) If the legislative appropriation is insufficient to cover the costs associated with the First Responder Mental Health Services Grant Program, the board may:

(a) prioritize renewal applications;

(b) prioritize applications for students who have been accepted into a program leading to a degree which qualifies the applicant to work as a mental health therapist;

(c) reduce the amount of a grant; or

(d) distribute grants on a pro rata basis to all eligible applicants who submitted all application material, as described in Subsection 765-627-5(2), before the application deadline.

(4) Each institution shall combine state or federal loans or grants, internships, student employment, and family and individual contributions toward financing the cost of attendance.

(5) OCHE may reduce the grant amounts based on funding.

(6) OCHE shall disclose on the application form that the grants are subject to funding and may be reduced.

#### **R765-627-7. Transfers.**

(1) Each recipient may transfer to the same program at another eligible institution and retain grant eligibility if the recipient meets all requirements in Section R765-627-4.

(2) Each transfer student shall be responsible for communication with financial aid offices at each institution and with scholarship staff in advance of the application deadline.

#### **R765-627-8. Appeals Process.**

(1) An applicant has the right to appeal an adverse decision.

(2) Upon request by the applicant, the scholarship staff shall provide the applicant an opportunity to appeal an adverse decision to a committee of at least three impartial persons.

(3) Each appeal request shall be submitted in writing within 30 days of the notice of adverse decision.

#### **R765-627-9. Reporting.**

(1) As specified by OCHE, each institution shall provide, as part of an annual institutional financial aid file submission by February 28 of each year, data pertaining to applications, awards, program enrollments, utilization, funding, and other grant information for the most recently completed academic year.

(2) OCHE may, at any time, request additional documentation or data related to the scholarship program and may review or formally audit an institution's documentation and compliance with this rule.