§ 115D-39.5. Tuition waivers.

(a) Allowed Tuition Waivers. – The State Board of Community Colleges shall not waive tuition and registration fees for any individuals, except the State Board may, as provided by general and uniform regulations, waive tuition and registration fees for the following:

(1) Persons not enrolled in elementary or secondary schools taking courses leading to a high school diploma or equivalent certificate.

(2) Courses requested by the following entities that support the organizations' training needs and are on a specialized course list approved by the State Board:

a. Volunteer fire departments.

b. Municipal, county, or State fire departments.

c. Volunteer EMS or rescue and lifesaving departments.

d. Municipal, county, or State EMS or rescue and lifesaving departments.

e. Law enforcement, fire, or EMS or rescue and lifesaving entities serving a lake authority that was created by a county board of commissioners prior to July 1, 2012.

f. Radio Emergency Associated Communications Teams (REACT) under contract to a county as an emergency response agency.

g. Municipal, county, or State law enforcement agencies.

h. Campus police agencies of private institutions of higher education certified by the Attorney General pursuant to Chapter 74G of the General Statutes.

i. The Division of Prisons of the Department of Adult Correction and the Division of Juvenile Justice of the Department of Public Safety for the training of full-time custodial employees and employees of the Divisions required to be certified under Article 1 of Chapter 17C of the General Statutes and the rules of the Criminal Justice and Training Standards Commission.

j. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the Catawba Indian Nation law enforcement, fire, or EMS or rescue and lifesaving tribal government departments or programs.

k. The Criminal Justice Standards Division of the Department of Justice for the training of criminal justice professionals, as defined in G.S. 17C-20(6), who are required to be certified under (i) Article 1 of Chapter 17C of the General Statutes and the rules of the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission or (ii) Chapter 17E of the General Statutes and the rules of the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission. The waivers provided for in this sub-subdivision apply to participants and recent graduates of the North Carolina Criminal Justice Fellows Program to obtain certifications for eligible criminal justice professions, as defined in G.S. 17C-20(6).

(3) Firefighters, EMS personnel, and rescue and lifesaving personnel whose duty station is located on a military installation within North Carolina for courses that support their organizations' training needs and are approved for this purpose by the State Board.

(4) Trainees enrolled in courses conducted under the Customized Training Program.

(5) Elementary and secondary school employees enrolled in courses in first aid or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

(6) All courses taken by high school students at community colleges, in accordance with this section and Article 2B of this Chapter.

(7) Human resources development courses for any individual who (i) is unemployed, (ii) has received notification of a pending layoff, (iii) is working and is eligible for the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (FEITC), or (iv) is working and earning wages at or below two hundred percent (200%) of the federal poverty guidelines.

(8) Courses providing employability skills, job-specific occupational or technical skills, or developmental education instruction to certain students who are concurrently enrolled in an eligible community college literacy course, in accordance with rules adopted by the State Board.

(9) Courses provided to students who are participating in a pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship program that meets all of the following criteria:

a. Meets one of the following:

1. Is a registered apprenticeship program recognized by the United States Department of Labor.

2. Is a pre-apprenticeship program recognized and approved by the State agency administering the statewide apprenticeship program.

b. Has a documented plan of study with courses relating to a job-specific occupational or technical skill.

c. Requires the participants in the program to be North Carolina high school students when entering the program.

(b) Faculty and Staff. – The State Board shall not waive tuition and registration fees for community college faculty or staff members. Community colleges may, however, use State or local funds to pay tuition and registration fees for one course per semester for full-time community college faculty or staff members employed for a nine-, 10-, 11-, or 12-month term. Community colleges may also use State and local funds to pay tuition and registration fees for professional development courses and for other courses consistent with the academic assistance program authorized by the State Human Resources Commission.

(c) Annual Report. – Annually by February 1, the Community Colleges System Office shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the number and type of waivers granted pursuant to subsection (a) of this section. (2025-56, s. 1(h); 2025-92, s. 2.3(a).)