

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 987

Short Title: Create Police Leadership Fellows Program. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Longest.

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 14, 2025

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO CREATE THE POLICE LEADERSHIP FELLOWS PROGRAM.
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 17C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new article
5 to read:

6 "Article 3.

7 "North Carolina Police Leadership Fellows Program.

8 **"§ 17C-30. Definitions.**

9 As used in this Article, the following definitions apply:

- 10 (1) Commission. – The North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training
11 Standards Commission.
12 (2) Committee. – The North Carolina Police Leadership Fellows Committee.
13 (3) Division. – The Criminal Justice Standards Division of the North Carolina
14 Department of Justice.
15 (4) Eligible criminal justice professions. – State and local sworn law enforcement
16 officers, State correctional officers, other correctional officers maintained by
17 local governments and juvenile justice agencies, sworn sheriffs and deputy
18 sheriffs, detention officers, and telecommunicators under the direct
19 supervision of a law enforcement agency.
20 (5) Program. – The North Carolina Police Leadership Fellows Program.
21 (6) Recipient. – An individual selected by the Committee to receive a forgivable
22 loan under the Program.

23 **"§ 17C-31. North Carolina Police Leadership Fellows Committee established; membership.**

24 (a) Committee Established. – There is established the North Carolina Police Leadership
25 Fellows Committee. The Committee shall be a Special Committee of the North Carolina Criminal
26 Justice Education and Training Standards Commission, as defined in the Commission's bylaws.
27 The Committee shall determine program and forgivable loan recipient selection criteria, selection
28 procedures, and shall select the recipients to receive forgivable loans under the North Carolina
29 Police Leadership Fellows Program in accordance with the requirements of this Article.

30 (b) Membership. – The Committee shall consist of 10 members who shall be appointed
31 as follows:

- 32 (1) The chair of the Commission shall appoint eight members of the Commission
33 to the Committee as follows:
34 a. Three at-large members.
35 b. Two sworn law enforcement officers.



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- 1 c. Two correctional officers.
- 2 d. The ex officio member representing the President of The University of
- 3 North Carolina System.
- 4 (2) The chair of the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards
- 5 Commission shall appoint two members of the North Carolina Sheriffs'
- 6 Education and Training Standards Commission to the Committee.
- 7 (c) Terms of Office. – Appointments to the Committee shall be for two-year terms,
- 8 commencing July 1, 2025.
- 9 (d) Chair; Meetings. – The chair of the Commission shall call the first meeting of the
- 10 Committee. The Committee members shall elect a chair and a vice-chair from the membership
- 11 of the Committee pursuant to the Commission's bylaws to serve one-year terms. The Committee
- 12 shall meet regularly at times and places deemed necessary by the chair or, in the absence of the
- 13 chair, by the vice-chair.
- 14 (e) Expenses. – Committee members shall receive per diem, subsistence, and travel
- 15 allowances in accordance with G.S. 138-5 or G.S. 138-6, as appropriate.
- 16 (f) Vacancies. – Except as otherwise provided, if a vacancy occurs in the membership of
- 17 the Committee, the appointing authority shall appoint another person meeting the same
- 18 qualifications to serve for the balance of the unexpired term.
- 19 § 17C-32. North Carolina Police Leadership Fellows Program established;
- 20 administration.
- 21 (a) Program. – There is established the North Carolina Police Leadership Fellows
- 22 Program to be administered by the Committee with the assistance of the Division. The purpose
- 23 of the Program is to increase the number of criminal justice professionals by providing forgivable
- 24 loans to exceptional individuals to obtain Bachelor's Degrees from a constituent institution of the
- 25 University of North Carolina System in criminal justice, government, the social sciences, or a
- 26 related field as determined by the Committee.
- 27 (b) Program Administrator. – The Director of the Division shall select a member of the
- 28 Division staff, with the consent of the Committee, to serve as the Program administrator. The
- 29 Program administrator will be responsible for all administrative duties and oversight of the
- 30 Program as established by the Committee. The Program administrator will conduct recruitment
- 31 efforts to include the following:
- 32 (1) Target high school graduates who, due to economic circumstances, are
- 33 displaced, unemployed, or underemployed.
- 34 (2) Target high school seniors who demonstrate an interest in being employed in
- 35 an eligible criminal justice profession.
- 36 (3) Engage with employees of eligible criminal justice professions and local
- 37 leaders for input in the Program.
- 38 (4) Attend high school career days, job fairs, and other activities to recruit
- 39 qualified individuals into the Program.
- 40 (c) Awards of Forgivable Loans. – The Program shall provide forgivable loans of up to
- 41 three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00) per year, totaling a maximum of six thousand dollars
- 42 (\$6,000.00) over two years for the freshman and sophomore years, to selected individuals. The
- 43 Program shall provide forgivable loans of up to seven thousand dollars (\$7,000.00) per year,
- 44 totaling a maximum of six thousand dollars (\$14,000.00) over two years for the junior and senior
- 45 years, to selected individuals. The maximum forgivable loans to any recipient under the Program
- 46 shall be twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00). The funds from the forgivable loans may be used
- 47 for tuition, fees, and the cost of books. The Committee may determine the maximum amount of
- 48 loan proceeds that may be applied to university fees and course textbooks. The number of
- 49 recipients in the Program each year shall be at least 50 if there are sufficient Program applicants
- 50 to meet this minimum amount, and shall not exceed 100. The Committee shall select recipients
- 51 no later than June 1 of each year.

1 (d) Eligibility Criteria. – An applicant must be domiciled in this State at the time of
2 application, a resident for tuition purposes as defined in G.S. 116-143.1(a)(2), a high school
3 graduate or a high school senior who will graduate from high school by the end of the current
4 academic year, and demonstrate the intent upon completion of the Program to be employed in an
5 eligible criminal justice profession. An applicant who has been convicted of any of the following
6 is ineligible to receive a forgivable loan:

7 (1) A felony.

8 (2) A crime for which the punishment could have been imprisonment for more
9 than two years.

10 (3) A crime or unlawful act defined as a Class B misdemeanor within the five-year
11 period prior to the date of application.

12 (4) Four or more crimes or unlawful acts defined as Class A misdemeanors,
13 except the trainee may be enrolled if the last conviction date occurred more
14 than two years prior to the date of application.

15 (5) A combination of four or more Class A misdemeanors or Class B
16 misdemeanors regardless of the date of conviction.

17 (e) Application Process. – The Committee may specify required application materials,
18 including a certified State and local background check for applicants who are at least 18 years of
19 age. Application materials and Committee deliberations are confidential and are not a public
20 record as defined in G.S. 132-1. The Committee shall publish application, award, and notification
21 deadlines and provide written notification to applicants regarding the outcome of the Committee's
22 deliberations.

23 (f) Award of Forgivable Loan. – The Committee shall adopt standards for awarding
24 forgivable loans based on measures the Committee deems appropriate, including the following,
25 and the selection of recipients by the Committee shall be final:

26 (1) Scholastic Profile as determined by SAT or ACT scores, grade point average,
27 and class rank when available.

28 (2) Potential for excellence in an eligible criminal justice profession.

29 (3) School and community service.

30 (4) At least two references.

31 (5) Demonstrated writing ability.

32 (g) Administration of Forgivable Loan Awards. – Upon the naming of recipients by the
33 Committee, the Division shall perform all administrative functions necessary to implement this
34 Article, which functions shall include dissemination of information, disbursement, receipt,
35 liaison with participating universities, determination of the acceptability of service repayment
36 agreements, and all other functions necessary for the execution, payment, and enforcement of
37 promissory notes required under this Article.

38 (h) Recipient Obligations. – A recipient must become and remain a student at a
39 constituent institution of the University of North Carolina System in a Bachelor's Degree in
40 criminal justice, government, the social sciences, or a related field as determined by the
41 Committee, at all times during each of the recipient's four academic years of university study and
42 pursue continuously studies that will qualify the recipient to be employed in an eligible criminal
43 justice profession upon graduation. The recipient must maintain a minimum cumulative 2.0 GPA
44 throughout the course of study and also maintain appropriate credit hours for each semester to
45 obtain a Bachelor's Degree in criminal justice, government, the social sciences, or a related field
46 as determined by the Committee. If the Committee, in its sole discretion, determines that
47 circumstances warrant an extension of the period within which the recipient must obtain a
48 Bachelor's Degree in criminal justice, government, the social sciences, or a related field as
49 determined by the Committee, the Committee may extend that period by up to 12 additional
50 months. The recipient must also accept employment in an eligible criminal justice profession for

1 at least eight years following graduation. The Committee may adopt additional recipient
2 obligations it deems appropriate.

3 (i) Annual Report. – The Program administrator, in coordination with the Committee,
4 shall report no later than January 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, to the Joint Legislative
5 Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety regarding the following:

6 (1) The number of forgivable loans awarded for each academic year
7 disaggregated to include geographic and other demographic information.

8 (2) Aggregated student performance, retention, and graduation rates.

9 (3) Employment subsequent to completion of the Program broken down by
10 county and eligible criminal justice profession.

11 (4) Forgiveness, termination, default, and repayment rates.

12 (5) Retention rates of recipients within criminal justice professions disaggregated
13 by county.

14 **"§ 17C-33. Terms of forgivable loans; receipt and disbursement of funds; default.**

15 (a) Forgivable Loans. – All forgivable loans shall be evidenced by notes made payable
16 to the Program that bear interest at a rate not to exceed ten percent (10%) per year as set by the
17 Committee and beginning on the first day of September after the completion of the Program or
18 60 days after termination of the forgivable loan, whichever is earlier. The forgivable loan may
19 be terminated upon the recipient's withdrawal from school, by the recipient's failure to meet the
20 standards set by the Committee, or by the recipient's default based on conditions set by the
21 Committee. The Committee may only disburse funds to the university where the recipient is
22 enrolled and may not disburse funds directly to a recipient.

23 (b) Forgiveness. – The Committee shall forgive the loan and any interest accrued on the
24 loan if, within eight years after obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in criminal justice, government,
25 the social sciences, or a related field as determined by the Committee, the recipient is employed
26 on a full-time basis for a period of at least eight years in an eligible criminal justice profession.
27 The recipient shall provide the Committee within 60 days of completion of the Program
28 verification of the recipient's intent to seek employment in an eligible criminal justice profession.
29 The recipient shall provide verification of employment to the Committee each year until the
30 obligation is satisfied. The Committee shall also forgive the loan if it finds that it is impossible
31 for the recipient to meet the terms of the loan, after or before graduation, due to death or
32 permanent disability of the recipient.

33 (c) Extension. – The Committee may extend repayment of the loan for up to two years
34 on a year-to-year basis for each year if (i) the recipient is on active duty with the Armed Forces
35 of the United States or (ii) the Committee, in its sole discretion, determines that circumstances
36 warrant an extension.

37 (d) Repayment. – If the recipient notifies the Committee that the recipient intends to
38 forego forgiveness of the loan after completion of the Program, the Committee shall provide the
39 recipient with the conditions of repayment and the recipient will have 60 days to begin repayment
40 of all funds distributed, including interest. The recipient will have up to 60 months to repay all
41 funds distributed, including interest.

42 (e) Default. – The Committee shall determine the events that constitute a default during
43 the Program, including, but not limited to, failure by the recipient to comply with the obligations
44 set out in G.S. 17C-32(h). In the event of default during the Program, the Committee may declare
45 the entire unpaid amount of indebtedness evidenced by the note, including interest, immediately
46 due and payable. A default shall preclude further participation by the recipient in the Program.
47 Upon default, the Committee shall notify the recipient, in writing, by certified mail, return receipt
48 requested, addressed to the recipient at the last address on file with the Committee. Refusal or
49 nondelivery at that address will be deemed delivered after seven days. The Committee may allow
50 a recipient who is in default to repay all funds distributed, including interest. If the Committee
51 approves repayment, the recipient will receive the conditions of repayment and will have 60 days

1 to begin repayment of all funds distributed, including interest. The recipient will have up to 60
2 months to repay all funds distributed, including interest."

3 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2025.