

**FIRST RESPONDER MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES GRANT
PROGRAM**

2023 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Ryan D. Wilcox

Senate Sponsor: Don L. Ipson

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill creates the First Responder Mental Health Services Grant Program to be administered by the Utah Board of Higher Education.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ creates the First Responder Mental Health Services Grant Program to be administered by the Utah Board of Higher Education to provide grants for specific individuals who are studying at certain educational institutions to become mental health therapists.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

This bill provides a special effective date.

Utah Code Sections Affected:

ENACTS:

53B-8-117, Utah Code Annotated 1953

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **53B-8-117** is enacted to read:

53B-8-117. First Responder Mental Health Services Grant Program.

(1) This section creates the First Responder Mental Health Services Grant Program.

30 (2) Subject to legislative appropriations and Subsection (6), the board shall award a
31 grant to an applicant who:

32 (a) is a full-time employee or a retiree, as that term is defined in Section [49-11-102](#),
33 who is an active member of or has qualified for an allowance under the requirements of:

34 (i) Title 49, Chapter 14, Public Safety Contributory Retirement Act;

35 (ii) Title 49, Chapter 15, Public Safety Noncontributory Retirement Act;

36 (iii) Title 49, Chapter 16, Firefighters' Retirement Act; or

37 (iv) Title 49, Chapter 23, New Public Safety and Firefighter Tier II Contributory
38 Retirement Act; and

39 (b) is seeking a post-secondary degree or certification to become a mental health
40 therapist, as that term is defined in Section [58-60-102](#), within the state system of higher
41 education, described in Section [53B-1-102](#).

42 (3) (a) Subject to Subsection (3)(b), the board may award a qualified applicant up to
43 the cost of tuition and fees.

44 (b) A grant award under Subsection (3)(a) is limited to:

45 (i) a maximum of \$6,000 each academic year; and

46 (ii) a maximum of four academic years.

47 (4) The board shall design the program to ensure that institutions combine loans,
48 grants, employment, and family and individual contributions toward financing the cost of
49 attendance.

50 (5) (a) The board shall make rules in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah
51 Administrative Rulemaking Act, to:

52 (i) set deadlines for receiving grant applications and supporting documentation; and

53 (ii) establish the application process and an appeal process for the First Responder
54 Mental Health Services Grant Program.

55 (b) The board shall include a disclosure on all applications and related materials that
56 the amount of the awarded grants may be subject to funding or be reduced, in accordance with
57 Subsection (6).

58 (6) (a) Subject to future budget constraints, the Legislature shall make an annual
59 appropriation from the Income Tax Fund to the board for the costs associated with the First
60 Responder Mental Health Services Grant Program authorized under this section.

61 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, if the appropriation under this
62 section is insufficient to cover the costs associated with the First Responder Mental Health
63 Services Grant Program, the board may:

64 (i) reduce the amount of a grant; or

65 (ii) distribute grants on a pro rata basis to all eligible applicants who submitted a
66 complete application before the application deadline.

67 Section 2. **Effective date.**

68 This bill takes effect on July 1, 2023.