Senator Don L. Ipson proposes the following substitute bill:

FIRST RESPONDER MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES GRANT
PROGRAM AMENDMENTS
2024 GENERAL SESSION
STATE OF UTAH
Chief Sponsor: Ryan D. Wilcox
Senate Sponsor: Don L. Ipson
LONG TITLE
General Description:
This bill amends the First Responder Mental Health Services Grant Program (program).
Highlighted Provisions:
This bill:
 defines terms;
 amends eligibility for the program;
 expands institutions at which a recipient may use a grant under the program;
 amends the computation of the grant amount;
 modifies the Utah Board of Higher Education's responsibilities related to accepting
applications for the programs; and
 makes technical changes.
Money Appropriated in this Bill:
None
Other Special Clauses:
None
Utah Code Sections Affected:
AMENDS:



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26 27	53B-8-117, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 74
28	Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:
29	Section 1. Section 53B-8-117 is amended to read:
30	53B-8-117. First Responder Mental Health Services Grant Program.
31	(1) <u>As used in this section:</u>
32	(a) "First responder" means an individual who works in Utah as:
33	(i) a law enforcement officer, as defined in Section 53-13-103;
34	(ii) an emergency medical technician, as defined in Section 53-2e-101;
35	(iii) an advanced emergency medical technician, as defined in Section 53-2e-101;
36	(iv) a paramedic, as defined in Section 53-2e-101;
37	(v) a firefighter, as defined in Section <u>34A-3-113</u> ;
38	(vi) a dispatcher, as defined in Section 53-6-102;
39	(vii) a correctional officer, as defined in Section 53-13-104;
40	(viii) a special function officer, as defined in Section 53-13-105, employed by a local
41	sheriff;
42	(ix) a search and rescue worker under the supervision of a local sheriff;
43	(x) a forensic interviewer or victim advocate employed by a children's justice center
44	established in accordance with Section 67-5b-102;
45	(xi) a credentialed criminal justice system victim advocate as defined in Section
46	77-38-403 who responds to incidents with a law enforcement officer;
47	(xii) a crime scene investigator technician;
48	(xiii) a wildland firefighter;
49	(xiv) an investigator or prosecutor of cases involving sexual crimes against children; or
50	(xv) a civilian employee of a first responder agency who has been authorized to view
51	or otherwise access information concerning crimes, accidents, or other traumatic events.
52	(b) "First responder agency" means the same as that term is defined in Section
53	<u>53-21-101.</u>
54	(c) "First responder volunteer" means:
55	(i) an individual who donates services as a first responder to a first responder agency
56	located in Utah without pay or other compensation except:

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57	(A) expenses that the individual actually and reasonably incurs as the supervising first
58	responder agency approves; and
59	(B) health insurance that a participant in the Volunteer Emergency Medical Service
60	Personnel Health Insurance Program described in Section 26-8a-603 receives; or
61	(ii) a volunteer firefighter who is not regularly employed as a firefighter service
62	employee, but who:
63	(A) has received training in firefighter techniques and skills;
64	(B) continues to receive regular firefighter training; and
65	(C) is on the rolls of a legally organized volunteer fire department that provides
66	ongoing training and serves a political subdivision of the state.
67	(d) "Retiree" means the same as that term is defined in Section <u>49-11-102</u> .
68	(2) This section creates the First Responder Mental Health Services Grant Program.
69	[(2)] (3) Subject to legislative appropriations and Subsection $[(6)]$ (8), the board shall
70	award a grant to an applicant who:
71	(a) is a [full-time employee or a retiree, as that term is defined in Section 49-11-102;
72	who is an active member of or has qualified for an allowance under the requirements of: (i)
73	Title 49, Chapter 14, Public Safety Contributory Retirement Act; (ii) Title 49, Chapter 15,
74	Public Safety Noncontributory Retirement Act; (iii) Title 49, Chapter 16, Firefighters'
75	Retirement Act; or (iv) Title 49, Chapter 23, New Public Safety and Firefighter Tier II
76	Contributory Retirement Act;] first responder, a first responder volunteer, or a retiree who
77	worked as a first responder in the state; and
78	(b) is seeking a post-secondary degree or certification to become a mental health
79	therapist, as that term is defined in Section 58-60-102, from:
80	(i) an institution of higher education within the state system of higher education,
81	described in Section 53B-1-102; or
82	(ii) a private, nonprofit institution of higher education in the state that is accredited by
83	the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.
84	[(3)] (4) (a) Subject to Subsection $[(3)(b)]$ (4)(b), the board may award a qualified
85	applicant [up to the cost of tuition and fees.] a grant in an amount that is equal to the difference
86	between:
87	(i) the total cost of tuition and fees for the program in which the recipient is enrolled;

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88	and
89	(ii) the total value of all other grants, tuition waivers, fee waivers, and scholarships that
90	the recipient receives to attend the institution.
91	(b) A grant award under Subsection $[(3)(a)] (4)(a)$ is limited to:
92	(i) a maximum of \$6,000 each academic year; and
93	(ii) a maximum of four academic years.
94	[(4)] (5) The board shall design the program to ensure that institutions combine loans,
95	grants, employment, and family and individual contributions toward financing the cost of
96	attendance.
97	(6) The board shall:
98	(a) select two periods during each calendar year to accept applications for the program;
99	and
100	(b) accept applications for no fewer than 30 days during each period described in
101	Subsection (6)(a).
102	$\left[\frac{(5)}{(7)}\right]$ (a) The board shall make rules in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah
103	Administrative Rulemaking Act, to:
104	(i) set deadlines for receiving grant applications and supporting documentation; and
105	(ii) establish the application process and an appeal process for the First Responder
106	Mental Health Services Grant Program.
107	(b) The board shall include a disclosure on all applications and related materials that
108	the amount of the awarded grants may be subject to funding or be reduced, in accordance with
109	Subsection [(6)] <u>(8)</u> .
110	[(6)] (a) Subject to future budget constraints, the Legislature shall make an annual
111	appropriation from the Income Tax Fund to the board for the costs associated with the First
112	Responder Mental Health Services Grant Program authorized under this section.
113	(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, if the appropriation under this
114	section is insufficient to cover the costs associated with the First Responder Mental Health
115	Services Grant Program, the board may:
116	(i) reduce the amount of a grant; or
117	(ii) distribute grants on a pro rata basis to all eligible applicants who submitted a
118	complete application before the application deadline.

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- 119 Section 2. Effective date.
- 120 <u>This bill takes effect on May 1, 2024.</u>