

HOUSE BILL 2226

By Pitts

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4,
Chapter 24, relative to creating the volunteer
firefighter training incentive pilot program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 24, is amended by adding Sections 2-7 of this act as a new part.

SECTION 2. As used in this part:

(1) "Commission" means the commission on firefighting personnel standards and education created by § 4-24-101;

(2) "Pilot program" means the three-year volunteer firefighter training incentive pilot program created by Section 3;

(3) "Recognized fire department" means an organization formally recognized by the SFMO in accordance with § 68-102-303 that offers its services for the purpose of suppressing fires, performing rescue services, or for performing other emergency response purposes;

(4) "SFMO" means the state fire marshal's office; and

(5) "Volunteer firefighter" means an individual who:

(A) Is trained in firefighting or prevention of fires and is an active member of a recognized fire department;

(B) Does not receive compensation or only receives expenses, reasonable benefits, or a nominal fee to perform the services of the recognized fire department; and

(C) Satisfies the requirements determined by the SFMO for participation in the pilot program.

SECTION 3. There is created a three-year volunteer firefighter training incentive pilot program. The purpose of the program is to award individual volunteer firefighters a grant for completing firefighting training and evaluate the effectiveness of such a grant program.

SECTION 4.

(a) The SFMO shall develop and manage the pilot program in conjunction with the following groups:

- (1) The commission;
- (2) The Tennessee Fire Chief's Association; and
- (3) The Tennessee Firemen's Association.

(b) The number of pilot program participants shall not exceed one thousand two hundred fifty (1,250) volunteer firefighters each year from no more than twenty-five (25) recognized fire departments. The departments selected to participate in the program shall represent a cross section, in geographic location, size, and type of departments, of the fire service in the state.

(c) Only departments located in cities or counties required by § 4-24-112 to meet the minimum firefighter training requirements shall be eligible to participate in the pilot program.

SECTION 5. A recognized fire department participating in the pilot program shall receive annually a grant of six hundred dollars (\$600) from the commission for each volunteer firefighter who completes the pilot program requirements as developed by the SFMO and shall disburse the full amount of the grant to each individual volunteer firefighter who satisfied the requirements.

SECTION 6.

(a) At the end of the pilot program, the SFMO shall evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot program and may make a recommendation for the implementation of a volunteer firefighting training incentive program for all volunteer firefighters.

(b) In evaluating the pilot program, the SFMO shall take into account:

(1) The number of volunteer firefighters who earn a higher certification;

(2) The increase in training hours completed by volunteer firefighters;

and

(3) The volunteer firefighter retention rates of participating recognized fire departments before and after the pilot program.

SECTION 7. This part shall be repealed on June 30, 2020.

SECTION 8. For purposes of developing the pilot program, this act shall take effect upon becoming law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, this act shall take effect November 1, 2016.