

## Criminal Justice Fellows Program Frequently Asked Questions

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### **What are the requirements to be eligible for the Criminal Justice Fellows Program?**

To be eligible to apply for and participate in the Criminal Justice Fellows Program, an individual must be a North Carolina resident, be a high school senior or a high school graduate, intend to pursue an associate degree (2-year degree) at a North Carolina community college, and intend to enter and remain in an eligible criminal justice profession anywhere in North Carolina for four (4) years following graduation.

### **I'm taking a year off from school after I graduate from high school or graduated from high school many years ago. Will I be eligible for the program?**

Yes. The program is open to high school seniors and graduates who would like to obtain their associate degree and intend to enter and remain in an eligible criminal justice profession anywhere in North Carolina.

### **What does residency mean?**

Applicants for the program must be "a resident for tuition purposes as defined in § 116-143.1(a)(2)".

According to § 116-143.1(a)(2), "a 'resident for tuition purposes' is a person who qualifies for the in-State tuition rate. To qualify as a resident for tuition purposes, a person must have established legal residence (domicile) in North Carolina and maintained that legal residence for at least 12 months immediately prior to his or her classification as a resident for tuition purposes. Every applicant for admission shall be required to make a statement as to his length of residence in the State."

Based on this state law, an applicant must have lived in a North Carolina County for 12 months.

Application to the program requires a copy of the applicant's driver's license or government issued ID as proof of residency.

### **Do I have to maintain full-time student status while in the program?**

It depends. You must become and remain a full-time student while in the program *unless* you do not need to be a full-time student in order to finish your degree in two years. For example, if you earned college credit in high school or completed summer classes, you may not need to be a full-time student during each semester to graduate within two (2) years. You must complete and submit a Status Credit Request form request form to apply for a waiver of the full-time requirement and must graduate with your associate degree within two (2) years of beginning the program.

### **If I fail a class, will the program pay for it when I retake it?**

No. The program will not pay for you to retake classes that you have failed or withdrawn from. You may, however, pay for the class on your own.

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### **I would like to take an online class at another community college. Will the fellowship pay for the class at that college?**

No. The fellowship only applies to classes taken at your chosen/primary community college. Any classes you take elsewhere will be your responsibility to pay. If you are planning to fully transfer to a different community college (ex. you are moving and transferring colleges), you must complete and submit a Transfer Request form. This form must be submitted to the Program Manager before the end of the semester prior to the semester you would like to transfer.

### **Will the fellowship pay for a bachelor's degree?**

No. The fellowship is intended only for an Associate in Applied Science Degree in Criminal Justice or another Committee approved field. Fellows are expected to graduate within two (2) years and become employed full-time in an eligible criminal justice profession in North Carolina upon graduation.

### **When is the application due date?**

The application process opens on September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year and closes on April 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. Applications are processed as they are received and reviewed for selection quarterly. The program awards only 100 fellowships per year, so apply as soon as possible before spots run out. Completed applications and all accompanying materials must be received by April 30<sup>th</sup> to be considered for program admission in the fall. Application materials received after April 30<sup>th</sup> will not be processed.

### **What is the selection process?**

The selection process has two parts: application grading and Committee selection. Applicants are first graded on their scholastic profile (as determined by their class rank, grade point average, and SAT or ACT scores), writing ability, school and community service, references, and potential for excellence in an eligible criminal justice profession. Applications are graded as they are received. Graded applications are then presented to the North Carolina Criminal Justice Fellows Committee for selection. The Committee meets quarterly, and applications are presented to them for selection as they are received and graded.

### **What professions can I go into after graduating with my degree under the program?**

You may go into any profession overseen by either the Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission or the Sheriff's Education and Training Standards Commission. Eligible professions include state and local law enforcement officers, state correctional officers, state juvenile justice officers, other correctional officers maintained by local governments and juvenile justice agencies, sworn sheriffs and deputy sheriffs, detention officers, and telecommunicators under the direct supervision of a law enforcement agency.

### **May I seek employment with a state agency after graduating?**

Yes. As long as the position with a state agency is an eligible criminal justice profession, you may work for a state agency to fulfill your four (4) year post-graduation employment obligation and remain eligible for loan forgiveness.

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### **What does it mean if I'm in "default"?**

Default is defined in the law under § 17C-23(e).

*Default -- The Committee shall determine the events that constitute a default during the Program, including, but not limited to, failure by the recipient to comply with the obligations set out in G.S. 17C-22(h). In the event of default during the Program, the Committee may declare the entire unpaid amount of indebtedness evidenced by the note, including interest, immediately due and payable. A default shall preclude further participation by the recipient in the Program. Upon default, the Committee shall notify the recipient, in writing, by certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the recipient at the last address on file with the Committee. Refusal or non-delivery at that address will be deemed delivered after seven days. The Committee may allow a recipient who is in default to repay all funds distributed, including interest. If the Committee approves repayment, the recipient will receive the conditions of repayment and will have 60 days to begin repayment of all funds distributed, including interest. The recipient will have up to 60 months to repay all funds distributed, including interest.*

### **What does it mean if I'm in repayment?**

Repayment is defined in the law under § 17C-23(d).

*Repayment -- If the recipient notifies the Committee that the recipient intends to forego forgiveness of the loan after completion of the Program, the Committee shall provide the recipient with the conditions of repayment and the recipient will have 60 days to begin repayment of all funds distributed, including interest. The recipient will have up to 60 months to repay all funds distributed, including interest.*

### **Who can I contact if I have a question about the program?**

If you have any questions or would like to request more information about the North Carolina Criminal Justice Fellows Program, please contact the CJ Fellows Program Manager at [cjfellows@ncdoj.gov](mailto:cjfellows@ncdoj.gov).