

Criminal Justice Fellows Program Frequently Asked Questions

Who can apply and what are the eligibility requirements?

The Criminal Justice Fellows Program is open to high school seniors and high school graduates. 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 in Applied Science in Criminal Justice or other Committee approved related field of study (2-year degree) at a North Carolina community college, and intend to work full-time in an eligible criminal justice profession anywhere in North Carolina for four (4) years following graduation.

How do I apply?

To apply, download the program application from www.ncdoj.gov/cjfellows. Submit your completed application along with copies of your unofficial high school transcript, your SAT and/or ACT scores (optional), two (2) references, your driver's license or government issued ID, and AOC records checks from all counties that you have resided in or may have been charged in (if you are 18+ years old) to the Program Manager for processing. Completed applications and accompanying documents may be submitted by email, fax, or mail to the addresses below:

Email: cjfellows@ncdoj.gov

Mailing Address:

Criminal Justice Fellows Program
P.O. Box Drawer 149

Fax: (919) 779-8210

Raleigh, NC 27602-0149

When is the application deadline?

The application process is opens annually from August 1st and closes on April 30th. The Criminal Justice Fellows Program awards only 100 fellowships per year and the selection process is ongoing, so applicants are encouraged to apply early. Completed applications and all accompanying documents **must** be received by the application deadline to be considered. If applying via mail, applicants should make sure to mail it early enough to be **received** by the application deadline as we use the date received and not the postmarked date.

How will applications be reviewed?

Applications are reviewed based on five (5) criteria: scholastic profile, writing ability, school and community service, references, and potential for excellence in an eligible criminal justice profession. Applications are reviewed by the program Manager for completeness in the order that they are received and presented to the Committee at each quarterly Committee meeting for selection and admission into the program.

Why should you apply to be a Fellow?

The Fellowship can help you to achieve your educational and professional goals by providing funds for tuition, fees, and textbooks and supplies. The maximum fellowship value per student for one academic year (two semesters) is **\$3,152.00**. Maximum values are as follows:

Fall Tuition (16+ hours)	\$1,216.00	Spring Tuition (16+ hours)	\$1,216.00
Fall Fees	\$60.00	Spring Fees	\$60.00
Fall Books/Required Items	<u>\$300.00</u>	Spring Books/Required Items	<u>\$300.00</u>
	Total \$1,576.00		Total \$1,576.00

The total value of the fellowship over two years is **\$6,304.00**. Tuition, fees, books, and items beyond these listed values per semester/over the course of their program are the responsibility of the student. The Fellowship will not pay for courses being retaken due to the student having previously failed or dropped the course.

I'm taking a year off from school after I graduate from high school or graduated from high school many years ago. Am I eligible to apply to the program?

Yes! High school graduates who would like to obtain their associate degree and intend to work full-time in an eligible criminal justice profession in North Carolina following graduation are eligible to apply. Individuals who have previously graduated high school and are considering/currently working in criminal justice are encouraged to apply!

I previously graduated from high school and am currently working as a criminal justice professional in North Carolina. Am I eligible to apply to the program?

Yes! Individuals currently employed in eligible criminal justice professions are eligible to apply for the Criminal Justice Fellows Program. After you graduate with your Associate in Applied Science in Criminal Justice or other Committee approved related field of study (2-year degree), you will just need to continue working in an eligible criminal justice profession for four (4) years to remain eligible to have your loan forgiven.

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.

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

You may go into any profession whose certification is administered 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.

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 certified and employed full-time in an eligible criminal justice profession in North Carolina upon graduation.

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 Criminal Justice Fellows Program, please contact the CJ Fellows Program Manager at cjfellows@ncdoj.gov.