# SOUTH CAROLINA

DEATH BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO THE SURVIVING FAMILIES
OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS WHO HAVE DIED IN THE LINE OF DUTY

## STATE DEATH BENEFITS

**South Carolina Code of Laws Title 9 Chapter 11 Section 9-11-120**
**Preretirement Death Benefit Program; post-retirement death benefit payment.**
Upon receipt by the system of the satisfactory proof of death of a member of the system whose employer participates in the Preretirement Death Benefit Program and whose death was a natural and proximate result of an injury by external accident or violence incurred while undergoing a hazard peculiar to the member's employment as a first responder while in the actual performance of his duty, provided that his death is not the result of the member's wilful negligence, suicide, or intentionally self-inflicted bodily injury, there must be paid to the member's designated beneficiary a one-time, lump sum benefit payment of seventy-five thousand dollars ($75,000). The amount of the benefit provided is increased to a total of one hundred fifty thousand dollars ($150,000) if the member is killed in the line of duty as defined above and the member's death is either:
(a) the result of an unlawful and intentional act of another person; or
(b) the result of an accident that occurs:
(i) as a result of the member's response to fresh pursuit, defined as the pursuit of a person who has committed or is reasonably suspected of having committed a felony, misdemeanor, traffic infraction, or violation of a county or municipal ordinance;
(ii) as a result of the member's response to what is reasonably believed to be an emergency;
(iii) at the scene of a traffic accident to which the member has responded; or
(iv) while the member is enforcing what is reasonably believed to be a traffic law or ordinance.

(5) Payments made pursuant to this subsection must be paid from the contributions made by participating employers to the Preretirement Death Benefit Program. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the board may adjust the required contributions to the Preretirement Death Benefit Program as necessary to fund these benefits on the basis of the program's actual experience and the recommendation of the system's actuary.

Contact your agency or retirement system for more information.

## EDUCATION BENEFITS

**South Carolina State Statute 59-111-110**
College tuition is not charged for 4 years at a state supported college, university, vocational or technical school for all children. Spouses are not eligible for state assistance under this law.

To apply, speak to the financial aid office of the school you wish to attend. More information can be found on the **South Carolina Commission of Higher Education** website at https://www.che.sc.gov/

**CONCERNS OF POLICE SURVIVORS** – provides financial assistance of up to $2,000 per semester to surviving children and surviving spouses of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty, according to C.O.P.S. criteria, who wish to pursue a course of study beyond high school. Since there is a tuition-free education benefit available in your state, you must first apply for and be denied by the state or the institution to be eligible for the C.O.P.S. scholarship.

How to Apply: https://www.concernsofpolicesurvivors.org/scholarship

**The PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS' EDUCATION ASSISTANCE (PSOEA) Program** provides financial assistance, for the purpose of seeking higher education, to the spouses and eligible children of local police, fire, and emergency public safety officers who have been killed or permanently disabled in the line of duty.

Educational assistance through the PSOEA Program is available after the Public Safety Officers' Benefit (PSOB) death or disability claim process has been completed and benefits have been awarded.
Visit https://psob.bja.ojp.gov/ for more information and the application or call the PSOB Office toll-free at 1-888-744-6513 to discuss the requirements for receiving PSOEA benefits.

**KIDS CHANCE OF SOUTH CAROLINA-** To be eligible for a scholarship grant, applicants must have a parent who has been killed or seriously injured as a result of a work-related incident that meets the criteria of the Workers' Compensation Act and that has resulted in demonstrated financial need. Applicants must be under 25 years of age.

For more information or to apply, visit https://www.kidschancesc.org/

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Workers' Compensation Act South Carolina General Statutes Section 42-9-290**
If a worker dies because of work-related injuries, the workers' dependents, or parents if there are no dependents, must file a claim within two years of the death to claim benefits. Death benefits are available for 500 weeks of compensation at 66 2/3 of weekly wage. Two-year lump sum payable to spouse upon remarriage and weekly benefits cease. Children receive benefits beyond age 19 if disabled, or until age 23 if full-time students.

For questions about your claim email the **South Carolina Workers' Compensation Commission** at claims@saf.sc.gov, call (803) 737-5700 or visit https://wcc.sc.gov/.

## PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS' BENEFITS (PSOB) PROGRAM

A unique effort of the U.S. Department of Justice; local, state, tribal, and federal public safety agencies; and national organizations, the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program provides death and education benefits to survivors of fallen law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders, and disability benefits to officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty.

The claim has two parts (A&B) that require the agency and family to fill out online. Visit https://psob.bja.ojp.gov/ for additional filing information.

If you need assistance filing this claim, contact the National C.O.P.S. office at (573) 346-4911 or cops@nationalcops.org

## STATE LIFE INSURANCE & RETIREMENT

Check with your agency to see if you are eligible for State Life Insurance or death benefits from a Retirement system. You can also visit:
**Police Officers Retirement System (SCPEBA)** https://www.peba.sc.gov/pors

## HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS

The state will pay the premium for spouses and dependents of officers that were covered by the state health and dental insurance for one year. After the 12-month period, a spouse or dependent may elect to continue the coverage with some employers paying part of the premium. For more information, contact the Benefits Coordinator at your agency.

## FUNERAL BENEFITS

**Workers' Compensation** pays a maximum amount for funeral expenses of $12,000. See Workers' Compensation section above

**DIGNITY MEMORIAL FUNERAL, CREMATION AND CEMETERY** providers created the Public Servants Program for emergency service personnel. This program provides dignified and honorable tributes, at no cost, for career and volunteer law enforcement officers who fall in the line of duty. Visit their website for complete information at https://www.dignitymemorial.com/ and look under Public Servants for details. You may also call 800-344-6489 and speak with a representative.

**WILBERT FUNERAL SERVICES, INC.** provides complimentary burial vaults and related services for fallen law enforcement officers. For more information visit https://www.wilbert.com/ or call (888) WILBERT.

## ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

**PEER SUPPORT ORGANIZATION**
**CONCERNS OF POLICE SURVIVORS INC., (C.O.P.S.),** is a national, non-profit organization that works with law enforcement agencies, police organizations, mental health professionals, and local peer-support organizations to provide assistance to surviving families of law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty. C.O.P.S. provides Hands-On Programs, training for law enforcement, National Police Week registration/accommodations, scholarships, counseling and so much more to surviving families and co-workers.

Contact the C.O.P.S. National Office 573-346-4911, email cops@nationalcops.org or visit https://www.concernsofpolicesurvivors.org/local-chapterfor information on a chapter in your area. Office hours are Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. CST.

**SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFIT** Spouses, children, or parents may be eligible for Social Security Benefits. To apply for benefits, call (800) 772-1213 to speak to a Social Security representative or visit your local Social Security Office. You cannot report a death or apply for survivors benefits online. Visit https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/survivors/ifyou.htmlfor more information.

**SOUTH CAROLINA SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION** https://www.sheriffsc.org/

**SOUTH CAROLINA POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION** https://www.scpolicechiefs.org/

**SOUTH CAROLINA POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION**
https://www.sspba.org/gen/chapters/South_Carolina_Division_14.jsp

**SOUTH CAROLINA FOP** https://scfop.org/

**South Carolina Law Enforcement Officers' Association**
https://www.scleoa.org/page/About

**First Responders Children's Foundation** provides financial support to children who have lost a parent in the line of duty as well as families enduring significant financial hardships due to tragic circumstances. They also provide annual education scholarships to children of fallen heroes. For more information, call (646) 822-4236 or visit https://1strcf.org.

**Real Estate Tax Abatement** Surviving spouses are exempt from real estate tax on their primary residence and up to one acre of land on which it resides as long as the spouse own the residence in fee or for life. Abatement terminates upon remarriage. Contact the **South Carolina Department of Revenue** at 803-898-5700 or visit https://dor.sc.gov/property/exempt-property for more information.

**OTHER BENEFITS TO ASK YOUR AGENCY ABOUT:**
City life insurance?
Private life insurance?
County & Local Jurisdiction Benefits?