



First Responder Recruitment and Retention Act 2023-2024 Tuition Waiver Application

The First Responder Recruitment and Retention Act provides a 100% waiver of resident tuition charges for Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters, Firefighter-Paramedics, and their dependent children for up to five consecutive years.

Law enforcement officer: Any person who is responsible for the prevention or detection of crime or the enforcement of the penal, traffic, or highway laws of the State of Nebraska or any political subdivision of the state for more than 100 hours per year and who is authorized by law to make arrests.

Professional firefighter: Any firefighter or firefighter-paramedic who is a member of a paid fire department of a municipality or a rural or suburban fire protection district in the state of Nebraska, including a municipality having a home rule charter or a municipal authority created pursuant to a home rule charter that has its own paid fire department, and for whom firefighting is a full-time career.

Legal Dependent: One who is determined to be a dependent student under the [dependency status](#) guidelines of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) and has at least one parent who qualifies as a law enforcement officer or professional firefighter in the State of Nebraska.

Waiver amounts are calculated utilizing in-state tuition charges less any federal grants, state grants or scholarships, and any institutional scholarships. Interested applicants must fulfill the following conditions to be eligible for the waiver:

- Provide a signed copy of Page 2 of the Department of Revenue First Responder Certificate of Verification & Authorization for Release of Information (FRVA) form found on the [Department of Revenue website](#).
- Provide a signed Verification of Satisfactory Performance Certification from the First Responder's supervisor
- Be admitted to Western Nebraska Community College
- Enroll in an *eligible* Associate program. Qualifying dependents may enroll in *any Associate program*. First Responders must enroll in an approved program relating to their career. Eligible programs are listed below:
 - *Eligible Law Enforcement Programs:
 - AA Degree in Information Tech: Cybersecurity Option
 - AA Degree in Information Tech: Information Tech Option
 - AA Degree in Criminal Justice
 - AA Degree in Human Services
 - AAS Degree in Criminal Justice
 - AAS Degree in Human Services
 - *Eligible Firefighter and Firefighter-Paramedic Programs:
 - AS Degree in Exercise Science
 - AS Degree in Health Professionals (Pre-)
 - EXCEPT Pre-Veterinary, Biomedical Research, Dental Hygiene, Dietetics, Food Science
 - ADN Degree in Nursing
 - AAS Degree in Emergency Medical Services
 - AAS Degree in Health Information Technology
 - AAS Degree in Medical Laboratory Technician
 - AAS Degree in Surgical Technology
- Complete the 2023-2024 [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA®\)](#) for the applicant
- Complete and sign this application form
- Complete the application process including providing supporting signatures and documentation each academic year a tuition waiver is requested.

***Please note: First Responders interested in an Associate program that is not listed as eligible may appeal to the Executive Vice President of Educational & Student Services by completing the "Program Appeal" section on Page 4.**

Student Name _____ WNCC ID _____

Telephone Number _____ WNCC Email Address _____

Law Enforcement Officer Certification

By signing this document, I affirm that:

1. I am a law enforcement officer responsible for the prevention or detection of crime or the enforcement of the penal, traffic or highway laws of the State of Nebraska or any political subdivision of the state for more than 100 hours per year and I am authorized to make arrests.
2. I am currently employed by a municipality, sheriff's office, or the Nebraska State Patrol as a law enforcement officer.
3. I am pursuing an associate degree program that relates to a career in law enforcement, **OR**
4. I have a legal dependent who is applying for the tuition waiver and the student named above is my legal dependent as defined in this application.
5. I will file with the Department of Revenue (DOR) documentation showing proof of employment as a law enforcement officer and proof of residence in Nebraska *each year* that I or my legal dependent apply for and receive the tuition waiver.
6. I will provide a copy of the DOR documentation to WNCC's Financial Aid Office each year the tuition waiver is requested.

Law Enforcement Officer Signature _____ Date _____

Professional Firefighter or Firefighter-Paramedic Certification

By signing this document, I affirm that:

1. I am a professional firefighter or Firefighter-Paramedic who is a member of a paid fire department and firefighting is my full-time career.
2. I am currently employed by a municipality, or rural or suburban fire protection district in the state of Nebraska.
3. I am pursuing an associate degree program that leads to a degree in science or medicine that that relates to a career in professional firefighting, **OR**
4. I have a legal dependent who is applying for the tuition waiver and the student named above is my legal dependent as defined in this application.
5. I will file with the Department of Revenue (DOR) documentation showing proof of employment as a professional firefighter and proof of residence in Nebraska *each year* that I or my legal dependent apply for and receive the tuition waiver.
6. I will provide a copy of the DOR documentation to WNCC's Financial Aid Office each year the tuition waiver is requested.

Firefighter
/Firefighter-Paramedic Signature _____ Date _____

Verification of Satisfactory Performance (to be completed by the First Responder's supervisor)

Name and Title _____

Department or Agency _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____ Email Address _____

I am the supervisor for the individual listed above and by my signature I attest the first responder has maintained and continues to maintain satisfactory performance with the department or agency listed above.

Signature of Supervisor _____ Date _____



First Responder Recruitment and Retention Act Legal Dependent Agreement

Legal Dependent Agreement, if applicable

By signing this document, I attest that:

1. I am a legal dependent of a law enforcement officer, professional firefighter, or firefighter-paramedic as defined in this application.
2. I am pursuing an associate degree from WNCC.
3. For a period of five years following the receipt of the tuition waiver, I will reside in the State of Nebraska, and I agree to annually file a tax return with the Nebraska Department of Revenue.
4. If I fail to annually file a Nebraska tax return, I may be required to repay the tuition waiver that I received under the First Responder Recruitment and Retention Act to Western Nebraska Community College.
5. I hereby grant Western Nebraska Community College, its employees, officers, and agents, permission to disclose any personally identifiable information from my academic records to the Nebraska Department of Revenue as may be necessary or appropriate to comply with the provisions of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-2605, including academic records that may otherwise be protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Dependent Signature _____ Date _____

NOTE: THIS FORM IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH LITTLE OR NO NOTICE IN RESPONSE TO NEBRASKA LAW. COMPLETING THIS APPLICATION DOES NOT MAKE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR A TUITION WAIVER UNDER THE ACT. CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY WILL BE DETERMINED BY WESTERN NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN ACCORDANCE WITH NEBRASKA LAW.



First Responder Recruitment and Retention Act Eligible Program Appeal

Please review the eligible program requirements before completing this form:

- **Law Enforcement:** Must enroll in an Associate degree program that relates to a career in law enforcement.
- **Firefighters and Firefighter-Paramedics:** Must enroll in an Associate degree program in science or medicine that relates to a career in professional firefighting.
- **Dependents:** May enroll in any Associate degree program and do not need to complete a program appeal.

Please complete this section only if you are a First Responder interested in pursuing an Associate degree that is not already listed as an eligible program (below), *but that relates to your career in law enforcement or in professional firefighting*. Programs that are already approved are listed below for your reference:

- *Eligible Law Enforcement Programs:
 - AA Degree in Information Tech: Cybersecurity Option
 - AA Degree in Information Tech: Information Tech Option
 - AA Degree in Criminal Justice
 - AA Degree in Human Services
 - AAS Degree in Criminal Justice
 - AAS Degree in Human Services
- *Eligible Firefighter and Firefighter-Paramedic Programs:
 - AS Degree in Exercise Science
 - AS Degree in Health Professionals (Pre-)
 - *EXCEPT Pre-Veterinary, Biomedical Research, Dental Hygiene, Dietetics, Food Science*
 - ADN Degree in Nursing
 - AAS Degree in Emergency Medical Services
 - AAS Degree in Health Information Technology
 - AAS Degree in Medical Laboratory Technician
 - AAS Degree in Surgical Technology

Proposed Associate Degree Program: _____

Please explain your role or career goals as a First Responder and how the degree program listed above relates to a career in law enforcement or professional firefighting. You may attach a separate page if needed.

Eligible program appeals will be reviewed by the Executive Vice President of Educational & Student Services. You will be notified of the appeal decision via your WNCC email or at the telephone number you provided on Page 2 of the Waiver Application. If applicable, Program Appeals must be submitted each year you are requesting the waiver.