TENSA

Death benefits available to the surviving families of law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty

STATE DEATH BENEFITS

A Lump Sum Payment of $500,000 from the state for the surviving spouse, or in equal shares, to the surviving children or parents. (Texas Government Code Section 615.022).
A monthly payment paid by the state to surviving minor children (Texas Government Code Section 615.023). The state would pay a monthly payment to a parent or guardian until the surviving children reach age 18: for one surviving child, $400; for two surviving children, $600; or for three or more children $800. https://www.ers.texas.gov/PDFs/Chapter615.pdf

EDUCATION BENEFITS

C.O.P.S. offers a scholarship to surviving spouses and children up to $1500 per semester. Visit https://www.concernsofpolicesurvivors.org/scholarship for the application.

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.

Call (888) 744-6513 or visit https://psob.bja.ojp.gov/benefits/ or more information.

Current with legislation from the 2019 Regular Session effective as of September 1, 2019

Section 54.354 - Education Benefits For Certain Survivors
(a) A person is eligible to receive education benefits under this section if the person is: (1) a surviving spouse; or (2) a surviving minor child as defined by Section 615.001, Government Code.
(b) An eligible person who enrolls as a full-time student at an institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003 is exempt from tuition and fees at that institution of higher education until the student receives a bachelor's degree or 200 hours of course credit, whichever occurs first.
(c) If the student elects to reside in housing provided by the institution of higher education and qualifies to reside in that housing, the institution shall pay from the general revenue
appropriated to the institution the cost of the student's contract for food and housing until
the student receives a bachelor's degree or 200 hours of course credit, whichever occurs
first. If there is no space available in the institution's housing, the institution shall, from the
general revenue appropriated to the institution, pay to the student each month the
equivalent amount that the institution would have expended had the student lived in the
institution's housing. The institution is not required to pay the student the monthly payment if
the student would not qualify to live in the institution's housing. (d) The institution of higher
education shall, from the general revenue appropriated to the institution, pay to the student
the cost of the student's textbooks until the student receives a bachelor's degree or 200 hours
of course credit, whichever occurs first. (e) A payment under this section is in addition to any
payment made under Section 615.022, Government Code.


WORKERS’ COMPENSATION

Workers’ Compensation – State Office of Risk Management Provider: State Office of Risk
Management Summary: Amount provided for funeral expenses varies, but shall not exceed
$10,000, and will be paid directly to the funeral home handling the burial arrangements.
Income benefits payments will be computed by multiplying the employee’s average weekly
wage by 75%. Details & Applicable Instructions: Workers’ Compensation shall pay the
following death benefits when a custodial officer is killed in the line of duty: • Will pay up to
$10,000 for funeral expenses which will be paid directly to the funeral home handling the
burial arrangements. • Payment will be computed by multiplying the employee’s average
weekly wage by 75%. • If the custodial officer is survived by any minor children, Workers’
Compensation will then mandatorily divide the payment, paying a portion each week to the
child until the child reaches the age of 18, or marries, or beyond age 18 if disabled, or until
the child reaches the age of 25 if full-time student. If there are two or more children, the
weekly amount must equally be divided among them. • At such time as all dependent
children become of age or leave home, the surviving spouse will receive a weekly benefit
thereafter. • The surviving spouse will continue to receive the Workers’ Compensation Benefit
whether or not the surviving spouse chooses to remarry (HB 1094, 84th Legislature). The minor
child or children will receive the weekly benefit until reaching the maximum age. • If the
custodial officer was single and had never been married, the parents (if living) or next of kin,
if financially dependent upon the officer, are entitled to receive cash settlement under
Workers’ Compensation. • Workers’ Compensation benefits are calculated based on the
custodial officer's average salary for the 13 weeks immediately prior to death. To file for
Workers’ Compensation, the custodial officer’s survivors, or their representative should
contact the Industrial Accident Board. To file the claim, the following information will be
needed: • Full name of the employee and age.
• Social Security Number of the employee. • Date and time of injury. • Description of injuries received. • Date and time of death. • Exact cause of death. • Hourly wage rate and weekly wage average of the employee. • Full name and age of surviving spouse. • Full names, ages, dates of birth, and marital status of children. • Date of marriage and copy of marriage certificate. • Names, addresses, and dates of marriage and divorce or death of previous spouses if the employee was married more than once. • Copy of the death certificate. • If the employee was not married, then the name and the address of parents, if living, or of parents, if living, or next of kin. Phone: (512) 475-1440

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 psob.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

RETIREMENT & PENSION

Benefits are different from agency to agency. Check with your departments HR representative.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Health, dental, and/or vision benefits for an eligible surviving spouse and surviving children, up to age 26, if the deceased was a Commissioned Peace Officer or was employed by TDCJ. Check with your agencies Human Resources Department for available health benefit information.

FUNERAL BENEFITS

State-Paid Funeral Expenses if the deceased was a Commissioned Peace Officer; jailer, county jailer or guard; or was employed by TDCJ (Texas Government Code Section 615.12(1) and 615.122).

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 @ 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 www.wilbert.com or call (888) WILBERT.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

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. For complete information, visit concernsofpolicesurvivors.org; email cops@nationalcops.org or call (573) 346-4911. Office hours are Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. CST.


Reimbursement for funeral costs such as professional services for funeral and burial services, flowers, caskets, urns, and grave markers, Transportation of deceased over 50 miles. Compensation for funeral and burial costs is limited to $6,500 for dates of crime after July 14, 2016. For dates of crime before this, other limits will apply. Compensation may be available for loss of earnings and travel to attend the funeral. See Loss of Earnings and Travel for more information. https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/crime-victims/crime-victims-compensation-program/funeral-cost-reimbursement

Combine Law Enforcement Association of Texas (CLEAT) $15,000 line of duty death benefit if the officer is a member in good standing at time of death. Contact them at 1-800-252-8153.

TMPA -The Voice of Texas Law Enforcement-$10,000 line of duty death benefit for members in good standing. Ph. 1-800-848-2088

Texas Fallen Officer Foundation (FOF)- The Texas Fallen Officer Foundation is a nonprofit organization that will provide aid and assistance to officers and the families of police and other law enforcement officers killed or critically injured in the line-of-duty throughout the State of Texas. https://www.texasfof.org/
100 CLUBS OF TEXAS - Many Clubs are spread throughout Texas. Houston and the 32 surrounding counties as well as San Antonio, Central Texas, El Paso, Denton and Corpus Christi. Line of duty death must meet specific criteria. An official letter from the Chief or Constable on official letterhead must be submitted. Contact your department to see if there is a club in your area as well as possible available benefits in your area.

Social Security Benefit: United States Social Security Administration Summary: One-time death benefit payment plus monthly death benefits. The surviving spouse must request the lump sum, one-time benefit and may be able to receive full benefits at age 65 if born on or before January 1, 1940 (age gradually increasing to 67 for widows or widowers born January 2, 1940 or later). Reduced benefits may be available as early as age 60. Documents Required: Marriage Certificate; Certified Death Certificate Contact Information: Toll Free: (800) 772-1213 Website: www.ssa.gov

The Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation is committed to ensuring we never forget the events of 9/11 and the sacrifices that were made and continue to be made by our first responders in the line of duty. Through the Fallen First Responder Home Program, Tunnel to Towers aims to pay off the mortgages of fallen law enforcement officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty that leave behind young children. The Foundation’s goal is to ensure stability and security to these families facing sudden, tragic loss. https://tunnel2towers.org/

American Police Hall of Fame Offers compassionate programs for law enforcement families, yearly birthday and Holiday gifts for children, scholarships, summer camp funds and so much more. https://www.aphf.org/

Homestead Exemption The surviving spouse of a first responder killed in the line of duty is eligible for a 100% property tax exemption on a residence homestead if they have not remarried. To apply, individuals must submit an application, documentation that the spouse was killed in the line of duty, and a copy of your marriage license.

OTHER BENEFITS TO ASK YOUR AGENCY ABOUT:
City life insurance?
Private life insurance?