

Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship

2019-20 Award Year

What is the Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship (CFHS)?

Beginning with the 2018-19 academic year, it is a scholarship awarded to Pell-eligible students whose parent or guardian died in the line of duty while performing as a public safety officer. It was created on March 23, 2018 through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018.

What is considered a public safety officer?

As defined in section 1204 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796b); or

- A fire police officer, defined as an individual who is serving in accordance with State or local law as an officially recognized or designated member of a legally organized public safety agency and provides scene security or directs traffic in response to any fire drill, fire call, or other fire, rescue, or police emergency, or at a planned special event.

How much is the student eligible to receive?

The student is eligible to receive a maximum Pell Grant for the award year for which the determination of eligibility is made. Since this amount is awarded as a Federal Pell Grant, the award is counted toward the Pell Lifetime Eligibility Used (LEU).

How does the student qualify for the scholarship?

- The student must be Pell-eligible and have a Pell-eligible EFC.
- The student must be less than 24 years of age or enrolled at an institution of higher education at the time of his or her parent's or guardian's death.
- In subsequent award years, the student continues to be eligible for the scholarship, as long as the student has a Pell-eligible EFC and continues to be an eligible student.

How is other Title IV aid awarded?

All Title IV aid award to such eligible students must be based on an EFC of zero without regard to the student's calculated EFC. Thus, the student is eligible for the maximum Pell Grant for his or her enrollment status and cost of attendance. In addition, the student's eligibility for Direct Loans and Campus-Based program aid must be based on an EFC of zero.

How is this status documented?

The financial aid administrator (FAA) must determine and document, in collaboration with the student, that the student was less than 24 years of age or enrolled at an institution of higher education at the time of his or her parent's or guardian's death. There is no single, national data source of individuals who died in the line of duty while serving as a public safety officer. While the Department of Education does not specify all of the acceptable documentation that may be used to determine eligibility for this scholarship, here are some documents that schools may consider:

- A determination letter acknowledging eligibility for certain federal benefits under the Public Safety Officers Benefit (PSOB) program administered by the Department of Justice;

- A written letter of attestation or determination made by a state or local government official with supervisory or other relevant oversight authority of an individual who died in the line of duty while serving as a public safety officer as defined above;
- Documentation of the student qualifying for a state tuition or other state benefit accorded to the children or other family members of a public safety officer consistent with the definition in 42 U.S.C. 3796b, or as a fire police officer as noted above; or
- Other documentation the school determines to be from a credible source that describes or reports the circumstances of the death and the occupation of the parent or guardian.

Institutions must maintain all evidentiary documentation related to the determination of the student's eligibility for the Children of the Fallen Heroes Scholarship.

How will schools report this information?

The June 17, 2019 release of the [2019-20 COD Technical Reference](#) states, "To accommodate the new Children of Fallen Heroes (CFH) Scholarship Act provision, the COD System will include a new indicator for Pell-eligible students, whose parent or guardian was actively serving as a police officer, firefighter, or other public safety officer and died in the line of duty. Schools certify eligibility by submitting the new CFH Indicator which will allow the student's maximum Pell Grant Scheduled Award Amount to be assessed as if the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) were zero, regardless of the official EFC. This COD system solution is a short-term solution beginning in the 2018-19 award year until the Children of Fallen Heroes eligibility can be interfaced from CPS transactions in the future. The CFH Indicator will only be able to be set on the COD Web and will not be returned as a tag in the Common Record Response." While there is no date set in which you would begin reporting eligibility in FAA Access to CPS Online, according to page 3-57 of the [2019-20 FSA Handbook](#), "You must certify eligible students on COD Web by marking the CFH Indicator = "true" for students who qualify. See the [Electronic Announcement of November 19, 2018](#) for more details on eligibility and treatment of the Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship. In the future, you will only need to certify the student's eligibility in FAA Access to carry over to future years."

What modifications will Federal Student Aid make?

Federal Student Aid will permit institutions to certify eligibility for CFHS and allow for increased Pell Grant disbursements through the Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) System. The Central Processing System (CPS) will not recalculate a student's EFC when an institution makes the determination that a student qualifies for a CFHS. However, in order to make the scholarship easier for schools to administer in subsequent award years, system modifications are being worked on which would accommodate eligibility certification within the CPS.