

## Chapter 17C.

### North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission.

#### Article 1.

#### General.

#### § 17C-1. Findings and policy.

The General Assembly finds that the administration of criminal justice is of statewide concern, and that proper administration is important to the health, safety and welfare of the people of the State and is of such nature as to require education and training of a professional nature. It is in the public interest that such education and training be made available to persons who seek to become criminal justice officers, persons who are serving as such officers in a temporary or probationary capacity, and persons already in regular service. (1971, c. 963, s. 1; 1979, c. 763, s. 1.)

#### § 17C-2. Definitions.

Unless the context clearly otherwise requires, the following definitions apply in this Article:

- (1) Commission. – The North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission.
- (2) Criminal justice agencies. – The State and local law-enforcement agencies, the State correctional agencies, other correctional agencies maintained by local governments, and the juvenile justice agencies, but shall not include deputy sheriffs, special deputy sheriffs, sheriffs' jailers, or other sheriffs' office personnel governed by the provisions of Chapter 17E of these General Statutes.
- (3) Criminal justice officers. – The administrative and subordinate personnel of all the departments, offices, agencies, units or entities comprising the criminal justice agencies who are sworn law-enforcement officers, both State and local, with the power of arrest; State correctional officers; State probation/parole officers; State probation/parole officers-surveillance; officers, supervisory and administrative personnel of local confinement facilities; State juvenile justice officers; chief court counselors; and juvenile court counselors.
- (3a) Critical incident. – An incident involving any use of force by a law enforcement officer that results in death or serious bodily injury to a person.
- (4) Entry level. – The initial appointment or employment of any person by a criminal justice agency, or any appointment or employment of a person previously employed by a criminal justice agency who has not been employed by a criminal justice agency for the 12-month period preceding this appointment or employment, or any appointment or employment of a previously certified criminal justice officer to a position which requires a different type of certification. (1971, c. 963, s. 2; 1979, c. 763, s. 1; 1983, c. 558, s. 2; c. 745, s. 2; 1989, c. 757, s. 1; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1024, s. 4(a); 1997-503, s. 2; 2001-490, s. 1.1; 2018-5, s. 17.1(a); 2021-138, s. 3(a); 2021-182, s. 3(b).)

#### § 17C-3. North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission established; members; terms; vacancies.

(a) There is established the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission, hereinafter called "the Commission." The Commission shall be composed of 35 members as follows:

- (1) Police Chiefs. – Three police chiefs selected by the North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police and one police chief appointed by the Governor.
- (2) Police Officers. – Three police officials appointed by the North Carolina Police Executives Association and two criminal justice officers certified by the Commission as selected by the North Carolina Law-Enforcement Officers' Association.
- (3) Departments. – The Attorney General of the State of North Carolina; the Secretary of Public Safety; the Secretary of the Department of Adult Correction, the Director of the State Bureau of Investigation, the Commander of the State Highway Patrol, and the President of the North Carolina Community Colleges System.
- (3a) Repealed by Session Laws 2001-490, s. 1.2, effective June 30, 2001.
- (4) At-large Groups. – One individual representing and appointed by each of the following organizations: one mayor selected by the League of Municipalities; one law-enforcement training officer selected by the North Carolina Law-Enforcement Training Officers' Association; one criminal justice professional selected by the North Carolina Criminal Justice Association; one sworn law-enforcement officer selected by the North State Law-Enforcement Officers' Association; one member selected by the North Carolina Law-Enforcement Women's Association; and one District Attorney selected by the North Carolina Association of District Attorneys.
- (5) Citizens and Others. – The President of The University of North Carolina; the Dean of the School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and two citizens, one of whom shall be selected by the Governor and one of whom shall be selected by the Attorney General. The General Assembly shall appoint four persons, two upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and two upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Appointments by the General Assembly shall be made in accordance with G.S. 120-122. Appointments by the General Assembly shall be for two-year terms to conclude on June 30th in odd-numbered years.
- (6) Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice. – Four correctional officers in management positions employed by the Department of Adult Correction shall be appointed by the General Assembly, two from the Division of Community Supervision and Reentry upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and two from the Division of Prisons upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Appointments by the General Assembly shall be made in accordance with G.S. 120-122. Appointments by the General Assembly shall serve two-year terms to conclude on June 30th in odd-numbered years or until the appointee no longer serves in a management position with the Department of Adult Correction, whichever occurs first. The Governor shall appoint one correctional officer employed by the Department of Adult Correction and assigned to the Office of Staff

Development and Training, and one juvenile justice officer employed by the Division of Juvenile Justice of the Department of Public Safety. The Governor's appointments shall serve three-year terms or until the appointee is no longer assigned to the Office of Staff Development and Training or is no longer a juvenile justice officer, whichever occurs first.

(b) The members shall be appointed for staggered terms. The initial appointments shall be made prior to September 1, 1983, and the appointees shall hold office until July 1 of the year in which their respective terms expire and until their successors are appointed and qualified as provided hereafter:

For the terms of one year: one member from subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section, serving as a police chief; three members from subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section, one serving as a police official, and two criminal justice officers; one member from subdivision (4) of subsection (a) of this section, appointed by the North Carolina Law-Enforcement Training Officers' Association; and two members from subdivision (5) of subsection (a) of this section, one appointed by the Governor and one appointed by the Attorney General.

For the terms of two years: one member from subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section, serving as a police chief; one member from subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section, serving as a police official; and two members from subdivision (4) of subsection (a) of this section, one appointed by the League of Municipalities and one appointed by the North Carolina Association of District Attorneys.

For the terms of three years: two members from subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section, one police chief appointed by the North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police and one police chief appointed by the Governor; one member from subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section, serving as a police official; and three members from subdivision (4) of subsection (a) of this section, one appointed by the North Carolina Law-Enforcement Women's Association, one appointed by the North Carolina Criminal Justice Association, and one appointed by the North State Law-Enforcement Officers' Association.

Thereafter, as the term of each member expires, his successor shall be appointed for a term of three years. Notwithstanding the appointments for a term of years, each member shall serve at the will of the appointing authority.

The Attorney General, the President of The University of North Carolina, the Dean of the School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the President of the North Carolina Community Colleges System, the Director of the State Bureau of Investigation, the Commander of the State Highway Patrol, the Secretary of Adult Correction, and the Secretary of Public Safety shall be continuing members of the Commission during their tenure. These members of the Commission shall serve *ex officio* and shall perform their duties on the Commission in addition to the other duties of their offices. The *ex officio* members may elect to serve personally at any or all meetings of the Commission or may designate, in writing, one member of their respective office, department, university or agency to represent and vote for them on the Commission at all meetings the *ex officio* members are unable to attend.

Vacancies in the Commission occurring for any reason shall be filled, for the unexpired term, by the authority making the original appointment of the person causing the vacancy. A vacancy may be created by removal of a Commission member by majority vote of the Commission for misconduct, incompetence, or neglect of duty. A Commission member may be removed only pursuant to a hearing, after notice, at which the member subject to removal has an opportunity to be heard. (1971, c. 963, s. 3; 1977, c. 70, ss. 29, 30; 1979, c. 763, s. 1; 1981 (Reg. Sess., 1982), c.

1191, s. 31; 1983, c. 558, s. 3; c. 618, ss. 1, 2; c. 807, ss. 1, 2; 1987, c. 282, s. 4; 1989, c. 757, s. 2; 1995, c. 490, s. 15; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 1998-202, s. 4(c); 2000-137, s. 4(d); 2000-140, s. 38.1(a); 2001-487, s. 5; 2001-490, s. 1.2; 2006-264, s. 29(c), (d); 2011-145, s. 19.1(g)-(k), (m); 2012-83, s. 29; 2015-49, s. 2; 2017-186, s. 2(iiii); 2021-180, s. 19C.9(hhh).)

#### **§ 17C-4. Compensation.**

(a) Members of the Commission who are State officers or employees shall receive no compensation for serving on the Commission, but may be reimbursed for their expenses in accordance with G.S. 138-6. Members of the Commission who are full-time salaried public officers or employees other than State officers or employees shall receive no compensation for serving on the Commission, but may be reimbursed for their expenses in accordance with G.S. 138-5(b). All other members of the Commission may receive compensation and reimbursement for expenses in accordance with G.S. 138-5.

(b) The Chairman of the Commission may appoint such ad hoc members of the Commission's standing and select committees as are necessary to carry out the business of the Commission, and such service shall be reimbursed as provided in G.S. 17C-4(a), subject to the approval of the Attorney General. (1971, c. 963, s. 4; 1979, c. 763, s. 1; 1989, c. 757, s. 3; 2018-5, s. 17.1(a).)

#### **§ 17C-5. Chairman; vice-chairman; other officers; meetings; reports.**

(a) The Commission shall elect one of the members of the Commission as Chairman at the first regular meeting after July 1 of each year. The ex officio members shall not be eligible for election as Chairman.

(b) The Commission shall select a vice-chairman and such other officers and committee chairmen from among its members as it deems desirable at the first regular meeting of the Commission after its creation and at the first regular meeting after July 1 of each year thereafter. Nothing in this subsection, however, shall prevent the creation or abolition of committees or offices of the Commission, other than the office of vice-chairman, as the need may arise at any time during the year.

(c) The Commission shall hold at least four regular meetings per year upon the call of the chairman. Special meetings shall be held upon the call of the chairman or the vice-chairman, or upon the written request of five members of the Commission. Such special meetings must be held within 30 days.

(d) The Commission shall present regular and special reports and recommendations to the Attorney General or the General Assembly, or both, as the need may arise or as the Attorney General or General Assembly may request. (1971, c. 963, s. 5; 1979, c. 763, s. 1; 1983, c. 807, s. 3; 2018-5, s. 17.1(a).)

#### **§ 17C-6. Powers of Commission.**

(a) In addition to powers conferred upon the Commission elsewhere in this Article, the Commission shall have the following powers, which shall be enforceable through its rules and regulations, certification procedures, or the provisions of G.S. 17C-10:

- (1) Promulgate rules and regulations for the administration of this Article, which rules may require (i) the submission by any criminal justice agency of information with respect to the employment, education, retention, and training of its criminal justice officers, and (ii) the submission by any criminal justice

- training school of information with respect to its criminal justice training programs that are required by this Article.
- (2) Establish minimum educational and training standards that must be met in order to qualify for entry level employment and retention as a criminal justice officer in temporary or probationary status or in a permanent position. The standards for entry level employment shall include all of the following:
    - a. Education and training in response to, and investigation of, domestic violence cases, as well as training in investigation for evidence-based prosecutions.
    - b. Education and training on juvenile justice issues, including (i) the handling and processing of juvenile matters for referrals, diversion, arrests, and detention; (ii) best practices for handling incidents involving juveniles; (iii) adolescent development and psychology; and (iv) promoting relationship building with youth as a key to delinquency prevention.
    - c. Education and training to develop knowledge and increase awareness of effective mental health and wellness strategies for criminal justice officers.
  - (3) Certify and recertify, suspend, revoke, or deny, pursuant to the standards that it has established for the purpose, persons as qualified under the provisions of this Article to be employed at entry level and retained as criminal justice officers.
  - (4) Establish minimum standards for the certification of criminal justice training schools and programs or courses of instruction that are required by this Article.
  - (5) Certify and recertify, suspend, revoke, or deny, pursuant to the standards that it has established for the purpose, criminal justice training schools and programs or courses of instruction that are required by this Article.
  - (6) Establish minimum standards and levels of education and experience for all criminal justice instructors, including instructors with probationary or limited teaching privileges, qualified assistants, in-service training coordinators, executive officers, and school directors, who participate in programs or courses of instruction that are required by this Article.
  - (7) Certify and recertify, suspend, revoke, or deny, pursuant to the standards that it has established for the purpose, criminal justice instructors, including instructors with probationary or limited teaching privileges, qualified assistants, in-service training coordinators, executive officers, and school directors, who participate in programs or courses of instruction that are required by this Article or are required and approved by their respective criminal justice agency to include those certified under Chapter 17E or an educational institution accredited by the Commission.
  - (8) Investigate and make such evaluations as may be necessary to determine if criminal justice agencies, schools, and instructors, including instructors with probationary or limited teaching privileges, qualified assistants, in-service training coordinators, executive officers, and school directors, are complying with the provisions of this Article.
  - (9) Adopt and amend bylaws, consistent with law, for its internal management and control.

- (10) Enter into contracts incident to the administration of its authority pursuant to this Article.
- (11) Establish minimum standards and levels of training for certification and periodic recertification of operators of and instructors for training programs in radio microwave, laser, and other electronic speed-measuring instruments.
- (12) Certify and recertify, suspend, revoke, or deny, pursuant to the standards that it has established, operators and instructors for training programs for each approved type of radio microwave, laser, and other electronic speed-measuring instruments.
- (13) In conjunction with the Secretary of Public Safety, approve use of specific models and types of radio microwave, laser, and other speed-measuring instruments and establish the procedures for operation of each approved instrument and standards for calibration and testing for accuracy of each approved instrument.
- (13a) Expired effective September 30, 2007.
- (14) Establish minimum standards for in-service training for criminal justice officers. In-service training standards for sworn law enforcement officers shall include all of the following training topics:
  - a. Response to, and investigation of, domestic violence cases, as well as training investigation for evidence-based prosecutions.
  - b. Juvenile justice issues, including (i) the handling and processing of juvenile matters for referrals, diversion, arrests, and detention; (ii) best practices for handling incidents involving juveniles; (iii) adolescent development and psychology; and (iv) promoting relationship building with youth as a key to delinquency prevention.
  - c. Training to develop knowledge and increase awareness of effective mental health and wellness strategies for justice officers. The standards established shall include two hours of training on this issue every three years.
  - d. Ethics.
  - e. Mental health for criminal justice officers.
  - f. Community policing.
  - g. Minority sensitivity.
  - h. Use of force.
  - i. The duty to intervene and report.
- (15) Establish minimum standards and levels of training for certification of instructors for the domestic violence training and juvenile justice training required by subdivisions (2) and (14) of this subsection.
- (16) Establish standards and guidelines for the annual firearms certification of qualified retired law enforcement officers, as defined in G.S. 14-415.10(4b), to efficiently implement the provisions of G.S. 14-415.25. The standards shall provide for the courses, qualifications, and the issuance of the annual firearms qualification certification. The Commission may adopt any rules necessary to effect the provisions of this section, and may charge a reasonable fee to applicants for the costs incurred in compliance with this subdivision.

- (17) Establish minimum educational and training standards for employment and continuing education for criminal justice officers concerning:
  - a. Recognizing and appropriately interacting with persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.
  - b. Drivers license and vehicle registration identifiers of persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, as authorized by G.S. 20-7(q2), including that those identifiers are optional.
- (18) Monitor compliance with G.S. 20-185.1(d).
- (19) Establish minimum standards and levels of training for certification of diversion investigators and diversion supervisors, as defined in G.S. 90-113.74(i). As part of these minimum standards, the Commission shall require that certified diversion investigators receive training in the following:
  - a. Definition of drug diversion.
  - b. Categories of drugs most subject to diversion and misuse.
  - c. Methods used to divert drugs.
  - d. Proper investigation of drug diversion cases.
  - e. Appropriate use of the controlled substances reporting system to investigate drug diversion cases.
  - f. Requests of prescriptions and records related to prescriptions pursuant to G.S. 90-107.1, including best practices for working with pharmacies in a manner that minimizes disruption of customer service and pharmacy operations.
  - g. Data privacy and security provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and other pertinent federal and State laws governing privacy and security of confidential data and records.
  - h. Proper handling of confidential data and records from any source.
  - i. Criminal and civil penalties under federal and State law for improperly accessing, handling, or disclosing confidential prescription data or other confidential data or records.
- (20) Certify and recertify at least once every three years, suspend, revoke, or deny, pursuant to the standards that it has established for the purpose, persons as qualified to be employed at entry level and retained as diversion investigators and diversion supervisors, as defined in G.S. 90-113.74(i).
- (21) Search the National Decertification Index (NDI) maintained by the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST) using the name of every applicant for certification or applicant for lateral transfer, and any other personal identifying information necessary to complete the search, and shall utilize any record of conviction of a criminal offense received as a result of the search during the application and lateral transfer process to determine if the applicant has any record that would disqualify the applicant for certification.
- (22) Establish initial and in-service educational and training standards for school resource officers, as set forth in G.S. 115C-105.58.
  - (b) The Commission shall have the following powers, which shall be advisory in nature and for which the Commission is not authorized to undertake any enforcement actions:

- (1) Identify types of criminal justice positions, other than entry level positions, for which advanced or specialized training and education are appropriate, and establish minimum standards for the certification of persons as being qualified for those positions on the basis of specified education, training, and experience; provided, that compliance with these minimum standards shall be discretionary on the part of criminal justice agencies with respect to their criminal justice officers;
- (2) Certify, pursuant to the standards that it has established for the purpose, criminal justice officers for those criminal justice agencies that elect to comply with the minimum education, training, and experience standards established by the Commission for positions for which advanced or specialized training, education, and experience are appropriate;
- (3) Consult and cooperate with counties, municipalities, agencies of this State, other governmental agencies, and with universities, colleges, junior colleges, and other institutions concerning the development of criminal justice training schools and programs or courses of instruction;
- (4) Study and make reports and recommendations concerning criminal justice education and training in North Carolina;
- (5) Conduct and stimulate research by public and private agencies which shall be designed to improve education and training in the administration of criminal justice;
- (6) Study, obtain data, statistics, and information and make reports concerning the recruitment, selection, education, retention, and training of persons serving criminal justice agencies in this State; to make recommendations for improvement in methods of recruitment, selection, education, retention, and training of persons serving criminal justice agencies;
- (7) Make recommendations concerning any matters within its purview pursuant to this Article;
- (8) Appoint such advisory committees as it may deem necessary;
- (9) Do such things as may be necessary and incidental to the administration of its authority pursuant to this Article;
- (10) Formulate basic plans for and promote the development and improvement of a comprehensive system of education and training for the officers and employees of criminal justice agencies consistent with its rules and regulations;
- (11) Maintain liaison among local, State and federal agencies with respect to criminal justice education and training;
- (12) Promote the planning and development of a systematic career development program for criminal justice professionals.

(c) All decisions and rules and regulations heretofore made by the North Carolina Criminal Justice Training and Standards Council and the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training System Council shall remain in full force and effect unless and until repealed or suspended by action of the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission established herein. The present Councils are terminated on December 31, 1979, and their power, duties and responsibilities vest in the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission effective January 1, 1980.



(d) The standards established by the Commission pursuant to G.S. 17C-6(a)(11) and 17C-6(a)(12) and by the Commission and the Secretary of Public Safety pursuant to G.S. 17C-6(a)(13) shall not be less stringent than standards established by the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, National Bureau of Standards, or the Federal Communications Commission. (1971, c. 963, s. 6; 1975, c. 372, s. 2; 1979, c. 763, s. 1; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1184, ss. 1, 2; 1989, c. 757, s. 4; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 18, s. 2; 1995, c. 509, s. 14.1; 2000-140, s. 38.1(b); 2002-159, s. 29; 2003-280, s. 3; 2004-186, ss. 2.1, 2.3, 2.5; 2005-27, ss. 1, 2; 2007-427, s. 2; 2009-546, s. 2; 2011-145, s. 19.1(g); 2016-94, s. 18.2; 2017-57, s. 16D.4(bb); 2017-191, s. 2; 2018-5, ss. 17.1(a), 35.25(d); 2018-44, s. 14(a); 2018-142, s. 23(b); 2021-136, s. 1(a); 2021-137, s. 2(a); 2021-138, ss. 7(a), 11(a), 15(a); 2023-56, s. 1; 2024-1, s. 2.8A(a).)

#### **§ 17C-7. Functions of the Department of Justice.**

(a) The Attorney General shall provide such staff assistance as the Commission shall require in the performance of its duties.

(b) The Attorney General shall have legal custody of all books, papers, documents, or other records and property of the Commission.

(c) Any papers, documents, or other records which become the property of the Commission that are placed in the criminal justice officer's personnel file maintained by the Commission shall be subject to the same disclosure requirements as set forth in Chapters 126, 153A, and 160A of the General Statutes regarding the privacy of personnel records. (1979, c. 763, s. 1; 1989, c. 757, s. 5; 2018-5, s. 17.1(a).)

#### **§ 17C-8. System established.**

The North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission shall establish a North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training System. The system shall be a cooperative arrangement among criminal justice agencies, both State and local, and criminal justice education and training schools, both public and private, to provide education and training to the officers and employees of the criminal justice agencies of the State of North Carolina and its local governments. Members of the system shall include the North Carolina Justice Academy as well as such other public or private agencies or institutions within the State, that are engaged in criminal justice education and training, and desire to be affiliated with the system for the purpose of achieving greater coordination of criminal justice education and training efforts in North Carolina. (1979, c. 763, s. 1; 2018-5, s. 17.1(a).)

#### **§ 17C-9. Criminal Justice Standards Division of the Department of Justice established; appointment of director; duties.**

(a) There is hereby established, within the Department of Justice, the Criminal Justice Standards Division, hereinafter called "the Division," which shall be organized and staffed in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and within the limits of authorized appropriations.

(b) The Attorney General shall appoint a director for the Division chosen from a list of three nominees submitted to him by the Commission who shall be responsible to and serve at the pleasure of the Attorney General and the Commission.

(c) The Division shall administer such programs as are assigned to it by the Commission. The Division shall also administer such additional related programs as may be assigned to it by the Attorney General or the General Assembly. Administrative duties and responsibilities shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) Administering any and all programs assigned to the Division by the Commission and reporting any violations of or deviations from the rules and regulations of the Commission as the Commission may require;
- (2) Compiling data, developing reports, identifying needs and performing research relevant to beneficial improvement of the criminal justice agencies;
- (3) Developing new and revising existing programs for adoption consideration by the Commission;
- (4) Monitoring and evaluating programs of the Commission;
- (5) Providing technical assistance to relevant agencies of the criminal justice system to aid them in the discharge of program participation and responsibilities;
- (6) Disseminating information on Commission programs to concerned agencies and/or individuals;
- (7) Taking such other actions as may be deemed necessary or appropriate to carry out its assigned duties and responsibilities;
- (8) The director may divulge any information in the Division's personnel file of a criminal justice officer or applicant for certification to the head of the criminal justice agency employing the officer or considering the applicant for employment when the director deems it necessary and essential to the retention or employment of said officer or applicant. The information may be divulged whether or not such information was contained in a personnel file maintained by a State or by a local government agency. (1979, c. 763, s. 1; 1983, c. 807, s. 4; 2018-5, s. 17.1(a).)

**§ 17C-10. Required standards.**

(a) Criminal justice officers shall not be required to meet any requirement of subsections (b) and (c) of this section as a condition of continued employment, nor shall failure of any such criminal justice officer to fulfill such requirements make him ineligible for any promotional examination for which he is otherwise eligible if the criminal justice officer held a permanent appointment prior to June 1, 1986, and is an officer, supervisor or administrator of a local confinement facility; prior to March 15, 1973, and is a sworn law enforcement officer with power of arrest; prior to January 1, 1974, and is a State adult correctional officer; prior to July 1, 1975, and is a State probation/parole officer; prior to July 1, 1974, and is a State youth services officer; prior to January 15, 1980, and is a State probation/parole intake officer, prior to April 1, 1983, and is a State parole case analyst; prior to December 14, 1983, and is a State probation/parole officer-surveillance; or prior to February 1, 1987, and is a State probation/parole intensive officer.

The legislature finds, and it is declared to be the policy of this Article, that such criminal justice officers have satisfied such entry level requirements by their experience. It is the intent of the Chapter that all criminal justice officers employed at the entry level after the Commission has adopted the required standards shall meet the requirements of this Article. All criminal justice officers who are exempted from the required entry level standards by this subsection shall be subject thereafter to the requirements of subsections (b) and (c) of this section as well as the requirements of G.S. 17C-6(a) in order to retain certification.

If any criminal justice officer exempted from the required standards by this provision fails to serve as a criminal justice officer for a 12-month period, said officer shall be required to comply

with the required entry level standards established by the Commission pursuant to the authority otherwise granted in this section and in G.S. 17C-6(a).

(b) The Commission shall provide, by regulation, for a period of probationary employment and certification for criminal justice officers. The Commission may prescribe such training requirements as are required for the award of either probationary or permanent certification of officers, in addition to the pre-employment requirements authorized in G.S. 17C-6(a). Any criminal justice officer appointed on a temporary or probationary basis who does not comply with the training provisions of this Article is not authorized to exercise the powers of a criminal justice officer to include the power of arrest. If, however, a criminal justice officer has enrolled in a Commission-approved preparatory program of training that concludes later than the end of the officer's probationary period, and the Commission does not require such training to be completed prior to the award of probationary certification, the Commission may extend, for good cause shown, the probationary period for a period not to exceed six months.

Upon separation of a criminal justice officer from a criminal justice agency within the prescribed period of temporary or probationary appointment, the officer's probationary certification shall be terminated by the Commission. Upon the reappointment to the same agency or appointment to another criminal justice agency of an officer who has separated from an agency within the probationary period, the officer shall be charged with the cumulative amount of time served during his initial or subsequent appointments and allowed the remainder of the probationary period to complete the Commission's requirements. Upon reappointment to the same agency or appointment to another agency of an officer who has separated from an agency within the probationary period and who has remained out of service for more than one year after the date of separation, the officer shall be allowed another probationary period to satisfy the Commission's requirements.

(c) In addition to the requirements of subsection (b) of this section, the Commission, by rules and regulations, shall fix other qualifications for the employment, training, and retention of criminal justice officers including minimum age, education, physical and mental standards, citizenship, good moral character, experience, and such other matters as relate to the competence and reliability of persons to assume and discharge the responsibilities of criminal justice officers. The Commission shall prescribe the means for presenting evidence of fulfillment of these requirements. The Commission shall require the administration of a psychological screening examination, including a face-to-face, in-person interview conducted by a licensed psychologist, to determine the criminal justice officer's psychological suitability to properly fulfill the responsibilities of the criminal justice officer. If face-to-face, in-person is not practicable, the face-to-face evaluation can be virtual as long as both the audio and video allow for a professional clinical evaluation in a clinical environment. The psychological screening examination shall be given (i) prior to the initial certification or (ii) prior to the criminal justice officer performing any action requiring certification by the Commission.

Where minimum educational standards are not met, yet the individual shows potential and a willingness to achieve the standards by extra study, they may be waived by the Commission for the reasonable amount of time it will take to achieve the standards required. Such an educational waiver shall not exceed 12 months.

(d) The Commission may issue a certificate evidencing satisfaction of the requirements of subsections (b) and (c) of this section to any applicant who presents such evidence as may be required by its rules and regulations of satisfactory completion of a program or course of instruction in another jurisdiction equivalent in content and quality to that required by the

Commission for approved criminal justice education and training programs in this State. (1971, c. 963, s. 1; 1979, c. 763, s. 1; 1981, c. 8; c. 400; 1983, c. 745, s. 3; 1989, c. 757, s. 6; 2018-5, s. 17.1(a); 2021-136, s. 1(c); 2021-138, s. 7(c).)

**§ 17C-10.1. Certification of military service members and veterans with law enforcement training and experience.**

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Commission shall waive an applicant's completion of the Commission-accredited training course and issue probationary certification to a current or honorably discharged former military police officer provided the Commission, upon evaluating the individual applicant's combined training and experience pursuant to G.S. 93B-15.1(a), determines that the applicant's combined training and experience is substantially equivalent to or exceeds the minimum expectations for employment as a law enforcement officer and the applicant satisfies all of the following conditions:

- (1) Successfully completed a military police training program and been awarded a military police occupational specialty rating.
- (2) Performed military police officer duties in any of the branches of military service, active or reserve, or the National Guard for not less than two of the five years preceding the date of the application for certification as a law enforcement officer.
- (3) Meets the minimum standards for law enforcement officers as set out in 12 NCAC 9B.0101 and 12 NCAC 9B.0111.

(b) An applicant certified pursuant to subsection (a) of this section must successfully complete the employing agency's in-service firearms training and qualification program prior to employment and shall serve a one-year period of probation. During the one-year period of probation, the applicant must successfully complete the Legal Unit and 24 hours of training in the service of civil process in a Commission-accredited Basic Law Enforcement Training Course and successfully pass the State Comprehensive Examination in its entirety.

(c) The Commission shall issue certification to a current or honorably discharged former military police officer whose combined training and experience is not substantially equivalent to or does not exceed the minimum expectations for employment as a law enforcement officer if the applicant meets all of the following requirements:

- (1) Successfully completed a formal military basic training program and been awarded a military police occupational specialty rating.
- (2) Engaged in the active practice of military police officer duties in any of the branches of military service, active or reserve, or the National Guard for not less than two of the five years preceding the date of the application for certification as a law enforcement officer.
- (3) Meets the minimum standards for law enforcement officers as set out in 12 NCAC 9B.0101 and 12 NCAC 9B.0111.
- (4) Successfully completes the Legal Unit and 24 hours of training in the service of civil process in a Commission-accredited Basic Law Enforcement Training Course.
- (5) Successfully completes any supplementary high-liability training as deemed necessary by the Commission, not to exceed an additional 180 hours.
- (6) Obtains a passing grade on the State Comprehensive Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) Exam.

(d) Members of the Air/Army National Guard and Military Reserve Components who have performed as a military police officer for not less than 1,040 hours during the five years preceding the date of application shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements of subdivision (2) of subsection (a) and subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of this section.

(e) An applicant who, after completing the required training in subsection (a) or (c) of this section, fails to obtain a passing score on not more than two of the units of the comprehensive exam may be retested in the units the applicant failed. An applicant who fails three or more of the units must enroll in and successfully complete a subsequent offering of the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course in its entirety in order to be eligible to be certified.

(f) An active duty military police officer who obtains certification under this section may retain the certification for the duration of active duty provided the officer continues to serve in a military police capacity and complies with any in-service training requirements as may be required by the Commission. An active duty member who is unable to complete annual in-service requirements due to deployment or overseas assignment shall have 12 months from the time the officer returns to the United States in which to complete any required in-service training. The officer shall retain the certification for a period of one year following separation from active duty.

(g) As used in this section, the following terms mean:

- (1) Branches of military service. – The United States Armed Forces: Air Force; Army; Marine; Navy; active, reserve, Air/Army National Guard components; and the Coast Guard.
- (2) Combined training. – Basic military training, basic military police training, in-service or advanced military police training and, any other military training courses that may be applicable to the performance of law enforcement duties.
- (3) Military police. – All law enforcement occupational classifications in the various branches of the Armed Forces, including Military Police Officer, Security Forces Specialist, Master-at-Arms, Maritime Enforcement Specialist, Boarding Officer, and Security forces.

(h) The Commission shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section. (2015-49, s. 1; 2015-264, s. 37(a); 2018-5, s. 17.1(a).)

#### **§ 17C-11. Compliance; enforcement.**

(a) Any criminal justice officer who the Commission determines does not comply with this Article or any rules adopted under this Article shall not exercise the powers of a criminal justice officer and shall not exercise the power of arrest unless the Commission waives that certification or deficiency. The Commission shall enforce this section by the entry of appropriate orders effective upon service on either the criminal justice agency or the criminal justice officer.

(a1) Any criminal justice training school, program, or course of instruction that the Commission determines does not comply with this Article, or any rules adopted under this Article, shall not continue to offer programs or courses of instruction unless the Commission waives that certification or deficiency. Any criminal justice instructor, school director, commission certified operator, and any commission certified instructor, who the Commission determines does not comply with this Article, or any rules adopted under this Article, shall not act as an instructor, school director, or operator unless the Commission waives that certification or deficiency. The Commission shall enforce this section by the entry of appropriate orders effective upon service on the criminal justice training school or the individual holding commission certification.

(b) Any person who desires to appeal the proposed denial, suspension, or revocation of any certification authorized to be issued by the Commission shall file a written appeal with the Commission not later than 30 days following notice of denial, suspension, or revocation.

(c) The Commission may appear in its own name and apply to courts having jurisdiction for injunctions to prevent violations of this Article or of rules issued pursuant thereto; specifically, the performance of criminal justice officer functions by officers or individuals who are not in compliance with the standards and requirements of G.S. 17C-6(a) and G.S. 17C-10. A single act of performance of a criminal justice officer function by an officer or individual who is performing such function in violation of this Article is sufficient, if shown, to invoke the injunctive relief of this section. (1979, c. 763, s. 1; 1989, c. 757, s. 7; 2001-490, s. 1.3; 2009-546, s. 3; 2018-5, s. 17.1(a).)

#### **§ 17C-12. Grants under the supervision of Commission and the State; donations and appropriations.**

(a) The Commission may accept for any of its purposes and functions under this Article any and all donations, both real and personal, and grants of money from any governmental unit or public agency, or from any institution, person, firm or corporation, and may receive, utilize and dispose of the same. Any arrangements pursuant to this section shall be detailed in an annual report of the Commission. Such report shall include the identity of the donor, the nature of the transaction, and the conditions, if any. Any money received by the Commission pursuant to this section shall be deposited in the State Treasury to the account of the Commission.

(b) The Commission may authorize the reimbursement to each political subdivision of the State not exceeding sixty percent (60%) of the salary and of the allowable tuition, living and travel expenses incurred by the officers in attendance at approved training programs, providing said political subdivisions do in fact adhere to the selection and training standards established by the Commission.

(c) The Commission by rules and regulations, shall provide for administration of the grant program authorized by this section. In promulgating such rules, the Commission shall promote the most efficient and economical program of criminal justice training, including the maximum utilization of existing facilities and programs for the purpose of avoiding duplication.

(d) The Commission may provide grants as a reimbursement for actual expenses incurred by the State or political subdivision thereof for the provisions of training programs of officers from other jurisdictions within the State. (1971, c. 963, ss. 8, 9; 1979, c. 763, s. 1; 2018-5, s. 17.1(a).)

#### **§ 17C-13. Pardons; expunctions.**

(a) When a person presents competent evidence that he has been granted an unconditional pardon for a crime in this State, any other state, or the United States, the Commission may not deny, suspend, or revoke that person's certification based solely on the commission of that crime or for an alleged lack of good moral character due to the commission of that crime.

(b) Notwithstanding G.S. 15A-145.4 or G.S. 15A-145.5, the Commission may gain access to a person's felony conviction records, including those maintained by the Administrative Office of the Courts in its confidential files containing the names of persons granted expunctions. The Commission may deny, suspend, or revoke a person's certification based solely on that person's felony conviction, whether or not that conviction was expunged, unless the conviction was expunged pursuant to G.S. 15A-145.4 or G.S. 15A-145.8A. (1989, c. 757, s. 8; 2011-278, s. 3; 2012-191, s. 6; 2023-56, s. 4(a).)

**§ 17C-14. Database of law enforcement officer certification suspensions and revocations.**

The Commission shall develop and maintain a statewide database accessible to the public on its website that contains all revocations and suspensions of law enforcement officer certifications by the Commission. (2021-138, s. 1(a).)

**§ 17C-15. Database for law enforcement officer critical incident information.**

(a) The Division shall develop and maintain a statewide database for use by law enforcement agencies that tracks all critical incident data of law enforcement officers in North Carolina.

(b) All law enforcement agencies in the State that employ personnel certified by the Commission shall provide any information requested by the Division to maintain the database required by subsection (a) of this section.

(c) Information collected under this section that is confidential under State or federal law shall remain confidential.

(d) A law enforcement officer who is reported to the Division as having been involved in a critical incident who disputes being involved in a critical incident has a right, prior to being placed in the database, to request a hearing in superior court for a determination of whether the officer's involvement was properly placed in the database. (2021-138, s. 3(b).)

**§ 17C-16. Requirement to report material relevant to testimony.**

(a) Any person who is certified by the Commission or has received a conditional offer of employment and who has been notified that the person may not be called to testify at trial based on bias, interest, or lack of credibility shall report and provide a copy of that notification to the Criminal Justice Standards Division within 30 days of receiving the notification, except as provided in subsection (h) of this section. This requirement shall only apply if the person is notified by one of the following methods:

- (1) In writing by a superior court judge, district court judge, federal judge, district attorney, assistant district attorney, United States attorney, assistant United States attorney, or the person's agency head.
- (2) In open court by a superior court judge, district court judge, or federal judge, and documented in a written order.

(b) The report to the Division shall be in writing and shall state who notified the person that the person may not be called to testify at trial. A person required to report to the Division under subsection (a) of this section shall make the same report to the person's agency head within 30 days of being notified that the person may not be called to testify at trial. An agency head who receives a report that a person in the agency has been notified that they may not be called to testify at trial shall also report the notification to the Division in writing within 30 days of the agency head's receipt of that report.

(c) A superior court judge, district court judge, federal judge, district attorney, assistant district attorney, United States attorney, or assistant United States attorney who notifies a person that they may not be called to testify at trial as provided in subsection (a) of this section shall report that notification to the Division and provide a copy of the written document or order within 30 days of notifying the person that they may not be called to testify at trial.

(d) If the Division transfers to another agency the certification of any person required to report to the Division pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, the Division shall provide written

notification to both the head of the new agency and the elected district attorney in the prosecutorial district where the agency is located that the person has been previously notified that the person may not be called to testify at trial. If the new agency receiving notification pursuant to this subsection is a State agency, the Division shall notify the elected district attorney in every prosecutorial district of the State.

(e) If any person required to report to the Division pursuant to subsection (a) of this section is subsequently informed in writing that that notification has been rescinded, the person shall provide the Division a copy of that document. The provisions of subsection (d) of this section do not apply if the person required to report pursuant to subsection (a) of this section is subsequently informed in writing that the notification has been rescinded.

(f) No later than March 1 each year, the Commission shall report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety regarding the number of individuals for whom the Division received a report required by subsection (a) of this section during the previous calendar year. The report shall include information for each case on whether a final agency decision has been entered pursuant to Chapter 150B of the General Statutes and what action, if any, has been taken against each certification. The report shall not include the name or any other identifying information of any person required to report pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

(g) The reports and notifications received by the Division pursuant to this section shall not be public record.

(h) Any person who has received a notification that may meet the reporting requirement provided in subsection (a) of this section may apply for a hearing in superior court for a judicial determination of whether or not the person received a notification that the person may not be called to testify at trial based on bias, interest, or lack of credibility. This hearing is limited to reviewing whether (i) a person who is certified by the Commission or has received a conditional offer of employment, (ii) has been notified in writing by a superior court judge, district court judge, federal judge, district attorney, assistant district attorney, United States attorney, or assistant United States attorney; or notified in open court by a superior court judge, district court judge, or federal judge, and documented in a written order, and (iii) that notification states that the person may not be called to testify at trial based on bias, interest, or lack of credibility, not matters of law or admissibility. The person must provide notice of the hearing to the Division. One extension of 15 days will be added to the 30-day reporting requirement provided in subsection (a) of this section if notice of a hearing is received. (2021-137, s. 3(a); 2021-138, s. 4(a).)

**§ 17C-17: Reserved for future codification purposes.**

**§ 17C-18: Reserved for future codification purposes.**

**§ 17C-19: Reserved for future codification purposes.**

## Article 2.

### North Carolina Criminal Justice Fellows Program.

#### **§ 17C-20. Definitions.**

As used in this Article, the following definitions apply:

- (1) Commission. – The North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission.
- (2) Committee. – The North Carolina Criminal Justice Fellows Committee.



- (3) Community college. – As defined in G.S. 115D-2(2).
- (4) Division. – The Criminal Justice Standards Division of the North Carolina Department of Justice.
- (5) Repealed by Session Laws 2023-134, s. 18.3(a), effective October 3, 2023.
- (6) Eligible criminal justice professions. – State and local sworn law enforcement officers, State correctional 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.
- (7) Program. – The North Carolina Criminal Justice Fellows Program.
- (8) Recipient. – An individual selected by the Committee to receive a forgivable loan under the Program. (2018-5, s. 17.1(b); 2020-78, s. 11.1(a); 2021-180, s. 18.6(a); 2023-134, s. 18.3(a).)

**§ 17C-21. North Carolina Criminal Justice Fellows Committee established; membership.**

(a) Committee Established. – There is established the North Carolina Criminal Justice Fellows Committee. The Committee shall be a Special Committee of the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission, as defined in the Commission's bylaws. The Committee shall determine program and forgivable loan recipient selection criteria, selection procedures, and shall select the recipients to receive forgivable loans under the North Carolina Criminal Justice Fellows Program in accordance with the requirements of this Article.

(b) Membership. – The Committee shall consist of 10 members who shall be appointed as follows:

- (1) The chair of the Commission shall appoint eight members of the Commission to the Committee as follows:
  - a. Three at-large members.
  - b. Two sworn law enforcement officers.
  - c. Two correctional officers.
  - d. The ex officio member representing the President of The North Carolina Community College System.
- (2) The chair of the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission shall appoint two members of the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission to the Committee.

(c) Terms of Office. – Appointments to the Committee shall be for two-year terms, commencing July 1, 2018.

(d) Chair; Meetings. – The chair of the Commission shall call the first meeting of the Committee. The Committee members shall elect a chair and a vice-chair from the membership of the Committee pursuant to the Commission's bylaws to serve one-year terms. The Committee shall meet regularly at times and places deemed necessary by the chair or, in the absence of the chair, by the vice-chair.

(e) Expenses. – Committee members shall receive per diem, subsistence, and travel allowances in accordance with G.S. 138-5 or G.S. 138-6, as appropriate.

(f) Vacancies. – Except as otherwise provided, if a vacancy occurs in the membership of the Committee, the appointing authority shall appoint another person meeting the same qualifications to serve for the balance of the unexpired term. (2018-5, s. 17.1(b).)

**§ 17C-22. North Carolina Criminal Justice Fellows Program established; administration.**

(a) Program. – There is established the North Carolina Criminal Justice Fellows Program to be administered by the Committee with the assistance of the Division. The purpose of the Program is to increase the number of criminal justice professionals by providing forgivable loans to exceptional individuals to obtain Applied Associate Degrees in Criminal Justice or other Committee-approved related fields of study as preparation to enter a criminal justice profession.

(b) Program Administrator. – The Director of the Division shall select a member of the Division staff, with the consent of the Committee, to serve as the Program administrator. The Program administrator will be responsible for all administrative duties and oversight of the Program as established by the Committee. The Program administrator will conduct recruitment efforts to include the following:

- (1) Repealed by Session Laws 2023-134, s. 18.3(b), effective October 3, 2023.
- (2) Target high school graduates who, due to economic circumstances, are displaced, unemployed, or underemployed.
- (3) Target high school seniors who demonstrate an interest in being employed in an eligible criminal justice profession.
- (4) Engage with employees of eligible criminal justice professions and local leaders for input in the Program.
- (5) Attend high school career days, job fairs, and other activities to recruit qualified individuals into the Program.

(c) Awards of Forgivable Loans. – The Program shall provide forgivable loans of up to three thousand one hundred fifty-two dollars (\$3,152.00) per year, totaling a maximum of six thousand three hundred four dollars (\$6,304.00) over two years, to selected individuals. If the Committee, in its sole discretion, determines that circumstances warrant an extension of the period over which the Program shall provide forgivable loans to a selected individual, the Committee may extend that period to three years but may not increase the maximum loan amount. The funds from the forgivable loans may be used for tuition, fees, and the cost of books. The Committee may determine the maximum amount of loan proceeds that may be applied to community college fees and course textbooks. The number of forgivable loans awarded annually shall not exceed 100 and the total number of recipients in the Program each year shall not exceed 200. The Committee shall select recipients no later than June 1 of each year.

(d) Eligibility Criteria. – An applicant must be domiciled in this State at the time of application, a resident for tuition purposes as defined in G.S. 116-143.1(a)(2), a high school graduate or a high school senior who will graduate from high school by the end of the current academic year, and demonstrate the intent upon completion of the Program to be employed in an eligible criminal justice profession. An applicant who has been convicted of any of the following is ineligible to receive a forgivable loan:

- (1) A felony.
- (2) A crime for which the punishment could have been imprisonment for more than two years.
- (3) A crime or unlawful act defined as a Class B misdemeanor within the five-year period prior to the date of application.
- (4) Four or more crimes or unlawful acts defined as Class A misdemeanors, except the trainee may be enrolled if the last conviction date occurred more than two years prior to the date of application.

(5) A combination of four or more Class A misdemeanors or Class B misdemeanors regardless of the date of conviction.

(e) Application Process. – The Committee may specify required application materials, including a certified State and local background check for applicants who are at least 18 years of age. Application materials and Committee deliberations are confidential and are not a public record as defined in G.S. 132-1. The Committee shall publish application, award, and notification deadlines and provide written notification to applicants regarding the outcome of the Committee's deliberations.

(f) Award of Forgivable Loan. – The Committee shall adopt standards for awarding forgivable loans based on measures the Committee deems appropriate, including the following, and the selection of recipients by the Committee shall be final:

- (1) Scholastic Profile as determined by SAT or ACT scores, grade point average, and class rank when available.
- (2) Potential for excellence in an eligible criminal justice profession.
- (3) School and community service.
- (4) At least two references.
- (5) Demonstrated writing ability.

(g) Administration of Forgivable Loan Awards. – Upon the naming of recipients by the Committee, the Division shall perform all administrative functions necessary to implement this Article, which functions shall include dissemination of information, disbursement, receipt, liaison with participating community colleges, determination of the acceptability of service repayment agreements, and all other functions necessary for the execution, payment, and enforcement of promissory notes required under this Article.

(h) Recipient Obligations. – A recipient must become and remain a student at a North Carolina community college in an Applied Associate Degree in Criminal Justice or in a Committee-approved related field of study at all times during each of the recipient's two academic years of community college study and pursue continuously studies that will qualify the recipient to be employed in an eligible criminal justice profession upon graduation. The recipient must maintain a minimum cumulative 2.0 GPA throughout the course of study and also maintain appropriate credit hours for each semester to obtain an Applied Associate Degree in Criminal Justice or Committee-approved field of study within two years. If the Committee, in its sole discretion, determines that circumstances warrant an extension of the period within which the recipient must obtain an Applied Associate Degree in Criminal Justice or Committee-approved field of study, the Committee may extend that period by up to 12 additional months. The recipient must also accept employment in an eligible criminal justice profession for at least four out of five years following graduation. The Committee may adopt additional recipient obligations it deems appropriate.

(i) Annual Report. – The Program administrator, in coordination with the Committee, shall report no later than January 1, 2020, and annually thereafter, to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety regarding the following:

- (1) The number of forgivable loans awarded for each academic year disaggregated to include geographic and other demographic information.
- (2) Aggregated student performance, retention, and graduation rates.
- (3) Employment subsequent to completion of the Program broken down by county and eligible criminal justice profession.
- (4) Forgiveness, termination, default, and repayment rates.

- (5) Retention rates of recipients within criminal justice professions disaggregated by county. (2018-5, s. 17.1(b); 2021-180, s. 18.6(b); 2023-134, s. 18.3(b).)

**§ 17C-23. Terms of forgivable loans; receipt and disbursement of funds; default.**

(a) **Forgivable Loans.** – All forgivable loans shall be evidenced by notes made payable to the Program that bear interest at a rate not to exceed ten percent (10%) per year as set by the Committee and beginning on the first day of September after the completion of the Program or 60 days after termination of the forgivable loan, whichever is earlier. The forgivable loan may be terminated upon the recipient's withdrawal from school, by the recipient's failure to meet the standards set by the Committee, or by the recipient's default based on conditions set by the Committee. The Committee may only disburse funds to the community college where the recipient is enrolled and may not disburse funds directly to a recipient.

(b) **Forgiveness.** – The Committee shall forgive the loan and any interest accrued on the loan if, within five years after obtaining an Applied Associate Degree in Criminal Justice or Committee-approved field of study, the recipient is employed on a full-time basis for a period of at least four years in an eligible criminal justice profession. The recipient shall provide the Committee within 60 days of completion of the Program verification of the recipient's intent to seek employment in an eligible criminal justice profession. The recipient shall provide verification of employment to the Committee each year until the obligation is satisfied. The Committee shall also forgive the loan if it finds that it is impossible for the recipient to meet the terms of the loan, after or before graduation, due to death or permanent disability of the recipient.

(c) **Extension.** – The Committee may extend repayment of the loan for up to two years on a year-to-year basis for each year if (i) the recipient is on active duty with the Armed Forces of the United States or (ii) the Committee, in its sole discretion, determines that circumstances warrant an extension.

(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.

(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 nondelivery 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. (2018-5, s. 17.1(b); 2021-180, s. 18.6(c); 2023-134, s. 18.3(c).)