



ROBERT G. CASSILLY

Harford County Executive

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Harford County Pays Down Student Loans for 44 Volunteer First Responders

BEL AIR, Md., (Nov. 8, 2024) – Harford County government helped pay down student loan debt for 44 volunteer first responders with a total of \$220,000 sent directly to lending institutions this year.

Harford's NEXT GEN Responder Student Loan Relief Program repays student loans up to \$5,000 per year to help retain volunteer first responders and recruit the next generation.

Harford County does not have a paid fire service and relies instead on 12 volunteer fire companies countywide. In addition to going to school or working paid jobs, volunteers must meet rigorous training standards and be available in emergencies that can happen at any time of the day or night.

"Volunteer first responders in Harford County go above and beyond every day, tirelessly working to protect our communities and save lives," County Executive Bob Cassilly said. "We are grateful for their commitment and proud to offer this program as a way to show our support and help reduce their student loan debt."

Any volunteer first responder with student loan debt is eligible for the program, including recent graduates and college students majoring in any field of study. To qualify, they must be a volunteer member of a Harford County volunteer fire or ambulance corps and earn 50 points in the LOSAP - Length of Service Award Program - for qualifying service activities in the 12 months beginning

on October 1 each year. Payments of up to \$5,000 per year, up to a maximum of \$20,000 over four years, are made directly to the student loan issuer.

Qualifications and applications are online at <https://www.harfordcountymd.gov/2976/NEXT-GEN-Responders-Student-Loan-Relief>.

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