



BJA Fact Sheet

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BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE • OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

JAMES H. BURCH, II, ACTING DIRECTOR

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program

By Hope D. Janke, PSOB Director

Enacted in 1976, the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program:

- Assists in the recruitment and retention of qualified public safety officers.
- Establishes the value communities place on contributions from those who are willing to serve their communities in dangerous circumstances.
- Offers peace of mind to men and women who are seeking careers in public safety.

A unique partnership effort of the U.S. Department of Justice; local, state, and federal public safety agencies; and national organizations, the PSOB Program provides death and education benefits to survivors of fallen law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders, as well as disability benefits to officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty.

The PSOB Office is responsible for reviewing nearly 700 death, disability, and education claims submitted annually. The PSOB Office also collaborates with national firefighter, law enforcement, and first responder groups to provide a wide range of PSOB training and technical assistance resources, through conferences, seminars, and printed materials such as the *PSOB Information Kit*, to offer vital information and support to survivors and agencies of America's fallen public safety officers.

PSOB Benefits

Death

PSOB provides a one-time benefit to eligible survivors of public safety officers whose deaths were the direct and proximate result of an injury sustained in the line of duty on or after September 29, 1976. For the current death benefit amount, visit the PSOB web site at www.psob.gov.

Disability

PSOB provides a one-time benefit to eligible public safety officers who were permanently and totally disabled as a result of a catastrophic injury sustained in the line of duty on or after November 29, 1990. Injuries must permanently prevent officers from performing any gainful work in the future. For the current disability benefit amount, visit www.psob.gov.

Education

PSOB provides support for higher education to eligible spouses and children of public safety officers who died in the line of duty on or after January 1, 1978, or were catastrophically disabled in the line of duty on or after October 3, 1996. For the current maximum educational assistance amount per month, visit www.psob.gov.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Across the country, dedicated public safety officers watch over our neighborhoods and work to make our communities safer. As Director, I respect these officers' devotion and their willingness to place themselves in danger to protect our nation's citizens. We owe officers—and their families—a tremendous debt of gratitude. And when tragedy strikes, our focus must be on helping the survivors and the public safety agencies.

To that end, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) are moving forward with enhancements to the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Office and Program to better serve our public safety officers, their families, and their agencies. In just the past several months, key steps have been taken to ensure that the PSOB Program has sufficient resources so that survivors will receive the highest quality service

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KEY POINTS

- The Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program serves the broader public safety community—law enforcement, firefighter, and other first responder survivors and disabled public safety officers.
- PSOB provides no-cost support to public safety agencies including training and technical assistance in responding to line-of-duty deaths.

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MESSAGE (cont.)

available and the PSOB Office staff can work efficiently and effectively to provide grieving families with the benefits they so greatly deserve and coworkers with caring and helpful assistance when filing claims on behalf of their fallen colleagues.

Without question, **“PSOB Cares,”** and BJA and OJP remain committed to providing survivors and law enforcement, firefighter, and other first responder agencies with the information and support needed throughout the claim process.

KEY POINTS (cont.)

- PSOB is implemented by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance, an agency dedicated to supporting state and local public safety agency needs and committed to serving these agencies and their families, while respecting and honoring their sacrifices.
- Tools and checklists are available to assist agencies and survivors with submitting claims and ensuring a timely claim review and decision.
- The Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act expanded program coverage to include certain heart attack and stroke circumstances.

For more information, visit www.psob.gov.

CONTACT US

Public Safety Officers’ Benefits Office
Bureau of Justice Assistance
Office of Justice Programs
810 Seventh Street NW.
Fourth Floor
Washington, DC 20531
Phone: 202-307-0635
Toll-free: 1-888-744-6513
E-mail: AskPSOB@usdoj.gov
PSOB web site: www.psob.gov

Hometown Heroes

On December 15, 2003, the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act expanded the circumstances under which public safety officer deaths resulting from heart attacks and strokes may be covered by the program.

- The Hometown Heroes Act establishes a statutory presumption that public safety officers who die from a heart attack or stroke following a nonroutine stressful or strenuous physical public safety activity or training, died in the line of duty for benefit purposes.
- The Hometown Heroes presumption may be overcome by “competent medical evidence to the contrary.”
- The Hometown Heroes Act excludes actions of a “clerical, administrative, or nonmanual nature” from consideration.
- The regulations governing the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act, as well as the entire PSOB Program, were finalized September 11, 2006.

CHECKLIST FOR FILING A PSOB DEATH CLAIM

The following checklist is provided to streamline the PSOB filing process for you and the fallen officer’s survivors. Please do not hesitate to call the PSOB Office toll free at 1-888-744-6513 for assistance with any part of the PSOB claim.

Step 1: Collect the following information regarding the officer’s line-of-duty death from your agency records.

- PSOB Report of Public Safety Officer’s Death form completed and signed by the head of the public safety agency or designee.
- Detailed Statement of Circumstances from the initiation of the incident to the pronouncement of the officer’s death.
- Investigation, Incident, and Accident Reports, if any.
- Death Certificate.
- Autopsy, Toxicology Report, or a statement signed by the head of the public safety agency or designee explaining that none were performed.
- *For claims involving heart attacks and strokes, please refer to the Hometown Heroes Checklist, available at www.psob.gov.*

Step 2: Collect the following information regarding the officer’s survivors/beneficiaries.

- PSOB Claim for Death Benefits form completed and signed by the survivor/claimant.
- Officer’s current Marriage Certificate, *if applicable*.
- Divorce Decrees for the officer’s and current spouse’s previous marriages, including references to physical custody of any children, *if applicable*.
- Death Certificates for the officer’s and current spouse’s previous marriages, if any of the marriages ended in death, *if applicable*.
- Birth Certificates for all the officer’s surviving children and step-children, regardless of age or dependency, identifying the children’s parents, *if applicable*. For further details on this requirement, please go to www.psob.gov.

Please e-mail (preferred), fax, or mail the above information to the PSOB Office, keeping a complete copy for your records.