



## 104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB4295

Introduced 1/14/2026, by Rep. Jed Davis

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Public Safety Career Pathways Act. Requires a participating public or nonpublic high school or school district to provide access to at least one Pipeline Program in a public safety field. Allows an individual 18 years of age or older to participate in a Fire and Emergency Medical Services Pathway. Provides that a law enforcement agency may establish a Cadet Program for individuals 18 to 20 years of age interested in pursuing sworn law enforcement employment. Provides that a Pipeline Program may also include training or supervised experience leading to certain other careers. Requires the State Board of Education to develop a model memorandum of understanding for institutions and local public safety partners. Requires a local public safety partner participating in a Pipeline Program to maintain all insurance required under State law. Provides that participation in a Pipeline Program does not create civil liability for a local public safety partner beyond its statutory duties, as long as the local public safety partner acts in good faith and complies with safety requirements. Provides that compensation for a Pipeline Program participant is optional and may be determined by the local public safety partner. Allows the State Board to provide tuition assistance to eligible participants in certified fire services, emergency medical services, or law enforcement preparatory programs. Requires a local public safety partner to comply with all safety requirements applicable to minors and trainees. Sets forth provisions concerning employee status, background checks, reporting, and rulemaking. Repeals the Act 5 years after the effective date. Effective immediately.

LRB104 16789 LNS 30198 b

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Public  
5 Safety Career Pathways Act.

6 Section 5. Purpose. The purpose of this Act is to expand  
7 student access to structured pathways leading to careers in  
8 public safety, including law enforcement, fire service,  
9 emergency medical services, telecommunications, corrections,  
10 and emergency management. This Act promotes regional  
11 flexibility, preserves all existing training and certification  
12 standards, and supports local recruitment efforts without  
13 imposing new mandates on schools.

14 Section 10. Definitions. As used in this Act:

15 "Access" means availability of a pathway option through  
16 school district programming, a regional partnership, or an  
17 agreement with a qualified provider.

18 "Cadet Program" means a structured educational and  
19 training experience for individuals ages 18 to 20 that  
20 prepares participants for future sworn law enforcement  
21 employment upon meeting all statutory requirements.

22 "Fire and Emergency Medical Services Pathway" means a

1 training sequence recognized or approved by the Office of the  
2 State Fire Marshal or leading to basic emergency medical  
3 technician certification or higher emergency medical services  
4 certification.

5 "Institution" means a public high school, school district,  
6 or nonpublic high school recognized by the State Board of  
7 Education that elects to participate.

8 "Law enforcement agency" means any agency recognized by  
9 the Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board.

10 "Local public safety partner" includes a law enforcement  
11 agency, fire protection district, emergency medical services  
12 provider, 9-1-1 telecommunication center, corrections agency,  
13 emergency management agency, public community college, or  
14 similar entity providing training or supervised experience.

15 "Pipeline Program" means a structured sequence of  
16 instruction, training, or supervised experience preparing a  
17 student for entry into a public safety career.

18 Section 15. Access requirement.

19 (a) Each institution shall provide access to at least one  
20 Pipeline Program in a public safety field.

21 (b) Access may be offered through:

22 (1) direct programming by the institution;

23 (2) regional vocational centers;

24 (3) community college partnerships;

25 (4) local public safety partners; or

1 (5) any combination of paragraphs (1) through (4).

2 (c) Nothing in this Act required an institution to create  
3 a new program, hire new personnel, construct a facility, or  
4 incur additional operational costs.

5 Section 20. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Pathway.

6 (a) An individual 18 years of age or older may participate  
7 in a Fire and Emergency Medical Services Pathway, including  
8 attendance at an approved training program, subject to all  
9 applicable certification requirements.

10 (b) No training or certification standard under the  
11 authority of the Office of the State Fire Marshal or the  
12 Department of Public Health may be reduced or waived due to  
13 participation in a Pipeline Program.

14 (c) A participant may not perform duties requiring  
15 certification until obtaining such certification under the  
16 law.

17 Section 25. Police Cadet Program.

18 (a) A law enforcement agency may establish a Cadet Program  
19 for individuals 18 to 20 years of age interested in pursuing  
20 sworn law enforcement employment.

21 (b) A cadet may perform nonenforcement duties, attend  
22 preparatory training, participate in physical fitness and  
23 academic components of academy instruction, and assist with  
24 community engagement activities.

1 (c) A cadet may not:

2 (1) exercise police powers;

3 (2) carry a firearm in any operational capacity;

4 (3) make arrests; or

5 (4) perform custodial searches.

6 (d) A cadet may become a sworn officer only upon reaching  
7 the statutory age, meeting all certification requirements of  
8 the Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board, and  
9 satisfying all hiring standards of the law enforcement agency.

10 (e) No training, certification, psychological, or fitness  
11 requirements for a sworn officer may be reduced or waived  
12 under this Act.

13 Section 30. Additional pathway options. A Pipeline Program  
14 may also include training or supervised experience leading to  
15 careers in:

16 (1) 9-1-1 telecommunications;

17 (2) corrections;

18 (3) probation or court services;

19 (4) emergency management; or

20 (5) related public safety fields.

21 Section 35. Model memorandum of understanding.

22 (a) The State Board of Education, in consultation with the  
23 Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board and the  
24 Office of the State Fire Marshal, shall develop a model

1 memorandum of understanding for institutions and local public  
2 safety partners.

3 (b) The model memorandum of understanding shall include:

4 (1) student responsibilities;

5 (2) supervision and safety protocols;

6 (3) training site expectations;

7 (4) attendance and reporting requirements;

8 (5) credit or credential options;

9 (6) partner responsibilities;

10 (7) program duration; and

11 (8) procedures for review.

12 (c) An institution and local public safety partner may  
13 modify the model memorandum of understanding by mutual  
14 agreement.

15 Section 40. Insurance; liability; employee status.

16 (a) A local public safety partner participating in a  
17 Pipeline Program shall maintain all insurance required under  
18 State law, including workers' compensation and general  
19 liability if applicable.

20 (b) Participation in a Pipeline Program does not create  
21 civil liability for a local public safety partner beyond its  
22 statutory duties, as long as the local public safety partner  
23 acts in good faith and complies with safety requirements.

24 (c) Participation in a Pipeline Program does not create  
25 employee status for a student unless the student receives

1 compensation under applicable labor laws.

2 Section 45. Compensation.

3 (a) Compensation for a Pipeline Program participant is  
4 optional and may be determined by the local public safety  
5 partner.

6 (b) A compensated participant may be considered a  
7 temporary or part-time employee only for purposes expressly  
8 required under State or federal law.

9 (c) An uncompensated participant may not be designated as  
10 an employee for any purpose.

11 Section 50. Tuition assistance.

12 (a) Subject to appropriation, the State Board of Education  
13 may provide tuition assistance to eligible participants in  
14 certified fire services, emergency medical services, or law  
15 enforcement preparatory programs.

16 (b) Nothing in this Section may be construed to require  
17 the State to appropriate funds.

18 Section 55. Safety requirements; background checks.

19 (a) A local public safety partner shall comply with all  
20 safety requirements applicable to minors and trainees.

21 (b) All mentors and supervisors under this Act shall  
22 comply with an institution's volunteer or contractor  
23 background-check procedures.

1 (c) No additional background check requirements may be  
2 imposed under this Act.

3 Section 60. Reporting.

4 (a) By December 31 each year, the State Board of Education  
5 shall submit a one-page summary to the General Assembly  
6 identifying:

7 (1) the total number of student participants under  
8 this Act;

9 (2) any participating agencies and partners under this  
10 Act;

11 (3) the pathway completion rates under this Act;

12 (4) regional partnership development under this Act;

13 and

14 (5) any recommendations for program refinement under  
15 this Act.

16 (b) An institution is not required to submit a report  
17 beyond the minimal participation data requested by the State  
18 Board of Education.

19 Section 65. No new mandates. Nothing in this Act may be  
20 construed as requiring an institution to incur additional  
21 expenditures or establish new programs.

22 Section 70. Rulemaking. The State Board of Education, the  
23 Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board, and the

1 Office of the State Fire Marshal may adopt any rules necessary  
2 to implement this Act. Rules shall be limited to  
3 administrative procedures and may not impose material costs on  
4 institutions or local public safety partners.

5 Section 75. Repeal. This Act is repealed 5 years after the  
6 effective date of this Act.

7 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
8 becoming law.