

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Education Postsecondary

BILL: SB 372

INTRODUCER: Senator Trumbull

SUBJECT: Public Postsecondary Tuition and Fee Waivers for Sheriff's Office Employees

DATE: January 12, 2026

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Jahnke	Bouck	HE	Pre-meeting
2.			AHE	
3.			FP	

I. Summary:

SB 372 expands eligibility for the state employee tuition and fee waiver to also include sheriff's office employees, including full-time sworn law enforcement officers, correctional officers, and civilian employees of a sheriff's office.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

II. Present Situation:

Public Postsecondary Tuition and Fees

Florida law defines "tuition" as the basic fee charged to a student for instruction provided by a public postsecondary educational institution.¹ In addition to tuition, institutions charge a variety of required fees, such as student activity, technology, financial aid, and capital improvement fees, which together make up the total per-credit-hour cost.²

For the 2025-2026 academic year, the resident undergraduate tuition rate for the State University System (SUS) is currently set in statute at \$105.07 per credit hour.³ When combined with required fees, the SUS average undergraduate tuition and fees total is \$200.08 per credit hour.⁴

Within the Florida College System (FCS), standard tuition for college credit courses is \$71.98 per credit hour, with additional required fees set by each institution. Tuition for the baccalaureate

¹ Section 1009.01(1), F.S.

² Sections 1009.23 and 1009.24, F.S.

³ Section 1009.24(4)(a), F.S.

⁴ Florida Board of Governors, *State University System of Florida, Tuition and Required Fees, 2025-2026*, available at, <https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2025-2026-SUS-Tuition-and-Fees-Report.pdf> (last visited Jan. 5, 2026).

degree program is \$91.79 per credit hour for students classified as residents for tuition purposes, plus required fees.⁵

Florida law extends fee waivers to students who meet specified conditions.⁶ Some fee waivers are mandatory,⁷ while others are permissive.⁸

State Employee Tuition and Fee Waiver

Each SUS and FCS institution must waive tuition and fees for state employees for up to 6 credit hours per academic term, on a space-available basis. Participation is subject to approval by the employee's agency head. The waiver applies to tuition and required fees charged per credit hour.⁹ Institutions may continue to charge non-waivable fees, such as laboratory or materials fees, as authorized elsewhere in statute.¹⁰

For purposes of this waiver, employees of the state include individuals employed by the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of state government, but exclude employees of state universities. The Chief Financial Officer, in cooperation with SUS and FCS institutions, must identify and implement measures to reduce administrative burdens associated with the waiver program, including streamlining the methods institutions use to verify state employment.

Eligible employees may be required to wait until after priority registration periods to enroll in courses. Participation in the waiver does not guarantee placement in a specific course or section and is dependent on institutional capacity.

SUS and FCS institutions are reimbursed for administrative costs associated with the waiver program from funds specifically appropriated for that purpose, and the Auditor General reviews the related cost assessment data as part of his or her regular audit responsibilities.¹¹

Sheriff's Offices and Employees

Florida has 67 sheriff's offices, one in each county, each headed by an elected sheriff who serves as a constitutional officer.¹² Sheriff's offices are responsible for county law enforcement and related public safety duties, including operating county detention facilities and executing court processes.¹³

⁵ Section 1009.23(3), F.S.

⁶ Section 1009.26, F.S.

⁷ Section 1009.26 (5), (7)-(8), (12)-(14), (17)-(20) F.S. Mandatory fee waivers include, but are not limited to, waivers for graduate students in state-approved school psychology internship programs, spouses of deceased state employees, recipients of a Purple Heart or other qualifying combat decoration, and active duty members of the Armed Forces.

⁸ Section 1009.26 (1)-(4), (6), (9)-(11), (15)-(16), and (21), F.S. Permissive fee waivers include, but are not limited to, waivers for full-time university employees, Florida residents 60 years of age or older on a space-available basis, purposes that support and enhance the mission of the university, and intercollegiate student athletes receiving an athletic scholarship.

⁹ Section 1009.265(1), F.S.

¹⁰ Sections 1009.23(12) and 1009.24(14), F.S.

¹¹ Section 1009.265, F.S.

¹² FLA. CONST. art. VIII, s. 1 (1968)

¹³ Sections 30.15, F.S. and 951.061, F.S.

Statewide, sheriff's offices employ approximately 35,677 certified law enforcement and correctional officers, as well as civilian employees.¹⁴ Civilian employees may include administrative staff, communications and dispatch personnel, detention support staff, analysts, and other professional or technical personnel necessary to support law enforcement and correctional operations.

Sheriff's office employees are not eligible for the state employee tuition and fee waiver.¹⁵ As a result, sheriff's office employees who enroll in courses at SUS or FCS institutions are subject to standard tuition and required fees unless they qualify for another form of financial assistance.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 372 amends s. 1009.265, F.S., to require state universities and Florida College System institutions to waive tuition and fees for sheriff's office employees under the existing state employee tuition and fee waiver program. The bill extends eligibility for the waiver to employees of each sheriff's office in the state, subject to approval by the sheriff and enrollment on a space-available basis.

The bill defines "employees of a sheriff's office" to include any full-time sworn law enforcement officer, correctional officer, or civilian employee of the sheriff's office and revises the program title to reflect the inclusion of sheriff's office employees.

Although the bill expands the class of individuals eligible for the tuition and fee waiver, participation remains subject to space availability. Institutions are not required to increase course capacity, and the increase in eligibility may not result in a proportional increase in the number of individuals who receive the waiver.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

¹⁴ Section 943.10(1)-(2), F.S.; Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice Agency Profile (CJAP), *SO Index Officer Population*, <https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/CJSTC/Publications/CJAP/CJAP-2024/SO-Index> (last visited Jan. 5, 2026). Officer population data reflects full-time sworn officers with law enforcement, correctional, or concurrent certification.

¹⁵ Section 1009.265(5), F.S.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

This bill has no fiscal impact on state revenue or expenditures. The bill could have a negative fiscal impact on the institutions granting the tuition and fee waivers.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 1009.265 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.