



**Ohio War Orphans and Severely Disabled Veterans' Children Scholarship Board  
Joint Sunset Review Committee  
May 7, 2024**

Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair Hillyer, and members of the Joint Sunset Review Committee, thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify to recommend the continuation of the Ohio War Orphans and Severely Disabled Veterans' Children Scholarship Board. My name is Michael Graham, and I am the Director of Legislative Affairs for the Ohio Department of Higher Education.

I appreciate the opportunity to be before you today to discuss the many reasons why the Ohio War Orphans and Severely Disabled Veterans' Children Scholarship Board is well worth continuation.

The Ohio War Orphans and Severely Disabled Veterans' Children Scholarship Board awards tuition assistance to the children of those killed in action, or severely disabled Ohio veterans who served in the armed forces during a period of declared war or conflict. To receive War Orphans Scholarship (WOS) benefits, a student must be an Ohio resident and enrolled for full-time undergraduate study and pursuing an associate or bachelor's degree at an eligible Ohio college or university.

Students may submit applications for WOS via paper or electronically. Once a student submits their application, it is then entered into the system. The student will receive a notification of receipt, which is either eligible, ineligible or incomplete, via email or mail. If the student is or becomes eligible, they are presented to the WOSDV Board at the annual meeting. Once approved, an award notification is sent to the student by email or mail.

Scholarship applications are reviewed and approved by a board which is comprised of eight members. A designee from both the Director of Veteran Services and the Chancellor, as well as a member from both the House of Representatives and the Senate, appointed by the leader of each chamber respectively. The final four members are appointed by the governor, one each from the American Legion, VFW, Disabled American Veterans and AMVETS.

The board meets once a year in July to determine the award amounts. Scholarship benefits cover a portion of instructional and general fee charges at two and four-year public institutions and a portion of these charges at eligible private colleges and universities.

The scholarship is funded by GRF line item 235504, which falls under the Department of Higher Education. 100% of the GRF funding goes straight towards scholarships for those who apply. The board does not draw a salary and although they are able to request travel funds, so far, no

members have to date. ODHE also pays the filing fee for Board Members when they file their required financial disclosure statements.

The Department of Higher Education does have one staff member that is partially-compensated from GRF line item 235414, Grants and Scholarship Administration, dedicated to administration of the War Orphans and Severely Disabled Veterans' Children Scholarship. That staff member is equivalent to a  $\frac{2}{3}$  FTE for the scholarship as she has other roles and responsibilities at the Department of Higher Education.

With no overhead cost other than the  $\frac{2}{3}$  FTE staff time and no budget for any other activities, the scholarship board operates in a fiscally-responsible manner. The scholarship has helped thousands of our veterans' children earn an education in Ohio after putting themselves in harm's way for our safety and freedom.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.