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Medical Benefits for the Surviving Dependents of Law Enforcement Officers and Firefighters Killed in the Line of Duty

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You asked whether selected states provide medical benefits to surviving dependents of law enforcement officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty. Specifically you asked about the following states: Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. If such benefits are provided by these states, you wished to know for how long; if the benefit changes following remarriage; and whether the state pays the entire benefit.

Briefly, it appears that of the above-named six states only two—Utah and Washington—offer medical benefits for surviving dependents of law enforcement officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty. Wyoming offers time-limited medical benefits to surviving spouses and dependents of firefighters killed in the line of duty. Medical benefits are offered in limited ways in some of the other states.

On the following pages we provide information related to medical survivor benefits for spouses and dependents of law enforcement officers or firefighters killed in the line of duty. We gathered the information from national survivor associations, state statutes and websites, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and correspondence with state offices. Table 1 shows benefits pertaining to fallen law enforcement officers in the above-named six states; Table 2 shows this information for families of fallen firefighters. In our review, we did not identify any information regarding medical benefits for firefighters killed in the line of duty in Idaho or Montana. Please note that for the cells that are left blank in the tables, we identified no pertinent information.

There are numerous additional benefits that surviving spouses and children of law enforcement officers and firefighters killed in the line-of-duty receive in the states we reviewed. Some of these benefits include: educational benefits, workers' compensation, one-time cash payments, mortgage benefits, and retirement/pension benefits. The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation maintains a list of states' survivor benefits that can be accessed at <https://www.firehero.org/resources/family-resources/benefits/>. State survivor benefits for the families of fallen law enforcement officers, compiled by Concerns of Police Officers (C.O.P.S.) can be viewed at <https://www.nationalcops.org/survivorbenefits.html>. Both of these sites were most valuable to us in our review.

Table 1: Benefits for the Spouses and Dependents of Law Enforcement Officers Killed in the Line of Duty

State	Medical Benefits to Surviving Dependents	Length of Benefits	Remarriage Information	State Contribution
Idaho	No statewide benefit. C3:F8Health benefits vary depending upon police department benefits. Spouses of state and county officers may elect to continue to participate in the same benefit program in effect at the time of the officer's death.			
Montana	No statewide benefit. Spouses of state and county officers may elect to continue to participate in the same benefit program in effect at the time of the officer's death.			
Oregon	The Public Safety Memorial Fund <i>may</i> award the spouse optional health and dental insurance benefits, educational scholarships, and mortgage benefits. (ORS 243.956)	The spouse may continue to receive these benefits for five years or until the spouse remarries. A child may continue to receive the benefit until they turn 18, or, if they are attending school, until 23.	Benefits end upon remarriage.	The Public Safety Memorial Fund is established in the State Treasury, separate and distinct from the General Fund.
Utah	Statewide benefits are provided per Utah's "Public Safety Officer and Firefighter Line-of-Duty Death Act," codified at Utah Code 53-17-201, enacted in 2016.	Spouse until eligible for Medicare. Children until age 26.		The employer is responsible for payment of the health care premiums. After a two-year period, the employer may be eligible for reimbursement.
Washington	The state provides medical coverage for spouses and dependents of law enforcement officers or firefighters killed in the line of duty. Relevant statutes and code include RCW 41.26.510, RCW 41.04.393, and WAC 415-02-700.	Lifetime benefit for the spouse; children are able to utilize this benefit until they reach age of majority.	Remarriage does not affect this benefit.	Paid by state.
Wyoming	No statewide benefit. Health benefits vary depending upon police department benefits. Spouses of state and county officers may elect to continue to participate in the same benefit program in effect at the time of the officer's death.			

Sources: Concerns of Police Survivors (<https://www.nationalcops.org/survivorbenefits.html>), state statutes and websites, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and phone calls to state offices.

Table 2: Benefits for the Spouses and Dependents of Firefighters Killed in the Line of Duty

State	Medical Benefits to Surviving Dependents	Length of Benefits	Remarriage Information	State Contribution
Oregon	The Public Safety Memorial Fund <i>may</i> award the spouse optional health and dental insurance benefits, educational scholarships, and mortgage benefits. (ORS 243.956)	The spouse may continue to receive these benefits for five years or until the spouse remarries. A child may continue to receive the benefit until they turn 18, or, if they are attending school, until 23.	Benefits end upon remarriage.	The Public Safety Memorial Fund is established in the State Treasury, separate and distinct from the General Fund.
Utah	State wide benefits provided per Utah's "Public Safety Officer and Firefighter Line-of-duty Death Act," codified at Utah Code 53-17-201, enacted in 2016.	Spouse until eligible for Medicare. Children until age 26.		The employer is responsible for payment of the health care premiums. After a two year period, the employer may be eligible for reimbursement.
Washington	The state provides medical coverage for spouses and dependents of law enforcement officers or firefighters killed in the line of duty. Relevant statutes and code include RCW 41.26.510, RCW 41.04.393, and WAC 415-02-700.	Lifetime benefit for the spouse; children are able to utilize this benefit until they reach age of majority.	Remarriage does not affect this benefit.	Paid by state.
Wyoming	Yes. On a limited basis. (National Fallen Firefighters Association, https://www.firehero.org/resources/family-resources/benefits/local/wy/).	The surviving spouse receives benefits for 54 months; children until age 18, in some circumstances until 21.		Unclear.
Sources: The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (https://www.firehero.org/resources/family-resources/benefits/), state statutes and websites, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and phone calls to state offices.				

We hope this is helpful. If you have questions or need additional information, please let us know.