

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4386

By Delegates Burkhammer

[Introduced January 15, 2026; referred to the

Committee on Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §8-15-17 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to
2 removing age limitations for fire fighting services.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 15. FIRE FIGHTING; FIRE COMPANIES AND DEPARTMENTS; CIVIL

SERVICE FOR PAID FIRE DEPARTMENTS.

§8-15-17. Form of application; age and residency requirements; exceptions.

1 (a) The Firemen's Civil Service Commission in each municipality shall require individuals
2 applying for admission to any competitive examination provided for under the civil service
3 provisions of this article or under the rules of the commission to file in its office, within a reasonable
4 time prior to the proposed examination, a formal application in which the applicant shall state
5 under oath or affirmation:

6 (1) His or her full name, residence, and post office address;
7 (2) His or her United States citizenship, age, and the place and date of his or her birth;
8 (3) His or her state of health, and his or her physical capacity for the public service;
9 (4) His or her business and employments and residences for at least three previous years;
10 and
11 (5) Any other information reasonably required, touching upon the applicant's qualifications
12 and fitness for the public service.

13 (b) Blank forms for the applications shall be furnished by the commission, without charge,
14 to all individuals requesting the same.

15 (c) The commission may require, in connection with the application, certificates of citizens,
16 physicians, and others, having pertinent knowledge concerning the applicant, as the good of the
17 service requires.

18 (d) ~~Except as provided in subsections (e), (f), and (g) of this section, the~~ The commission
19 may not accept an application for original appointment if the individual applying is less than 18

20 years of age or more than 35 years of age at the date of his or her application.

21 (e) If any applicant is an honorably discharged veteran of any branch of the United States
22 armed forces, armed services reserve, or National Guard, then the individual may apply for an
23 original appointment if the applicant is not more than 40 years of age. The commission may create
24 a policy to prioritize applicants who are an honorably discharged veteran of any branch of the
25 United States armed forces, armed services reserve, or National Guard.

26 (f) If any applicant formerly served upon the paid fire department of the municipality to
27 which he or she makes application for a period of more than one year, and resigned from the
28 department at a time when there were no charges of misconduct or other misfeasance pending
29 against the applicant within a period of two years next preceding the date of his or her application,
30 and at the time of his or her application resides within the corporate limits of the municipality in
31 which the paid fire department to which he or she seeks appointment by reinstatement is located,
32 then the individual is eligible for appointment by reinstatement in the discretion of the Firemen's
33 Civil Service Commission, ~~even though the applicant is over the age of 35 years, and the~~
34 ~~applicant, providing his or her former term of service so justifies, may be appointed by~~
35 ~~reinstatement to the paid fire department without a competitive examination.~~ The applicant shall
36 undergo a medical examination; and if the individual is so appointed by reinstatement to the paid
37 fire department, he or she shall be the lowest in rank in the department next above the
38 probationers of the department and may not be entitled to seniority considerations.

39 (g) If an individual is presently employed by one paid fire department ~~and is over the age of~~
40 35, he or she may make an application to another paid fire department if:

41 (1) The paid fire department to which he or she is applying is serving a municipality that has
42 elected to participate in the West Virginia Municipal Police Officers and Firefighters Retirement
43 System created in §8-22A-1 *et seq.* of this code: *Provided*, That any individual applying pursuant
44 to this subdivision is to be classified as a new employee for retirement purposes and prior
45 employment service may not be transferred to the West Virginia Municipal Police Officers and

46 Firefighters Retirement System; or

47 (2) The paid fire department to which he or she is applying is serving a municipality that has
48 elected to participate in the West Virginia Public Employees Retirement System created in §5-10-1
49 *et seq.* of this code: *Provided*, That any individual applying pursuant to this subdivision is to be
50 classified as a new employee for retirement purposes and prior employment service may not be
51 transferred to the West Virginia Public Employees Retirement System, except for individuals and
52 their prior employment service already credited to them in the West Virginia Public Employees
53 Retirement System pursuant to §5-10-1 *et seq.* of this code.

54 (h) Individuals who are authorized to apply to a paid fire department pursuant to subsection
55 (f) of this section shall be in the lowest rank of the department and are not entitled to seniority
56 considerations.

57 (i) Notwithstanding charter provisions to the contrary, any applicant for original
58 appointment need not be a resident of the municipality or the county in which he or she seeks to
59 become a member of the paid fire department.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to remove age limitations for persons employed for fire
fighting services.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law
and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.