§ 219-r. Authorization to adopt supplemental award programs. 1. No political subdivision shall be required to adopt a supplemental award program. Any supplemental award program adopted pursuant to this section shall be governed by the provisions of this article.

2. (a) A political subdivision may adopt a supplemental award program for volunteer firefighters only if that political subdivision has previously established a service award program for volunteer firefighters under article eleven-A or eleven-AA of this chapter.

(b) A political subdivision may adopt a supplemental award program for volunteer ambulance workers only if that political subdivision has previously established a service award program for volunteer ambulance workers under article eleven-AAA of this chapter.

3. A supplemental award program may be adopted only in the same manner as the service award program was adopted by a resolution of the governing board following the affirmative vote of at least sixty percent of the governing board and the approval of a proposition authorizing the adoption of the program at a referendum of the electors of the political subdivision. A proposition for the approval of such local resolution shall be submitted at the next general election of state or local government officers held in such local government not less than sixty days after the passage of such resolution.

4. The resolution authorizing adoption of a supplemental award program shall state:

(a) the amount of the contribution to the program to be made by the sponsor on behalf of each participant credited with at least one decade of service;

(b) the maximum number of years for which service may be granted;

(c) the date on which the proposition authorizing the adoption of the program shall be submitted to referendum;

(d) the date as of which the program shall take effect.

5. The proposition authorizing the adoption of the supplemental award program shall be submitted to referendum in the same manner as the service award program.

6. The proposition shall state:

(a) the estimated annual cost of the supplemental service award program;

(b) the portion of the estimated annual cost of the program, if any, to be paid by any other political subdivisions;

(c) annual cost per participant;

(d) whether the program provides credit for years of service rendered by a participant preceding the adoption of the supplemental service award program and the estimated cost of providing such credit.

7. Upon approval of the proposition, the supplemental award program shall be deemed adopted by the political subdivision in accordance with the terms of the resolution adopted by the governing board. The supplemental award program shall take effect January first next succeeding the date at which the proposition was approved.

8. Once a supplemental award program has been adopted, participation therein by the sponsor may be terminated, or the benefits under the program may be changed by resolution of the governing board of the sponsor receiving the affirmative vote of at least sixty percent of the governing board and the approval of a proposition at a referendum of the electors of the sponsor.

9. Payments under the supplemental program, if adopted, shall not impair any rights of the participants under the volunteer firefighters' benefit law or volunteer ambulance workers' benefit law or any other law.