**Section 1085.90 Forgivable Loan Program**

*Every program under the initiative shall implement a program of forgivable loans to cover any portion of tuition, books, and fees of candidates under the program in excess of the candidates' grants-in-aid. All students admitted to a cohort shall be eligible for a forgivable student loan. Loans shall be fully forgiven if a graduate completes 5 years of service in hard-to-staff schools or hard-to-staff teaching positions, with partial forgiveness for shorter periods of service. Grow Your Own Illinois shall establish standards for the approval of requests for waivers or deferrals from individuals to waive this obligation. GYOI shall also define standards for the fiscal management of these loan funds.* (Section 25(a) of the Act) Any candidate in a program administered under this Part may receive a forgivable loan for tuition, books and fees associated with completion of the teacher preparation program, provided those expenditures are not otherwise paid for through grants-in-aid or other resources of the consortium. Any amount expended for an individual's tuition, books and fees shall be considered a part of that individual's loan, regardless of how the payment is administered and regardless of whether the individual receives any actual payment of funds. The cumulative total amount of any candidate's loan shall not exceed $25,000.

a) Pursuant to Section 25(a) of the Act, loan funds provided to candidates as part ofthisprogram *shall be fully forgiven if a graduate completes 5 years of service in hard-to-staff schools or hard-to-staff teaching positions, with partial forgiveness for shorter periods of service.* Forgiveness and repayment of loans shall be determined as provided in this Section.

b) An individual may accrue the service required for forgiveness of loans under this Part in one or more eligible schools or positions.

c) If an individual has not assumed employment in an eligible school or position within 2 years after receiving a teaching license/certificate, the individual shall be required to begin the repayment of amounts loaned under this Part. No interest shall apply.

d) An individual who drops out of the program shall be required to begin repaying the amounts loaned in the month following the month when it becomes evident that he or she will not be completing coursework required under the teacher preparation program for 2 consecutive semesters.

e) If a graduate has not completed 5 years of service within 10 years after receiving a teaching license/certificate, the individual shall be required to begin the repayment of amounts loaned under this Part.  The amount due shall be the total amount borrowed, less a percentage reflecting the relationship that any time taught by the individual in eligible schools or positions bears to the total 5 year commitment. Loan amounts shall be reduced in increments of 10% for each semester completed.

f) Repayment of loans shall be made in no more than 60 equal installments. The minimum monthly payment will be determined by dividing the total amount due by 60. An individual may prepay the balance due on the loan in its entirety at any time or make payments in addition to the minimum amount owed each month without penalty.

g) In addition to the loan forgiveness permitted under Section 25 of the Act, GYOI may defer or waive an individual's obligation to repay an amount due as provided in this subsection (g).

1) GYOI shall waive the repayment obligation for an individual who is counseled out of a preparation program or found ineligible to continue, provided that the individual's exit from the program is not due to a violation of law or of applicable institutional policies.

2) GYOI shall waive the repayment obligation for an individual who drops out of a preparation program or demonstrates that he or she is unable to complete a portion of the required teaching service due to:

A) The onset or exacerbation of a disability;

B) The need to care for an immediate family member during serious illness or disability;

C) Destruction of the individual's residence; or

D) Other circumstances that require the individual to assume responsibilities that cannot be avoided without serious financial hardship or other family disruption (e.g., death of a spouse that results in the need to take a second job or assume operation of a business).

3) GYOI shall waive the repayment obligation for a candidate who does not complete a preparation program due to the unavailability of a State appropriation for this initiative for at least 2 consecutive years.

4) GYOI shall waive the repayment obligation for any candidate in good standing who cannot complete the preparation program due to the consortium's ineligibility for funds under Section 1085.70.

5) GYOI shall defer the repayment obligation for a period of time specifically related to the circumstances when an individual:

A) Is unemployed or is working for fewer than 30 hours per week;

B) Is experiencing a financial hardship (e.g., receiving public assistance, earning an amount per month that is no greater than 200% of the amount of the loan payment, or experiencing circumstances such as those outlined in subsection (g)(2) of this Section);

C) Has re-enrolled as a full-time student in an institution of higher education (for example, to pursue a master's degree) or in a program under this Part (for example, to obtain program training by attending a teacher education program for a specialized area, such as math or science); or

D) Is deployed for active duty as a member of the U.S. Armed Services, reserve forces of the United States or as a member of the Illinois National Guard.

6) Each request for a waiver or deferral of repayment shall be submitted in a format specified by GYOI. The affected individual shall describe the specific circumstances that apply. This description shall be accompanied by evidence such as a physician's statement, insurance claim or other documentation of the relevant facts.

h) When a teaching license/certificate is issued to an individual who received assistance under this Part, the license/certificate shall be accompanied by:

1) A statement indicating the total amount of the loan received by the individual and identifying the dates applicable to repayment under this Section; and

2) A claim form that the individual may use to claim forgiveness of the loan amount, which shall require the individual to identify the periods of service completed in eligible schools or positions and the school administrators who can verify the individual's service.

i) Management of Loans

1) It shall be the responsibility of each 4 year institution of higher education, and of any 2 year institution that participates in a consortium, to assist GYOI with the forgivable loan process in the following manner:

A) By keeping records of the amounts provided to or on behalf of each individual for tuition, fees and books;

B) By keeping up-to-date contact information regarding the address and telephone number of each individual during the individual's preparation at that institution; and

C) By notifying GYOI within 30 days after a candidate fails to enroll in coursework as expected or otherwise ceases to participate in the program and informing GYOI of the total amount of the candidate's loan for direct expenses as of that point in time.

2) When a candidate leaves a 2 year institution and enters a 4 year institution to continue in a program under this Part, the 2 year institution shall inform both GYOI and the 4 year institution of the total amount of the candidate's loan for direct expenses as of that point in time. Each 2 year institution shall ensure that the affected 4 year institution continues to receive any information that subsequently affects the amount of a candidate's loan.

3) Each institution shall notify GYOI as to who will be responsible for this information and shall provide contact information for the responsible individual within the institution.

j) It shall be the responsibility of GYOI to take such actions as may be necessary to secure repayment when necessary.

(Source: Amended at 44 Ill. Reg. 11419, effective June 24, 2020)