**Section 582.100 Eligibility Requirements**

A medical facility or a health care professional may apply to the Department for loan repayment assistance.

a) If the medical facility is the applicant, the medical facility shall forward the loan repayment funds to the health care professional employed by the medical facility to pay educational debt.

b) To be eligible for this program, the medical facility shall:

1) Be located in an HPSA in Illinois;

2) Be a not-for-profit corporation or public facility;

3) Participate as a provider in the Medicare, Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs, as appropriate;

4) See and treat all patients regardless of the patient's ability to pay for services; and

5) Provide discounts for individuals with limited incomes.

c) If the health care professional is the applicant, the individual shall:

1) Either:

A) Be working at a medical facility in an HPSA in Illinois; or

B) Have accepted an offer of employment at a medical facility in an HPSA in Illinois and will begin employment at that site within 60 calendar days after the submission of the application;

2) Have a degree in allopathic or osteopathic medicine or dentistry or other eligible health profession from an accredited school; have completed an approved graduate training program; and have a current, valid and unencumbered license to practice the health profession in Illinois;

3) Participate as a provider in the Medicare, Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs, as appropriate;

4) Agree to see and treat all patients at the medical facility regardless of the patient's ability to pay for services;

5) Apply to participate in the loan repayment program;

6) Not be in breach of a health professional service obligation to the federal, State or local government;

7) Not have any judgment liens arising from federal debt;

8) Not be excluded, suspended or disqualified by a federal agency;

9) Sign a written agreement attesting to accepting repayment of health professional educational loans and to serve for the applicable period of obligated service in a medical facility in an HPSA in Illinois; and

10) Be a U.S. citizen.

d) Individuals who owe an obligation for health professional service to the federal government or to the State or other entity under an agreement with the federal, State or other entity are ineligible for this program unless the obligation will be completely satisfied prior to the beginning of the service obligation under this Part.

e) Individuals who are in a reserve component of the U.S. Armed Forces are eligible to participate in the program. These individuals shall note the following:

1) Service performed for military training by a health care professional will not satisfy the service obligation commitment. If a health care professional's military training or service, in combination with the health care professional's absence from the medical facility, will exceed seven weeks per service year, the health care professional shall request a deferment of his/her obligation (see Section 582.130(a)(3)).

2) A health care professional who receives a deferment shall have his or her service obligation tolled. The tolling of this requirement shall equal the health care professional’s period of deferment.

3) If deployed, the health care professional shall return to the medical facility where he/she served prior to deployment. If unable to return to the original medical facility, the health care professional shall request a transfer to another medical facility (see Section 582.140). If the health care professional does not obtain a transfer, he/she shall resume work at the original medical facility. If the health care professional does not obtain a transfer and refuses to return to the medical facility or accept assignment to another medical facility, he/she will be in breach of the service obligation (see Section 582.160).

f) Health care professionals will not be accepted into the loan repayment program if one or more of the following exist:

1) Breach on a prior service obligation to the federal, State or local government, or other entity, even if the health care professional has satisfied the obligation through service, monetary payment or other means;

2) Failure to apply previously awarded loan repayment funds to the health care professional's qualifying educational loans;

3) Default on any federal payment obligation, federal income tax liability, federally guaranteed/insured loans or non-federal payment obligation;

4) Default on any State payment obligation or State income tax liability; or

5) Write off of any federal or non-federal debt as uncollectible, or waiver of any federal service or payment obligation.

g) Health care professionals shall demonstrate satisfactory professional competence and meet discipline and specialty-specific education, training and licensure requirements.

1) Physicians shall:

A) Either:

i) Have certification in a primary care specialty from a specialty board approved by the American Board of Medical Specialties or the American Osteopathic Association; or

ii) Have completed a residency program in a primary care specialty, approved by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education or the American Osteopathic Association; and

B) Be licensed in Illinois as a physician under the Medical Practice Act of 1987.

2) Physician Assistants shall:

A) Have a degree from a physician assistant educational program accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant at a college, university or educational institution that is accredited by the U.S. Department of Education and a nationally recognized accrediting body or organization; and

B) Be licensed in Illinois as a physician assistant under the Physician Assistant Practice Act of 1987.

3) Advanced Practice Registered Nurses

A) Certified nurse practitioners shall:

i) Have a master's degree, post-master's certificate or doctoral degree from a school accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education; and

ii) Be licensed in Illinois as an advanced practice registered nurse under the Nurse Practice Act.

B) Certified nurse midwives shall:

i) Have a master's degree or post-baccalaureate certificate from a school accredited by the American College of Nurse Midwives; and

ii) Be licensed in Illinois as an advanced practice nurse under the Nurse Practice Act.

4) Dentists

A) Dentists shall:

i) Have a Doctor of Dental Surgery or Doctor of Dental Medicine degree from a program accredited by the American Dental Association;

ii) Be licensed in Illinois as a dentist under the Illinois Dental Practice Act; and

iii) Work at a medical facility that is in a Dental HPSA in Illinois.

B) A dentist whose practice is limited to pediatric patients shall meet the requirements of this subsection (g)(4) and also document completion of a two-year training program in pediatric dentistry accredited by the American Dental Association.

5) Psychiatrists

A) Psychiatrists shall:

i) Have a certification in psychiatry from a specialty board approved by the American Board of Medical Specialties or the American Osteopathic Association; or

ii) Have completed a residency program in psychiatry, approved by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education or the American Osteopathic Association; and

iii) Be licensed in Illinois as a physician under the Medical Practice Act of 1987; and

B) Work at a medical facility that is in a Mental Health HPSA in Illinois.

(Source: Amended at 47 Ill. Reg. 13300, effective August 29, 2023)