

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Higher Education Student Assistance Act is
5 amended by changing Section 65.115 as follows:

6 (110 ILCS 947/65.115)

7 (This Section may contain text from a Public Act with a
8 delayed effective date)

9 Sec. 65.115 ~~65.110~~. School and Municipal Social Work
10 Shortage Loan Repayment Program.

11 (a) To encourage Illinois students to work, and to
12 continue to work, as a school social worker in public school
13 districts in this State or in State municipalities, the
14 Commission shall, each year, receive and consider applications
15 for loan repayment assistance under this Section. This program
16 shall be known as the School and Municipal Social Work
17 Shortage Loan Repayment Program. The Commission shall
18 administer the program and shall adopt all necessary and
19 proper rules to effectively implement the program.

20 (b) Beginning July 1, 2022, subject to a separate
21 appropriation made for such purposes, the Commission shall
22 award a grant, up to a maximum of \$6,500, to each qualified
23 applicant. The Commission may encourage the recipient of a

1 grant under this Section to use the grant award for repayment
2 of the recipient's educational loan. If an appropriation for
3 this program for a given fiscal year is insufficient to
4 provide grants to all qualified applicants, the Commission
5 shall allocate the appropriation in accordance with this
6 subsection. If funds are insufficient to provide all qualified
7 applicants with a grant as authorized by this Section, the
8 Commission shall allocate the available grant funds for that
9 fiscal year to qualified applicants who submit a complete
10 application on or before a date specified by the Commission,
11 based on the following order of priority:

12 (1) first, to new, qualified applicants who are
13 members of a racial minority as defined in subsection (e);
14 and

15 (2) second, to other new, qualified applicants in
16 accordance with this Section.

17 (c) A person is a qualified applicant under this Section
18 if he or she meets all of the following qualifications:

19 (1) The person is a United States citizen or eligible
20 noncitizen.

21 (2) The person is a resident of this State.

22 (3) The person is a borrower with an outstanding
23 balance due on an educational loan related to obtaining a
24 degree in social work.

25 (4) The person has been employed as a school social
26 worker by a public elementary school or secondary school

1 in this State for at least 12 consecutive months or as a
2 social worker for an Illinois municipality who did not
3 report directly to a police department.

4 (5) The person is currently employed as a school
5 social worker by a public elementary school or secondary
6 school in this State or as a social worker for an Illinois
7 municipality who does not report directly to a police
8 department.

9 (d) An applicant shall submit an application, in a form
10 determined by the Commission, for grant assistance under this
11 Section to the Commission. An applicant is required to submit,
12 with the application, supporting documentation as the
13 Commission may deem necessary.

14 (e) Racial minorities are underrepresented as school
15 social workers in elementary and secondary schools and in
16 municipalities in Illinois, and the General Assembly finds
17 that it is in the interest of this State to provide them
18 priority consideration for programs that encourage their
19 participation in this field and thereby foster a profession
20 that is more reflective of the diversity of Illinois
21 residents, students and parents they will serve. A more
22 reflective workforce in ~~school~~ social work allows improved
23 outcomes for individuals ~~students~~ and a better utilization of
24 services. Therefore, the Commission shall give priority to
25 those applicants who are members of a racial minority. In this
26 subsection (e), "racial minority" means a person who is a

1 citizen of the United States or a lawful permanent resident
2 alien of the United States and who is:

3 (1) Black (a person having origins in any of the black
4 racial groups in Africa);

5 (2) Hispanic (a person of Spanish or Portuguese
6 culture with origins in Mexico, South or Central America,
7 or the Caribbean Islands, regardless of race);

8 (3) Asian American (a person having origins in any of
9 the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the
10 Indian Subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands); or

11 (4) American Indian or Alaskan Native (a person having
12 origins in any of the original peoples of North America).

13 (Source: P.A. 102-622, eff. 7-1-22; revised 11-10-21.)