

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 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Human
5 Services Professional Loan Repayment Program Act.

6 Section 5. Purpose. The purpose of the Human Services
7 Professional Loan Repayment Program is to recruit and retain
8 qualified human service professionals to work for
9 community-based human services providers. Due to numerous
10 factors, human services agencies have a high turnover rate and
11 struggle to maintain consistent staffing levels. Many of these
12 positions require degrees in human services-related fields of
13 study. In addition, most human services positions require a
14 graduate degree or postsecondary degree or certification. The
15 higher education requirements for the human services workforce
16 often means that many students graduate with a high level of
17 debt for a job that pays slightly above minimum wage with a
18 great deal of stress and burnout.

19 Section 10. Definitions. In this Act:

20 "Commission" means the Illinois Student Assistance
21 Commission.

22 "Professional" means an individual employed by a human

1 services agency that contracts with or is grant-funded by a
2 State agency for the purposes of providing direct or indirect
3 services that ensure that individuals have the essential
4 elements to build and maintain physical, emotional, and
5 economic well-being at every phase of life.

6 "Program" means the Human Services Professional Loan
7 Repayment Program.

8 "Qualified program" means a program that offers an
9 associate, bachelor's, or master's degree from an accredited
10 college or university.

11 "State agency" means the Department of Human Services, the
12 Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of
13 Juvenile Justice, the Department on Aging, and the Department
14 of Public Health.

15 Section 15. Establishment of the Program. The Human
16 Services Professional Loan Repayment Program is created and
17 shall be administered by the Commission. Subject to
18 appropriation, the Program shall provide loan repayment
19 assistance to eligible professionals practicing in a
20 community-based, human services agency that contracts with or
21 is grant-funded by a State agency.

22 Section 20. Applications. Each year for which funds have
23 been appropriated, the Commission shall receive and consider
24 applications for loan repayment assistance under this Act. All

1 applications must be submitted to the Commission in a form and
2 manner prescribed by the Commission. An eligible professional
3 must submit any supporting documents deemed necessary by the
4 Commission at the time of application.

5 Section 25. Award; maximum loan time; maximum amount. The
6 Commission shall award a grant to each eligible applicant for
7 a cumulative maximum of 4 years. The recipient of a grant
8 awarded by the Commission under this Act must use the grant
9 award for payments toward the recipient's educational loans
10 from a qualified program. The amount of the grant shall not
11 exceed: (i) \$25,000 per year for a master's degree or higher;
12 (ii) \$15,000 per year for a bachelor's degree; (iii) \$3,000
13 per year for a professional with an associate degree; and (iv)
14 up to a \$5,000 per year add-on if independently licensed as a
15 licensed clinical social worker, a licensed clinical
16 professional counselor, a licensed practitioner of the healing
17 arts, a licensed marriage and family therapist, a
18 board-certified behavior analyst, or a registered behavior
19 technician.

20 Section 30. Eligibility; work requirement.

21 (a) To be eligible to receive a grant under the Human
22 Services Professional Loan Repayment Program, the Commission
23 must find that the eligible professional satisfies all of the
24 following:

1 (1) The applicant is a resident of the State of
2 Illinois.

3 (2) The applicant has worked for at least 24
4 consecutive months as a full-time employee as a human
5 services professional in a community-based human services
6 agency that currently has or did have a contract with a
7 State agency to provide human services during the duration
8 of applicant's 24 consecutive month tenure.

9 (3) The applicant is a borrower with an outstanding
10 balance due on an educational loan.

11 (4) The applicant has not defaulted on an educational
12 loan.

13 (5) The applicant must remain a full-time employee as
14 a human services professional in the same community-based
15 human services agency for at least 12 months after
16 receiving this grant.

17 (b) The Commission may grant preference to a previous
18 recipient of a grant under the Program, provided that the
19 recipient continues to meet the eligibility requirements under
20 this Section.

21 Section 35. Administration; rules. The Commission shall
22 administer the Program and shall adopt rules not inconsistent
23 with this Act for the Program's effective implementation.

24 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect January
25 1, 2023.