



102ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2021 and 2022

HB4720

Introduced 1/27/2022, by Rep. Lamont J. Robinson, Jr.

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Human Service Professional Loan Repayment Program Act. Creates the Human Service Professional Loan Repayment Program, which shall be administered by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, to provide loan repayment assistance to eligible direct service professionals practicing in a community-based, human service agency that contracts with or is grant funded by a State agency. Contains provisions concerning applications, award amounts, eligibility and work requirements, and rules.

LRB102 25675 CMG 34968 b

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 Service Professional Loan Repayment Program Act.

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

19 Section 10. Definitions. In this Act:

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

22 "Eligible applicant" means a student who has graduated

1 with a degree from an accredited college or university with an
2 associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree in a human
3 services field, or has been independently licensed as a
4 licensed clinical social worker, a licensed clinical
5 professional counselor, a licensed practitioner of the healing
6 arts, a licensed marriage and family therapist, a
7 board-certified behavior analyst, or a registered behavior
8 technician.

9 "Professional" means a position funded by a grant or
10 contract from a State agency for the purposes of providing
11 direct or indirect services that ensure that individuals have
12 the essential elements to build and maintain physical,
13 emotional, and economic well-being at every phase of life.

14 "Program" means the Human Service Professional Loan
15 Repayment Program.

16 "Qualified program" means a program which offers an
17 Associate's, Bachelor's, or Master's Degree in a Human
18 Services field from an accredited college or university for
19 the purpose of training and preparing students to be human
20 service professionals.

21 "State agency" means the Department of Human Services, the
22 Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of
23 Juvenile Justice, the Department on Aging, and the Department
24 of Public Health.

25 Section 15. Establishment of the Program. Beginning on

1 January 1, 2023, there is to be created the Human Service
2 Professional Loan Repayment Program, which shall be
3 administered by the Commission. The Program shall provide loan
4 repayment assistance to eligible direct service professionals
5 practicing in a community-based, human service agency that
6 contracts with or is grant funded by a State agency.

7 Section 20. Applications. Each year, the Commission shall
8 receive and consider applications for loan repayment
9 assistance under this Act. All applications must be submitted
10 to the Commission in a form and manner prescribed by the
11 Commission. An eligible applicant must submit any supporting
12 documents deemed necessary by the Commission at the time of
13 application.

14 Section 25. Award; maximum loan time; maximum amount. The
15 Commission shall award a grant to each eligible applicant for
16 a cumulative maximum of 4 years. The recipient of a grant
17 awarded by the Commission under this Act must use the grant
18 award for payments towards the recipient's educational loans
19 from a qualified program. The amount of the grant shall not
20 exceed: (i) \$25,000 per year for a Master's Degree in Human
21 Services or higher; (ii) \$15,000 per year for a Bachelor's
22 Degree in Human Services; (iii) \$3,000 per year for a direct
23 service worker with an associate's degree; and (iv) up to a
24 \$5,000 per year add-on if independently licensed as a licensed

1 clinical social worker, a licensed clinical professional
2 counselor, a licensed practitioner of the healing arts, a
3 licensed marriage and family therapist, a board certified
4 behavior analyst, or a registered behavior technician.

5 Section 30. Eligibility; work requirement.

6 (a) To be eligible to receive a grant under the Human
7 Service Professional Loan Repayment Program, the Commission
8 must find that the eligible applicant satisfies all of the
9 following:

10 (1) The applicant is a United States citizen or an
11 eligible noncitizen.

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

14 (3) The applicant has worked for at least 24
15 consecutive months as a full-time employee as a human
16 service professional in a community-based human service
17 agency that currently has or did have a contract with a
18 State agency to provide human services during the duration
19 of applicant's 24 consecutive month tenure.

20 (4) The applicant holds a degree from a qualified
21 program.

22 (5) The applicant is a borrower with an outstanding
23 balance due on an educational loan.

24 (6) The applicant has not defaulted on an educational
25 loan.

1 (7) The applicant must remain a full-time employee as
2 a human service professional in a community-based human
3 service agency for at least 12 months after receiving this
4 grant.

5 (b) If the recipient of this grant fails to maintain
6 full-time employment in a community-based human service agency
7 for at least 12 months after receiving the grant, the
8 Commission shall require the recipient to begin to repay the
9 total amount of the grant within 90 calendar days after
10 notification of employment ending. The repayment amount shall
11 be prorated according to the fraction of employment obligation
12 not completed, at a rate of interest equal to 5%.

13 (c) If the recipient's employment at a community-based
14 human service agency is terminated for any reason other than
15 for cause, the recipient must search for, apply to, and accept
16 new, qualified, full-time employment as a human service
17 professional in a community-based human service agency within
18 90 calendar days from the recipient's termination of full-time
19 employment, otherwise the stipend recipient is subject to the
20 repayment of stipend funds to the Commission.

21 (d) If the recipient's employment at a community-based
22 human service agency is terminated for cause, the recipient
23 shall repay the total amount of the grant received under this
24 program within 90 calendar days after termination of full-time
25 employment. The amount of repayment owed by the recipient
26 shall be prorated based on the amount of the employment

1 requirement that has been satisfied.

2 The Commission may grant preference to a previous
3 recipient of a grant under the Program, provided that the
4 recipient continues to meet the eligibility requirements under
5 this Section.

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