

AN ACT concerning health.

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

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Community Behavioral Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program Act.

Section 5. Purpose. The purpose of the Community Behavioral Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program is to recruit and retain qualified mental health and substance use professionals to practice in underserved or rural areas and to address this State's community-based behavioral health care workforce shortage that causes disparities in access to critical mental health and substance use services.

Section 10. Definitions. In this Act:

"Commission" means the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.

"Physician" means a person licensed by this State to practice medicine in all its branches and includes any person holding a temporary license, as provided in the Medical Practice Act of 1987.

"Program" means the Community Behavioral Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program.

"Psychiatrist" or "licensed psychiatrist" means a physician who has successfully completed a residency program in psychiatry accredited by either the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education or the American Osteopathic Association.

Section 15. Establishment of Program. Beginning on July 1, 2019, there is created the Community Behavioral Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program, which shall be administered by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. The Program shall provide loan repayment assistance, subject to appropriation, to eligible mental health and substance use professionals practicing in a community mental health center in an underserved or rural federally designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Area.

Section 20. Applications. Each year, the Commission shall receive and consider applications for loan repayment assistance under this Act. All applications must be submitted to the Commission in a form and manner prescribed by the Commission. Applicants must submit any supporting documents deemed necessary by the Commission at the time of application.

Section 25. Award; maximum loan time; maximum amount. Subject to appropriation, the Commission shall award a grant to each qualified applicant for a maximum of 4 years. The

Commission must encourage the recipient of a grant awarded under this Act to use the grant award for payments towards the recipient's educational loans. The amount of the grant shall not exceed (i) \$35,000 per year for a psychiatrist, (ii) \$15,000 per year for an advanced practice registered nurse or a physician assistant, (iii) \$12,000 per year for a psychologist who holds a doctoral degree, (iv) \$6,500 per year for a licensed clinical social worker or a licensed clinical professional counselor, and (v) \$2,500 per year for a substance use professional.

Section 30. Eligibility; work requirement.

(a) To be eligible for assistance under the Community Behavioral Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program, the Commission must find that the applicant satisfies all of the following:

(1) He or she is a United States citizen or an eligible noncitizen.

(2) He or she is a resident of this State.

(3) He or she has worked for at least 12 consecutive months as a behavioral health professional in a community mental health center in an underserved or rural federally designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Area in this State.

(4) He or she is a borrower with an outstanding balance due on an educational loan.

(5) He or she has not defaulted on an educational loan.

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

(c) A recipient of a grant under the Program must complete a separate 12-month period working in a community mental health center in an underserved or rural federally designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Area in this State for each grant that he or she is awarded.

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