

Chapter 251

(Senate Bill 441)

AN ACT concerning

**Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Nancy Grasmick
Public School Professional Award – School Nurses**

FOR the purpose of expanding the Nancy Grasmick Public School Professional Award within the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include school nurses; and generally relating to loan repayment assistance for school nurses.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Education
Section 18–1501 through 18–1503 and 18–1506
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Education

18–1501.

(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

(b) (1) “Eligible field of employment” means employment in the State by an organization, institution, association, society, or corporation that is exempt from taxation under § 501(c)(3) or (4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(2) “Eligible field of employment” includes employment by the State or any local government in the State, but does not include being employed as a judicial clerk in any court.

(c) “Higher education loan” means any loan for undergraduate or graduate study that is obtained for tuition, educational expenses, or living expenses from:

(1) A college or university, government, or commercial source; or

(2) An organization, institution, association, society, or corporation that is exempt from taxation under § 501(c)(3) or (4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(d) (1) “Mental health professional” means an individual who provides mental health services in public schools and is employed by:

(i) A county school system; or

(ii) A local health department to provide school health services through an agreement with a county board.

(2) “Mental health professional” includes a school psychologist, resource psychologist, psychologist coordinator, social worker, social worker supervisor, school counselor, or mental health coordinator.

(e) “Program” means the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program.

(F) “SCHOOL NURSE” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO:

(1) IS LICENSED AS A REGISTERED NURSE IN ACCORDANCE WITH TITLE 8 OF THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE;

(2) PROVIDES HEALTH SERVICES IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL; AND

(3) IS EMPLOYED BY:

(I) A COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM; OR

(II) A LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES THROUGH AN AGREEMENT WITH A COUNTY BOARD.

18–1502.

(a) There is a program of loan assistance repayment known as the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program in the State.

(b) The Office of Student Financial Assistance shall assist in the repayment of the amount of any higher education loan owed by an individual who:

(1) (i) Receives a graduate, professional, or undergraduate degree from:

1. A college or university in the State of Maryland;

2. A school of law; or

3. For a mental health professional, any accredited college or university; or

(ii) Receives a Resident Teacher Certificate (RTC) from the Department after completing an alternative teaching preparation program approved by the State Superintendent;

(2) Obtains eligible employment;

(3) Receives an income that is less than the maximum eligible total income levels established by the Office, including any additional sources of income; and

(4) Satisfies any other criteria established by the Office.

(c) Subject to the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, the Office shall assist in the repayment of the amount of any higher education loan owed by a:

(1) Public school teacher in the State who:

(i) Has taught in Maryland for at least 2 years:

1. In science, technology, engineering, fine arts, or math subjects;

2. In a school in which at least the following percentages of the students are enrolled in the free and reduced price lunch program in the State:

A. 75% through June 30, 2025; and

B. 55% beginning July 1, 2025; or

3. In a school that:

A. Had Title I status during the 2018–2019 school year;

B. Lost Title I status after the 2018–2019 school year; and

C. Participates in the United States Department of Agriculture Community Eligibility Provision; and

(ii) Has received a performance evaluation rating for the most recent year available in the county in which the teacher taught; [or]

(2) Mental health professional who has provided mental health services in a public school for at least 2 years as an employee of:

(i) A county school system; or

(ii) A local health department through an agreement with a county board; **OR**

(3) NURSE WHO HAS BEEN A SCHOOL NURSE FOR AT LEAST 2 YEARS.

(d) (1) A grant awarded under subsection (c) of this section shall be known as the Nancy Grasmick Public School Professional Award.

(2) A recipient of a Nancy Grasmick Public School Professional Award shall be known as a Nancy Grasmick Public School Professional Scholar.

(e) An applicant for assistance in the repayment of a commercial loan shall demonstrate to the Office that the commercial loan was used for tuition, educational expenses, or living expenses for graduate or undergraduate study.

(f) Assistance in the repayment of a loan from an entity set forth in § 18–1501(c)(2) of this subtitle shall require the approval of the Office.

(g) Subject to the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, the Office shall assist in the repayment of the amount of any higher education loan owed by a licensed clinical alcohol and drug counselor, a licensed clinical marriage and family therapy counselor, or a licensed clinical professional counselor whose practice is located in a high–need geographic area of the State as determined by the Maryland Department of Health.

18–1503.

(a) The Office of Student Financial Assistance shall adopt regulations to establish:

(1) The maximum starting income for eligibility in the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program;

(2) The maximum total income for eligibility in the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program, including any additional sources of income;

(3) That priority for participation in the Program shall be given to an individual who:

(i) Graduated from an institution of higher education in the last 3 years;

(ii) Is a resident of the State;

(iii) Is employed on a full–time basis; and

(iv) 1. Provides, as the principal part of the individual’s employment, legal services to low–income residents in the State who cannot afford legal services, nursing services in nursing shortage areas in the State as defined in § 18–802 of this title, or other services in an eligible field of employment in which there is a shortage of qualified practitioners to low–income or underserved residents or areas of the State; or

2. For teacher [and], mental health professional, **AND SCHOOL NURSE** applicants only, qualifies for a Nancy Grasmick Public School Professional Award;

(4) A limit on the total amount of assistance provided by the Office of Student Financial Assistance in repaying the loan of an eligible individual, based on the individual's total income and outstanding higher education loan balance;

(5) A procedure and schedule for the monthly or annual payment of the amount of loan assistance provided by the Office of Student Financial Assistance to the eligible individual, as appropriate to assist an eligible individual in meeting loan forgiveness program requirements;

(6) A requirement that an eligible individual apply to federal loan forgiveness programs for which the individual may qualify;

(7) A requirement that an eligible individual notify the Office of Student Financial Assistance if the individual receives other loan repayment assistance; and

(8) An annual review of the eligibility of each individual participating in the Program.

(b) The Office of Student Financial Assistance shall adopt any other regulations necessary to implement this subtitle.

18-1506.

The Office shall publicize the availability of the Program, including by publicizing the Program:

(1) At historically Black colleges and universities;

(2) In a manner that focuses on students who are historically underrepresented in the teaching field; [and]

(3) To eligible mental health professionals in an effort to recruit and retain mental health professionals to public schools in the State; **AND**

(4) TO ELIGIBLE SCHOOL NURSES IN AN EFFORT TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN NURSES WORKING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE STATE.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

Approved by the Governor, April 25, 2024.