

Chapter 388

(House Bill 643)

AN ACT concerning

Higher Education – Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Eligibility

FOR the purpose of expanding the eligibility for the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include individuals who received a certain degree from an accredited veterinary school and provided veterinary services for a certain time period or provided volunteer veterinary services at certain animal shelters and to include individuals who provided veterinary technician services for a certain time period or provided volunteer veterinary technician services at certain animal shelters; and generally relating to eligibility for the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Education
Section 18–1502
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

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

Article – Education

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

4. FOR A VETERINARY PRACTITIONER OR VETERINARY TECHNICIAN, ANY ACCREDITED VETERINARY 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;

(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; ~~for~~

(3) Nurse who has been a school nurse for at least 2 years~~;~~.

~~(4) VETERINARIAN PRACTITIONER WHO HAS PROVIDED VETERINARY SERVICES AS:~~

~~(I) AN EMPLOYEE IN THE STATE FOR A PERIOD NOT LESS THAN 5 YEARS; OR~~

~~(II) A VOLUNTEER FOR A MINIMUM OF 100 HOURS PER YEAR FOR A PERIOD NOT LESS THAN 3 YEARS AT AN ANIMAL SHELTER THAT IS OWNED BY:~~

~~1. A LOCAL GOVERNMENT;~~

~~2. AN ORGANIZATION CONTRACTED TO PERFORM ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES FOR A LOCAL GOVERNMENT; OR~~

~~3. AN ORGANIZATION THAT SHELTERS ANIMALS AND WAS A RECIPIENT OF THE MARYLAND SPAY AND NEUTER GRANTS PROGRAM DURING THE PRIOR YEAR; OR~~

~~(5) VETERINARY TECHNICIAN WHO HAS PROVIDED VETERINARY TECHNICIAN SERVICES AS:~~

~~(I) AN EMPLOYEE IN THE STATE FOR A PERIOD NOT LESS THAN 5 YEARS; OR~~

~~(II) A VOLUNTEER FOR A MINIMUM OF 100 HOURS PER YEAR FOR A PERIOD NOT LESS THAN 3 YEARS AT AN ANIMAL SHELTER THAT IS OWNED BY:~~

~~1. A LOCAL GOVERNMENT;~~

~~2. AN ORGANIZATION CONTRACTED TO PERFORM ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES FOR A LOCAL GOVERNMENT; OR~~

~~3. AN ORGANIZATION THAT SHELTERS ANIMALS AND WAS A RECIPIENT OF THE MARYLAND SPAY AND NEUTER GRANTS PROGRAM DURING THE PRIOR YEAR.~~

(D) 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:

(1) A VETERINARIAN PRACTITIONER WHO HAS PROVIDED VETERINARY SERVICES AS:

(I) AN EMPLOYEE IN THE STATE FOR A PERIOD NOT LESS THAN 5 YEARS; OR

(II) A VOLUNTEER FOR A MINIMUM OF 100 HOURS PER YEAR FOR A PERIOD NOT LESS THAN 3 YEARS AT AN ANIMAL SHELTER THAT IS OWNED BY:

1. A LOCAL GOVERNMENT;

2. AN ORGANIZATION CONTRACTED TO PERFORM ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES FOR A LOCAL GOVERNMENT; OR

3. AN ORGANIZATION THAT SHELTERS ANIMALS AND WAS A RECIPIENT OF THE MARYLAND SPAY AND NEUTER GRANTS PROGRAM DURING THE PRIOR YEAR; OR

(2) A VETERINARY TECHNICIAN WHO HAS PROVIDED VETERINARY TECHNICIAN SERVICES AS:

(I) AN EMPLOYEE IN THE STATE FOR A PERIOD NOT LESS THAN 5 YEARS; OR

(II) A VOLUNTEER FOR A MINIMUM OF 100 HOURS PER YEAR FOR A PERIOD NOT LESS THAN 3 YEARS AT AN ANIMAL SHELTER THAT IS OWNED BY:

1. A LOCAL GOVERNMENT;

2. AN ORGANIZATION CONTRACTED TO PERFORM ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES FOR A LOCAL GOVERNMENT; OR

3. AN ORGANIZATION THAT SHELTERS ANIMALS AND WAS A RECIPIENT OF THE MARYLAND SPAY AND NEUTER GRANTS PROGRAM DURING THE PRIOR YEAR.

~~(d)~~ (E) (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)~~ **(F)** 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)~~ **(G)** 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)~~ **(H)** 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.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

Approved by the Governor, May 6, 2025.