

# WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18c-3-3

## **§18C-3-3. Health Sciences Service Program; establishment; administration; eligibility.**

(a) There is continued a special revolving fund account under the Higher Education Policy Commission in the State Treasury formerly known as the Health Sciences Scholarship Fund. The fund shall be used to accomplish the purposes of this section. The fund consists of any of the following:

- (1) All unexpended health sciences scholarship funds on deposit in the State Treasury on the effective date of this section;
- (2) Appropriations as may be provided by the Legislature;
- (3) Repayments, including interest as set by the Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences, collected from program award recipients who fail to practice or teach in West Virginia under the terms of an award agreement or the Health Sciences Scholarship Program previously established by this section; and
- (4) Amounts that may become available from other sources.

Balances remaining in the fund at the end of the fiscal year do not expire or revert to the general revenue. All costs associated with the administration of this section shall be paid from the Health Sciences Service Program Fund under the direction of the Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences.

(b) Award preference is given to West Virginia residents. An individual is eligible for consideration for a Health Sciences Service Program award if the individual:

(1) Either:

(A) Is a fourth-year medical student at the Marshall University School of Medicine, West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, or West Virginia University School of Medicine who has been accepted in a primary care or emergency medicine internship/residency program in West Virginia; or

(B) Is enrolled in an approved education program at a West Virginia institution leading to a degree or certification in the field of nurse practitioner, nurse educator, nurse midwife, physician assistant, dentist, pharmacist, physical therapist, doctoral clinical psychologist, licensed independent clinical social worker, or other disciplines identified as shortage fields by the Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences; and

(2) Signs an agreement to practice for at least two years in an underserved area of West Virginia or, if pursuing a master's degree in nursing, signs an agreement to teach at least

two years for a school of nursing located in West Virginia, as may be determined by the Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences, after receiving the master's degree.

(c) Program awards shall be in an amount set by the Higher Education Policy Commission of at least \$20,000 for medical and dental students and at least \$10,000 for all others and may be awarded by the Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences, with the advice of an advisory panel, from the pool of all applicants with a commitment to practice in an underserved area of West Virginia. This section does not grant or guarantee any applicant any right to a program award.

(d) A program award recipient who fails to practice in an underserved area of West Virginia within six months of the completion of his or her training, or who fails to complete his or her training or required teaching, is in breach of contract and is liable for repayment of the program award and any accrued interest. The granting or renewal of a license to practice in West Virginia or to reciprocal licensure in another state based upon licensure in West Virginia is contingent upon beginning payment and continuing payment until complete repayment of the award and any accrued interest. A license, renewal, or reciprocity may not be granted to any person whose repayment is in arrears. The appropriate regulatory board shall inform all other states where a recipient has reciprocated based upon West Virginia licensure of any refusal to renew licensure in West Virginia as a result of failure to repay the award. This provision shall be explained in bold type in the award contract. Repayment terms, not inconsistent with this section, shall be established by the Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences pursuant to the rule required by this section.

(e) (1) There is created a student loan repayment program to be administered by the Higher Education Policy Commission. The loan repayment program shall help repay the student loans for mental health providers who provide therapy and counseling services and who reside in West Virginia and work in an underserved area of West Virginia for up to three years beginning January 1, 2020. Individuals participating in the loan repayment program may be eligible to receive up to \$30,000 to be dispersed as follows:

(A) A participant may receive a loan repayment program award of up to \$10,000 each year in exchange for the participant completing one year of practice in an underserved area.

(B) A participant may not receive a program award for more than three years of practice.

(C) A participant must direct each award received toward the repayment of his or her educational loans.

(2) There is created a special revenue fund account under the Higher Education Policy Commission in the State Treasury known as the Mental Health Provider Student Loan Repayment Fund. The fund shall be used to accomplish the purposes of this subsection. The fund shall consist of appropriations as may be provided by the Legislature. Any moneys remaining in the fund at the close of a fiscal year shall be carried forward for use in the next fiscal year.

(f) Rule. — The Higher Education Policy Commission shall promulgate a rule pursuant to §29A-3A-1 et seq. of this code to implement and administer this section.

(g) As used in this section:

(1) "Training" means:

(A) The entire degree program or certification program for nurse midwives, nurse practitioners, nurse educators, physician assistants, dentists, pharmacists, physical therapists, doctoral clinical psychologists, licensed independent clinical social workers, and other disciplines identified as shortage fields by the Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences; or

(B) Completion of a degree program and an approved residency/internship program for students pursuing a degree in medicine or osteopathy, or as otherwise may be designated for such students in the rule required by this section.

(2) "Underserved area" means any primary care health professional shortage area located in the state as determined by the Bureau for Public Health or any additional health professional shortage area, including an emergency medicine professional determined by the Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences.