ARC 0764D

COLLEGE STUDENT AID COMMISSION[283]

Notice of Intended Action

Proposing rulemaking related to the attorney loan repayment program and providing an opportunity for public comment

The College Student Aid Commission hereby proposes to adopt a new Chapter 26, "Attorney Loan Repayment Program," Iowa Administrative Code.

Legal Authority for Rulemaking

This rulemaking is proposed under the authority provided in Iowa Code section 256.178 and 2026 Iowa Acts, House File 2770.

State or Federal Law Implemented

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, 2026 Iowa Acts, House File 2770.

Purpose and Summary

The Commission proposes to adopt new Chapter 26 pursuant to 2026 Iowa Acts, House File 2770, division III. This chapter will establish eligibility requirements, application procedures, award administration, repayment agreements, participant obligations, and program administration for the Attorney Loan Repayment Program. The program is intended to encourage attorneys to practice law in Iowa, with priority given to attorneys practicing in rural areas, through repayment assistance for qualifying student loans.

The Administrative Rules Coordinator provided preclearance for the publication of this Notice of Intended Action on October 30, 2026.

Regulatory Analysis

A Regulatory Analysis for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on September 30, 2026. A public hearing was held on the following date(s):

- October 20, 2026

The Department received one written public comment from the Iowa State Bar Association, a representative of which also attended and provided comments at the public hearing. A representative from the Office of the State Public Defender also attended, and changes from the Regulatory Analysis have been made following comments made at the public hearing.

Fiscal Impact

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa.

Jobs Impact

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

Waivers

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Commission for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 7—Chapter 2504.

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this proposed rulemaking, which must be received by the Commission no later than 4:30 p.m. on December 22, 2026. Comments should be directed to:

Katrina Holck
College Student Aid Commission
Grimes State Office Building
400 East 14th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Phone: 515.729.7449
Email: katrina.holck@iowa.gov

Public Hearing

Public hearings at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

December 16, 2026 3:30 p.m.	Room B50 Grimes State Office Building Des Moines, Iowa
December 22, 2026 3:30 p.m.	Room B50 Grimes State Office Building Des Moines, Iowa

Persons who wish to make oral comments at a public hearing may be asked to state their names for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of this proposed rulemaking.

Any persons who intend to attend a public hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the Commission and advise of specific needs.

Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its regular monthly meeting or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

The following rulemaking action is proposed:

ITEM 1. Adopt the following **new** 283—Chapter 26:

CHAPTER 26
ATTORNEY LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

283—26.1(256) Purpose. The purpose of this chapter is to implement Iowa Code section 256.232 as enacted by 2026 Iowa Acts, House File 2770, division III, establishing the attorney loan repayment program administered by the college student aid commission to recruit and retain attorneys to provide indigent defense legal services in Iowa. Nothing in the chapter shall be construed to preclude an attorney receiving loan assistance for the hours of indigent defense service from also submitting and being paid for those hours of service by the office of the state public defender from the indigent defense fund pursuant to Iowa Code section 815.11.

283—26.2(256) Definitions. For purposes of this chapter:

"Commission" means the college student aid commission.

"Eligible attorney" means an attorney who satisfies the requirements of Iowa Code section 256.232(2) and this chapter.

"Eligible loan" means the attorney's total federally guaranteed Stafford loan amount under the federal family education loan program or the federal direct loan program, the attorney's federal graduate plus loans, or the attorney's federal Perkins loan, including principal and interest. Federal direct consolidation loans comprised of eligible loan(s) are also included.

"Indigent defense services" means court-appointed legal services, including guardian ad litem services, the costs of which are payable from the indigent defense fund under Iowa Code section 815.11 and, if payable from the indigent defense fund, court-appointed representation of a respondent in proceedings under Iowa Code chapter 229.

"Law school" means a law school accredited by an accrediting authority recognized by the Iowa supreme court for purposes of determining eligibility to sit for the Iowa bar examination.

"Program" means the attorney loan repayment program established pursuant to Iowa Code section 256.232.

"Rural area" means a county or municipality that has a population of less than 26,000 and is located more than 20 miles from a city with a population of at least 50,000, based on the most recent federal decennial census.

283—26.3(256) Eligibility requirements. An applicant shall satisfy all of the following requirements to be eligible to participate in the program:

1. Be a graduate of law school within five years of the time of application to the program.
2. Be licensed to practice in Iowa.
3. Have an outstanding balance on eligible loan(s).
4. Submit a complete application and all required documentation by the deadline established by the commission.
5. Commit to practicing law in accordance with the selection priorities provided on their application, as executed through a program agreement.

283—26.4(256) Application process.

26.4(1) *Application period.* The commission shall establish annual application periods and publish application materials on the commission's website.

26.4(2) *Required documentation.* Applicants shall submit documentation required by the commission, which may include but is not limited to:

a. Proof of graduation from an accredited law school.

b. Proof of Iowa licensure and good standing.

c. Documentation of eligible loan balances.

d. Documentation of primary residence.

e. Verification of indigent defense service commitments and location(s) of practice.

f. Any additional information required by the commission to determine eligibility or priority status.

283—26.5(256) Selection priorities.

26.5(1) Subject to available funding, the commission shall prioritize applicants in accordance with Iowa Code section 256.232(4).

26.5(2) Priority shall be given in the following order:

a. Attorneys who reside and practice law in rural areas of the state and provide a minimum of 50 hours of indigent defense services annually. If necessary, preference is given to attorneys who graduated from an Iowa law school or an Iowa high school or who completed private instruction pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 299A.

b. Attorneys who practice law in rural areas of the state and provide a minimum of 100 hours of indigent defense services annually. If necessary, preference is given to attorneys who graduated from an Iowa law school or an Iowa high school or who completed private instruction pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 299A.

c. Attorneys who practice law in Iowa and provide 200 hours of indigent defense services annually. If necessary, preference is given to attorneys who graduated from an Iowa law school or an Iowa high school or who completed private instruction pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 299A.

26.5(3) In the event eligible applications exceed available funding, the commission may consider additional factors, including date of law school graduation, with preference to most recent graduates; geographic distribution of participants; and U.S. citizenship status.

283—26.6(256) Program agreements.

26.6(1) Approved applicants shall enter into a written agreement with the commission.

26.6(2) The agreement shall specify all of the following:

a. The term of participation.

b. Residency and practice location requirements.

c. Award amount and the schedule of loan repayment installments.

d. Documentation and reporting requirements.

e. Conditions constituting and consequences for breach of the program agreement.

26.6(3) An agreement shall not become effective until executed by both the participant and the commission.

283—26.7(256) Loan repayment awards.

26.7(1) New award recipients are limited to 25 in a single year, and total recipients shall not exceed 150 attorneys at any time.

26.7(2) Subject to available funding, an eligible attorney who enters into and remains in compliance with a program agreement shall receive loan repayment assistance in an amount not to exceed the lesser of $10,000 per year or the outstanding balance of the attorney's eligible loan.

26.7(3) Loan repayment assistance may be provided for each year of eligible service during a period of not more than six consecutive years.

26.7(4) In the event an attorney who receives loan repayment assistance ceases to practice law in accordance with the program agreement, the loan repayment assistance shall terminate immediately, the loan repayment assistance shall be prorated for the months the attorney complied with the agreement, and no further payment shall be made.

283—26.8(256) Participant responsibilities. Program participants shall:

1. Maintain active licensure and good standing to practice law in Iowa.
2. Complete eligible service obligations required under the program agreement.
3. Provide annual certifications and documentation required by the commission.
4. Notify the commission within 30 calendar days of any material change affecting eligibility or compliance.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 256.232.