

256.222 Health care professional incentive program — fund.

1. *Definitions.* For purposes of [this section](#), unless the context otherwise requires:

a. “Award” means either of the following:

(1) A loan repayment made on behalf of an eligible health care professional on the total amount owed, including principal and interest, by the eligible health care professional on any of the following:

(a) A federally guaranteed Stafford loan under the federal family education loan program or the federal direct loan program.

(b) A federal grad plus loan.

(c) A consolidated federally guaranteed Stafford loan under the federal family education loan program or the federal direct loan program.

(d) A consolidated federal grad plus loan.

(2) An income bonus paid to an eligible health care professional.

b. “Commission” means the college student aid commission.

c. “Department” means the department of health and human services.

d. “Eligible health care profession” means health care occupational categories that are in high demand, as determined and maintained on a list by the department, and may include but are not limited to physicians, physician assistants, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, nurse educators, and mental health professionals.

e. “Eligible health care professional” means an individual currently employed, or who will be employed, in an eligible health care profession that is located in an eligible practice area.

f. “Eligible practice area” means a geographic region or county in this state that has a shortage of health care professionals as determined by the department.

g. “Employment obligation” means the number of consecutive years an eligible health care professional must practice.

(1) If practicing full-time, which means at least two thousand eighty hours of work in a calendar year, including all paid holidays, vacations, sick time, and other paid leave, an eligible health care professional must practice for five years.

(2) If practicing part-time, which means at least one thousand five hundred sixty hours of work in a calendar year, including all paid holidays, vacations, sick time, and other paid leave, an eligible health care professional must practice for seven years.

h. “Program” means the health care professional incentive program established in [this section](#).

2. *Program established.* The health care professional incentive program is established and shall be administered by the commission, in coordination with the department, for the purpose of offering awards to recruit and retain eligible health care professionals for employment in eligible practice areas. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and each fiscal year thereafter, the commission, in coordination with the department, shall determine the number of awards available for each eligible health care profession prior to the commencement of the fiscal year.

3. *Legislative intent.* It is the intent of the general assembly that the program shall not interfere with local community investments to recruit and retain health care professionals.

4. *Exceptions.* An eligible health care professional shall be ineligible for the program if the eligible health care professional is currently participating in, or has participated in, any of the following:

a. The primary care provider loan repayment program pursuant to [section 135.107](#), Code 2025.

b. The rural Iowa primary care loan repayment program pursuant to [section 256.221](#), Code 2025.

c. The health care professional recruitment program pursuant to [section 256.223](#), Code 2025.

d. The health care award program pursuant to [section 256.224](#), Code 2025.

e. The mental health professional loan repayment program pursuant to [section 256.225](#), Code 2025.

5. *Program requirements.*

a. An eligible health care professional may submit an application for the program to the commission in the form and manner prescribed by the commission. The applicant shall elect to receive an award as either a loan repayment or an income bonus if selected for the program, and shall submit any additional information requested by the commission.

b. The commission shall give priority to an applicant fulfilling a full-time employment obligation.

c. If selected for an award, the eligible health care professional and the commission shall execute a program agreement that specifies all of the following:

(1) The date the eligible health care professional's employment obligation begins, which shall be no later than six months from the date the program agreement is executed.

(2) The date the health care professional's employment obligation terminates.

(3) Whether the award is a loan repayment or an income bonus, and the terms and conditions related to the award, including the aggregate award amount that the eligible health care professional will receive.

(4) Requirements regarding the eligible health care professional's license to practice in this state while participating in the program.

(5) All other terms and conditions agreed to by the eligible health care professional and the commission.

6. Awards.

a. Upon verifying the eligible health care professional is in compliance with all terms of the program agreement executed pursuant to [subsection 5](#), paragraph "c", the commission shall pay the eligible health care professional's award annually as follows:

(1) For a full-time employment obligation, the award shall be paid as follows:

(a) An amount equal to twenty percent of the aggregate award shall be paid to the eligible health care professional after the completion of the first year of the eligible health care professional's employment obligation.

(b) An amount equal to fifteen percent of the aggregate award shall be paid to the eligible health care professional after the completion of the second year, the third year, and the fourth year of the eligible health care professional's employment obligation.

(c) An amount equal to thirty-five percent of the aggregate award shall be paid to the eligible health care professional after the completion of the fifth year of the eligible health care professional's employment obligation.

(2) For a part-time employment obligation, the aggregate award shall be prorated by the commission.

b. A minimum of every five years, the commission, in consultation with the department, shall establish a list of eligible health care professions and the aggregate award amount for each eligible health care profession. The aggregate award amount shall not exceed two hundred thousand dollars.

c. An individual who executed a program agreement under [subsection 5](#), paragraph "c", prior to the exclusion of the individual's health care profession from the list established under paragraph "b" shall remain eligible for the program per the terms of the individual's program agreement.

7. *Health care professional incentive program fund.* A health care professional incentive program fund is created in the state treasury under the control of the commission. All moneys deposited or paid into the fund are appropriated to the commission to be used for awards as provided in [this section](#). Notwithstanding [section 8.33](#), moneys in the fund that remain unencumbered or unobligated at the close of each fiscal year shall not revert but shall remain available for expenditure. Notwithstanding [section 12C.7](#), [subsection 2](#), interest or earnings on moneys in the fund shall be credited to the fund and may be utilized by the commission for administrative costs.

8. *Rules.* The commission, in coordination with the department, shall adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) to administer [this section](#).

2025 Acts, ch 120, §11, 12

Referred to in §135.107

NEW section