

CHAPTER 25
RURAL IOWA ADVANCED REGISTERED NURSE PRACTITIONER AND
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

283—25.1(261) Rural Iowa advanced registered nurse practitioner and physician assistant loan repayment program. The rural Iowa advanced registered nurse practitioner and physician assistant loan repayment program is a state-supported and administered loan repayment program for applicants who agree to practice as advanced registered nurse practitioners or physician assistants in service commitment areas for five consecutive years and meet the requirements of these rules.
[ARC 1321C, IAB 2/19/14, effective 3/26/14; ARC 1686C, IAB 10/29/14, effective 12/3/14]

283—25.2(261) Definitions. As used in this chapter:

“Advanced registered nurse practitioner” means an individual who graduated from a graduate-level credential program at an eligible university, holds a practitioner’s license to practice as an advanced registered nurse practitioner pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 152, and is employed in the practice of nursing in an eligible service commitment area.

“Eligible loan” means the advanced registered nurse practitioner’s or physician assistant’s total subsidized, unsubsidized, and consolidated Federal Stafford Loan amount under the Federal Family Education Loan Program, Federal Direct Loan Program, federal Graduate PLUS Loan, or federal Perkins Loan, including principal and interest. Only the outstanding portion of a federal consolidation loan that was used to repay an eligible subsidized or unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan qualifies for loan repayment.

“Eligible university” means a college or university that meets the requirements of Iowa Code section 261.2, subsection 11, and is an institution of higher learning under the control of the state board of regents or an accredited private institution as defined in Iowa Code section 261.9. An eligible university must complete and return the forms to the commission to participate in the program.

“Maximum award” means the maximum amount of loan repayments that the advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant can receive after completing all obligations under the rural Iowa advanced registered nurse practitioner and physician assistant loan repayment program, not to exceed a total of \$20,000. The maximum award can be applied only to eligible loans; thus, payments cannot exceed the outstanding eligible loan balance at the time of payment.

“Physician assistant” means an individual who graduated with a master’s degree in a physician assistant studies program at an eligible university, holds a practitioner’s license to practice as a physician assistant pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 148C, and is employed as a physician assistant in an eligible service commitment area.

“Service commitment area” means a medically underserved Iowa city with a population of less than 26,000 that is located more than 20 miles from a city with a population of 50,000 or more. Each applicant participating in the program must contract with the service commitment area to ensure the service commitment area provides a nonrefundable \$2,000 contribution for deposit in the rural Iowa advanced registered nurse practitioner and physician assistant trust fund. Payment of the nonrefundable contribution to the trust fund can be made by, but is not limited to, the following organizations: community agencies, hospitals, medical groups, municipalities, community foundations, local government entities, or other community entities. Locations and distances between cities will be consistently measured and verified by calculating the straight-line distance between main post offices.

“Surplus funds” means funding available after the maximum award has been obligated to all recommended applicants in accordance with rule 283—25.3(261).

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283—25.3(261) Eligibility requirements.

25.3(1) The commission will annually determine and communicate the number of physician assistant and advanced registered nurse practitioner recommendations that can be funded at each eligible university. The intent of this determination will be to ensure that an equal number of students in each program at eligible universities are able to enter into an agreement. Priority will be given to applicants

who are Iowa residents upon enrolling in the eligible university. The criteria used by the state board of regents to determine residency for tuition purposes, Iowa Administrative Code rule 681—1.4(262), are adopted for this program. If fewer than the maximum number of physician assistants or advanced registered nurse practitioners are recommended at an eligible university, the commission may obtain additional recommendations from the other eligible universities to award the remaining agreements.

25.3(2) An applicant must enter into an agreement with the commission during the applicant's final year of study leading to eligibility for licensure as an advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant.

25.3(3) An applicant must be enrolled on a full-time basis and graduate from an eligible university with a graduate-level credential that qualifies the applicant to work as a physician assistant or advanced registered nurse practitioner. The commission may waive the full-time enrollment requirement for a temporary time frame only in the instance of a leave of absence approved by an eligible university. The applicant must request a waiver from the commission in writing.

25.3(4) Within nine months of graduating from an eligible university, an applicant must receive a permanent license to practice nursing or to work as a physician assistant in the state of Iowa and engage in full-time practice, as defined by the service commitment area, as an advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant for a period of five consecutive years in a service commitment area.

25.3(5) An applicant must annually complete and return to the commission an affidavit of completion of the employment obligation in a service commitment area.

25.3(6) Prior to or upon engagement in full-time employment in a service commitment area, the advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant must contract with the service commitment area to provide a nonrefundable \$2,000 contribution for deposit in the rural Iowa advanced registered nurse practitioner and physician assistant trust fund. Payment must be received by the commission from the service commitment area prior to payment of any loan repayment awards to the advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant.

25.3(7) Failure by the applicant to meet all eligibility requirements under these rules and in the agreement will result in forfeiture of all remaining unpaid payments.

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283—25.4(261) Awarding of funds.

25.4(1) Prior to accepting an offer of employment, the advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant must notify the commission of the service commitment area in which the advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant will be employed, and the commission will verify the eligibility of the service commitment area.

25.4(2) The maximum award will be paid to the advanced registered nurse practitioner's or physician assistant's eligible loan lender in five equal installments, upon successful completion of each of the five 12-month employment obligations. Failure to complete all, or any portion, of the five-consecutive-year employment obligation will result in the forfeiture of all remaining unpaid payments. An advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant who fails to meet the requirements of these rules may also be subject to repayment of moneys advanced by the service commitment area as provided in any contract between the advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant and the service commitment area.

25.4(3) No loan repayment amounts will be paid until the service commitment area provides the nonrefundable \$2,000 contribution for deposit into the rural Iowa advanced registered nurse practitioner and physician assistant trust fund.

25.4(4) If surplus funds are available, the commission will accept applications from physician assistants and advanced registered nurse practitioners practicing full-time in service commitment areas. Recipient selections shall be evenly divided between physician assistants and advanced registered nurse practitioners, to the extent possible. If surplus funds are not sufficient to fund all applicants, physician assistant and advanced registered nurse practitioner applicants will be prioritized by Iowa residency status, full-time employment status, individuals working in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) or a Governor's Designated Rural Health Clinic county, total eligible student

loan debt (highest receiving priority), and application date (earliest submitted receiving priority). Recipients will enter into agreements with the commission, and payments will be made in accordance with subrules 25.4(2) and 25.4(3).

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283—25.5(261) Waivers.

25.5(1) *Service commitment area.* The commission may waive the requirement that the advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant practice in the same service commitment area for five years. The advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant must request a waiver from the commission in writing.

25.5(2) *Full-time employment.* The commission may waive the requirement that the advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant be employed full-time if the advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant demonstrates exceptional circumstances. The advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant must request a waiver from the commission in writing. If a waiver request is granted by the commission, the agreement will be amended to provide an allowance for part-time employment. The five-year employment obligation will be proportionally extended to ensure the advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant is employed in a service commitment area for the equivalent of five full-time years.

25.5(3) *Postponement of advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant employment.* The advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant obligation to engage in practice in accordance with 25.3(4) may be postponed for no more than two years from the time full-time practice was to commence. The advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant must request a waiver from the commission in writing for one of the following purposes:

- a. Active duty service in the armed forces, the armed forces military reserve, or the national guard.
- b. Service in Volunteers in Service to America or the federal Peace Corps.
- c. A service commitment to the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps.
- d. A period of religious missionary work conducted by an organization exempt from federal income taxation pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant obligation to engage in practice in accordance with 25.3(4) may be postponed for a period exceeding two years for any period of temporary medical incapacity, including leave approved under the Family and Medical Leave Act, during which the advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant is unable to engage in full-time practice. The advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant must request a waiver from the commission in writing.

25.5(4) *Satisfaction of advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant employment.* All obligations under the rural Iowa advanced registered nurse practitioner and physician assistant loan repayment program are considered to be satisfied when any of the following conditions are met:

- a. All terms of the agreement are met.
- b. The person who entered into the agreement dies.
- c. The person who entered into the agreement, due to permanent disability, is unable to meet the requirements of these rules.
- d. The person who entered into the agreement has no remaining eligible loan balance to repay.

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283—25.6(261) Loan repayment cancellation.

25.6(1) Within 30 days following withdrawal from an eligible university, or termination of employment from a residency program or as an advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant in a service commitment area, the applicant must notify the commission.

25.6(2) The applicant is responsible for notifying the commission immediately of a change in contact information including, but not limited to, name, telephone number, e-mail address, and place of employment.

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283—25.7(261) Restrictions. An advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant who is in default on a Federal Stafford Loan, Grad PLUS Loan, SLS Loan, Perkins/National Direct/National Defense Student Loan, Health Professions Student Loan (HPSL), or Health Education Assistance Loan (HEAL) or who owes a repayment on any Title IV grant assistance or state award shall be ineligible for loan repayment. Eligibility may be reinstated upon payment in full of the delinquent obligation or by commission ruling on the basis of adequate extenuating evidence presented in appeal under the procedures set forth in 283—Chapters 4 and 5.

[ARC 1321C, IAB 2/19/14, effective 3/26/14]

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 261.114 as amended by 2014 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2347.

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