

TITLE 39  
HEALTH AND SAFETY

CHAPTER 25

RURAL NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM [EFFECTIVE UNTIL JUNE 30, 2029]

39-2501. RURAL NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM. [EFFECTIVE UNTIL JUNE 30, 2029] A rural and underserved nursing incentive program as set forth in this chapter shall be administered by the department of health and welfare. The program shall provide for the payment of nursing education loans for eligible nurses practicing in rural and underserved areas of the state subject to the requirements of this chapter. The department of health and welfare may promulgate rules to implement the provisions of this chapter.

[39-2501, added 2023, ch. 60, sec. 1, p. 218.]

39-2502. DEFINITIONS. [EFFECTIVE UNTIL JUNE 30, 2029] As used in this chapter:

(1) "Applicant" means an individual submitting documents required by the department of health and welfare for the purpose of requesting a grant from the rural nursing loan repayment program.

(2) "Application period" means the time period from October 1 to November 30 of the state fiscal year for which funding is requested.

(3) "Approval" means written notification that the application will be awarded funding through the rural nursing loan repayment program.

(4) "Board" means the rural nursing loan repayment grant review board.

(5) "Department" means the department of health and welfare.

(6) "Director" means the director of the department.

(7) "Eligible area" means:

(a) A rural area also designated by the United States secretary of health and human services as a health professional shortage area;

(b) A county without a population center of twenty thousand (20,000) or more persons; or

(c) All certified Idaho critical access hospitals.

(8) "Eligible employer" means:

(a) Critical access hospitals, federally qualified health centers, rural health clinics, long-term care facilities, public health districts, state hospitals, licensed home health agencies, licensed hospice agencies, rural health care clinics, tribal clinics, veterans health administration hospitals, veterans health administration clinics, veterans health administration long-term care homes, or Indian health service clinics; or

(b) Any other employer located in a rural area that employs nurses for purposes of providing nursing services to patients, as determine by the board.

(9) "Grant period" means the time immediately following the application period from December 1 through June 30 for which funding is granted.

(10) "Nurse" means a licensed practical nurse or a registered nurse pursuant to [chapter 14, title 54](#), Idaho Code.

(11) "Qualified nursing education debt" means a debt with a financial aid program or financial institution incurred to meet the educational costs of attending an accredited nursing school.

(12) "Recipient" means an individual who receives a grant pursuant to this chapter.

(13) "Rural nurse" means a licensed nurse who spends a minimum of thirty-two (32) hours per week, on average, providing nursing care to patients in an eligible area.

(14) "Rural nursing loan repayment fund" or "fund" means the fund in the state treasury established in section [39-2503](#), Idaho Code.

(15) "Rural nursing loan repayment grant" or "grant" means a grant awarded pursuant to this chapter.

(16) "Rural nursing loan repayment program" or "program" means the rural nursing loan repayment program established by this chapter.

[39-2502, added 2023, ch. 60, sec. 1, p. 218.]

39-2503. RURAL NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT FUND. [EFFECTIVE UNTIL JUNE 30, 2029] There is hereby established in the state treasury a rural nursing loan repayment fund to be administered by the department. Moneys in the fund shall:

- (1) Be subject to appropriation by the legislature to pay for:
  - (a) The educational debts of nurses in rural and underserved areas of the state that demonstrate a need for assistance in nursing recruitment and retention; and
  - (b) The expenses of administering the rural nursing loan repayment program, which expenses shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the annual appropriation by the legislature; and
- (2) Consist of:
  - (a) Legislative appropriations;
  - (b) Health care industry contributions, private donations, and federal funds as available; and
  - (c) Interest earned on idle moneys in the fund.

[39-2503, added 2023, ch. 60, sec. 1, p. 219.]

39-2504. REVIEW BOARD. [EFFECTIVE UNTIL JUNE 30, 2029] (1) The director shall appoint eight (8) members of a board to be known as the rural nursing loan repayment grant review board. Members of the board:

- (a) Shall serve at the pleasure of the director; and
  - (b) Shall not be compensated but shall be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred for attendance at board meetings.
- (2) The board shall meet at least annually for the purposes described in this chapter.
- (3) The board shall be composed of the following:
- (a) A rural hospital chief nursing officer or administrator;
  - (b) A rural long-term care chief nursing officer or administrator;
  - (c) A faculty member from an Idaho-accredited registered nursing school;
  - (d) A faculty member from an Idaho-licensed practical nursing school;
  - (e) A federally qualified health center or rural health clinic representative;
  - (f) A representative from the American nurses association-Idaho or the nurse leaders of Idaho association;
  - (g) An Idaho hospital association representative; and
  - (h) An Idaho health care association representative.
- (4) Appointments to the board shall be for three (3) years, except for initial appointments to the board, which shall be staggered in such a manner that approximately one-third (1/3) of the board members are appointed for

one (1) year, one-third (1/3) of the board members are appointed for two (2) years, and one-third (1/3) of the board members are appointed for three (3) years. Board members may be reappointed at the end of their terms.

(5) A majority of the board members constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business. A majority vote is required by the quorum in finalizing decisions.

[39-2504, added 2023, ch. 60, sec. 1, p. 219.]

39-2505. SCOPE OF RURAL NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT GRANT SUPPORT. [EFFECTIVE UNTIL JUNE 30, 2029] (1) The board may award grants in accordance with the procedures and criteria in this chapter to nurses for qualified education debt repayments and for nursing education loan repayments.

(2) Rural nursing loan repayment grant awards.

(a) Grant award recipients will be determined annually by the board.

(b) Subject to available funding, the board may offer awards to up to fifty (50) qualified applicants per year.

(c) A nurse selected to receive a rural nursing loan repayment grant award shall be entitled to receive qualified nursing education debt repayments for a period not to exceed three (3) years.

(d) Award amounts shall consist of:

(i) Five thousand dollars (\$5,000) after the verified completion of one (1) year of continuous employment by eligible employers in an eligible area;

(ii) Ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) after the verified completion of two (2) years of continuous employment by eligible employers in an eligible area; and

(iii) Ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) after the verified completion of three (3) years of continuous employment by eligible employers in an eligible area.

(e) The award shall not exceed the qualified nursing education debt incurred by the recipient, and the maximum amount of education debt repayments that a rural nurse may receive shall be twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) over a three (3) year period.

(f) All nursing grant awards shall be paid directly from the rural nursing loan repayment fund to the recipient of the award.

(g) In determining the awards to be made in any given year, the board and the department shall consider the value of retaining an appropriate balance in the fund for use in future years.

(h) An award payment to a recipient in a single year is not guaranteed or assured in subsequent years.

(3) Grant awards are limited to qualified education debt repayments and nursing loan repayments for nurses providing nursing care in eligible areas.

(4) Nothing in this chapter may be construed to require the provision of awards without an appropriation for that purpose.

[39-2505, added 2023, ch. 60, sec. 1, p. 219.]

39-2506. ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANTS. [EFFECTIVE UNTIL JUNE 30, 2029] (1) A nurse who meets the following requirements is eligible to apply for a rural nursing loan repayment grant award:

(a) During the period covered by the award, the nurse must be a rural nurse providing nursing care in an eligible area. A nurse may provide

patient care services in nursing care in more than one (1) eligible area;

(b) The nurse must be licensed as a licensed practical nurse or a registered nurse and must have completed an accredited nursing program; and

(c) The nurse must hold an unrestricted Idaho nursing license and must be able to meet the nursing requirements of the eligible employer.

(2) Nurses receiving or having received other nursing educational loan repayment through programs such as the rural health care access program and the state loan repayment program are not eligible for this program.

(3) Advanced practice registered nurses are not eligible for this program.

[39-2506, added 2023, ch. 60, sec. 1, p. 220.]

39-2507. RURAL NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS REQUIRED. [EFFECTIVE UNTIL JUNE 30, 2029] (1) A completed grant application must be submitted by the applicant to the department for the purpose of requesting a grant on or before the conclusion of the application period specified for the appropriate grant cycle. All applications must include the required information.

(2) The grant application and any attachments submitted by the applicant shall be the primary source of information for awarding a grant. Additionally, the board may request or use other information known to it in making its decision.

(3) All grant applications shall:

(a) Be on a form prescribed by the department; and

(b) Include a letter of support from an eligible employer along with supporting documentation.

[39-2507, added 2023, ch. 60, sec. 1, p. 220.]

39-2508. RURAL NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT GRANT AWARD SCHEDULE. [EFFECTIVE UNTIL JUNE 30, 2029] (1) The board shall conduct the grant process in accordance with the schedule provided in this section.

(2) The department will make available a list of areas eligible for potential grant assistance no later than August 1 prior to the application period.

(3) The department shall develop an application form and make guidance available no later than October 1, which shall initiate the application period prior to the grant period.

(4) The completed application shall be submitted to the department no later than November 30 of the application period.

(5) Applications will be reviewed by the board, and the board will select award recipients from qualified applicants.

(6) The board shall issue notification to every applicant regarding the disposition of their grant request by February 15 prior to the grant period.

(7) Funds for approved rural nursing loan repayment grants shall be disbursed upon verified completion of employment by eligible employers after one (1) year, two (2) years, or three (3) years of continuous employment, according to the payment schedule, that meets grant criteria.

[39-2508, added 2023, ch. 60, sec. 1, p. 221.]

39-2509. RURAL NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT AWARD CRITERIA. [EFFECTIVE UNTIL JUNE 30, 2029] (1) Grant awards shall be made by the board based on ranking and priority in accordance with the following criteria:

(a) Priority shall be given to licensed practical nurses and registered nurses who are Idaho residents and graduated from an accredited nursing program in Idaho; and

(b) Award priority shall be given to nurses working in an eligible area with a demonstrated nursing shortage.

(2) In reviewing and weighing the criteria listed in subsection (1) of this section, the board shall consider all relevant factors.

(3) If a nurse selected for an award of debt payments does not accept the award, then the award shall be made to an eligible nurse who has not yet been awarded a grant and who best satisfies the criteria provided in subsection (1) of this section.

[39-2509, added 2023, ch. 60, sec. 1, p. 221.]

39-2510. FRAUDULENT INFORMATION ON GRANT APPLICATION. [EFFECTIVE UNTIL JUNE 30, 2029] Providing false information on any application or document submitted under this chapter is a misdemeanor and grounds for declaring the applicant ineligible. Any and all funds determined to have been acquired on the basis of fraudulent information must be returned to the rural nursing loan repayment grant program. This section shall not limit other remedies that may be available for the filing of false or fraudulent applications.

[39-2510, added 2023, ch. 60, sec. 1, p. 221.]

39-2511. DEPARTMENT AUTHORITY. [EFFECTIVE UNTIL JUNE 30, 2029] The state department of health and welfare is authorized to take all actions necessary to implement and enforce the provisions of this chapter, including the promulgation of rules.

[39-2511, added 2023, ch. 60, sec. 1, p. 221.]

39-2512. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS. [EFFECTIVE UNTIL JUNE 30, 2029] Applicants aggrieved by the award or failure to award a grant pursuant to this chapter shall be afforded the remedies provided in [chapter 52, title 67](#), Idaho Code.

[39-2512, added 2023, ch. 60, sec. 1, p. 221.]

39-2513. SUNSET DATE. [EFFECTIVE UNTIL JUNE 30, 2029] The provisions of this chapter shall be null, void, and of no force and effect on and after June 30, 2029.

[39-2513, added 2023, ch. 60, sec. 1, p. 221.]