

# Behavioral Health Workforce Initiative Loan Repayment Program

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### Who can apply:

#### **Do you have a list of qualifying approved agencies/work locations for my area? What is the process for becoming an approved site?**

Approved Site Locations are no longer a requirement of the program; any qualifying behavioral health professional meeting the eligibility criteria can apply for loan repayment.

#### **I'm currently in school for my undergraduate/graduate education. Can I apply?**

The program is only to repay loans related to **completed** degree programs. Applicants must be employed full or part-time in a qualifying behavioral health position serving Oregon's underserved populations in a direct service manner. Unpaid internships and volunteering do not count as employment under this program.

#### **I work as an administrator/HR rep./etc. at a Community Mental Health Clinic. Can I apply?**

The program is for behavioral health professionals who provide the following direct patient services to Oregon's underserved community, either in-person or via telehealth:

- Direct patient care,
- Case management,
- Care coordination,
- Charting,
- Clinical supervision duties related to behavioral health, or
- A combination of these services.

Other administrative tasks do not qualify as behavioral health care services.

#### **I am a provider with a private practice. Can I apply?**

Yes, as long as you meet all eligibility criteria as listed on our website.

#### **I applied when the program was under the Office of Rural Health. Am I eligible to apply? Can you use my past application?**

You are still eligible if you applied in the past and were not awarded; however, you will need to re-apply with our online application form.

#### **Do I have to be a U.S. citizen to qualify for the Loan Repayment program?**

No. To be considered eligible, you must only be gainfully employed in the behavioral health field. Your employer may have policies related to citizenship status, but the program application does not ask for this information.

## **Can clinical managers apply for loan repayment if they are not providing direct patient care?**

Yes, if they provide any combination of these other services to underserved communities:

- Patient charting
- Clinical supervision
- Case management
- Care coordination

## **Qualifying loans:**

### **What student loans are considered qualifying student loans?**

Qualifying student loans are one or more government or commercial loans received solely to cover the cost of completed associates, undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral educational programs.

This does not include:

- Credit card loans, lines of credit, or personal loans.
- Any loans for education or training programs that an individual has not yet completed.

### **I am currently going to school. Will those student loans be considered?**

The program will not consider loans for education or training programs that are not yet completed.

## **Award terms and service obligations:**

### **I work two part-time positions at different locations providing services. Am I eligible for a full-time award?**

Yes, if the total hours at both locations equate to full-time, you could be considered for a full-time award; however, you are not guaranteed to be offered a full-time award.

### **What are the requirements within the two-year commitment?**

Chosen awardees must provide a certain amount of direct patient care per week dependent on receiving the full- or part-time award, work 45 weeks out of 52 weeks per calendar year, and provide quarterly verifications of employment and caseload hours.

### **Can I use my previous two years of work experience to count as my two-year service obligation?**

No. You will have to sign a two-year service obligation to receive an award.

### **I am a school counselor and I have summers off. How will that affect my service obligation?**

As long as summer school is a part of the school's fixed schedule for their students, this time off will not affect your service obligation.

### **Are there requirements that awardees provide a certain number of direct care client hours? What is that number if so?**

There are no set required direct care client hours needed to be awarded. Eligible behavioral health care workers must perform full-time or part-time work duties in one or more of the following categories:

- Direct patient care
- Patient charting

- Clinical supervision
- Case management
- Care coordination

**If I get awarded and I am promoted to a clinical manager position where I am not providing direct care services, do I lose my eligibility or my award?**

No, you will continue to receive your award as long as you still work in behavioral health providing any of the listed duties below:

- Direct patient care
- Patient charting
- Clinical supervision
- Case management
- Care coordination

**Is the award paid out in one lump sum?**

No, awards will be divided into quarterly payments. You will receive payment after completing each quarter of service worked.

**If I am awarded and have to take time off from work (sick, personal, vacation), how does that affect my service obligation?**

Awardees are allotted seven weeks of time off per service obligation year without any changes to your service obligation.

**What if I have to take more than 7 weeks of work off per service obligation year?**

Upon request, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) may temporarily suspend your service obligation during appropriate circumstances such as, but not limited to, parental leave, medical leave, military service leave or other factors beyond a provider's control.

If OHA approves your request for temporary suspension, OHA will also suspend award disbursements until you can go back to work. Once you return to work, OHA will reinstate your service obligation and award disbursements.

## **Troubleshooting:**

**I'm having issues submitting my application.**

We recommend filling out the application from a desktop computer using the Microsoft Edge browser. Also make sure to complete all Required Fields.