

2019 MINNESOTA LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM INFORMATION NOTICE (PIN)

Program eligibility requirements and benefits are established by Minnesota statute, [144.1501](#).

Loan Forgiveness for Health Care Professionals Practicing in Rural and Urban Health Professional Shortage Areas in Minnesota

Program Purpose

The purpose of Minnesota's Loan Forgiveness program is to recruit and retain health care professionals to needed areas and facilities in Minnesota. Loan Forgiveness is an important benefit for health care professionals as well as health care facilities and communities experiencing a shortage of access to primary care services.

Program Administration

The Office of Rural Health and Primary Care (ORHPC), Minnesota Department of Health, administers this program. It is funded by the State of Minnesota. Program eligibility requirements and benefits are established by Minnesota statute, 144.1501, authorizing the health professional loan forgiveness program.

Eligible Clinicians/Professions

Eligibility includes the following health professionals who have or will have a current **permanent and unrestricted** license to practice **independently and unsupervised** in the state of Minnesota, *or as specified below*:

MDs/DOs	Primary Care Doctors of Allopathic or Osteopathic Medicine (Family Practice, Internal Medicine, OB/GYN, Pediatrics or Psychiatry)
DDs	General Practice Dentists (D.D.S. or D.M.D.)
DT/ADTs	Licensed Dental Therapists/Advanced Dental Therapists <i>working under a collaborative agreement with a licensed dentist</i>
PHARMS	Pharmacists
NPs	Primary Care Certified Nurse Practitioners
CNMs	Certified Nurse-Midwives
PAs	Primary Care Physician Assistants
CRNAs	Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists
ACNSs	Advanced Clinical Nurse Specialists
PHNs	Public Health Nurses

LPN/RNs	Licensed Practical Nurses/Registered Nurses (working in nursing homes/ICFs/home care provider, housing with services establishment)
FACs	Nursing Educators/Allied Healthcare Educators <i>who are teaching in a post-secondary institution</i>
LCPs	Licensed Clinical or Counseling Psychologists (Ph.D. or equivalent)
LICSWs	Licensed Independent Clinical Social Workers (master's or doctoral degree in social work, LGSW not eligible)
PNSs	Psychiatric Nurse Specialists/Nurse Practitioners
LPCCs	Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors (master's or doctoral degree with a major study in counseling, licensed to practice independently and unsupervised)
LMFTs	Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (master's or doctoral degree with a major study in marriage and family therapy, LAMFT not eligible)

Program Limitations

Applicants to the Nurse Loan Forgiveness program are not eligible to apply if they have received any loan forgiveness funding from the Nursing Facility Employee Scholarship Program administered by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, as defined in [Minnesota Statute 256B.431](#), Subdivision 36.

Applicants to the Urban or Rural Mental Health Professional Loan Forgiveness program are not eligible to apply if they are participating in the Student Loan Payment Reimbursement for Behavioral Med Practitioners afforded under the State of Minnesota Commissioner's Plan per state labor negotiations.

Loan Eligibility

The Minnesota Loan Forgiveness Program provides funds for repayment of qualified educational loans. Applicants are responsible for securing their own educational loans. Credit card or loans from family members do not qualify. *Parent PLUS loans do not qualify as they cannot be transferred to the student.* Qualified loans include government, commercial, and foundation loans for actual costs paid for tuition, reasonable education and living expenses related to the graduate or undergraduate education of a health care professional.

Service Obligation

- A. For all health professionals, except as noted in (B) and (C) below:
1. Participants are required to practice full time, or at least 30 hours per week, for at least 45 weeks per year, for *a minimum of three years*, a maximum of four years.
 2. For Public Health Nurses, Dental Therapists/Advanced Dental Therapists, Midlevel Practitioners, Pharmacists, and Rural Physicians, you must work in in a **designated rural area**. A **designated rural area** is defined by Minnesota statute 144.1501 as a statutory and home rule charter city or township that is (1) outside the seven-

county metropolitan area, as defined in section 473.121, subdivision 2 excluding the cities of Duluth, Mankato, Moorhead, Rochester and St. Cloud.

3. For Urban Physicians and Mental Health Professionals, you must work in **an underserved urban community**. An underserved urban community in Minneapolis or St. Paul is defined by Minnesota statute 144.1501 as a [health professional shortage area \(HPSA\)](#), [medically underserved area \(MUA\)](#), or with [medically underserved populations \(MUP\)](#). Use the website from the federal [Health Resources and Services Administration \(HRSA\)](#) to verify that a clinic or facility is in one of these designations. **If your work site address does not fall in one of these designations, you are not eligible to participate in the Urban Physician or Mental Health Professional loan forgiveness program. For Urban Mental Health Professionals and Urban Psychiatrists only, other eligible cities include Duluth, Mankato, Moorhead and St. Cloud.**
 4. For Dentists, you are required to provide at least 25 percent of your annual patient encounters to state public program enrollees or patients receiving a sliding fee schedule in Minnesota.
- B. For Nurses who agree to practice in a Minnesota nursing home; an intermediate care facility for the developmentally disabled; a hospital if the hospital owns/operates a Minnesota nursing home where a minimum of 50 percent of the hours worked is in a nursing home; *a housing with services establishment as defined in section 144D.01, subdivision 4; or for a home care provider as defined in section 144A.43, subdivision 4*, you are required to practice full time, or at least 30 hours per week, for at least 45 weeks per year, for a **minimum of two years**, with the option to extend your contract an additional two years.
- C. For Nurse Faculty and Allied Health Care Faculty, you are required to teach at least twelve credit hours, or 720 hours per year (including prep time) in the nursing field/allied health care field in a postsecondary program in Minnesota.

Funding

Dentist	\$30,000/year
Rural Dental Therapist/Advanced Dental Therapist	\$10,000/year
Urban and Rural Physicians	\$25,000/year
Rural Pharmacists	\$20,000/year
Rural Midlevel Practitioners	\$12,000/year
Nurse Faculty/Allied Health Care Faculty	\$9,000/year
Nurses in Nursing Homes/Assisted Living/Home Care Providers	\$5,000/year
Rural Public Health Nurses	\$5,000/year
Urban and Rural Mental Health Professionals	\$12,000/year (Psychologists and Psychiatric NPs) \$7,000/year (LICSW, LMFT, LPCC)

Selection

This is a competitive selection process. Selections are made based on suitability for practice as indicated by personal and professional experience and training noted on an application, as well as preference given to those closest to completing their training. *MDH also gives preference to applicants that can demonstrate cultural competencies.* The number of applicants ORHPC may select for participation varies annually and is contingent upon the vacancy rate for each profession, and upon available state funding.

Annual Reporting

Annually, ORHPC requires participants to verify their continued employment and submit documentation that they have applied the loan forgiveness funds to their designated educational loan(s). This information will be verified prior to each annual disbursement. It is at the discretion of the participant to pay their loan servicer(s) with an annual lump sum payment, or make monthly payments that total the annual disbursement from ORHPC.

Income Tax Reporting

Loan forgiveness payments made to participants under the loan forgiveness program are considered exempt from federal and state income taxes. The State of Minnesota will not issue a 1099 form.

Temporary Suspension of Service

Service obligations may be suspended as a result of an illness, disability or temporary job transfer lasting less than a total of 12 months during a three- or four-year commitment. All requests for temporary suspension of service must be in writing in advance (if known) and substantiated by documentation deemed acceptable and approved by the state on a case-by-case basis. The agreement end date will be extended by the amount of time a participant is in suspension status. Suspensions cannot exceed 12 months.

Penalty for Non-fulfillment

If a participant does not fulfill the minimum obligation of the program, i.e., the required minimum years of practice in an underserved community, a nursing facility, or an educational program in Minnesota, or if the participant cannot verify that program funds were spent towards approved student loans, the participant will be required to repay the total amount received plus interest, at a rate established according to Minnesota Statutes 270C.40.

In the event a recipient accepts funding from the Nursing Facility Employee Scholarship Program administered by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, as defined in [Minnesota Statute 256B.431](#), Subdivision 36, during participation with the MDH Nurse Loan Forgiveness Program, MDH will place the recipient in default, and the recipient will be required to pay back all funds received from the Nurse Loan Forgiveness program plus interest.