

STATE OF NEW YORK

3915

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 1, 2021

Introduced by Sens. KENNEDY, KAMINSKY -- read twice and ordered printed,
and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing the New
York state volunteer first responder loan forgiveness incentive
program

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assem-
bly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new section 679-k
2 to read as follows:

3 § 679-k. New York state volunteer first responder loan forgiveness
4 incentive program. 1. Purpose. The president shall grant student loan
5 forgiveness awards for the purpose of attracting and retaining volunteer
6 ambulance workers, as defined in section three of the volunteer ambu-
7 lance workers' benefit law, and volunteer firefighters, as defined in
8 section three of the volunteer firefighters' benefit law. Such awards
9 shall be made on a competitive basis, in accordance with rules and regu-
10 lations promulgated by the corporation for such purposes, to applicants
11 who meet the eligibility criteria.

12 2. Eligibility. To be eligible for an award pursuant to this section,
13 applicants shall:

14 a. have outstanding student loan debt;

15 b. agree to work in a voluntary fire or ambulatory department in New
16 York state for a period of no less than five years;

17 c. apply for this program within five years of college graduation; and

18 d. comply with subdivision five of section six hundred sixty-one of
19 this part.

20 3. Awards. Awards shall be granted to qualified applicants in the
21 amount of up to ten thousand dollars per year, per applicant, not to
22 exceed a duration of five years and not to exceed the total amount of
23 such applicant's student loan debt. The corporation shall grant such
24 awards within amounts appropriated for such purposes and based on the

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 availability of funds. No one applicant shall receive more than a total
2 of fifty thousand dollars upon the end of a five-year period.

3 4. Priority. First priority shall be given to applicants who have
4 received payment of an award pursuant to this section in a prior year
5 and remain eligible. Second priority shall be given to applicants who
6 have graduated and obtained an undergraduate or graduate degree from a
7 college or university located in New York state. Third priority shall be
8 given to applicants who are completing the second, third, fourth or
9 fifth year of service at a voluntary fire or ambulatory department in
10 New York. Fourth priority shall be given to an applicant who can demon-
11 strate economic need but did not receive an award during the first year
12 of this program's operation. If larger numbers of applicants are eligi-
13 ble pursuant to this subdivision than funds available, applicants shall
14 be chosen pursuant to rules and regulations promulgated by the corpo-
15 ration; provided, however, that each applicant chosen shall receive an
16 award of up to ten thousand dollars in each year such applicant is
17 accepted into the program.

18 5. Rules and regulations. The corporation is authorized to promulgate
19 rules and regulations, and may promulgate emergency regulations, neces-
20 sary for the implementation of the provisions of this section.

21 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.