STATE OF NEW YORK

7553

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

November 29, 2021

Introduced by Sen. BROUK -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Rules

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to the New York state masters-in-mental health incentive scholarship program

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

Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new section 669-i to read as follows:

§ 669-i. New York state masters-in-mental health incentive scholarship program. 1. Students who are matriculated in an approved master's degree in mental health program at a New York state public institution of higher education leading to a career as a mental health clinician shall be eligible for an award under this section, provided the applicant: (a) was a New York state resident for twelve continuous months prior to the beginning of the term; (b) is a United States citizen; is an eligible non-citizen; or is eligible to apply for citizenship within twelve months; (c) achieved academic excellence as an undergraduate student from a college or university located in this state with a 3.0 grade point average or higher upon completion of such undergraduate study; (d) enrolls in full-time study in an approved master's degree for mental health practitioners program at a New York state public institution of higher education or private not-for-profit college or university in this state which leads to licensure as a mental health counselor, family therapist, creative arts therapist, psychoanalyst, or applied behavioral analyst; be enrolled in such program on a full-time basis; (e) executes a service contract agreeing to be employed for four years by a non-profit organization licensed, funded or designated by the office of mental health, the office of addiction services and supports, or the office for persons with developmental disabilities; (f) be in a non-default status on a student loan made under any New York state or federal education loan program or repayment of any New York state award; (g) earn a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher each term of graduate study; and (h) complies with the applicable provisions of this article and all

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

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requirements promulgated by the corporation for the administration of the program.

2. Within amounts appropriated therefor, awards shall be granted to applicants that the corporation has certified are eligible to receive such awards. Up to five hundred awards may be granted to new recipients annually. Such awards shall be granted upon successful completion of each term, as defined by the corporation.

3. An award shall entitle the recipient to annual payments for not more than two academic years of full-time graduate study leading to certification as a mental health clinician.

4. The corporation shall grant such awards in an amount equal to the annual tuition charged to state resident students attending a graduate program full-time at the state university of New York, or actual tuition charged, whichever is less; provided, however, (a) a student who receives educational grants and/or scholarships that cover the student's full cost of attendance shall not be eligible for an award under this program; (b) for a student who receives educational grants and/or scholarships that cover less than the student's full cost of attendance, such grants and/or scholarships shall not be deemed duplicative of this program and may be held concurrently with an award under this program, provided that the combined benefits do not exceed the student's full cost of attendance; and (c) an award under this program shall be applied to tuition after the application of all other educational grants and scholarships limited to tuition and shall be reduced in an amount equal to such educational grants and/or scholarships. Upon notification of an award under this program, the institution shall defer the amount of tuition equal to the award. No award shall be final until the recipient's successful completion of a term has been certified by the institution.

5. The corporation shall convert to a student loan the full amount of the award granted pursuant to this section, plus interest, according to a schedule to be determined by the corporation if: (a) two years after the completion of the degree program and receipt of initial certification it is found that a recipient is not employed for four years by a not-for-profit organization licensed, funded or designated by the office of mental health, the office of addiction services and supports, or the office for persons with disabilities; (b) a recipient fails to complete his or her graduate degree program in mental health; (c) a recipient fails to receive or maintain his or her license in New York state for the required period; or (d) a recipient fails to respond to requests by the corporation for the status of his or her academic or professional progress. The terms and conditions of this subdivision shall be deferred for any interruption in graduate study or employment as established by the rules and regulations of the corporation. Any obligation to comply with such provisions as outlined in this section shall be cancelled upon the death of the recipient. Notwithstanding any provisions of this subdivision to the contrary, the corporation is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to provide for the waiver or suspension of any financial obligation which would involve extreme hardship.

6. The corporation is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations, and may promulgate emergency regulations, necessary for the implementation of the provisions of this section including, but not limited to, the criteria for the provision of awards on a competitive basis, and the rate of interest charged for repayment of the student loan.

§ 2. This act shall take effect immediately.