STATE OF NEW YORK

8455

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

December 29, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. PAULIN -- read once and referred to the Committee on Health

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to establishing an early intervention loan repayment program

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

Section 1. The public health law is amended by adding a new section 2560 to read as follows:

§ 2560. Early intervention loan repayment program. 1. There is hereby established within the department an early intervention loan repayment program.

2. (a) Within sixty days of the effective date of this section, the department shall develop a fund and make monies available, subject to appropriations, for purposes of loan repayment awards for early intervention providers as defined by the department, in accordance with the provisions of this section. Such funding shall be awarded regionally with fifty percent of the funds made available to providers with a principal residence within the city of New York and the remaining fifty percent made available to providers with a principal residence outside the city of New York. Such funds shall be distributed in a manner to be determined by the commissioner without a competitive bid or request for proposals.

(b) Loan repayment awards under this section shall be awarded to repay student loans for early intervention providers who work in areas determined to be underserved and who agree to serve families, in-person, in underserved areas for a period of three consecutive years. "Underserved areas" shall be located in New York state and shall include, but not be limited to medically underserved populations, medically underserved areas, health care provider shortage areas, and other areas and populations where there is a shortage of early intervention providers as determined by the commissioner.

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

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(c) Loan repayment awards made under this section shall not exceed the total qualifying outstanding student loan debt amount of the early intervention provider. Qualifying student loans under this section shall include loans for tuition and other related education expenses, made by or guaranteed by the federal or state government, or made by a lending or educational institution approved under title IV of the federal higher education act. Loan repayment awards shall only be used to repay such outstanding debt.

(d) Early intervention providers shall be eligible for loan repayment awards to be determined by the commissioner, over a three-year period and distributed as follows: thirty percent of the total award for the first year, thirty percent for the second year, and any unpaid balance of the total awards not to exceed the maximum award amount for the third year.

(e) In the event the three-year commitment as provided by paragraph (b) of this subdivision is not fulfilled, the recipient shall be responsible for repayment of amounts paid by the department, which shall be calculated in accordance with a formula set forth in subdivision (b) of section two-hundred fifty-four-o of title forty-two of the United States code, as amended, or any regulations made thereunder.

3. The commissioner may postpone, change or waive the service obligation and repayment amounts set forth in paragraphs (b) and (e) of subdivision two of this section in individual circumstances where there is compelling need or hardship.

4. Within ninety days following the effective date of this section, the department shall establish a working group consisting of members appointed from professional organizations representing early intervention providers ("the working group"). The working group, no later than September thirtieth, two thousand twenty-five shall make recommendations, to the department, on the development and implementation of a streamlined application process for the early intervention loan repayment program set forth under this section.

5. In the event there are undistributed funds available following the three-year distribution period as provided under subdivision two of this section, such funds shall be reallocated and distributed in current or subsequent distribution periods in a manner determined by the commissioner for the purpose set forth under this section.

§ 2. This act shall take effect April 1, 2024.