§ 606. County awards for professional education in nursing, medicine, dentistry, optometry or veterinary medicine. Each county of the state outside New York city is hereby authorized to establish awards in such manner as the local legislative body of such county may determine, for attendance by legal residents of this state, who meet the citizenship requirements established by article fourteen of this chapter for the professional study of nursing, medicine, dentistry, optometry or veterinary medicine, at approved nursing, medical, dental, optometry or veterinary medicine schools within the United States, conditioned upon the promise of the scholarship holder to practice nursing, medicine, dentistry, optometry or veterinary medicine in such county for such period as such body may fix, following his licensing as a nurse, physician, dentist, optometrist or veterinarian. Each such award shall entitle the recipient to such sum of money as may be fixed by such body while in attendance at approved nursing, medical, dental, optometry or veterinary medicine schools in the United States during a period of not to exceed four years of professional study and for physicians for a further period of not to exceed two years while engaged in an internship or as a resident physician in an accredited hospital in the United States. Such awards may, as an alternative to awards hereinbefore authorized, be granted by any such county to those already so licensed to practice nursing, medicine, dentistry, optometry or veterinary medicine upon the promise of such grantees to practice within the county for a period of time and upon such terms and conditions as the county may fix, provided such recipient did not receive a similar award while a student. The county shall appropriate annually such sums of money as may be necessary to defray the costs of such awards and moneys so appropriated shall be deemed appropriated for a lawful county purpose and shall be raised by the same method as moneys required for other lawful county purposes.