

R434. Health, Family Health and Preparedness, Primary Care and Rural Health.

R434-40. Utah Health Care Workforce Financial Assistance Program.

R434-40-1. Purpose.

This rule implements the Utah Health Care Workforce Financial Assistance Program Act, Chapter 46; which governs the award of grant funds to geriatric, health care, and mental health professionals to repay loans taken for educational expenses, and the award of scholarship funds to individuals seeking to become nurse educators, in exchange for serving for a specified period in an underserved area of the state.

R434-40-2. Authority.

This rule is required by Subsections 26-46-102(3) and 26-46-103(6)(a), and is promulgated under the authority of Section 26-1-5.

R434-40-3. Definitions.

The definitions as they appear in Section 26-46-101 apply. In addition:

(1) "Applicant" means an individual who submits a completed application and meets the application requirements established by the Department for a loan repayment or scholarship grant under the act.

(2) "Approved site" means a site approved by the Department that meets the eligibility criteria established in this rule and that is:

(a) within an underserved area where health care is provided and the majority of patients served are medically underserved due to lack of health care insurance, unwillingness of existing geriatric professional and health care professionals to accept patients covered by government health programs, or other economic, cultural, or language barriers to health care access; or

(b) that is a Utah nursing school or training institution that provides a nursing education course of study to prepare persons for the practice of nursing under Title 58, Chapter 31b, Nurse Practice Act, or under Title 58, Chapter 44a, Nurse Midwife Practice Act; has a shortage of nurse educator faculty; and meets the criteria established by the Department.

(3) "Clinical-related administrative, management or other activities" means charting, administrative care coordination activities, training, laboratory follow-up, patient correspondence, attending staff meetings, activities related to maintaining professional licensure and other non-treatment related activities pertaining to the participant's approved practice. Any time spent in a management role is also considered to be an administrative activity. Clinical service provided by award recipients while a student or resident observes should be counted as patient care, not teaching, as the award recipient is treating the patient.

(4) "Committee" means the Utah Health Care Workforce Advisory Committee created by Section 26-1-7.

(5) "Dentist" means an individual licensed under Title 58, Chapter 69, Dentist and Dental Hygienist Practice Act, to practice dentistry.

(6) "Department" means the Utah Department of Health and Human Services.

(7) "Educational expenses" means the cost of education in a health care profession, including books, education equipment, fees, materials, reasonable living expenses, supplies, and tuition.

(8) "Educational loan" means a commercial, government, or government-guaranteed loan taken to pay educational expenses.

(9) "Geriatric" means individuals 65 years old and older.

(10) "Geriatric professional" is further defined to mean an individual who has successfully completed one or more of the following:

a. graduate level certification in gerontology from a nationally accredited certifying organization or transcribed program of an accredited academic institution;

b. graduate degree in gerontology; or

c. additional training focused on the geriatric or gerontological aspects of the professional's discipline. Additional training may include internship, practicum, preceptorship, residency, or fellowship.

(11) "Grant" means a grant of funds under a grant agreement.

(12) "Loan repayment" means a grant of funds under a grant to defray educational loans in exchange for service for a specified period at an approved site.

(13) "Mental health professional" means:

(a) a mental health therapist, as defined in Subsection 58-60-102(5); or

(b) an individual practicing within the scope of practice described in Title 58, Chapter 60, Part 5, Substance Use Disorder Counselor Act..

(14) "Nurse" means an individual licensed to practice nursing in the state under Title 58, Chapter 31b, Nurse Practice Act, or under Title 58, Chapter 44a, Nurse Midwife Practice Act.

(15) "Nurse educator" means a nurse employed by a Utah school of nursing providing nursing education to individuals leading to licensure or certification as a nurse.

(16) "Occupational Therapist" means an individual licensed to practice in the state under Title 58, Chapter 42a, Occupational Therapy Practice Act.

(17) "Pharmacist" means an individual licensed to practice in the state under Title 58, Chapter 17b, Pharmacy Practice Act.

(18) "Physical Therapist" means an individual licensed to practice in the state under Title 58, Chapter 24b, Physical Therapy Practice Act.

(19) "Physician" means an individual licensed to practice in the state under Title 58, Chapter 67, Utah Medical Practice Act, or Title 58, Chapter 68, Utah Osteopathic Medical Practice Act.

(20) "Physician assistant" means an individual licensed to practice in the state under Title 58, Chapter 70a, Physician Assistant Practice Act.

(21) "Postgraduate training" means internship, practicum, preceptorship, or residency training required for licensure of a geriatric, health care, or a mental health professional, and as required by this rule.

(22) "Publicly funded" means any behavioral health facility that is either administered or run by a state, local or municipal government agency, contracted with a government agency to provide services on behalf of the government agency, or receives a substantial amount of state or federal funding, either state or federal.

(23) "Recipient" means an applicant selected to receive a loan repayment or scholarship grant under the act.

(24) "Scholarship" means a grant of funds for educational expenses given to an individual under a grant agreement where the individual agrees to become a nurse educator in exchange for service for a specified period at an approved site that is a Utah nursing school or training institution.

(25) "Service obligation" means professional service rendered at an approved site for a minimum of three years in exchange for a scholarship or loan repayment grant.

R434-40-4. Loan Repayment Grants -- Terms and Service.

(1) The Department may provide loan repayment grants to geriatric, health care, and mental health professionals to repay loans taken for educational expenses in exchange for their agreement to serve for a specified period at an approved site in the state.

(2) Loan repayment grants may be given only to repay bona fide loans taken by eligible individuals for educational expenses incurred while pursuing an education at an institution that awards a degree that qualifies the applicant to practice in the applicant's professional field.

(3) Loan repayment grants under this section may not:

(a) be used to satisfy other obligations owed by the recipient under any similar program and may not be used to repay a loan that is in default at the time of application; or

(b) be in an amount greater than the total outstanding balance on the loans taken for educational expenses, including accrued interest.

(4) The Department may not disburse any grant moneys under the act until the recipient has performed at least six months of service at the approved site.

R434-40-5. Scholarship Grants -- Terms and Service.

(1) To increase the number of nurse educators in underserved areas in the state, the Department may provide scholarship grants to individuals seeking to become nurse educators in exchange for their agreement to serve for a specified period at an approved site in the state.

(2) Scholarship grants may be given to pay educational expenses while pursuing an education at an institution accredited by the National League of Nursing that provides training leading to the award of a final degree that qualifies the applicant to become a nurse educator in the state.

(3) Scholarship grants given under this section may not be used to satisfy other obligations owed under any similar program and may not be in an amount more than is reasonably necessary to meet educational expenses.

(4) Scholarship grant recipients shall seek a course of education following a schedule of at least a minimum number of course hours per year as set by the Department which leads to receipt of a degree or completion of specified additional course work in a number of years as established by the Department.

R434-40-6. Loan Repayment Grant Administration.

(1) The Department may award loan repayment grants to repay loans taken for eligible individuals' educational expenses. The Department may consider committee recommendations in awarding loan repayment grants.

(2) As requested by the Department, a loan repayment grant recipient shall provide information reasonably necessary for administration of the program.

(3) The Department shall determine the total amount of the loan repayment grant.

(4) The loan repayment grant recipient may not enter into any other similar contract until the recipient satisfies the service obligation described in the grant agreement.

(5) The Department may approve payment to a loan repayment grant recipient for increased federal, state, and local taxes caused by receipt of the loan repayment grant.

(6) The Department shall not pay for an educational loan of a loan repayment grant applicant who is in default at the time of an application.

(7) Before receiving a loan repayment grant, the applicant must enter into a grant agreement with the Department that binds the individual to the terms of the program.

(8) A loan repayment grant recipient must have a permanent, unrestricted license to practice in the recipient's health care specialty in Utah before the recipient's first day of service under the grant agreement.

(9) Before beginning to fulfill the service obligation, a loan repayment grant recipient must obtain approval from the Department of the site where the recipient may complete the service obligation.

(10) A loan repayment grant recipient must obtain approval from the Department before changing the approved site where the recipient fulfills the service obligation.

R434-40-7. Scholarship Grant Administration.

(1) The Department may award scholarship grant funds to an applicant for a maximum of four years or until earning the nursing postgraduate degree. The Department may consider committee recommendations in awarding scholarship grants.

(2) The Department may pay tuition and fees directly to the school and determine the amount and frequency of direct payments to the student.

(3) The scholarship grant recipient may not enter into a scholarship agreement other than with the program established in Section 26-46-1 until the service obligation agreed upon in the grant agreement with the Department is satisfied.

(4) A scholarship grant recipient must work full-time, as defined by the scholarship grant recipient's employer and as specified in the grant agreement with the Department.

(5) A scholarship grant recipient must serve one year of service obligation for each year the recipient received a scholarship grant under this program, with a minimum of three years required.

(6) The Department may cancel a scholarship grant at any time if it finds that the scholarship grant recipient has voluntarily or involuntarily terminated the recipient's schooling, postgraduate training, or if it appears to be a reasonable certainty that the scholarship grant recipient does not intend to practice as required by statute, rules, and grant agreement in an underserved area in the state.

(7) Upon completion of schooling and required postgraduate training, the scholarship grant recipient is responsible for finding employment at an approved site.

(8) A scholarship grant recipient must obtain approval from the Department before beginning service obligation at an approved site.

(9) A scholarship grant recipient must obtain approval from the Department before changing the approved site where the recipient fulfills the service obligation.

(10) A scholarship grant recipient must obtain an unrestricted license to practice in the state and begin practicing for the agreed upon period at an approved site within three months of completion of postgraduate training.

(11) If there is no available approved site upon a scholarship grant recipient's graduation, the recipient shall repay the scholarship grant amount as negotiated in the scholarship grant agreement.

R434-40-8. Eligible Bona Fide Loans.

(1) An eligible bona fide loan is a loan used to pay for educational expenses leading to a qualifying recipient's professional degree approved by the Department.

(2) A bona fide loan includes the following:

(a) a commercial loan made by a bank, credit union, savings and loan association, insurance company, school, or credit institution;

(b) a governmental loan made by a federal, state, county, or city agency;

(c) a loan made by another person that is documented by a contract notarized at the time of the making of the loan, indicative of an arm's length transaction, and with competitive term and rate as other loans available to students; or

(d) a loan that the applicant conclusively demonstrates to the Department is a bona fide loan.

R434-40-9. Full-Time Equivalency Provisions for Recipients.

(1) The loan repayment grant amount is based on the level of full-time equivalency that the loan repayment grant recipient agrees to work.

(2) For full-time providers of primary medical care services, clinicians must work a minimum of 40 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks/service year. At least 32 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved service sites during normally scheduled office hours. Of the minimum 32 hours spent providing patient care, no more than 8 hours per week may be spent in a teaching capacity. The remaining 8 hours/week may be spent providing patient care for patients at the approved sites, providing patient care in an approved alternative site, including hospitals, nursing homes, or shelter, or performing clinical-related administrative activities.

(3) For part-time providers of primary medical care services, clinicians must work a minimum of 20 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks/service year. At least 16 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved service sites during normally scheduled office hours. Of the minimum 16 hours spent providing patient care, no more than 4 hours per week may be spent in a teaching capacity. The remaining 4 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved sites, providing patient care in an approved alternative site, including hospitals, nursing homes, or shelters, or performing clinical-related administrative activities.

(4) For full-time providers of mental health services, clinicians must work a minimum of 40 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks/service year. At least 20 hours/week must be spent providing patient care at the approved service sites during normally scheduled office hours. Of the minimum 20 hours spent providing patient care, no more than 8 hours/week may be spent in a teaching capacity, performing clinical-related administrative activities, or in an alternative site, including hospitals, nursing homes, or shelters, as directed by the approved sites. The remaining 20 hours/week must be spent providing patient care at the approved service sites or performing service as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings when directed by the approved sites.

(5) For part-time providers of mental health services, clinicians must work a minimum of 20 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks/service year. At least 10 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved service sites during normally scheduled office hours. Of the minimum 10 hours spent providing patient care, no more than 4 hours per week may be spent in a teaching capacity, performing clinical-related administrative activities, or in an alternative site, including hospitals, nursing homes, and shelters, as directed by the approved sites. The remaining 10 hours/week may be spent providing patient care at the approved service sites or performing service as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings when directed by the approved sites.

(6) A full-time loan repayment grant recipient whose professional responsibilities change such that the recipient no longer meets the criteria for a full-time award may receive part-time award funding for the remainder of the service obligation, provided that the recipient meets the criteria for a part-time award and the recipient's site approves the new funding amount.

(7) A scholarship grant recipient must work full-time, as defined by the scholarship grant recipient's employer and as specified in the scholarship grant with the Department.

(8) A scholarship grant recipient must serve one year of service obligation for each year the recipient received a scholarship grant under this program, with a minimum of three years required.

(9) The Department may approve a full-time equivalency of less than 40 hours per week if the applicant's employer can demonstrate that performing less than 40 hours per week at the work site combined with other activities, such as on-call service, is equivalent to a 40 hour work week.

R434-40-10. Approved Site Determination.

(1) The Department shall approve sites based on comprehensive applications submitted by sites.

(2) The criteria the Department may use to determine an approved site for sites that are not nursing schools include:

(a) the percentage of the population with incomes under 200% of the federal poverty level;

(b) the percentage of the population 65 years of age and over;

(c) the percentage of the population under 18 years of age;

(d) the distance to the nearest geriatric, health care, or mental health professional, and barriers to accessing their services;

(e) ability of the site to provide support facilities and services for the requested health care professional;

(f) financial stability of the site;

(g) percent of patients served who are without insurance or whose care is paid for by government programs, such as Medicaid, Medicare, and CHIP; and

(h) the applicant's policy and practice to provide care regardless of a patient's ability to pay.

(3) The criteria the Department may use to determine an approved site for sites that are nursing schools include:

(a) a demonstrated shortage of nursing educator faculty;

(b) number of and degrees sought by students;

(c) number of students denied for each degree sought;

(d) residency of students;

(e) ability of the nursing school to provide support facilities and services for the requested position to be trained;

(f) faculty to student ratio, including ratios of clinical and classroom instructors;

(g) average class sizes for each of the degrees offered by the school;

(h) school plans to expand enrollment;

(i) diversity of students;

(j) current and projected staffing for the type of instructor requested;

(k) sources and stability of funding to hire and support the prospective instructor; and

(l) distance to the next closest nursing school.

(4) The Department may give preference to sites that provide letters of support from the area served by the prospective employer, such as from:

(a) a majority of practicing health care professionals;

(b) county and civic leaders;

(c) hospital administrators;

(d) business leaders, local chamber of commerce, citizens; and

(e) local health departments.

(5) The Department may give preference to sites located in a service area designated by the Secretary of Health and Human Services as having a health care professional shortage and that are requesting one of the following medical specialties:

(a) family practice;

(b) internal medicine;

(c) obstetrics and gynecology;

(d) pediatrics; or

(e) mental health.

(6) To become approved, a site must offer a salary and benefit package competitive with salaries and benefits of other geriatric professionals and health care professionals in the service area.

(7) The health care facility employing the eligible professional shall provide education loan repayment assistance to the eligible professional in an amount equal to 20% of the total award amount provided to the eligible professional.

- (8) Other criteria that the site applicant can demonstrate as furthering the purposes of the act.

R434-40-11. Loan Repayment Grant Eligibility and Selection.

(1) In selecting a loan repayment grant recipient for a loan repayment grant award, the Department may evaluate the applicant based on the following selection criteria:

- (a) the extent to which an applicant's training in a health care specialty is needed at an approved site;
 - (b) the applicant's commitment to serve in an underserved area, which can be demonstrated in any of the following ways:
 - (i) has worked or volunteered at a community or migrant health center, homeless shelter, public health department clinic, worked with geriatric populations, or other service commitment to the medically underserved;
 - (ii) has work or educational experience with the medically underserved through the Peace Corps, VISTA, has worked with geriatric populations, or a similar volunteer agency;
 - (iii) has cultural or language skills that may be essential for provision of health care services to the medically underserved;
 - (iv) other facts or experience that the applicant can demonstrate to the Department that establishes the applicant's commitment to serve in an underserved area; and
 - (v) the availability of the applicant to begin service, with greater consideration being given to applicants available for service at earlier dates;
 - (c) the applicant's:
 - (i) academic standing;
 - (ii) prior professional or personal experience serving in an underserved area;
 - (iii) board certification or eligibility;
 - (iv) postgraduate training achievements;
 - (v) peer recommendations;
 - (vi) other facts that the applicant can demonstrate to the Department that establishes the applicant's professional competence or conduct;
 - (d) the applicant's financial need;
 - (e) the applicant's willingness to serve patients who are without insurance or whose care is paid for by government programs, such as Medicaid, Medicare, and CHIP;
 - (f) the applicant's willingness to provide care regardless of a patient's ability to pay;
 - (g) the applicant's ability and willingness to provide care; and
 - (h) the applicant's achieving an early match with an approved site.
- (2) To be eligible for a loan repayment grant, an applicant must be a United States citizen or permanent resident.
- (3) The applicant shall submit a written commitment from the health care facility employing the eligible professional that the health care facility will provide education loan repayment assistance to the eligible professional in an amount equal to 20% of the total award amount provided to the eligible professional.
- (4) The Department may consider only grant applicants who apply within 18 months of the applicant's beginning employment at an approved eligible site.
- (5) The Department may give priority to health care professionals working in publicly funded sites.

R434-40-12. Scholarship Grant Eligibility and Selection.

(1) In selecting a recipient for a nurse scholarship grant, the Department may evaluate the applicant based on the following selection criteria:

- (a) the applicant's commitment to serve in an underserved area, which may be demonstrated in any of the following ways:
 - (i) has worked or volunteered to serve in an underserved area or service commitment to the medically underserved;
 - (ii) has work or educational experience with the medically underserved through the Peace Corps, VISTA, or a similar volunteer agency;
 - (iii) has cultural or language skills that may be essential for services in an underserved area; and
 - (iv) other facts or experience that the applicant can demonstrate to the Department that establishes the applicant's commitment to the medically underserved.
 - (b) evidence that the applicant has a license in good standing to practice in the state under Title 58, Chapter 31, Nurse Practice Act, or under Title 58, Chapter 44a, Nurse Midwife Practice Act;
 - (c) the applicant's academic ability as demonstrated by official transcripts and official school admission test scores;
 - (d) the applicant's evidence that they have been accepted by or currently attends an accredited school;
 - (e) the applicant's projected educational expenses;
 - (f) the applicant's educational, personal, and professional references that demonstrate the applicant's good character and potential to successfully complete school; and
 - (g) the applicant's essay which is required as part of the scholarship application.
- (2) In selecting a scholarship grant recipient, the Department may give preference to applicants who agree to serve for a greater length of time in return for scholarship assistance.
- (3) To be eligible to receive a scholarship grant, an applicant must be a United States citizen or permanent resident.

R434-40-13. Loan Repayment and Scholarship Grant Service Obligation.

(1) Before receiving an award under the act, the recipient shall enter into a grant agreement with the state agreeing to the conditions upon which the award is to be made.

(2) The grant agreement shall include necessary conditions to carry out the purposes of the act.

(3) In exchange for financial assistance under the act, the recipient shall serve for a period established at the time of the award, but which may not be for less than 24 months, in an underserved area at a site approved by the Department.

(4) The recipient's service in an underserved area at a site approved by the Department retires the amount owed for the award according to the schedule established by the Department at the time of the award.

(5) Periods of internship, preceptorship, or other clinical training do not satisfy the service obligation under the act.

(6) A scholarship grant recipient must:

(a) be a full-time matriculated student and meet the school's requirements to continue in the program and receive an advanced degree within the time specified in the scholarship grant agreement, unless extended pursuant to Section R434-40-16;

(b) within three months before and not exceeding one month following graduation or completion of postgraduate training, a scholarship grant recipient shall provide to the Department documented evidence of an approved site's intent to hire the recipient;

(c) upon completion of schooling or postgraduate training, the scholarship grant recipient must find employment at an approved site;

(d) obtain an unrestricted license to practice in Utah before beginning to fulfill the service obligation at the approved site;

(e) obtain approval from the Department before beginning to fulfill the recipient's service obligation at an approved site;

(f) begin employment at the approved site within three months of graduation or completion of postgraduate training; and

(g) obtain Department approval before changing the approved site where the recipient fulfills the service obligation.

R434-40-14. Loan Repayment Grant Breach, Repayment, and Penalties.

Penalties for a recipient who fails to complete the service obligation shall be made in accordance with the grant agreement.

R434-40-15. Scholarship Grant Breach, Repayment, and Penalties.

Penalties for a recipient who fails to complete the service obligation shall be made in accordance with the grant agreement.

R434-40-16. Extension of Loan Repayment and Scholarship Grants.

(1) The Department may extend the period within which the loan repayment grant recipient must complete the service obligation:

(a) if the loan repayment grant recipient has signed a grant agreement for three years the loan repayment grant recipient may apply on or after the recipient's first day of service under a loan repayment grant to extend the grant agreement by one year;

(b) a loan repayment grant may be extended only at an approved site; and

(c) a loan repayment grant recipient who desires to extend the loan repayment grant must inform the Department in writing of the recipient's interest in extending the grant agreement at least six months before the end of the current service obligation.

(2) The Department may extend the period within which the scholarship grant recipient must complete the recipient's education:

(a) if the scholarship grant recipient has a serious illness;

(b) if the scholarship grant recipient is activated by the military; or

(c) for other good cause shown, as determined by the Department.

(3) The service obligation may be extended only at an approved site.

R434-40-17. Release of Recipient from Service Obligation.

(1) The Department may cancel or release, in full or in part, a recipient from the service obligation under the grant agreement without penalty:

(a) if the service obligation has been fulfilled;

(b) if the recipient fails to meet the conditions of the award or if it reasonably appears the recipient will not meet the loan repayment or scholarship grant conditions;

(c) if the recipient cannot fulfill the service obligation due to permanent disability that prevents the recipient from performing any work for remuneration or profit;

(d) if the recipient dies; or

(e) for other good cause shown, as determined by the Department.

(2) Extreme hardship sufficient to release the recipient without penalty includes:

- (a) inability to complete the required schooling or fulfill service obligation due to permanent disability that prevents the recipient from completing school or performing any work for remuneration or profit; or
- (b) a family member, for which the recipient is the principal care giver, has a life-threatening chronic illness.
- (3) The Department may develop alternative service obligation criteria that a loan repayment or scholarship grant recipient may use to fulfill the service obligation if the loan repayment or scholarship grant recipient cannot fulfill the service obligation at an approved site due to reasons beyond the recipient's control.

R434-40-18. Reporting Requirements of Award Recipients.

The Department may require an award recipient to provide information regarding:

- (1) the academic performance;
- (2) commitment to underserved areas;
- (3) continuing financial need;
- (4) service obligation fulfillment; and
- (5) other information reasonably necessary for the administration of the program during the period the recipient is in school; postgraduate training; and during the period the award recipient is completing the service obligation.

R434-40-19. Reporting Requirements of Approved Sites.

The Department may require the approved site to provide information regarding:

- (1) the award recipients' performance;
- (2) commitment to underserved areas;
- (3) service obligation fulfillment; and
- (4) other information reasonably necessary for the administration of the program during the period the award recipient is completing the service obligation.

KEY: medically underserved, grants, scholarships

Date of Last Change: June 7, 2022

Notice of Continuation: May 8, 2019

Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: 26-46-102