



"I recommend continuing this program. I was able to attain an online BSN while living and working in a rural area."

— Nurse, Morton Hospital
Lewis County

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Health Professional Loan Repayment and Scholarship program provides financial support in the form of education-related loan repayment or conditional scholarships to providers who are willing to serve in healthcare professional shortage areas within the state for two to three years.

Health Professional Loan Repayment and Scholarship Program awards range from \$2,000 to \$35,000 per year—depending on the participants' educational costs or educational debt.

The Program offers two funding sources: the state-funded Health Professional Loan Repayment Program (HPLRP) and the federally matched State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP). Since 2010, the state's funding for this program has been reduced, leaving largely federal funds to support the loan repayment program, and eliminating new scholarship awards.



EMERGING ISSUES

- Washington's rural communities have a variety of barriers to access primary health care. A notable portion (24 percent) of Washington's population is rural. Thirty-eight percent of the people who live in rural Washington are at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, and 15 percent of the rural population are elderly, according to an estimate by the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Washington State is facing an aging medical workforce. According to a recent study conducted by the University of Washington Center for Health Workforce Studies, 70 percent of physicians in Washington are 56 years old or older.
- The state is facing a primary health care provider shortage. This program provides incentives for medical students in Washington to go into primary care medicine instead of specialty medicine.



BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

The Health Professional Loan Repayment and Scholarship program benefits students and health care professionals by

reducing their educational debt. With the cost of college tuition rising, and reductions to student financial assistance, many students are overburdened with educational debt.



BENEFITS TO THE STATE

The Health Professional Loan Repayment and Scholarship program encourages eligible health care professionals to

serve in the state's most medically underserved urban and rural communities. The goal of the program is to assist the state in reducing barriers to access primary care health services.

PROGRAM RESULTS

The Loan Repayment Program has placed more than 546 primary care health care providers in 38 counties across the state. This number includes about 170 recipients who have benefited from federal matching funds and are serving in federally designated Health Personnel Shortage Areas (HPSAs).

More than 354 students in health professional training programs have received scholarships. The majority of these recipients have attended postsecondary institutions in Washington, and all recipients must practice as medical professionals in the state of Washington.

"I want to thank you for granting me this Scholarship. This opportunity has allowed me to be able to finish and complete Nursing School. Without this award, I wouldn't have been the first person within my family to obtain a college degree."

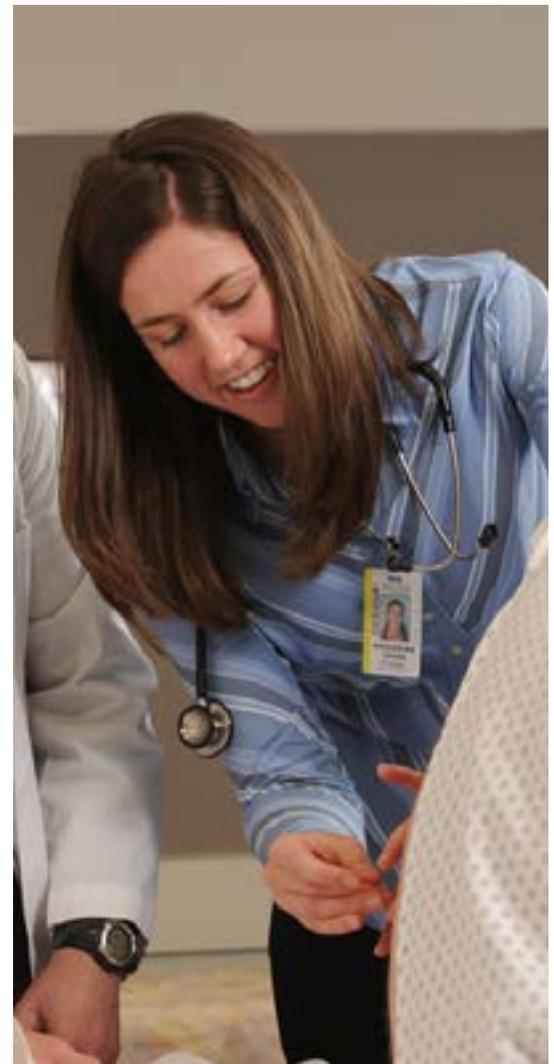
— Nurse,
Edmonds, WA

"Thank you for your help in this endeavor. I cannot tell you how challenging it is to recruit good physicians to rural areas. It is so good to have this program available that actually rewards physicians for making a commitment to our rural population."

— Rural Health Facility
Walla Walla, WA

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Washington's student financial aid programs are known collectively as Opportunity Pathways. The Washington Student Achievement Council administers these programs, helping tens of thousands of students earn college certificates and degrees annually.