

1. **Question:** What is the purpose of the Health Professional Loan Repayment and Scholarship (HPLRS) program?

Answer: The HPLRS program provides educational loan repayment assistance to attract and retain licensed health professionals in critical shortage areas in Washington. In return for financial assistance, program participants agree to provide primary health care services in rural or underserved urban areas that are designated as health professional shortage areas.

2. **Question:** What are the goals of the program?

Answer:

- Increase the supply of an appropriate mix of health care professionals to meet the needs of rural and underserved urban communities.
- Assist communities in recruiting health providers, eliminating barriers to access to health care to underserved populations.
- Achieve distribution of an appropriate mix of health care professionals to respond in a timely manner to the needs of rural and underserved urban communities.
- Assist communities that are underserved, or at risk of becoming so, to attract and retain needed health care professionals.
- Assist communities that are underserved, or at risk of becoming so, to attract and retain diverse health care professionals that more closely reflects the increasing diversity of our state.
- Maintain enough flexibility to recognize such variables as funding levels, education debt, tuition costs, current program participants, and applicant pool.

3. **Question:** What are the benefits to students?

Answer: HPLRS benefits students and health care professionals by reducing their educational debt in a time when tuition is rising and overall financial aid is being reduced.

4. **Question:** What are the benefits to the state?

Answer: HPLRS encourages eligible health care professionals to serve in Washington's most medically underserved urban and rural communities, reducing barriers that many in those areas experience in accessing primary care health services.

5. **Question:** What are some of the program's challenges and emerging issues?

Answer:

- The state is facing a primary health care provider shortage. HPLRS provides incentives for medical students in Washington to go into primary care medicine instead of specialty medicine.
- Contributing to this shortage is an aging medical workforce. According to a recent study conducted by the University of Washington's Center for Health Workforce Studies, 70 percent of physicians in Washington are 56 or older.
- Severe financial shortfalls have led to reduced state funding for the program, from a high of \$4,350,000 to the current amount of \$525,000. Federal matching funds bring the total available to award loan repayment providers to \$1,050,000.
- Federal program requirements and limitations on provider types restrict the state program's ability to address individual community needs.
- Washington's population is 24 percent rural, and rural populations face additional barriers in accessing health care. According to an estimate by the U.S. Census Bureau, 15 percent of rural Washingtonians are elderly and 38 percent are at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

6. **Question:** How many awards are made and to whom?

Answer: Due to program funding cuts, no new scholarship awards have been granted since 2010, when six recipients received awards. Loan repayments have been awarded to 115 providers over the last five years. See participant data below for breakdown by year and provider type.

2010–15 TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDING AND AWARDS

	State Legislative Allocations	Federal/ State Loan Repayment Funds	Total* Applications	Scholarship Awards	Loan Repayment Awards	Total Awards
2010-11	\$530,000	\$525,000	116	6	38	44
2011-12	\$530,000	\$525,000	25	0	14	14
2012-13	\$530,000	\$525,000	31	0	24	24
2013-14	\$525,000	\$525,000	103	0	25	25
2014-15	\$525,000	\$498,225	113	0	14	14

2010–11 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

	Total* Applications	Awarded								Total Awards
		MD	DO	PA	NP	RN	RX	DDS	Other	
2010-11	46	0	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	6

2010–14 LOAN REPAYMENT AWARDS

	Total* Applications	Awarded								Total Awards
		MD	DO	PA	NP	RN	RX	DDS	Other	
2010-11	70	2	0	6	2	5	10	6	7	38
2011-12	25	5	3	2	3	0	0	1	0	14
2012-13	31	10	2	2	4	0	0	4	2	24
2013-14	103	7	0	2	5	6	2	3	0	25
2014-15	113	4	0	3	1	2	2	1	0	14

* Includes applicants later found ineligible, or who declined the award or failed to submit required documentation.