

2023 -- S 0224

LC001444

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- RHODE ISLAND STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

Introduced By: Senators DiMario, Euer, Lawson, Sosnowski, Lauria, Valverde, Picard, Murray, and Gu

Date Introduced: February 16, 2023

Referred To: Senate Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended by
2 adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 112

4 RHODE ISLAND STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

5 **16-112-1. Short title.**

6 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Rhode Island Student Loan
7 Repayment Program".

8 **16-112-2. Creation.**

9 (a) There is hereby established at the Rhode Island student loan authority (RISLA) a
10 restricted receipt account entitled the Rhode Island student loan repayment fund ("the fund"). The
11 fund shall be used to provide eligible individuals, as defined in § 16-112-4, with payment from the
12 state to the individual's lending agency to pay a portion of their student loan debt.

13 (b) RISLA shall administer the fund.

14 (c) RISLA shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary to implement this chapter,
15 which shall include, but are not limited to, providing an easy-to-follow guide in a variety of
16 languages regarding how to complete the request for student loan repayment assistance.

17 **16-112-3. Definitions.**

18 For purposes of this chapter:

1 “Underserved community” means a federally designated health professional shortage area
2 as identified by the United States Health Resources and Services Administration.

3 **16-112-4. Eligibility of individuals.**

4 (a) Individuals employed by a Rhode Island based employer may be eligible for the Rhode
5 Island student loan repayment program if they:

6 (1) Have unpaid health professional student loans;

7 (2) Have a license to practice as a clinical social worker; and

8 (3) Have committed to practice full time for two (2) years or practice part-time for four (4)
9 years within this state.

10 (b) Preference for student loan repayment assistance under this chapter may be given to
11 individuals who work in an underserved community.

12 **16-112-5. Student loan repayment of program amounts.**

13 The total amount of student loan repayments may not exceed the outstanding balance.

14 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- RHODE ISLAND STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT
PROGRAM

1 This act would establish the Rhode Island student loan repayment program wherein eligible
2 individuals who: (1) Have unpaid health professional student loans; (2) Have a license to practice
3 as a clinical social worker; and (3) Have committed to practice full-time for two (2) years or practice
4 part-time for four (4) years, within Rhode Island, may apply to have their student loans, or a portion
5 thereof, paid by the state directly to the individual's lending agency. The program would be
6 administered by the Rhode Island student loan authority (RISLA).

7 This act would take effect upon passage.

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