

Materials for FAME language on Nursing and Healthcare providers

1. It provides that the director of the ombudsman program must serve full time and expands the director's required experience to include child welfare.
2. It provides that the staffing for the ombudsman program is at the discretion of the nonprofit organization under contract to provide ombudsman service.
3. It provides that the contract to provide ombudsman services is for a period of 5 years, except that the contract may be terminated consistent with the terms of the contract.
4. It provides that the contract to provide ombudsman services must include funds for the nonprofit organization to provide health insurance benefits for employees of the ombudsman program.
5. It provides that the ombudsman program must provide information about its services through a publicly accessible website and makes a technical correction regarding plural language.
6. It clarifies that the ombudsman program may provide opinions and recommendations on current or proposed state programs, rules, policies, and laws.
7. It clarifies that the ombudsman program may provide input on the State's child welfare system to the Department of Health and Human Services and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters.
8. It clarifies that the ombudsman program provides services to persons and families involved with the State's child welfare system.
9. It requires that the Department of Health and Human Services to notify the ombudsman program of any statewide policy changes affecting the State's child welfare system before the changes take effect.
10. It requires the Department of Health and Human Services to notify the ombudsman program of certain child fatalities.

PART CC

Sec. CC-1. 10 MRSA §1019, sub-§2 is amended to read:

- 2. Criteria.** For an applicant to participate in the nursing education loan repayment program established under subsection 1, the applicant must:
- A. Be a nurse;
 - B. Be currently enrolled in a master's or doctoral degree program in nursing or have completed a master's or doctoral degree in nursing;
 - C. Possess an outstanding education loan relating to the master's or doctoral nursing degree; and
 - D. Sign a statement of intent in a form acceptable to the authority to work as full-time nursing faculty in a nursing education program in the State for a minimum of 5-3 years after acceptance into the nursing education loan repayment program.

Sec. CC-2. 10 MRSA §1019, sub-§4 is amended to read:

4. **Administration.** The nursing education loan repayment program and the nursing education loan repayment fund are administered by the authority. The authority shall repay the loan of an applicant who meets the criteria in subsection 2 in the amount of up to \$20,000 for a master's degree and up to \$40,000 for a doctoral degree. The authority may adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this subchapter. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are ~~major substantive rules~~ routine technical rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

Sec. CC-3. PL 2021, c. 483, Pt. H, §1, is amended to read:

Sec. H-1. Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Pilot Program. The Finance Authority of Maine shall establish the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Pilot Program, referred to in this section as "the program," for certain health care professionals who commit to living and working in Maine for at least 3 years. Under the program, the authority shall pay up to \$25,000 per year and, in aggregate, the lesser of \$75,000 and 50% of the recipient's outstanding loan balance. The program terminates when the funds allocated pursuant to this Part to the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program Fund established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 12953 are fully expended or by December 31, 2024~~6~~, whichever occurs first, unless other funding is made available to carry out the purpose of the program. Costs and expenses of maintaining, servicing and administering the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program Fund and of administering the program may be paid out of amounts in the fund.

The authority shall adopt routine technical rules pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A to carry out the purposes of the program, including application requirements and program eligibility.

PART CC SUMMARY

This Part amends the Nurse Educators Loan Repayment Program by changing the required program commitment period from a minimum of five years to three years and by making any program rules adopted routine technical rules instead of major substantive rules. This Part also amends the date by which funds in the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Pilot Program must be expended.



**Testimony by William Norbert
Governmental Affairs and Communications Manager**

In Support of L.D. 1995

An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2022 and June 30, 2023

**Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development,
Economic Advancement & Business**

March 7, 2022

Senators Breen and Curry, Representatives Pierce and Roberts, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement & Business:

My name is Bill Norbert. I am the Governmental Affairs and Communications Manager at the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME). I live in Brunswick and am here to testify in support of the Governor's proposed initiatives relating to both the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program and the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Pilot Program found at Language Part CC on pages 38-39 of the bill. These technical changes will help us comply with federal deadlines associated with the ARPA funding of these programs and allow us to finally get the programs up and running to address Maine's critical health care workforce needs.

The first initiative amends the **Nurse Educators Loan Repayment Program** by changing the required program commitment period from a minimum of five years to three years. This is to comport with the federal regulations associated with the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funding for the program and ensure that program funds are expended by the end of 2026. According to the federal regulations governing ARPA funds, the date by which funds need to be committed is December 31, 2024, and funds need to be expended by December 31, 2026. Although a five-year commitment to serving as a nurse educator was the original desire of the Legislature, the federal regulations make a three-year commitment necessary in order to make use of the federal funding. As you may recall, last session the Legislature funded with federal ARPA monies the Nurse Educators Loan Repayment Program. It also made some changes to the program, which had never been operated due to lack of funding. The program will repay over time the student loans (up to \$20,000 for participants with a

master's degree and up to \$40,000 for participants with a doctoral degree) of selected participants to support rebuilding Maine's nursing workforce as an industry negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Another portion of this language change makes any program rules adopted by FAME routine technical rules instead of major substantive ones. The rule language change (from major substantive to routine technical) is to change the original statute, which had never been utilized due to lack of program funding over the years, to comport with FAME's regular practice of rulemaking. Major substantive rulemaking is supposed to be reserved for those limited circumstances in which an agency has no prior experience or expertise in administering a type of program. Such is not the case with FAME as we administer numerous student loan and loan repayment programs. We respectfully ask you to amend this holdover language to comport with all of FAME's other programs and require routine technical rulemaking only.

The second initiative within Part CC amends the date by which funds in the **Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Pilot Program** must be expended. The program has a three-year return service (work) commitment with disbursements (loan repayments) being made annually after certification of eligible of employment and Maine state residency. Without knowing what the final deadlines for expending funds would be, the Legislature required in the governing program statute that the program sunset when the funds are fully expended or by December 31, 2024, whichever occurs first, unless other funding is made available to carry out the purpose of the program. Expending all funds by 2024 is not possible, however, unless the return service clock had begun on January 1, 2022, which it did not. As stated previously, according to the federal regulations governing ARPA funds, the date by which funds need to be committed is December 31, 2024, and they need to be expended by December 31, 2026. We thus under the law are entitled to and could use more time than December 31, 2024 in order to make this program work well.

Last June, the Legislature approved one-time funding of \$1 million for FAME to pilot the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program to make loan repayments to eligible program participants to address critical workforce shortages exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program will repay a portion of the outstanding education loan debt of health care professionals who agree to live and work in the state for a minimum of three years. The goal is to increase the number of such professionals practicing in the state and to help address their student loan debt burdens. Under the concept, FAME would pay up to \$25,000 per year or up to \$75,000 or 50% of a participant's outstanding total student loan debt, whichever is lower. As you all know, Maine faces great health care and workforce needs. Professionals in these fields have always done noble and heroic work, but especially so during this long pandemic. Many have incurred substantial student loan debt, as well, and would prefer to live and work in Maine if possible.

We are grateful for inclusion of these necessary language changes in the Governor's Supplemental Budget. They will enable us to both comply with federal regulations related to the ARPA funding and also carry out the intent of the Legislature for these programs, as well as get these programs up and running finally. We would

appreciate your support for these two initiatives wish you all the best in your work and deliberations.

Thank you for this opportunity and I would be happy to answer any questions.



130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2021

Legislative Document

No. 119

H.P. 85

House of Representatives, January 13, 2021

**An Act To Increase Faculty in Nursing Education Programs by
Amending the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program**

Received by the Clerk of the House on January 11, 2021. Referred to the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R. B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative MEYER of Eliot.
Cosponsored by Senator BRENNER of Cumberland and
Representatives: GEIGER of Rockland, PERRY of Calais.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 10 MRSA §1019, sub-§2**, as enacted by PL 2005, c. 417, §1, is amended to
3 read:

4 **2. Criteria.** For an applicant to participate in the nursing education loan repayment
5 program established under subsection 1, the applicant must:

6 A. Be a nurse;

7 B. ~~Complete~~ Be currently enrolled in a master's or doctoral degree program in nursing
8 or have completed a master's or doctoral degree in nursing;

9 C. Possess an outstanding education loan relating to the master's or doctoral nursing
10 degree; and

11 D. Sign a statement of intent in a form acceptable to the authority to work as full-time
12 nursing faculty in a nursing education program in the State for a minimum of ~~3~~ 5 years
13 after acceptance into the nursing education loan repayment program.

14 **Sec. 2. 10 MRSA §1019, sub-§4**, as enacted by PL 2005, c. 417, §1, is amended to
15 read:

16 **4. Administration.** The nursing education loan repayment program and the nursing
17 education loan repayment fund are administered by the authority. The authority shall repay
18 the loan of an applicant who meets the criteria in subsection 2 in the amount of up to ~~\$4,500~~
19 ~~\$30,000~~ for a master's degree and up to ~~\$6,000~~ \$60,000 for a doctoral degree. The authority
20 may adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this subchapter. Rules adopted pursuant to
21 this subsection are major substantive rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

22 **SUMMARY**

23 This bill amends the nursing education loan repayment program as follows.

24 1. It extends eligibility to apply to individuals who are currently enrolled in master's
25 or doctoral degree programs.

26 2. It specifies that applicants must indicate an intention to work as full-time nursing
27 faculty in a nursing education program in the State, and increases that required commitment
28 from 3 years to 5 years after acceptance into the nursing education loan repayment program.

29 3. It increases the maximum amount of loans eligible for repayment under the program
30 from \$4,500 to \$30,000 for a master's degree and from \$6,000 to \$60,000 for a doctoral
31 degree.

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Date: (Filing No. H-)

**INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND
BUSINESS**

Reproduced and distributed under the direction of the Clerk of the House.

**STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
130TH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SPECIAL SESSION**

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT “ ” to H.P. 85, L.D. 119, “An Act To Increase Faculty in Nursing Education Programs by Amending the **Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program**”

Amend the bill in section 2 in subsection 4 in the 4th line (page 1, line 19 in L.D.) by striking out the following: “\$30,000” and inserting the following: ‘\$20,000’

Amend the bill in section 2 in subsection 4 in the 4th line (page 1, line 19 in L.D.) by striking out the following: “\$60,000” and inserting the following: ‘\$40,000’

Amend the bill by inserting after section 2 the following:

‘Sec. 3. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

FINANCE AUTHORITY OF MAINE

Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program N362

Initiative: Provides one-time funds to the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program to enable it to begin making loan repayments and to accommodate the increased loan repayment amounts.

GENERAL FUND	2021-22	2022-23
All Other	\$1,000,000	\$0
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$1,000,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>

Amend the bill by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or section number to read consecutively.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

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SUMMARY

This amendment changes the maximum repayment amount under the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program for a master's degree from \$30,000 to \$20,000 and for a doctoral degree from \$60,000 to \$40,000. It also adds an appropriations and allocations section to the bill to provide one-time appropriations to enable the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program to begin operating and to accommodate the increased loan repayment amounts.

FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

(See attached)

Change Package - 2021

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE FISCAL RECOVERY	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
STATUS OF RACIAL, INDIGENOUS AND TRIBAL POPULATIONS, PERMANENT COMMISSION ON THE Racial, Indigenous and Tribal Populations N329		
Initiative: Provides one-time funds to support development of a strategy and one-time investments in public health infrastructure to reduce disparities in outcomes for residents of the State in minority groups.		
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE FISCAL RECOVERY	2021-22	2022-23
All Other	\$500,000	\$500,000
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE FISCAL RECOVERY TOTAL	\$500,000	\$500,000
 STATUS OF RACIAL, INDIGENOUS AND TRIBAL POPULATIONS, PERMANENT COMMISSION ON THE DEPARTMENT TOTALS		
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE FISCAL RECOVERY	\$500,000	\$500,000
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$500,000	\$500,000
 SECTION TOTALS		
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE FISCAL RECOVERY	\$29,708,406	\$13,649,916
SECTION TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$29,708,406	\$13,649,916

PART FF

Sec. FF-1. 10 MRSA §1019, sub-§2, as enacted by PL 2005, c. 417, §1, is amended to read:

2. Criteria. For an applicant to participate in the nursing education loan repayment program established under subsection 1, the applicant must:

A. Be a nurse;

B. ~~Complete~~ Be currently enrolled in a master's or doctoral degree program in nursing or have completed a master's or doctoral degree in nursing;

C. Possess an outstanding education loan relating to the master's or doctoral nursing degree; and

D. Sign a statement of intent in a form acceptable to the authority to work as full-time nursing faculty in a nursing education program in the State for a minimum of ~~3~~ 5 years after acceptance into the nursing education loan repayment program.

Sec. FF-2. 10 MRSA §1019, sub-§4, as enacted by PL 2005, c. 417, §1, is amended to read:

4. Administration. The nursing education loan repayment program and the nursing education loan repayment fund are administered by the authority. The authority shall repay the loan of an applicant who meets the criteria in subsection 2 in the amount of up to ~~\$4,500~~ \$20,000 for a master's degree and up to ~~\$6,000~~ \$40,000 for a doctoral degree. The authority may adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this subchapter. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are major substantive rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

Sec. FF-3. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

FINANCE AUTHORITY OF MAINE

Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program N362

Initiative: Provides one-time funds to the nursing education loan repayment program to enable it to begin making loan repayments and to accommodate the increased loan repayment amounts.

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE FISCAL RECOVERY	2021-22	2022-23
All Other	\$1,000,000	\$0
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE FISCAL RECOVERY TOTAL	<u>\$1,000,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>

PART GG

Sec. GG-1. Extend funding for specified civil legal aid projects. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the funds allocated in this Part must be deposited in the Maine Civil Legal Services Fund established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 4, section 18-A, referred to in this section as "the fund," and distributed as follows. The administrator of the fund shall disburse for use in calendar year 2022 and again for use in calendar year 2023, to each legal services provider that received an award from the Maine Justice Foundation under its Bank of America grant program for calendar year 2021, the same amount as the award made under the Bank of America grant program for 2021. These distributions must be separate from the competitive selection process undertaken by the Civil Legal Services Fund Commission appointed pursuant to Title 4, section 18-A, subsection 6. The amounts allocated to the fund and distributed in accordance with this Part may not be considered by the commission in determining its distribution of funds under its periodic competitive grant selection process, but the recipients of these amounts shall include in their regular reports to the commission covering calendar years 2022 and 2023 a statement of the manner in which these disbursements have been used to

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE	\$500,000	\$500,000
FISCAL RECOVERY TOTAL		

Maine Environmental Protection Fund 0421

Initiative: Provides one-time funding for contracted services to conduct time-sensitive licensing for urgent economic development projects to support recovery and job growth.

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE	2021-22	2022-23
FISCAL RECOVERY		

All Other	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
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FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
FISCAL RECOVERY TOTAL		

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION,
DEPARTMENT OF
DEPARTMENT TOTALS**

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE FISCAL RECOVERY	2021-22	2022-23
	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000

DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000
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SECTION TOTALS

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE FISCAL RECOVERY	2021-22	2022-23
	\$27,500,000	\$17,146,609

SECTION TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$27,500,000	\$17,146,609
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PART H

Sec. H-1. Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Pilot Program.

The Finance Authority of Maine shall establish the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Pilot Program, referred to in this section as "the program," for certain health care professionals who commit to living and working in Maine for at least 3 years. Under the program, the authority shall pay up to \$25,000 per year and, in aggregate, the lesser of \$75,000 and 50% of the recipient's outstanding loan balance. The program terminates when the funds allocated pursuant to this Part to the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program Fund established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 12953 are fully expended or by December 31, 2024, whichever occurs first, unless other funding is made available to carry out the purpose of the program. Costs and expenses of maintaining, servicing and administering the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program Fund and of administering the program may be paid out of amounts in the fund.

Change Package - 2021

The authority shall adopt routine technical rules pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A to carry out the purposes of the program, including application requirements and program eligibility.

Sec. H-2. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

FINANCE AUTHORITY OF MAINE

Doctors For Maine's Future Scholarship Fund Z090

Initiative: Provides one-time funds for the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship Program as established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 12103-A.

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE FISCAL RECOVERY	2021-22	2022-23
All Other	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE FISCAL RECOVERY TOTAL	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000

Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Fund N393

Initiative: Provides one-time funding for the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program Fund to enable it to make loan repayments to eligible program participants to address critical workforce shortages exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, including but not limited to the behavioral health and oral care sectors.

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE FISCAL RECOVERY	2021-22	2022-23
All Other	\$1,000,000	\$0
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE FISCAL RECOVERY TOTAL	\$1,000,000	\$0

FINANCE AUTHORITY OF MAINE

DEPARTMENT TOTALS	2021-22	2022-23
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE FISCAL RECOVERY	\$2,000,000	\$1,000,000
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$2,000,000	\$1,000,000

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF

Department of Health and Human Services Central Operations 0142

Initiative: Establishes one limited-period Public Service Coordinator II position through June 17, 2023 to support curriculum design services that will look across all department providers to make a crosswalk of all short-term certifications.

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND - ARP STATE FISCAL RECOVERY	2021-22	2022-23
Personal Services	\$125,010	\$131,405

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-ONE

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H.P. 979 - L.D. 1327

An Act To Create the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §12004-I, sub-§18-G is enacted to read:

18-G.

<u>Education:</u>	<u>Maine Health Care Provider Loan</u>	<u>Not Authorized</u>	<u>20-A MRSA</u>
<u>Financial Aid</u>	<u>Repayment Program Advisory</u>		<u>§12955</u>
	<u>Committee</u>		

Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA c. 441 is enacted to read:

CHAPTER 441

MAINE HEALTH CARE PROVIDER LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

§12951. Definitions

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

1. Advisory committee. "Advisory committee" means the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program Advisory Committee established in Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 18-G.

2. Authority. "Authority" means the Finance Authority of Maine.

3. Direct care worker. "Direct care worker" means an individual who by virtue of employment generally provides to individuals direct contact assistance with personal care or activities of daily living or has direct access to provide care and services to clients, patients or residents regardless of setting. "Direct care worker" does not include a certified nursing assistant employed in that person's capacity as a certified nursing assistant.

4. Eligible student loan. "Eligible student loan" means a student loan obtained as a result of preparation for a health care profession as determined by the authority by rule.

5. Fund. "Fund" means the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program Fund established in section 12953.

6. Health care provider. "Health care provider" means a person licensed or certified by this State as a medical, dental or behavioral health practitioner and performing within the scope of the person's practice as defined by state law or a person with a professionally recognized medical, dental or behavioral health credential.

7. Program. "Program" means the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program established in section 12952.

8. Underserved area. "Underserved area" means an area in the State that is a health professional shortage area or medically underserved area or that contains a medically underserved population, as those terms are defined by the federal Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration.

§12952. Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program established

The Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program is established within the Finance Authority of Maine for the purpose of increasing the number of health care providers practicing in the State.

§12953. Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program Fund

1. Fund created. The Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program Fund is established in the authority as a nonlapsing, interest-earning, revolving fund to carry out the purposes of this chapter. The fund consists of any funds appropriated, allocated or contributed from private or public sources, including from state and federal sources, and any existing funding for authority programs that, at the discretion of the authority, may be combined with the program. The funds, to be accounted within the authority, must be held separate and apart from all other money, funds and accounts. Eligible investment earnings credited to the assets of the fund become part of the assets of the fund. Any unexpended balances remaining in the fund at the end of any fiscal year do not lapse and must be carried forward to the next fiscal year.

2. Fund administration. The authority may receive, invest and expend on behalf of the fund money from gifts, grants, bequests and donations in addition to money appropriated or allocated by the State and any federal funds received by the State for the benefit of health care providers who have outstanding eligible student loans. Money received by the authority on behalf of the fund must be used for the purposes of this chapter. The fund must be maintained and administered by the authority. Any unexpended balance in the fund carries forward for continued use under this chapter, except for federal funds that must be expended according to guidelines issued by the Federal Government governing the use of those funds.

3. Fund expenses. Costs and expenses of maintaining, servicing and administering the fund and of administering the program may be paid out of amounts in the fund.

§12954. Program eligibility

1. Application. To be considered for an award under this chapter, as part of the application, the applicant must:

A. Submit documentation, in a manner identified by the authority, validating:

- (1) The applicant's original eligible student loan balance upon graduation;
- (2) The current balance owed on the eligible student loan, including principal and interest;
- (3) Current payment amounts on the eligible student loan, including information on any federal student loan repayment plan described in 20 United States Code, Section 1098e;
- (4) For federal loans, information regarding the applicant's expected eligibility for the federal loan forgiveness program described in 34 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 685.219; and
- (5) Loans related to expenses for a health care professional who was trained or has credentials in a country other than the United States and its territories and who is working towards a professional license in this State, as determined by the advisory committee;

B. Submit an employer certification form certifying the applicant's employment status and salary or hourly wage; and

C. Submit a signed statement of intent in a form acceptable to the authority to work in the applicant's identified health care profession in the State for a minimum of 3 years after acceptance into the program.

2. Eligibility. To be considered for an award under this chapter, the applicant:

A. Must be a current resident of the State or become a resident of the State within 6 months of being selected as a recipient under the program;

B. Must, as determined by the authority:

(1) Be currently practicing as an eligible health care provider in the State; or

(2) Within 6 months of being selected as a recipient under the program, begin practicing as an eligible health care provider in the State;

C. Must possess an outstanding eligible student loan; and

D. May not be a current beneficiary of a state or federal loan repayment program. Applicants who were formerly beneficiaries of a state or federal loan repayment program or who intend to participate in such programs following completion of their 3-year commitment under this chapter are eligible to apply for an award.

§12955. Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program Advisory Committee

The Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program Advisory Committee is established pursuant to Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 18-G to make recommendations to the authority regarding the administration of the program.

1. Membership. The advisory committee consists of:

A. The State Economist, serving in an ex officio capacity;

B. A representative of the Department of Health and Human Services, appointed by the Commissioner of Health and Human Services; and

C. The following members, selected by and serving at the pleasure of the chief executive officer of the authority:

(1) Two representatives of organizations that provide primary and specialized health care services in multiple locations across the State, at least one of which must be an organization that provides services in rural areas;

(2) An individual, not employed by the State, who is an expert in the State's workforce;

(3) A representative of a college or university with a degree-granting program in a health care profession;

(4) A representative of an organization representing the interests of hospitals based in the State;

(5) A representative of an organization representing the interests of federally qualified health centers, as defined in 42 United States Code, Section 1395x(aa) (1993), based in the State;

(6) An individual representing the interests of health care professionals in the field of oral health;

(7) An individual representing the interests of health care professionals in the field of behavioral health;

(8) An individual representing the interests of health care professionals in the field of physical health;

(9) An individual representing or designated by the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations established under Title 5, section 25001;

(10) An individual representing health care professionals who were trained in or have credentials from a country other than the United States and its territories; and

(11) An individual representing direct care workers.

2. Duties. The advisory committee shall:

A. Make recommendations regarding the administration of the program;

B. Make recommendations for priority occupations for awards for the next application cycle; and

C. Make recommendations for a point system to determine awards based on, at a minimum, the following criteria:

(1) Priority and nonpriority occupations;

(2) Work location and whether or not the location is an underserved area, except as applied to nurse educators; and

(3) Student income-to-debt ratios.

§12956. Awards

1. Publication of priority occupations. The authority shall publicize, using a method determined by the authority and taking into consideration the recommendations of the advisory committee, the priority occupations for the upcoming application cycle.

2. Application cycle. The authority shall publicize the dates and deadlines of the application cycle using a method determined by the authority.

3. Award amounts. The authority shall maintain financial projections and, based on the recommendations of the advisory committee, establish the targeted number of annual awards to be made to applicants each year who meet the criteria described in section 12954. In accordance with the priority occupations and point system established by the advisory committee pursuant to section 12955, subsection 2, an annual award may not:

- A. Exceed \$30,000 annually;
- B. Exceed \$90,000 in aggregate or 50% of a recipient's outstanding eligible student loan debt at the time of application to the program, whichever is less; or
- C. Be awarded to a recipient for more than 3 years total.

4. Nurse educators and direct care workers. The authority and the advisory committee shall ensure that nurse educators and direct care workers are included among the occupations considered each year for priority consideration.

§12957. Annual recertification and limitations

In order to remain eligible for an award, a recipient must annually submit to the authority an employer certification form certifying the recipient's employment status and salary or hourly wage.

§12958. Rulemaking

The authority shall adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this chapter. Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

Sec. 3. Notification. The Finance Authority of Maine shall notify the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over innovation, development, economic advancement and business matters upon the capitalization of the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program Fund pursuant to this Act.

Sec. 4. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

FINANCE AUTHORITY OF MAINE

Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program Fund N324

Initiative: Provides base allocations to authorize the expenditure of funds received from private and public sources for the repayment of student loans for eligible health care providers and to pay the administrative costs of the fund.

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2021-22	2022-23
All Other	\$500	\$500
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$500	\$500

Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program Fund N324

Initiative: Provides base allocations to authorize the expenditure of funds received from federal sources for the repayment of student loans for eligible health care providers.

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND	2021-22	2022-23
All Other	\$500	\$500
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND TOTAL	<u>\$500</u>	<u>\$500</u>
FINANCE AUTHORITY OF MAINE		
DEPARTMENT TOTALS	2021-22	2022-23
FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND	\$500	\$500
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	\$500	\$500
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	<u>\$1,000</u>	<u>\$1,000</u>