

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3297

To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish the Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 18, 2021

Mr. CROW (for himself, Mr. BURGESS, Ms. ESHOO, and Mr. GUTHRIE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish the Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Public Health Work-  
5 force Loan Repayment Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE LOAN REPAYMENT**  
2 **PROGRAM.**

3 Part D of title III of the Public Health Service Act  
4 (42 U.S.C. 254b et seq.) is amended by adding at the end  
5 the following new subpart:

6 **“Subpart XIII—Public Health Workforce**  
7 **“SEC. 340J. LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM.**

8 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall estab-  
9 lish a program to be known as the Public Health Work-  
10 force Loan Repayment Program (referred to in this sec-  
11 tion as the ‘Program’) under which the Secretary awards  
12 loan repayment agreements described in subsection (c) to  
13 assure an adequate supply of and encourage recruitment  
14 of public health professionals to eliminate critical public  
15 health workforce shortages in local, State, and Tribal pub-  
16 lic health agencies.

17 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to participate in  
18 the Program, an individual shall—

19 “(1)(A) be accepted for enrollment, or be en-  
20 rolled, as a student in an accredited academic edu-  
21 cational institution in a State or territory in the  
22 final year of a course of study or program leading  
23 to a public health degree, a health professions de-  
24 gree, or a degree in computer science, information  
25 science, information systems, information tech-  
26 nology, or statistics and have accepted employment

1 with a local, State, or Tribal public health agency,  
2 or a related training fellowship, as recognized by the  
3 Secretary, to commence upon graduation; or

4 “(B)(i) have graduated, during the preceding  
5 10-year period, from an accredited educational insti-  
6 tution in a State or territory and received a public  
7 health degree, a health professions degree, or degree  
8 in computer science, information science, informa-  
9 tion systems, information technology, or statistics;  
10 and

11 “(ii) be employed by, or have accepted employ-  
12 ment with, a local, State, or Tribal public health  
13 agency or a related training fellowship, as recognized  
14 by the Secretary;

15 “(2) be a United States citizen;

16 “(3)(A) submit an application to the Secretary  
17 to participate in the Program; and

18 “(B) execute a written contract as required in  
19 subsection (c); and

20 “(4) not have received, for the same service, a  
21 reduction of loan obligations under section 428K or  
22 428L of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

23 “(c) CONTRACT.—The written contract referred to in  
24 subsection (b)(3)(B) between the Secretary and an indi-  
25 vidual shall contain—

1           “(1) an agreement on the part of the Secretary  
2           that the Secretary will repay, on behalf of the indi-  
3           vidual, loans incurred by the individual in the pur-  
4           suit of the relevant degree in accordance with the  
5           terms of the contract;

6           “(2) an agreement on the part of the individual  
7           that the individual will serve in the full-time employ-  
8           ment of a local, State, or Tribal public health agency  
9           or a related fellowship program in a position related  
10          to the course of study or program for which the con-  
11          tract was awarded for a period of at least 3 consecu-  
12          tive years;

13          “(3) an agreement on the part of the individual  
14          to relocate to a priority service area (as determined  
15          by the Secretary) in exchange for an additional loan  
16          repayment incentive amount to be determined by the  
17          Secretary;

18          “(4) a provision that any financial obligation of  
19          the United States arising out of a contract entered  
20          into under this section and any obligation of the in-  
21          dividual that is conditioned thereon, is contingent on  
22          funds being appropriated for loan repayments under  
23          this section;

1 “(5) a statement of the damages to which the  
2 United States is entitled, under this section for the  
3 individual’s breach of the contract; and

4 “(6) such other statements of the rights and li-  
5 abilities of the Secretary and of the individual as the  
6 Secretary determines appropriate, not inconsistent  
7 with this section.

8 “(d) PAYMENTS.—

9 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A loan repayment provided  
10 for an individual under a written contract referred  
11 to in subsection (b)(3)(B) shall consist of payment,  
12 in accordance with paragraph (2), for the individual  
13 toward the outstanding principal and interest on  
14 education loans incurred by the individual in the  
15 pursuit of the relevant degree in accordance with the  
16 terms of the contract.

17 “(2) PAYMENTS FOR YEARS SERVED.—

18 “(A) IN GENERAL.—For each year of serv-  
19 ice that an individual contracts to serve pursu-  
20 ant to subsection (c)(2), the Secretary may pay  
21 not more than \$35,000 on behalf of the indi-  
22 vidual for loans described in paragraph (1).  
23 With respect to participants under the Program  
24 whose total eligible loans are less than  
25 \$105,000, the Secretary shall pay an amount

1 that does not exceed  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the eligible loan bal-  
2 ance for each year of such service of such indi-  
3 vidual.

4 “(B) CONSIDERATIONS.—The Secretary  
5 may take actions in making awards under this  
6 section to ensure that—

7 “(i) not less than 50 percent of such  
8 awards are awarded to individuals who, at  
9 the time of entering into a contract under  
10 subsection (c), are not employed by a local,  
11 State, or Tribal public health agency or a  
12 related training fellowship, as recognized  
13 by the Secretary; and

14 “(ii) such awards are equitably dis-  
15 tributed among—

16 “(I) the geographical regions of  
17 the United States; and

18 “(II) local, State, and Tribal  
19 public health agencies.

20 “(3) TAX LIABILITY.—For purposes of the In-  
21 ternal Revenue Code of 1986, a payment made  
22 under this section shall be treated in the same man-  
23 ner as an amount received under section 338B(g),  
24 as described in section 108(f)(4) of such Code.

1       “(e) POSTPONING OBLIGATED SERVICE.—With re-  
 2 spect to an individual with a contract to serve under sub-  
 3 section (c), the date of the initiation of the period of obli-  
 4 gated service may be postponed or extended as approved  
 5 by the Secretary.

6       “(f) BREACH OF CONTRACT.—An individual who fails  
 7 to comply with a contract entered into under subsection  
 8 (c) shall be subject to the same financial penalties as pro-  
 9 vided for under section 338E for breaches of loan repay-  
 10 ment contracts under section 338B.

11       “(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

12               “(1) EDUCATION LOAN.—The term ‘education  
 13 loan’ means—

14                       “(A) any loan made, insured, or guaran-  
 15 teed under part B, D, or E of title IV of the  
 16 Higher Education Act of 1965;

17                       “(B) any loan made under subpart II of  
 18 part A of title VII, or part E of title VIII, of  
 19 this Act;

20                       “(C) a private education loan, as defined  
 21 in section 140 of the Truth in Lending Act; or

22                       “(D) any other loan funded, insured, or  
 23 guaranteed by any Federal agency that is not  
 24 the Department of Education that is issued di-  
 25 rectly to students.

1           “(2) FULL-TIME.—The term ‘full-time’, when  
2           used with respect to employment, means employ-  
3           ment—

4                   “(A) with a qualifying employer for not  
5           less than 30 hours per week; or

6                   “(B) with 2 or more qualifying employers  
7           for a total of not less than 30 hours per week.

8           “(3) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—  
9           The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the  
10          meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher  
11          Education Act of 1965.

12          “(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
13          is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section—

14                   “(1) \$100,000,000 for fiscal year 2021; and

15                   “(2) \$75,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022  
16          through 2026.”.

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