What You Need to Know About
The Ohio Dentist and Dental Hygienist Loan Repayment Programs

How do the Ohio loan repayment programs determine which clinicians will receive loan repayment?

Loan repayment contracts will be awarded to eligible applicants who practice in dental health resource shortage areas, as determined by the director of health, or federally designated dental health professional shortage areas (HPSAs). Applicants working in areas with high population to dentist ratios shall have the greatest priority. Other considerations are the applicant's background, career goals, the length of time the applicant is willing to provide dental services in a dental health resource shortage area and the amount of educational expenses for which reimbursement is being sought. To qualify, applicants must be dental or dental hygiene students in the final year of dental or dental hygiene school, dental residents in the final year of residency, or currently practicing general or pediatric dentists or dental hygienists. Persons who currently receive National Health Service Corps (NHSC) tuition or who have any other service obligations that will not be satisfied prior to signing a contract are not eligible.

What educational expenses are covered by the programs?

The loan repayment programs will pay all or part of the principal and interest of a government or commercial educational loan taken by an individual for expenses incurred while the individual was enrolled in an accredited dental or dental hygiene college, including tuition, fees, books and laboratory expenses, as well as room and board in amounts determined to be reasonable by the director of health.

How is community need determined?

The director of health designates dental health resource shortage areas in the state that experience special dental health problems and dentist practice patterns that limit access to dental care, while the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Shortage Designation Branch determines dental health professional shortage area (HPSA) designations. These designations may apply to a geographic area, one or more facilities within a particular area, or a population group within a particular area. The Ohio Department of Health has information on qualified sites and their recruitment needs. For additional information, e-mail BCHS@odh.ohio.gov or call (614) 466-4180. Visit the Ohio Dental Clinics Web site at http://ohiodentalclinics.com, an online resource for Ohio's safety net dental clinics, for potential job opportunities.

When will awards be made?

Funds are received from dentist and dental hygienist biennial registration fees paid in odd-numbered years and are awarded in even-numbered years. Applications will be available again in 2016.

What are the conditions of the awards?

Clinicians must provide dental services at the dental practice site(s) they have agreed upon, practicing either full-time (40 hours per week) or part-time (20-39 hours per week). Participants must serve Medicaid-eligible persons and provide dental services without regard to a patient's ability to pay. Limited teaching activities performed at the practice site identified in the clinician's contract may be permitted. *Clinicians who fail to complete their service obligation according to the terms specified in their contract will be responsible to repay a significant default penalty.*

How do clinicians apply?

Application packets will be available on the Oral Health Program Web site when the next application cycle begins. For more information about the loan repayment programs or eligible practice sites, contact Mona Taylor at (614) 466-4180, or via e-mail at Mona.Taylor@odh.ohio.gov.

Revised April 2015