

Human Services and Home Health Workers Student Loan Repayment Board

Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2022
3:00 – 5:00pm

Date of meeting: Tuesday, October 11, 2022

Start time: 3:00 pm

End time: 5:00 pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Members participating remotely		Vote 1*	Vote 2*
1	Tammy Mello (<i>chair</i>) – The Key Program, Inc.	X	X
2	Jule Gomes Noack – Horace Mann Educational Associates (HMEA)	X	X
3	Diane Gould – Advocates	X	X
4	Michael Weekes – Providers' Council	X	X
5	John Yazwinski – Father Bill's & MainSpring	-	X
6	Lisa Gurgone – Mystic Valley Elder Services	-	X
7	Lois Nesci – Gándara Center	X	X
8	Lisa Parent – Community Nurse Home Care	X	X
9	John Feehan – YWCA	A	X

* (X) Voted in favor; (O) Opposed; (A) Abstained from vote; (-) Absent from meeting or during vote

Proceedings

Jule Gomes Noack made a motion to accept the 9/26/2022 meeting minutes. Lois Nesci seconded the motion. Six of the seven present board members voted in favor. One board member abstained.

Tammy Mello began the discussion with the topic of eligible workers. The group discussed the inclusion of licensed workers. Diane Gould expressed concern about the exclusion of licensed clinicians. Michael Weekes asked if there was a way to quantify direct care workers in Massachusetts.

John Yazwinski joined at 3:40pm.

Leslie Darcy, Special Advisor to the Secretary, suggested a tiered approach for consideration, with a second round of applications for licensed clinicians.

John Yazwinski asked to prioritize unlicensed workers. Tammy Mello suggested the inclusion of language that allows for licensed clinicians that do not meet the eligibility criteria in other loan repayment programs.

Diane Gould raised the priority of the funding and suggested that if the priority of the funding is to focus on the least paid workers, unlicensed workers should benefit most.

Jule Gomes Noack suggested the focus should be on equity and front-line workers, and an additional eligible worker could be licensed clinicians.

John Feehan brought up that childcare workers are not listed. Leslie Darcy clarified that they would fall under other direct care staff job titles, and that there should be a consideration about whether the EEC-licensed facilities should be center-based or home-based.

The board discussed tying a worker's degree to the profession, and the use of subcontractors.

Michael Weekes asked about the work commitment and how the compliance process is tracked. Leslie Darcy provided an overview of the process.

Lisa Gurgone joined the meeting at 3:45pm.

Lisa Gurgone suggested that subcontractors are an important component of home care and should be included. Michael Weekes suggested that subcontractors could be limited to home care.

Tammy Mello called a vote on adding language to exclude licensed clinicians serving in settings from other loan repayment programs and adding language to specify that subcontractors are limited to home care settings. All board members voted in favor.

The conversation turned to the consideration of work commitment and payment schedule. John Feehan suggested the payment should be made sooner rather than later. Leslie Darcy clarified that the other loan repayment programs are designed to mitigate the need to recoup funds, and that these conditions are outlined as part of the application process.

John Feehan suggested a \$1,000 payment with no commitment. The board discussed the merits and concerns about this structure. Diane Gould suggested that loan repayment should be a significant amount of money, based on prior experience.

Tammy Mellow raised that the board may want to keep amounts consistent with the other loan repayment programs. Jule Gomes Noack echoed Tammy's suggestion of alignment with the other programs, and raised that a work commitment is a necessary component of the program, but could be three years for master's level workers.

The board discussed whether loan repayment assistance levels should be conditioned on degree type. Jule Gomes Noack suggested looking at career paths within the sector. Tammy Mello shared agency data related to staff debt.

John Yazwinski recommended a tiered approach. Leslie Darcy provided an overview on the reach of the other loan repayment programs. Lisa Gurgone suggested prioritization of workers who represent diverse populations. The board agreed they would review prioritization ahead of the next meeting.

The board discussed the inclusion of certificates, ultimately agreeing that certificates should not be included.

The board agreed that for the next meeting, they will decide on the award amounts and service commitment.

At 5:00pm the meeting concluded.