

Human Services and Home Health Workers Student Loan Repayment Board

Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2022
3:00 – 5:00pm

Date of meeting: Monday, November 7, 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	X
6	Lisa Gurgone – Mystic Valley Elder Services	X	X
7	Lois Nesci – Gándara Center	X	X
8	Lisa Parent – Community Nurse Home Care	X	X
9	John Feehan – YWCA	X	X

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

Proceedings

Michael Weekes made a motion to accept the 10/24/2022 meeting minutes. Lisa Gurgone seconded the motion. All nine of the present board members voted in favor.

Tammy Mello began the discussion with the topic of applicant priority criteria. The group discussed the criteria and the proposed definitions of diversity.

The group discussed the use of an essay as part of an applicant’s answer to the question of diversity. John Feehan raised that each applicant would have college debt, and therefore would likely be experienced in writing essays based on their time in college. Lois Nesci raised the possibility of requiring a short-answer questionnaire, rather than an essay, and shared her organization’s experiencing using writing samples.

Leslie Darcy, Special Advisor to the Secretary, suggested to the board that questions could be weighted differently.

Lois Nesci raised that there is a difference between race and cultural/linguistic competence that the board should discuss further.

The board discussed different ways to ask the prioritization questions, including drop down boxes and short answer questions.

John Feehan suggested using the top five languages for the Vaccine Equity Initiative (VEI) communities as a prioritization related to bilingual candidates. Michael Weekes raised that there is large variation even among the VEI communities, such as Boston.

Lois Nesci suggested that the board provide applicants the opportunity to add comments for additional context in their application. The board further discussed the components of a diversity / cultural competence question.

The board agreed that there would not be an essay, but rather short-answer questions, in addition to a drop-down menu for the bilingual question which will allow applicants the opportunity to select their language and ensure it matches their respective community needs. The board then discussed the weight of each question, with John Feehan suggesting a point for each prioritization.

Tammy Mello called a vote on the final prioritization, which included the following criteria: (1) Individual salary / area median income less than 50%; (2) Bilingual, with the top 5 VEI Community languages; (3) Cultural Competency with a short answer question of “How do you bring racial, cultural and/or linguistic, diversity, and/or competence to your role?; (4) Living in a VEI Community; (5) Working in a VEI Community; (6) Working in the field for 3+ years. All nine present board members voted in favor of the priority criteria.

Tammy Mello moved the discussion to key recommendations for the final report. Tammy Mello suggested tuition assistance and the importance of building a pipeline. Michael Weekes raised that there should be a program evaluation done. Jule Gomes Noack raised the need to make the sector more attractive to applicants. John Feehan raised the need to make education more accessible.

The board agreed that for the next meeting, they will decide on the final program recommendations.

At 5:00pm the meeting concluded.