

Human Services and Home Health Workers Student Loan Repayment Board

Meeting Minutes
September 12, 2022
3:00 – 5:00pm

Date of meeting: Monday, September 12, 2022

Start time: 3:00 pm

End time: 5:00 pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

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

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

Proceedings

Lois Nesci made a motion to accept the 8/30/2022 meeting minutes. Lisa Gurgone seconded the motion. All seven present board members voted in favor.

Tammy Mello began the discussion by raising the intent of the program. John Feehan suggested staff retention. Dianne Gould suggested the number of years of service, with a focus on diversity.

Michael Weekes stated that it should be focused on both retention and recruitment.

Tammy Mello raised the idea of using add-on monetary bonuses as an extra incentive and the need for bi-lingual clinicians. Lisa Gurgone suggested home health could benefit from the add-ons. Tammy Mello suggested the program could be focused on those with the highest debt.

Jule Gomes Noack suggested a focus on front-line supervisors.

The board agreed that the focus should be on recruitment and retention, and should be intentional about diversity. The board began the next topic of discussion: who is eligible, including what level of staffing.

Michael Weekes raised a loan repayment example from Illinois. In Illinois, eligible workers can be licensed or unlicensed.

Leslie Darcy provided an overview of other loan repayment programs in Massachusetts.

Lois Nesci raised that DDS workers were not present in the other programs.

Leslie Darcy provided an overview of the legislative language, spending requirements, and repercussions of non-payment by an awardee.

John Feehan suggested a condition of work experience and asked if this would be competitive in terms of timeline.

Tammy Mello raised that some clinicians may be receiving loan repayment elsewhere. Lisa Gurgone shared the same may be the case in home care.

Leslie Darcy provided an overview of the recently announced federal debt cancellation by the Biden administration.

Tammy Mello posed the idea of tying the loan repayment amount to the degree amount. Jule Gomes Noack agreed with that format.

John Feehan suggested a focus on a particular type of industry, or a targeting of entry.

Diane Gould spoke about the concern that not all employees could use loan repayment.

The group agreed that they will review the Illinois and Massachusetts Behavioral Health models in more detail and discuss the degree costs in the next meeting. The group brainstormed different roles to include, such as recovery coaches, registered nurses, childcare associates, direct care workers, among others. The group asked staff to create a template to catalogue board member feedback.

John Feehan raised that while positions may be important, the board could also focus on industries and years of experience.

The board agreed that for the next meeting, they will review the other loan repayment models and bring forward additional criteria ideas.

At 5:00pm the meeting concluded.