

Human Services and Home Health Workers Student Loan Repayment Board

Meeting Minutes

August 30, 2022

9:00 – 10:00am

Date of meeting: Tuesday, August 30, 2022

Start time: 9:00 am

End time: 10:00 am

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	Lisa Parent – Community Nurse Home Care	X
4	Diane Gould – Advocates	X
5	Michael Weekes – Providers' Council	X
6	John Feehan – YWCA	X
7	John Yazwinski – Father Bill's & MainSpring	X
8	Lisa Gurgone – Mystic Valley Elder Services	X
9	Lois Nesci – Gándara Center	X

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

Proceedings

Leslie Darcy, Special Advisor to the Secretary, called the meeting to order at 9:00am. She delivered welcoming remarks to the Board.

Board members briefly introduced themselves and their respective affiliations.

David Giannotti, Public Education and Communications Division Chief of the State Ethics Commission, provided the Board with a brief overview of the state's conflict of interest and ethics regulations. He explained that members of the Board are considered special state employees and should consult the State Ethics Commission with any questions or concerns related to potential conflicts of interest and any required disclosures.

Leslie Darcy provided an overview of the Open Meeting Law. She emphasized the importance of transparency and reminded members of the Board that documents and minutes from the Board's meetings are part of the public record.

Leslie Darcy provided an overview of the Board's legislative mandate and outlined the Board's decision points related to the \$16.5M in funds.

Tammy Mello asked a question about how the Board would be organized. Lois Nesci requested a motion to appoint Tammy Mello as Board Chair to facilitate the Board's organization. Jule Gomes Noack seconded the motion. The motion was approved by roll-call vote (see detailed record of votes above).

Michael Weekes inquired about how frequently the Board would convene and best modes of communication. Leslie Darcy answered that there is no statutory meeting cadence and is up to the Board to decide on this point.

Diane Gould inquired about what the output of the Board will be. Leslie Darcy answered that the Board will generate a document outlining the conditions of the student loan repayment, and that the Board will determine what information is necessary to reach agreement on said conditions.

Michael Weekes asked about examples of student loan repayment programs in other states and noted it may be helpful to see what research is available.

Jule Gomes Noack asked about what recommendations for student loan repayment are within the Board's scope. Leslie Darcy outlined that the following items are within the Board's scope: (1) type of eligible worker, (2) recipient income requirements, (3) loan repayment assistance levels, (4) work commitments necessary for eligibility. Leslie Darcy added that it is not within the Board's scope to develop the loan application.

Michael Weekes inquired about what metrics could be captured by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services loan vendor and that it would be helpful to know which workers will benefit from the loan repayment program. Leslie Darcy answered that the vendor could develop a report for the Board about demographic data and that the Board could be added to the Annual Report distribution.

Lois Nesci asked about the plan to schedule the upcoming Board meetings and that every two weeks for meetings would be acceptable. Leslie Darcy suggested a poll to determine best days/times for the Board and scheduling 4-6 meetings. Tammy Mello suggested scheduling 6 for two-hour windows. Tammy Mello suggested the Board could focus on one decision category each meeting.

Tammy Mello stated she would send a Roosevelt Institute article on debt and equity to the group.

Michael Weekes asked about additional research available. Leslie Darcy proposed a meeting with Michael Weekes to discuss the suggested research in more detail outside of the Board meeting.

John Feehan added that the Board should consider the purpose of the funds, whether that is to attract workers to a field or to help people pay off large debts, or to address racial equity. Lisa Parent agreed and stated that the Board should consider where the opportunities and where the gaps are in the workforce. Tammy agreed with Lisa's assessment of the gaps.

John Yazwinski stated the Board should consider what they would like these funds to accomplish for the workforce.

At 10:00am the meeting concluded.