

SENATE, No. 3644

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED APRIL 19, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator HOLLY T. SCHEPISI

District 39 (Bergen and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Volunteer Emergency Responder Loan Redemption Program in Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ACT** establishing a loan redemption program for certain
2 emergency responders and supplementing chapter 71C of Title
3 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. As used in this act:

9 “Authority” means the Higher Education Student Assistance
10 Authority established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71A-3.

11 “Eligible student loan expenses” means the cumulative
12 outstanding balance of the principal and interest due on student
13 loans used to cover the cost of attendance while enrolled in an
14 undergraduate degree or certificate program at an in-State
15 institution of higher education.

16 “Program” means the Volunteer Emergency Responder Loan
17 Redemption Program established pursuant to this act.

18 “Program participant” means a person who volunteers as an
19 emergency responder following the effective date of this act and
20 who meets the criteria of subsection a. of section 2 of this act, and
21 who has executed a contract with the Higher Education Student
22 Assistance Authority for participation in the loan redemption
23 program.

24 “Volunteer emergency responder” means an active member in
25 good standing of a volunteer fire company, a volunteer member of a
26 duly incorporated first aid, rescue or ambulance squad, or a member
27 of any county or municipal volunteer Office of Emergency
28 Management, provided the member’s official duties include
29 responding to a fire or emergency call.

30
31 2. a. There is established in the Higher Education Student
32 Assistance Authority a Volunteer Emergency Responder Loan
33 Redemption Program. To be eligible to participate in the program
34 an applicant shall:

35 (1) be a resident of the State;

36 (2) be an active volunteer emergency responder;

37 (3) have completed an undergraduate degree or certificate
38 program at an in-State institution of higher education; and

39 (4) provide the authority with a sworn or official statement from
40 the chief or other presiding officer with the volunteer fire company,
41 the volunteer first aid, rescue or ambulance squad, or the county or
42 municipal volunteer Office of Emergency Management, as
43 appropriate, attesting that the applicant is an active member in good
44 standing.

45 An individual may apply to the authority to participate in the
46 program in such manner as the authority prescribes and shall
47 include all information and documentation required by the
48 authority.

1 Authority. To be eligible to participate in the program, an applicant
2 must:

- 3 • be a resident of the State;
- 4 • be an active volunteer emergency responder;
- 5 • have completed an undergraduate degree or certificate
6 program at an in-State institution of higher education; and
- 7 • provide the authority with a sworn or official statement from
8 the chief or other presiding officer with the volunteer fire
9 company, the volunteer first aid, rescue or ambulance squad,
10 or the county or municipal volunteer Office of Emergency
11 Management, as appropriate, attesting that the applicant is
12 an active member in good standing.

13 The redemption of loans under the program would amount to
14 \$16,000 or the outstanding balance of eligible student loan
15 expenses, whichever is less, in the following manner:

- 16 • first year of active service following graduation from the
17 degree or certificate program, an amount up to \$4,000, but
18 not to exceed 25 percent of the original qualifying loan;
- 19 • second year of active service following graduation from the
20 degree or certificate program, an amount up to \$4,000, but
21 not to exceed 25 percent of the original qualifying loan; and
- 22 • third year of active service following graduation from the
23 degree or certificate program, an amount up to \$8,000, but
24 not to exceed 50 percent of the original qualifying loan.