Addendum #1 to RFA 67-94

Pennsylvania Primary Care Loan Repayment Program

This addendum is to provide answers to all questions per the RFA Potential Applicant letter.
Questions and Answers
To
RFA #67-94
Pennsylvania Primary Care Loan Repayment Program (LRP)

Service Commitment

Q1: I am emailing to clarify when an applicant qualifies to apply for the repayment program. For how long must you be employed by an approved practice site to apply for the loan repayment program? I have been working at an approved practice since July 2019 and am currently under a 1-year contract.

A1: Grant Agreements resulting from RFA #67-94 will have a service commitment period of July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2021. Participants will be contractually obligated to provide primary care services at their LRP-approved practice site for the entire service commitment period in exchange for loan repayment grant funding. Applicants not providing primary health care at an LRP-approved practice site since July 1, 2019 are not eligible to apply. Please refer to RFA #67-94, Paragraphs A.1.a & b, pages 3-5.

Q2: What constitutes time off/what will be deducted from 4 weeks per year (i.e. sick time, family sick time, holidays in which clinic is closed, earned vacation time, etc.)?

A2: Applicants who are awarded an LRP Grant Agreement are expected to provide either full or half time services 48 weeks per year as verified by their employer. Please refer to RFA #67-94, Paragraph A.1.a, page 4. Failure to complete the terms may be considered a breach of contract unless a prior suspension has been granted in writing. See also RFA #67-94, Paragraph B.3.a, pages 18-19.

Q3: I’m in a position that sets my work hours, e.g. it’s a 37.5 hours per week position vs. 40. I can request to change that, if needed, to meet the stipulations of the program. However, I’m hoping if I put that I’m currently doing the 37.5 that it would not bump me out of qualifying. I haven’t seen any spaces yet where I can make any comments/notes to the application.

A3: Full or half-time service commitment eligibility is verified with your employer. The 40-hour week is based on your normally scheduled hours as reported by your employer. Unpaid lunch periods can be included in your normally scheduled hours. You must still meet the minimum 32 hours of direct patient care requirement to be eligible for a full-time service award. Applicants who are normally scheduled for less than 40 hours per week, but more than 20, and who meet the minimum of 16 hours of direct patient care, will be eligible for a half-time service award. Please refer to RFA 67-94, Paragraph A.1.a, pages 3-5.
Q4: I am in the process of completing this application for submission and I would like to be able to apply for the fulltime LRP, but I have a special situation. I am a full-time employee, but the total number of hours that full-time employees work at my agency are 37.5; therefore, I am short 2.5 hours to be able to apply for the full-time LRP grant. I would like to know if I can qualify for the full-time LRP if I was to work at another agency the 2.5 hours needed to have the 40 hours each week. I would like some orientation regarding this matter.

A4: Please refer to Answer #3.

Q5: I work 32 hours a week at a health center in the outpatient office and on average one week of every 5 weeks, I rotate with my internal medicine colleagues by rounding on our patients in the hospital for 16 of those 32 hours. They are the same pool of patients with the same organization in the hospital setting. This qualifies as the full-time commitment, correct?

A5: Full-time practice is defined as not less than 40 hours per week, 48 weeks per year. Of the 40 hours per week, a minimum of 32 hours must be spent providing direct patient care at the LRP approve practice site. Up to 8 hours per week may be spent providing patient care in alternative settings as directed by the approved site. Full or half-time service commitment eligibility is determined based on your normally scheduled hours as verified by your employer. Please refer to RFA 67-94, Paragraph A.1.a, pages 3-5.

Q6: I plan to apply to the PA Primary Care Loan Repayment Program (67-94) as an LPC providing psychotherapy in an FQHC. I’m curious about the full time/part time stipulations, specifically if I applied (and was then accepted) as a full time employee, if it would be possible to shift to part time employment within the 2 year commitment period with the understanding that I would then ONLY be entitled to the part time pay back of max $30,000? Or if I apply as a full-time staff, if it’s critical that I REMAIN full time through the end of the 2 years. Or if I think I MIGHT switch to part time eventually (as there’s no talk/guarantee for this at this time), if I should indicate that and only request part time repayment?

A6: If granted a full-time award, the Grantee would be contractually obligated to provide continuous, full-time practice at an LRP-approve practice site for the entire period of July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2021. A half-time service commitment is not available to practitioners who are employed full-time. Please see RFA #67-94, Paragraph A.1.a, 1 & 2, page 4.

Q7: 1. If my commitment were to change to part time after being awarded as a full-time employee, is there a possibility to extend my contract and still utilize the money? 2. If #1 is not possible, would the rep be able to switch my submitted application to a part-time status? 3. If #2 is not possible, would I be able to resubmit an application for part-time status?

A7: Please refer to Answer #6.

Q8: If I was to provide these services to a qualified clinic on a part time basis—would that qualify? If so, how many hours per week?

A8: Half-time practice is defined as a minimum of 20 hours per week (not to exceed 39 hours per week), 48 weeks per year. The 20-hour week must include not less than two days per week. Of
the 20 hours per week, a minimum of 16 hours must be spent providing direct patient care at the LRP-approved practice site. Please refer to RFA #67-94, Paragraph A.1.a.2, page 4.

Q9: I have a question regarding the RFA for the Pennsylvania Primary Care LRP. My questions are in reference to the section "Introduction," sub-section "Service Commitment," sub-section "Half-Time Service Commitment" on the bottom of page 4 of the RFA. Can I qualify for this LRP if I provide services part-time (70%, 28 hours per week direct clinical services) at an LRP Approved Practice Site through a contractual agreement with another organization that is not a LRP site? That is, the Approved Practice Site provides funds to a separate organization to support my providing part-time clinical services at the Approved Site. The remainder of my time is spent with educational activities at the non-approved site.

A9: Only time spent providing primary care services at an LRP-approved practice site will count towards the service commitment. You would qualify for a half-time service award as long as you consistently work a minimum of 20 hours a week at the LRP-approved site and spend at least 16 hours a week providing direct patient care. Furthermore, LRP practitioners may be either employees or independent contractors of the practice site. Please refer to RFA #67-94, Paragraph A.3.b, page 15.

Q10: I am a PA student that is currently in my clinical rotation year. I was told about the application process for PAs in primary care through my program. I was reading the handout and it states the time frame in July 1st, 2019 - June 30th, 2021 and I would need to have my license by then. I do not graduate till August of 2020 so I cannot take my boards till then. Can I still apply?

A10: Not at this time. For RFA #67-94, LRP participation is contingent upon continuous practice at an LRP-approved practice site for the period of July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2021. Furthermore, to be eligible, an applicant must meet discipline and specialty-specific education, training and licensure requirements as of July 1, 2019. Future RFAs will clearly state the service commitment period for that application cycle. Please refer to RFA #67-94, Paragraphs A.1.a&b, pages 4-5.

Eligibility Requirements

Q11: I am a psychiatrist currently starting to do Medication Assisted Therapy for opioid use disorders. I just heard about the Loan Repayment program. My question is - I have been a psychiatrist for twenty-some years. My student loans are paid off. Am I not eligible for any incentive program? This seems like a bias toward younger practitioners. I am still going ahead with my plans to use MAT but wondered why we older folks don't get the same opportunity.

A11: The Pennsylvania Primary Care Loan Repayment Program provides loan repayment opportunities as an incentive to recruit and retain primary care practitioners willing to serve underserved Pennsylvania residents. The LRP does this by providing Grant funding to primary care practitioners employed in underserved areas to assist with repayment of their outstanding qualifying educational loans. The primary purpose of the LRP is to increase access to primary care services in underserved areas, not the repayment of educational loans. An applicant without qualifying educational debt would not be eligible for a loan repayment Grant. Please refer to RFA #67-94, Paragraphs A & A.1, pages 2-3.
Q12: Would I be ineligible by living in MD? I have worked in PA for 12 years and went to a PA school for my masters. So, my loan is PA based.

A12: You do not need to be a Pennsylvania resident to be eligible to apply to the LRP. Please refer to the Eligibility Requirements in RFA #67-94, Paragraph A.1.b, page 5.

Q13: I am a physician assistant in a family clinic in Harrisburg city. I am in the country under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival and was wondering if this would disqualify me from the program.

A13: To be eligible for the LRP an applicant must be a U.S. citizen or a U.S. national. Please refer to RFA 67-94, Paragraph A.1.b,1)i, page 5.

Q14: I just graduated from residency and started my first job on July 23rd, 2019. Would that make me ineligible?

A14: Yes. To be eligible for the LRP, an applicant must have provided primary health care at an LRP-approved practice site since July 1, 2019. Please refer to RFA 67-94, Paragraph A.1.b,1)iv, page 5.

Q15: I started a CRNP position at a qualifying facility on September 10th, 2019. Do I qualify for this program at this time if I started the job in sept?

A15: No. Please refer to Answer #14.

Q16: Question regarding 1A and overall service term: if I started with my non-profit in December 2019, am I eligible for this LRP cycle?

A16: No. Please refer to Answer #14.

Eligible Disciplines

Q17: I am a Licensed Dietitian in the state of PA. I received a notification from my medical director informing me of the loan repayment program. I currently work at federally designated Health Center in a low-income area. I want to see if I would qualify for this program and if so, I would like to submit an application for consideration.

A17: Licensed dietitians are not eligible for the LRP. Per RFA #67-94, Paragraph 1, Introduction, page 2 -3, only primary care practitioner licensed in the disciplines listed may apply to the LRP. Practitioners providing patient care in any other discipline are not eligible to apply.

Q18: When I read the eligibility criteria, it states that you must have a license. I am a Licensed Social Worker. Does that make me eligible to apply or do you have to be a licensed clinical social worker? It states in the document that “must be able to practice independently and unsupervised.” With an LSW, I can do that, so again am I eligible to apply?

A18: Licensed Social Workers are not eligible to apply to the LRP. Please refer to Answer #16. Please also refer to Paragraph A.1.b.1.iii, page 5.
Q19: I have my LSW with a masters in social work. I have been employed full time at a community mental health center in which I received the information about loan repayment from. I was wondering if I qualify with an LSW but not yet an LCSW? I have a caseload of clients who I see for mental health treatment weekly/bi-weekly and conduct the sessions on my own. Despite qualifying in that manner, I am unsure if a clinical license instead of only a license from Pennsylvania (LSW), is still required?

A19: Please refer to Answer #18.

Q20: I am writing to inquire about the Loan Repayment Program. I am an LSW--is that status eligible for the program? I am employed as a full-time therapist.

A20: Please refer to Answer #18.

Q21: Question Pertains to: 1. Introductions // c. Eligible Disciplines // 3) Primary Behavioral and Mental Health Care // v. Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs) Are there any exceptions pertaining to Eligible Disciplines? I am currently not an LCSW. I am an LSW. My license is overseen, monitored, given, and entrusted to me through the Pennsylvania State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors. My current role does not require an LCSW. As an LSW through the state of PA I am required to complete bi-annual training requirements to maintain my license as well as to remain in good standing with the Pennsylvania State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors. In the state of PA, I am required to obtain a Masters Level Degree to qualify to sit the licensure exam in the state of PA for an LSW. As an LSW I am qualified to supervise other master's level interns, as well as provide direct training to staff members. As an LSW I am able to provide therapeutic services (mental health and behavioral health services) to a case load of clients and their family members. As an LSW I am able to bill medical assistance and some other private insurance companies for my therapeutic services (mental health and behavioral health services). As an LSW I am currently completing my certification for both TF-CBT and AF-CBT. I am currently on track to complete my state required LCSW supervised hours to then be eligible to take the LCSW exam in the early part of 2020.

A21: There are no exceptions to the disciplines eligible to participate in the LRP. To be eligible, an applicant must meet discipline and specialty-specific education, training and licensure requires as of July 1, 2019. Future RFAs will clearly state the service commitment period for that application cycle. Please also refer to Answer #18.

Q22: I have a question regarding the application for the PA Primary Care Loan Repayment Program. I am currently a PA-S and do not graduate until July 2020 and plan on taking my boards sometime in August 2020. Am I eligible to apply for this program? I wanted to clarify since it doesn't specify PA-S from PA-C on the website and other candidates such as NPs have to be certified.

A22: Not while you are a student. To be eligible for the LRP, an applicant must meet discipline and specialty-specific education, training and licensure requirements as of July 1, 2019. Please refer to RFA#67-94, Paragraphs A.1.b&c.1.ii, pages 5-6.
Q23: I am currently working through the application process. I am a physician assistant student that will be graduating in May 2020, and I am very interested in this program. Are students eligible to apply for these positions? I wasn't sure what to put for the "Organization Name" on the practitioner application, as I am not affiliated with any.

A23: Please refer to Answer #22.

Grant Payments

Q24: When is first grant payment made? If not given until June, will reward given reflect deduction of payments made over the course of the beginning of the year (decreasing debt) until reward is dispersed?

A24: Grant payments are made in two equal installments at the end of each year of the service commitment with the first payment made at the end of the first year of the service commitment or at the execution of a fully-signed Grant Agreement, whichever is later. The participant must provide verification that the entire amount of the grant payment was applied to the qualifying educational loans that were approved and incorporated into the Grant Agreement within 90 days of receipt of the payment. Please refer to RFA #67-94, Paragraph A.2.a, page 11.

Qualifying Loans

Q25: My loans have been consolidated into two loans. Would I be able to apply with those?

A25: Consolidated or refinanced loans will only be considered for repayment if each original loan would have been considered a qualifying educational loan and the consolidated or refinanced loan is identified as a student or educational loan from a government or commercial lender. Consolidated or refinanced loans that include non-qualifying debt are not eligible for repayment. Please refer to RFA #67-94, Paragraph A.3.a, page 12.

Q26: I'm applying for the PA loan repayment primary care program, and saw that covered loans include "commercial loans." I just wanted to ask if that includes private loans through lenders such as Wells Fargo. If so, what exactly is the disbursement information do you need?

A26: Commercial loans are loans that are obtained from a commercial lending institution, such as a bank or credit union. If a loan is considered private, meaning not a federal loan, obtained from a commercial lender, it should be eligible. Eligibility cannot be determined until the loan documentation is reviewed. A Disbursement Report will provide the amount and date that the loan(s) was originally disbursed and will be used to verify that the loan was contemporaneous with the education that was required for the licensure for the discipline under which you are applying to the LRP. The information required for the Disbursement Report is provided in RFA #67-94, Paragraph A.3.a.2.ii, page 14.

Documentation and Verification of Loans

Q27: I am trying to figure out how to fill out the loan information part of the application. I do have a consolidated loan under the same account number which is both subsidized and unsubsidized, so I am assuming that I just add the two loans together correct? As far as academic period, these
were consolidated from my undergraduate and graduate career so would you like me to put the start date for undergraduate and end date for my graduate career? I am also having a great deal of difficulty trying to find a disbursement report. I do have a loan details document from MyFedLoan but it does not have the account number, but I could also provide a billing statement that does have the account number. Is this sufficient?

A27: All loans with the same lender and having the same account number should be listed on one line. The balance listed will be the total amount still owed on that account. The academic period should indicate the time you were in school when the loan(s) were incurred. For consolidated or refinanced loans, that would be the time that the original loan was disbursed. If the loan covers multiple years of education, the dates will be from the earliest date you were in school to the latest date you were in school when the loan(s) were incurred. The day can be estimated as long as the month and year are correct. A Disbursement Report verifies the original date and amount of the loan. For a consolidated or refinanced loan, this must include information on the original loans, not the date the consolidation was disbursed. If the loans are federal loans, a National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) Aid Summary Report will satisfy the requirements for the Disbursement Report. Not all lenders will call this document a Disbursement Report. The important thing is that the documentation must clearly show the date and amount of the original loan to verify that the loan was contemporaneous with the education that was required for the licensure for the discipline under which you are applying to the LRP. All the documentation taken together, the Account Statement and Disbursement Report, must provide a clear connection from the origination of the loan to the current (within 30 days of the LRP application submission) outstanding balance. If account numbers are not present on the Disbursement Report, there must be a way to identify the loan is the same as the one on the Account Statement, such as a loan program name, the origination date and/or amount, or even the current balance as reported in the NSLDS. LRP Administration may contact the applicant for more information regarding the loan documentation if necessary. Please refer to RFA #67-94, Paragraph A.3.a.2, pages 13-14 and Paragraph C.2.g, pages 28-31.

Qualifying Practice Sites

Q28: I am a registered nurse (RN) working for the PA Department of Health. We take care of patients who have no medical insurance in our State Health Centers. Providing infants, children and adults with vaccines. We screen for Tuberculosis and provide treatment. Also, STD /HIV screening and treatment. I worked as a Community Health Nurse at Lancaster and Dauphin County State Health Centers for four years before becoming a Community Health Nurse Supervisor. It looks like the Pennsylvania DOH- State Health Centers are not listed on your LRP sites. Do I qualify to apply for this PA Primary Care Loan Repayment Program?

A28: Pennsylvania State Health Centers do not qualify as an LRP-approved practice site because they do not offer comprehensive primary care services. Please refer to RFA #67-94, Paragraph A.3.b, pages 14-16. Furthermore, Registered Nurses are not an eligible discipline for the LRP. Refer to Answer #17.

Q29: I also wanted to inquire about the eligibility of the agency I work at--it is a rape crisis center. Is this kind of agency eligible for the program?
A29: To be eligible to participate in the LRP, a practice site must provide comprehensive primary care medical, dental or behavioral health services in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) or to a patient population that consists of at least 30% low-income patients. Additionally, behavioral health facilities must be licensed as an outpatient provider by the PA Department of Human Services Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Please refer to RFA #67-94, paragraph A.3.b, pages 14-15. More information can also be found in the LRP Practice Site Reference Guide at: https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Health-Planning/Pages/Loan-Repayment.aspx

Q30: I am a physician assistant student who will be graduating in August 2020. I’m interested in participating in the loan repayment program. I wanted to know what I would need to do to get started. Is there anything I need to do through you in order to get hired at these locations or do I contact the locations directly? Do I apply for a job at the designated locations, then apply for the loan repayment? Do I apply for repayment after I’ve worked for two years or do I apply upon being hired? Also how frequently does the list change of the locations that are part of the repayment? I have the list as of 2019 however I would hate to apply to a place and then have them be removed for some reason.

A30: The PA Department of Health does not place practitioners in positions at LRP-approved practice sites. Contract negotiations are solely the responsibility of the practitioner and are between the practitioner and the practice site. For the purposes of RFA #67-94, an applicant must have been continuously employed at an LRP-approved practice site since July 1, 2019, in order to qualify for the LRP. Future RFAs will clearly state the service commitment period for that application cycle. A list of LRP-approved practice sites is published as of the date of the RFA and sites approved subsequent to the publishing of the RFA will appear in the drop-down menu within the Practitioner Application. Practitioner applications cannot be submitted until the practice site at which they are working is available in the drop-down menu. The Pennsylvania Primary Care Career Center (www.paprimarycarecareers.org) can assist in finding placement at a community health center that is approved for loan repayment. Please refer to RFA #67-94, Paragraph A.3.b, pages 14 -16.

Awards

Q31: Does maternity leave extend length of time in agreement or is this only time taken beyond 12 weeks?

A31: A participant’s LRP service commitment will be suspended for maternity leave up to 12 weeks with prior written approval. Maternity leave that exceeds 12 weeks will extend the participant’s LRP service commitment end date. Please refer to RFA #67-94, Paragraph B.3, pages 18-19.

Q32: If agreement is breached, how much is repaid? Is the total debt/grant allowance repaid or is the amount of grant that has been distributed repaid considering 1/2 of total is dispersed each year?

A32: Any participant who fails to complete the terms of the obligated service commitment will be considered to have breached the Grant Agreement and be required to repay the amount of loan repayment Grant assistance received within 90 days of the breach of the Grant Agreement. Please refer to RFA #67-94, Paragraph B.3.b, pages 19-20.
**Application Instructions – Loan Information**

**Q33:** When listing the loans, what time period is needed for the academic period? Is it looking at the time frame of the loans or when I was enrolled in my college programs?

**A33:** The academic period should indicate the time you were in school when the loan(s) were incurred. For consolidated or refinanced loans, that would be the time that the original loan was disbursed. If the loan covers multiple years of education, the dates will be from the earliest date you were in school to the latest date you were in school when the loan(s) were incurred. The day can be estimated as long as the month and year are correct.

**Other**

**Q34:** I just wanted to check to see if there is a program for nurses working in underserved areas as well.

**A34:** Not through the PA Department of Health. Loan repayment for nurses who practice at health care facilities with a critical shortage of nurses is available through the U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program. More information can be found at: [https://bhw.hrsa.gov/loans-scholarships/nurse-corporps](https://bhw.hrsa.gov/loans-scholarships/nurse-corporps).

**Q35:** Why not extend the program to Registered Nurses working in SUD fields? I have a current certification in addictions nursing and have worked with young pregnant Opioid-addicted women for nearly 3 years. I plan to continue to help these patients in the current FQHC organization. I deserve assistance as well.

**A35:** The LRP is funded in part through a grant from the U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA). As such, the LRP must abide by the requirements of the grant which specifies which disciplines may be included in the loan repayment program. Registered nurses are not considered an eligible HRSA discipline and, therefore, do not qualify for the LRP. Individuals certified as Alcohol and Drug Counselors (CADC), Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselors (CAADC), Certified Addictions Registered Nurses (CARNs), and CARN – Advanced Practice (CARN-AP) are eligible to apply to the PA Substance Use Disorder Loan Repayment Program (SUD LRP). More information on the SUD LRP can be found at: [https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Health-Planning/Pages/SUD-LRP.aspx](https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Health-Planning/Pages/SUD-LRP.aspx). See also Answer #17.