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## **An Act To Authorize the Social Work Education Loan Repayment Program**

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec. 1. 10 MRSA c. 110, sub-c. 2-B** is enacted to read:

### **SUBCHAPTER 2-B**

### **SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM**

#### **§ 1038. Social Work Education Loan Repayment Program**

**1. Definitions.** As used in this subchapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

- A. "Fund" means the Social Work Education Loan Repayment Fund established in subsection 4.
- B. "Program" means the Social Work Education Loan Repayment Program established in subsection 2.

**2. Social Work Education Loan Repayment Program.** The Social Work Education Loan Repayment Program is established for the purpose of increasing the number of social workers practicing in the State.

**3. Criteria.** For an applicant to participate in the program, the applicant must:

- A. Be a social worker licensed under Title 32, chapter 83;
- B. Have completed a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree in social work from an accredited school of social work within 3 years prior to the date the applicant's application is received by the authority;
- C. Possess an outstanding education loan relating to the degree;
- D. Practice in an underserved practice area, including but not limited to the practice of social work:
  - (1) In a public or private child welfare or family service agency;
  - (2) In a public interest law service;
  - (3) In a public child care facility;
  - (4) In a public service for individuals with disabilities;

(5) In a public service for the elderly;

(6) In a public service for veterans; or

(7) At an organization exempt from taxation under the United States Internal Revenue Code, Section 501(c)(3).

Priority consideration must be given to social workers practicing in a public or private child welfare or family service agency, in a public service for the elderly or in a public service for individuals with disabilities;

E. Submit an application to the authority, which must include but is not limited to information concerning academic performance, awards and special honors and community involvement; and

F. Have signed a statement of intent in a form acceptable to the authority to work as a social worker in the State for a minimum of 3 years after acceptance into the program.

**4. Social Work Education Loan Repayment Fund.** The Social Work Education Loan Repayment Fund is created as a nonlapsing, interest-earning, revolving fund to carry out the purposes of this subchapter.

A. The authority may receive, invest and expend on behalf of the fund money from gifts, grants, bequests and donations in addition to money appropriated or allocated by the State and any federal funds received by the State for the benefit of social workers who have outstanding education loans. Money received by the authority on behalf of the fund must be used for the purposes of this subchapter. The fund must be maintained and administered by the authority. Any unexpended balance in the fund carries forward for continued use under this subchapter.

B. Costs and expenses of maintaining, servicing and administering the fund and of administering the program may be paid out of amounts in the fund.

**5. Administration.** The program and the fund are administered by the authority. The authority shall repay the loans of up to 3 applicants each year who meet the criteria in subsection 3 in the amount of up to \$5,000 for each applicant. The authority may adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this subchapter. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

Effective September 12, 2009