



ADVOCACY SUMMIT

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Advocating for Equity Where
We Live, Work and Play

42 USC 295f-1: Public Health Workforce Loan REPAYMENT PROGRAM

Background

State and local health departments are the backbone of the American public health system. Americans count on these individuals to monitor health status, prevent disease outbreaks, provide scientific expertise, and respond to crises.¹ However, due to consistent underfunding, budget cuts, and the loss of essential staff, recent figures estimate that an additional 80,000 full-time employees are needed just to provide basic services to our communities.² These issues in the hiring and retention of public health professionals are due in large part to the rising costs of education faced by those seeking a public health degree.

We ask that you support the funding of the Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program (PHWLRP) which, under the Public Health Service Act, authorizes \$100,000,000 in FY-2024 to help address the critical need for government public health employees.³

Loan Repayment

If funded, the PHWLRP would support public health graduates who work for *three consecutive years* in government public health at local, state, or tribal public health departments, with student loan repayment of up to \$50,000 a year and not to exceed \$150,000.³

Eligible recipients must be in the final semester of, or have graduated within the last 10 years from, a relevant public

health degree program (including epidemiology, laboratory sciences, data systems, data science, data analytics, informatics, statistics, or other subject matter related to public health).¹

Pilot Program

If funded, the PHWLRP would also establish the Bio-Preparedness Workforce Pilot Program, providing loan repayment support to public health professionals with expertise in infectious disease and emergency preparedness and response.¹

The pilot program will be evaluated and reported on for its impact on recruitment and retention of public health professionals.¹

Timeline

- 2006:** Originally included in Pandemics and All Hazards Preparedness Act — **Never Funded**⁴
- 2010:** Authorized in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act — **Never Funded**⁵
- 2023:** Updated and Reauthorized in the Consolidated Appropriations Act — **Awaiting Funding**⁶

¹ de Beaumont Foundation. Staffing up: Investing in the public health work force. Accessed 8 Sep. 2024. <https://debeaumont.org/staffing-up/>

² "Public Health Workforce." American Public Health Association - For Science. For Action. For Health., www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/public-health-workforce. Accessed 29 Aug. 2024.

³ Consolidated Appropriations Act, Pub L No 117-103, 136 Stat 4459 (2023).

⁴ Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act, Pub L No 109- 417, 120 Stat 2831 (2006).

⁵ Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, Pub L No. 111-152, 124 Stat 1029 (2010).

⁶ Tait, Margaret & Burke, Emily & Leshan, Tim & Casalotti, Adriane & Krasna, Heather & Leider, Jonathon. (2024). Federal Student Loan Debt in Public Health and the Opportunities for Loan Repayment Programs. Public health reports (Washington, D.C. : 1974). 333549231223712. 10.1177/00333549231223712.