

# STATE OF ARKANSAS



Asa Hutchinson  
*Governor*

**Department of Career Education**  
*Arkansas Rehabilitation Services*  
Alan McClain, *Commissioner*

Charisse Childers, Ph.D.  
*Director*

June 17, 2019

Arkansas Legislative Council  
Honorable Senator Cecile Bledsoe, Chair  
Honorable Representative Jeff Wardlaw, Chair  
State Capitol, Room 315  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Re: Arkansas Rehabilitation Services  
Forgiveness of Student Loan Program – 2019 Update

Dear Senator Bledsoe and Representative Wardlaw,

This letter is in fulfillment of Section 10 of Act 121 of 2019 requiring Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) to report to the Arkansas Legislative Council regarding vocation rehabilitation counselors employed by ARS who are eligible for, and have enrolled in the agency's Forgiveness of Student Loan program incentive. The program has been very successful in enhancing the agency's ability to recruit and retain vocational rehabilitation counselors. You may recall that eligible ARS vocational rehabilitation counselors may elect to enroll each calendar year in the student loan forgiveness benefit for a total of five years and \$10,000 in loan payback assistance. As part of the benefit's program obligation, a VR counselor agrees to stay employed at ARS for two years for every year that a student loan payment is made on their behalf.

On June 14, 2019, notification of the program's benefit was sent out to every ARS counselor and district manager throughout the state.

**Currently, there are two counselors taking advantage of this benefit.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this status report to the Legislative Council and for your generous support of this program. If you have any questions, please contact my Deputy Commissioner, Joseph Baxter at [joseph.baxter@arkansas.gov](mailto:joseph.baxter@arkansas.gov) or at 501-296-1614.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan McClain".

Alan McClain  
Commissioner

Cc: Joseph Baxter, Deputy Commissioner  
Lynn Franquemont, Director of Community Service Programs