

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to the law as it existed prior to this session of the General Assembly.

1 State of Arkansas
2 86th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2007
4

As Engrossed: H3/7/07 H3/8/07 H3/23/07

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 2549

5 By: Representative L. Smith
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7

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE ARKANSAS *SOCIAL WORK*
10 STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM; AND FOR OTHER
11 PURPOSES.
12

Subtitle

13 *AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE ARKANSAS SOCIAL*
14 *WORK STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM.*
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18 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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20 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code title 6, Chapter 81, is amended to add an
21 additional subchapter to read as follows:

22 SUBCHAPTER 16 – ARKANSAS *SOCIAL WORK* STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM.
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24 6-81-1601. Creation.

25 (a) There is created the Arkansas *Social Work* Student Loan Forgiveness
26 Program to be administered by the *Department of Higher Education*.

27 (b) The program shall provide loan assistance to eligible students for
28 upper-division undergraduate and graduate study.
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30 6-81-1602. Purpose.

31 The primary purpose of the Arkansas *Social Work* Student Loan
32 Forgiveness Program is to:

33 (1) Attract capable and promising students to the *social work*
34 profession;

35 (2) Increase employment and retention of persons who are working
36 toward or who have received either a baccalaureate degree or a master's



1 degree in social work;

2 (3) Provide opportunities for persons making mid-career
3 decisions to enter the social work profession; and

4 (4) Increase the opportunity for those in need of services
5 provided by social workers in this state to obtain appropriate services.

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7 6-81-1603. Definitions.

8 As used in this subchapter, "agreed eligible social work services
9 provider" means a state agency or community-based entity that:

10 (1) Provides social work services;

11 (2) Is approved by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating
12 Board as a social work services provider for purposes of this subchapter; and

13 (3) The student participating in the loan forgiveness program
14 under this subchapter has agreed to work for in the social work profession as
15 provided in § 6-81-1604(a).

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17 6-81-1604. Eligibility – Loan forgiveness.

18 (a) To be eligible for a program loan, a candidate shall:

19 (1) Be a full-time student at the upper-division undergraduate
20 or graduate level in a social work program approved by the Council on Social
21 Work Education leading to either a baccalaureate degree or a master's degree
22 in social work;

23 (2) Have declared an intent to work:

24 (A) In social work with an agreed eligible social work
25 services provider; and

26 (B) For at least the number of years for which a
27 forgivable loan is received;

28 (3)(A) If applying for an undergraduate forgivable loan, have
29 maintained a minimum cumulative grade point average of at least a 2.5 on a
30 4.0 scale for all undergraduate courses in social work.

31 (B) Renewal applicants for undergraduate loans shall have
32 maintained a minimum cumulative grade point average of at least a 2.5 on a
33 4.0 scale for all undergraduate work and have earned at least twelve (12)
34 semester credits per term, or the equivalent; and

35 (4)(A) If applying for a graduate forgivable loan, have
36 maintained an undergraduate cumulative grade point average of at least a 3.0

1 on a 4.0 scale or have attained a Graduate Record Examination score of at
2 least one thousand (1,000).

3 (B) Renewal applicants for graduate loans shall have
4 maintained a minimum cumulative grade point average of at least a 3.0 on a
5 4.0 scale for all graduate work and have earned at least nine (9) semester
6 credits per term, or the equivalent.

7 (b) An undergraduate forgivable loan may be awarded for two (2)
8 undergraduate years, not to exceed six thousand dollars (\$6,000) per year.

9 (c) A graduate forgivable loan may be awarded for two (2) graduate
10 years, not to exceed nine thousand five hundred dollars (\$9,500) per year.

11 (d) In addition to meeting criteria specified in subsection (a) of
12 this section, a loan recipient at the graduate level shall:

13 (1) Hold a baccalaureate degree from a school or department of
14 social work at any college or university accredited by the Council on Social
15 Work Education; and

16 (2) Not have received an undergraduate forgivable loan as
17 provided for in subsection (b) of this section.

18 (e) The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall adopt rules
19 necessary to administer the program, including without limitation, the
20 following:

21 (1) A forgivable loan must be repaid within ten (10) years after
22 completion of a program of studies;

23 (2) Credit for repayment of an undergraduate or graduate
24 forgivable loan shall be in an amount not to exceed six thousand dollars
25 (\$6,000) in loan principal plus applicable accrued interest for each full
26 year of eligible service in the social work profession;

27 (3) Any forgivable loan recipient who fails to perform social
28 work services under the employment of the agreed eligible social work
29 services provider is responsible for repaying the loan plus accrued interest
30 at eight percent (8%) annually; and

31 (4)(A) Forgivable loan recipients may receive loan repayment
32 credit for social work services performed while under the employment of the
33 agreed eligible social work services provider at any time during the
34 scheduled repayment period.

35 (B) However, such repayment credit shall be applicable
36 only to the current principal and accrued interest balance that remains at

1 the time the repayment credit is earned.

2 (C) No loan recipient shall be reimbursed for previous
3 cash payments of principal and interest.

4 (f) This section shall be implemented only as specifically funded.

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/s/ L. Smith

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