

## **Title 6. Education**

### **Chapter XIII. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Division of Workforce Services, Department of Commerce**

#### **Subchapter A. Generally**

#### **Part 490. Rules for Administration of the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Forgiveness of Student Loan Program — Acts 2021, No. 282**

**Codification Notes.** This part as promulgated prior to codification into the Code of Arkansas Rules provided as follows:

#### **"INTRODUCTION**

Act 282 of 2021, effective July 28, 2021, amended and re-authorized the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Forgiveness of Student Loan Program, which assists eligible employees with the repayment of qualifying student loans. The Forgiveness of Student Loan Program (Program) was originally authorized by Act 1275 of 2007. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS), as the administrator of the Program, is authorized by Act 282 to promulgate rules regarding Program eligibility, payments, and management."

#### **Subpart 1. Generally**

##### **6 CAR § 490-101. Eligibility.**

Individuals who meet the criteria below are eligible for participation in the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Forgiveness of Student Loan Program:

- (1) Employment with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services;
- (2) Completion of a six-month probationary period, beginning with the first day of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services employment;
- (3) Proof the individual has incurred student loan debt resulting from obtaining a bachelor's or master's degree in the field of vocational rehabilitation:
  - (A) Documentation of the name and address of the student loan creditor;

(B) A payoff amount for the loan owed to the creditor, current within thirty (30) days of the individual's application to the program; and

(C) Documentation, such as a transcript or diploma from an educational institution, confirming that the individual received a degree in one (1) of the following fields:

(i) Rehabilitation counseling;

(ii) Social work;

(iii) Psychology;

(iv) Disability studies;

(v) Education, including special education;

(vi) Counseling, other than rehabilitation counseling (master's level only); and

(vii) Counselor education (master's level only); and

(4) Execution of an agreement by which the individual acknowledges, among other requirements, that Arkansas Rehabilitation Services will not issue payments under the program if the individual resigns or is terminated for cause.

**Authority.** Arkansas Code § 25-30-206.

### **6 CAR § 490-102. Program payments.**

Payments made by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services under the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Forgiveness of Student Loan Program will satisfy the following criteria:

(1) Payments will be issued directly to the student loan creditor identified by the individual at the time of application to the program;

(2) Each installment will be the lesser of:

(A) Two thousand dollars (\$2,000); or

(B) The current loan payoff amount;

(3)(A) Each installment is conditioned upon the participant's continual employment over the two (2) years preceding the date that the payment is issued.

(B) For example, an individual who is determined eligible on August 1 of State Fiscal Year 2022 must be employed until August 1 of State Fiscal Year 2024 in order for an installment to be issued;

(4) Participants may receive up to five (5) installments, not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), under the program; and

(5) Total payments under the program in a given state fiscal year shall not exceed eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000).

**Authority.** Arkansas Code § 25-30-206.

### **6 CAR § 490-103. Program management.**

Pursuant to Acts 2021, No. 282, the following rules for Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Forgiveness of Student Loan Program management will apply:

(1) Individuals may submit an application for eligibility once per state fiscal year;

(2)(A) Each subsequent application must include all documents required to demonstrate eligibility.

(B) However, subsequent applications may refer to documents submitted with the original, approved application regarding the individual's degree in the field of vocational rehabilitation; and

(3)(A) In all events, eligible participants must recertify their loan payoff amounts within thirty (30) days of a payment coming due.

(B) For example, an individual whose application was approved on August 1 of State Fiscal Year 2022 must submit a current loan payoff amount thirty (30) days prior to August 1 of State Fiscal Year 2024.

(C) Program staff will send a written reminder of this requirement to eligible participants at least sixty (60) days before a payment comes due.

**Authority.** Arkansas Code § 25-30-206.