

## **Healthcare Employees Recruitment & Retention Program Guidelines**

The Healthcare Employees Recruitment & Retention Program exists to assist the following State agencies in recruiting and retaining healthcare workers:

- Department of Corrections
- Department of Disabilities and Special Needs
- Department of Health and Environmental Control
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Juvenile Justice
- Department of Mental Health
- Department of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School

The agencies receive no special funding for this program; instead, agencies deciding to use the program must use funds from their existing budgets. The program applies to employees in Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions in the critical needs healthcare classification titles listed below:

- EA10 Licensed Practical Nurse
- EA15 Licensed Practical Nurse II
- EA20 Registered Nurse I
- EA30 Registered Nurse II
- EA60 Nurse Practitioner I
- EA65 Nurse Practitioner II
- EA70 Nurse Administrator/Manager I
- EA80 Nurse Administrator/Manager II
- EA90 Nurse Administrator/Manager III
- EB12 Occupational Therapist
- EB15 Physical Therapist I
- EB20 Physical Therapist II
- EB25 Pharmacist I
- EB30 Pharmacist II
- EB35 Physician's Assistant
- EB60 Speech and Hearing Therapist I
- EB65 Speech and Hearing Therapist II
- Mental Health Professionals in the GA50, GA60, and GA70 classifications.
- EB70 Respiratory Therapist I
- EB75 Respiratory Therapist II
- EB95 Health Educator I
- EB96 Health Educator II
- EB97 Health Educator III
- GA80 Psychologist I
- GA90 Psychologist II
- GB60 Social Worker II
- GB65 Social Worker III
- GB70 Social Worker Director
- KB35 Nutritionist I
- KB40 Nutritionist II
- KB45 Nutritionist III
- KB50 Nutritionist IV
- UB26 Psychiatrist
- UB07 Physician
- UB28 Dentist
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The agency head may request the inclusion of additional healthcare classifications from the Division of State Human Resources. The program consists of compensation and education initiatives for agencies to use to aid in recruiting and retaining healthcare workers. Agencies are required to report annually on their use of the initiatives.

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## Compensation Initiatives

### Bonus Guideline Extension

Agencies are allowed to spend state, federal, and other sources of revenue to provide lump-sum bonuses to aid in recruiting and retaining healthcare workers in specified critical needs healthcare jobs. Employee bonuses shall be approved by the State Human Resources Director and may not exceed an accumulation of more than \$10,000 in bonuses per year. Critical needs jobs could include jobs located in rural areas, areas with high turnover, or areas where the agency has experienced recruiting difficulties. The specific ways in which bonuses may be awarded are as follows:

- **Sign-on Bonus**

Agencies may give sign-on bonuses to healthcare recruits at the beginning of their employment with the agency. These recruits cannot include employees moving from other agencies by transfer, promotion, or demotion. Sign-on bonuses are limited to one per year. At the agency's discretion, a sign-on bonus may be divided to pay new employees a portion after one month of employment in the position and the remainder of the bonus after one year of successful employment in the position.

- **Referral Bonus**

Agencies may give a referral bonus to current employees for referring a successful candidate for a critical needs or hard-to-fill healthcare position after a minimum of one month of employment in the position. Referred candidates cannot include employees moving from other agencies by transfer, promotion, or demotion. In addition, referred candidates cannot be current employees of the hiring agency in any capacity, to include temporary, temporary grant, research grant, time-limited project or contract employees.

- **Retention Bonus**

Agencies may give a retention bonus to a current employee in a critical needs or hard-to-fill healthcare position as an incentive to retain the employee. The employee must be in receipt of a bona fide job offer from another employer, either within or outside of State government. Employees are limited to one retention bonus per year, which may be paid in a lump-sum or in separate installments. An employee with a bona fide job offer who receives a base salary increase for retention is not eligible to receive a retention bonus. An employee may not receive a retention bonus while in probationary or trial status.

## **Education Initiatives**

### **Leave for Class**

Agencies may provide paid educational leave for any employees in FTE positions to attend class while enrolled in healthcare degree programs that are related to the agency's mission.

All such leave is at the agency head's discretion to determine if the healthcare degree program is related to the agency's mission. Employees receiving leave for class are limited to such leave associated with no more than ten credit hours per semester. This leave may be used when a class cannot be scheduled after work hours and the agency cannot rearrange the employee's work schedule.

A service commitment will be required between the employee and the agency. The service commitment will require the participant to work two years with the agency for every one full academic year in which leave for class is received. If the employee separates before the completion of the service agreement, the employee would be expected to repay the agency on a pro-rata basis.

### **Paid Practicum**

State agencies may allow employees to be paid while working on a practicum or required clinical experience towards completion of a healthcare degree. State agencies may permit field placements at other state agencies to be considered work time for participating employees.

### **Loan Repayment**

State agencies may enter into an agreement with Psychiatrists, Psychologists, and Nurses employed in those positions to repay them for their outstanding student loans associated with completion of a healthcare degree. The employee must be employed in a critical needs area, which would be identified at the agency head's discretion. Critical needs areas could include rural areas, areas with high turnover, or where the agency has experienced recruiting difficulties. Agencies may pay these employees up to 20% of their outstanding student loan or \$7,500, whichever is less, each year over a five-year period. Payments will be made directly to the employee at the end of each year of employment. The agency will be responsible for verifying the principle balance of the employee's student loan prior to issuing payments.

### **Tuition Assistance**

The Tuition Assistance Guidelines are expanded to:

1. Increase tuition reimbursement from a maximum of six credit hours to 10 credit hours per semester;
2. Allow probationary employees to participate in tuition programs (waive the six-month waiting period); and

3. Provide tuition pre-payment instead of tuition reimbursement for employees willing to pursue a degree in a healthcare program. An agency may pay up to 50% of an employee's tuition through tuition pre-payment. The remaining tuition could be reimbursed to the employee after successful completion of the class.

All other requirements in the Tuition Assistance Guidelines will apply. An agreement will be required between the employee and the agency. If the employee fails to successfully complete the class, the employee will be required to repay the agency.

The following programs are approved for the Leave for Class, Paid Practicum, and Tuition Assistance Initiatives. An agency head may request the approval for inclusion of additional healthcare degree programs from the Division of State Human Resources.

- Associate Degree in Respiratory Care
- Associate Nursing Degree
- Bachelors of Science in Nursing
- Bachelors of Science in Health Education
- Bachelors of Science in Nutrition
- Bachelors of Science in Occupational Therapy
- Bachelors of Science in Physical Education
- Bachelors of Science in Physical Therapy
- Bachelors of Science in Speech and Hearing Therapy
- Bachelors of Science in Social Work
- Bachelors of Science in Speech Pathology
- Doctor of Dental Medicine
- Doctor of Medicine (MD)
- Doctor of Nursing (ND)
- Doctor of Pharmacy
- Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Science (Ph.D.)
- Doctor of Psychology
- Doctor of Psychiatry
- Doctor of Social Work
- LPN Nursing Diploma
- Master of Public Health
- Masters in Nursing
- Masters of Science in Nursing
  - Acute Care Clinical Specialist
  - Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
  - Community/Public Health Clinical Nurse Specialist
  - Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
- Masters of Science (Physician's Assistant)
- Masters of Science in Health Education
- Masters of Science in Speech Pathology
- Masters of Science in Social Work
- Registered Nurse/ Bachelors in Science in Nursing