
Wisconsin's Health Professions Loan Assistance Programs

Dentists & Dental Hygienists

OVERVIEW

The Wisconsin Health Professions Loan Assistance Program (HPLAP) was established to assist rural and underserved communities in recruiting and retaining primary care health and dental professionals. Dental care providers who agree to work in federally designated shortage area are eligible for up to \$50,000 in education loan repayment assistance through this competitive program.

The HPLAP has two funding sources, with slightly different criteria. One portion of the program is funded solely by State funds and another portion uses federal funds. Most of the specifications for the awards provided under these two funding sources are the same. However, those awards that are partially funded by federal matching dollars have some additional requirements, which are noted below.

Wisconsin Office of Rural Health
310 N. Midvale Blvd, Suite 301
Madison, Wisconsin 53705



Terms and Eligibility

Dentists

Dental Hygienists

General Terms

<i>Maximum Award</i>	\$50,000	\$25,000
<i>Service Obligation</i>	3 years in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area (from the date award contract is signed)	3 years in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area (from the date award contract is signed)
<i>Annual Repayment</i>	One third of the total award paid each year	One third of the total award paid each year
<i>Requirements</i>	<p>During each of the three years of the award, dentists must provide dental services to a certain minimum number of recipients of Medicaid or BadgerCare (unduplicated) not to fall below a certain minimum amount of claims paid.</p> <p>The program requires a minimum of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 recipients and \$8,000 in claims paid during the first year of the award. • 70 recipients and \$11,000 in claims paid the second year. • 90 recipients and \$15,000 in claims paid the third year. 	<p>Dental hygienists must be employed in a dental office that provides the same Medicaid and BadgerCare services required of dentist applicants.</p>

Eligibility

<i>Applicants</i>	<p>Must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dentist as defined in S. 447.01 (7), Stats. • Licensed under Ch. 447, Stats. • Practicing General or Pediatric Dentistry. <p><u>Note:</u> Includes proximate or anticipated graduation or licensure. Being a graduate of a Wisconsin school is not required.</p>	<p>Must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dental hygienist licensed under S. 447.04 (2), Stats. • Practicing General or Pediatric Dentistry. <p><u>Note:</u> Includes proximate or anticipated graduation or licensure. Being a graduate of a Wisconsin school is not required.</p>
<i>Shortage Areas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA): designated by the federal Department of Health and Human Services as having a shortage of dental professionals. (A map and list of eligible shortage areas is available from the Wisconsin Office of Rural Health and from the Health Resources and Services Administration website: http://hpsafind.hrsa.gov/) • Federally qualified health centers or community health centers • American Indian reservations or trust lands of an American Indian tribe. 	
<i>Practice Sites</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All practice sites must be General or Pediatric dental care sites. • For awards partially funded by federal dollars (see OVERVIEW), sites must also: (1) be public or non-profit; and (2) provide a sliding fee scale for persons with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level. 	

Loan Repayment

Qualifying Loans

Health education assistance, Plus, national direct student, Stafford, health professions student, supplemental for students, state educational financial aid office guaranteed student, university-sponsored student, trust fund, scholastic, foundation, and any other loans determined to be exclusively for educational purposes, obtained by the applicant from a public or private lending institution for education related to obtaining a dentistry or dental hygienist degree. Home equity loans and personal loans from individuals, such as friends or family members, are not considered qualifying loans.

Principal Balance

- May include capitalized interest that has been appropriately made for the allowable student loans
- Award based on balance as of the application date

Payments

- Made once per year at the beginning of each of the three years of the service obligation period
- Two-party checks are made out to the lender(s), signed by the recipient, and forwarded to the lender(s) by the recipient
- Recipients must document within 60 days of issuance that the check(s) have been applied to the loans
- Payments can be made for principal and interest or principal only
- Payments cannot be applied to back interest or penalties

Tax Liability

- Awards are **not** taxable at either the federal or state level

Application

Annual Deadline

Applications are considered and awarded on a rolling basis, based on available funds.

Establishing Priorities Among Competing Applicants

Practicing in an eligible area does not guarantee an award. Should there be more applicants than available funds, the following criteria are used to rank applications:

Factors Related to the Practice Area

- Extremely high need for dental care - Eligible areas with higher needs are given greater priority. Need is determined from the area's HPSA score; a higher score indicates a greater need.
- Per capita income - Areas with lower values are given greater priority.
- Financial and other support for applicant recruitment & retention – Applicants providing evidence of greater employer and community support are given greater priority.
- Geographic distribution - Applications are evaluated against previous awards and other current applicants to assure a relatively wide geographic distribution of awards.

Factors Related to the Applicant

- Educational loan balance - Applicants with higher loan balances are given greater priority.
- Applicant retention - Applicants with a greater likelihood to remain in the area for the loan repayment obligation period and after are given greater priority, illustrated in their personal essay.

Agreement

General Provisions

- Contract between recipient and the University of Wisconsin
- Recipients must work full-time (32 clinic hours/week)
- Recipients must work at least 45 weeks per year
- Recipients must treat Medicare and Medicaid patients (see *General Terms: Requirements*)
- Payments to recipients must be applied to the appropriate loans
- Recipients must document that the terms of the agreement are being met. This will be monitored by the Wisconsin Office of Rural Health through phone, mail, and on-site contacts.

Federal Funding - Additional Provisions

- For awards partially funded by federal funds (see OVERVIEW), additional provisions apply:
- Recipients must work in public or non-profit sites
 - Recipients must accept Medicare assignment and must utilize the site's sliding fee scale for those persons with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level
 - Recipients must be U.S. citizens and have no judgment liens against their property for a debt to the U.S.

Penalties for Breach of Agreement

- Breach during first year or second year, repayment due of:
- The greater of either \$31,000 **or**
 - All award funds previously received **plus** \$7,500 for each month not served in the entire three year contract

Waiver of Penalties

- Breach during third year, repayment due of:
- \$7,500 for each month not served
 - Recipient is unable to perform professional duties due to permanent physical or mental impairment
 - Verified by appropriate board-certified specialist(s)

Suspension of Agreement

- Under certain conditions, agreement can be suspended without penalty for a limited period of time
- Extended leave required which exceeds the maximum seven weeks off allotted each year
- Examples: Extended illness or family leave, termination of employment requiring job search in and relocation to another eligible practice site

Additional Considerations

While not a stipulation of the contract with the State of Wisconsin program, the federal National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Loan Repayment Program prohibits concurrent obligations to another entity. Therefore, recipients cannot participate in both the NHSC and Wisconsin programs simultaneously.

Contact Info

For additional information, please contact:

Kevin Jacobson
Wisconsin Office of Rural Health
310 N. Midvale Blvd., Suite 301
Madison, Wisconsin 53705
(608) 261-1888 or 1-800-385-0005
FAX: (608) 261-1893
kmjacobson2@wisc.edu

Further information and the online application is available at: http://www.worh.org/hplap_info