

year under section 7692 of title 38, United States Code, as enacted by subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consider the anticipated needs of the Veterans Health Administration during the period 2 to 6 years in the future.”

§ 7693. Eligibility; preferences; covered costs

(a) **ELIGIBILITY.**—An individual is eligible to participate in the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program if the individual—

(1) will be eligible for appointment under section 7401 of this title to work in an occupation described in section 7692 of this title;

(2) owes any amount of principal or interest under a loan, the proceeds of which were used by or on behalf of that individual to pay costs relating to a course of education or training which led to a degree that qualified the individual for the position referred to in paragraph (1); and

(3) is—

(A) recently graduated from an accredited medical or osteopathic school and matched to an accredited residency program in a medical specialty described in section 7692 of this title; or

(B) a physician in training in a medical specialty described in section 7692 of this title with more than 2 years remaining in such training.

(b) **PREFERENCES.**—In selecting individuals for participation in the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program under this subchapter, the Secretary may give preference to the following:

(1) Individuals who are, or will be, participating in residency programs in health care facilities—

(A) located in rural areas;

(B) operated by Indian tribes, tribal organizations, or the Indian Health Service; or

(C) affiliated with underserved health care facilities of the Department.

(2) Veterans.

(c) **COVERED COSTS.**—For purposes of subsection (a)(2), costs relating to a course of education or training include—

(1) tuition expenses;

(2) all other reasonable educational expenses, including expenses for fees, books, equipment, and laboratory expenses; and

(3) reasonable living expenses.

(Added Pub. L. 115-182, title III, §303(a), June 6, 2018, 132 Stat. 1464; amended Pub. L. 115-251, title II, §211(a)(12), Sept. 29, 2018, 132 Stat. 3176.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 115-251 substituted “will be eligible for appointment” for “is hired”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

PREFERENCE

Pub. L. 115-182, title III, §303(d), June 6, 2018, 132 Stat. 1467, as amended by Pub. L. 115-251, title II, §211(b)(6)(A), Sept. 29, 2018, 132 Stat. 3176, provided that: “In granting preference under section 7693 of title 38, United States Code, as enacted by subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall determine whether

a facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs is underserved based on the criteria developed under section 401 of this Act [38 U.S.C. 8110 note].”

§ 7694. Specialty education loan repayment

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Payments under the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program shall consist of payments for the principal and interest on loans described in section 7682(a)(2) of this title for individuals selected to participate in the Program to the holders of such loans.

(b) **FREQUENCY OF PAYMENT.**—The Secretary shall make payments for any given participant in the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program on a schedule determined appropriate by the Secretary.

(c) **MAXIMUM AMOUNT; WAIVER.**—(1) The amount of payments made for a participant under the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program may not exceed \$160,000 over a total of 4 years of participation in the Program, of which not more than \$40,000 of such payments may be made in each year of participation in the Program.

(2)(A) The Secretary may waive the limitations under paragraph (1) in the case of a participant described in subparagraph (B). In the case of such a waiver, the total amount of payments payable to or for that participant is the total amount of the principal and the interest on the participant’s loans referred to in subsection (a).

(B) A participant described in this subparagraph is a participant in the Program who the Secretary determines serves in a position for which there is a shortage of qualified employees by reason of either the location or the requirements of the position.

(Added Pub. L. 115-182, title III, §303(a), June 6, 2018, 132 Stat. 1465.)

§ 7695. Choice of location

Each participant in the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program who completes residency may select, from a list of medical facilities of the Veterans Health Administration provided by the Secretary, at which such facility the participant will work in a medical specialty described in section 7692 of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 115-182, title III, §303(a), June 6, 2018, 132 Stat. 1465.)

§ 7696. Term of obligated service

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—In addition to any requirements under section 5379(c) of title 5, a participant in the Specialty Education Loan Repayment Program must agree, in writing and before the Secretary may make any payment to or for the participant, to—

(1) obtain a license to practice medicine in a State;

(2) successfully complete post-graduate training leading to eligibility for board certification in a specialty;

(3) serve as a full-time clinical practice employee of the Veterans Health Administration for 12 months for every \$40,000 in such benefits that the employee receives, but in no case for fewer than 24 months; and