

**THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND INFORMATION**  
**Loan Repayment and Scholarship Program**  
**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

The FAQs answer commonly asked questions tailored toward applicants and grantees. For additional information about the program, visit [Loan Repayments, Scholarships, & Grants - HCAI](#).

**General**

**1. What is a “Grant Guide” and where can it be located?**

Both applicants and grantees can find their program’s grant guide on the program’s webpage by visiting [Loan Repayments, Scholarships, & Grants - HCAI](#) page, and navigating to the program for which grant guide you wish to view. The program grant guide can be found by clicking the blue “Grant Guide” button located at the top of the page. The grant guide will provide program eligibility and requirements for the program.

**2. Do all applicants receive an award?**

Unfortunately, no. HCAI’s programs are competitive, and each application cycle is unique, and the number of applicants awarded depends on the number of eligible applications received as well as the availability of funding.

**3. If I have been working in a qualified facility for several years already, can I backdate my contract to include time that I have already worked?**

No. You cannot use prior employment to shorten your service obligation. The start date of your 24-month service obligation will begin after you are awarded and will be identified in the contract. All contracts awarded during a cycle will have the same contract start date.

**4. What is a “Service Obligation”?**

“Service Obligation” means a loan repayment/scholarship program commitment in which the recipient has a contractual obligation to practice their profession at an approved practice site in California, for a period of one (1) to three (3) years depending on the program. Please refer to the program’s webpage and/or grant guide at [Loan Repayments, Scholarships, & Grants - HCAI](#).

**5. Should I use my work or personal contact information?**

HCAI encourages you to use your personal contact information (i.e., email address, phone number and residential address) when completing or updating your “Profile”.

**6. How can I ensure I receive communications and updates from HCAI?**

To ensure you receive email communications from HCAI (incl. Funding eApp & DocuSign), please make sure to check your email's "Spam"/"Trash" folders, and add the following email addresses to your approved senders list:

- [no-reply@hcai.ca.gov](mailto:no-reply@hcai.ca.gov)
- [HWDD-LRP@hcai.ca.gov](mailto:HWDD-LRP@hcai.ca.gov)
- [HWDD-SCH@hcai.ca.gov](mailto:HWDD-SCH@hcai.ca.gov)
- [HPEF-Email@hcai.ca.gov](mailto:HPEF-Email@hcai.ca.gov)
- [esign@oshpd.ca.gov](mailto:esign@oshpd.ca.gov)

**Eligibility**

**7. Can I work at multiple practice sites?**

Yes. You may work at multiple sites so long as they meet eligibility requirements for your program. Applicants/grantees with multiple practice sites must provide an Employment Verification Form (EVF) for each practice site. A practice site is a distinct physical location where you provide direct patient/client care at. If you work for one employer, but at two different physical locations, you will need to provide two separate EVFs.

**8. What types of loans are eligible for a loan repayment program?**

Qualifying educational loans are any outstanding U.S. government (federal, state, or local) and U.S. commercial (i.e., private) educational loans for undergraduate or graduate education obtained by the applicant for school tuition, other reasonable educational expenses, and reasonable living expenses in pursuit of their degree.

Please refer to the "Debt Eligibility" section in your program's grant guide at [Loan Repayments, Scholarships, & Grants - HCAI](#) for more information.

**9. What is Cost of Attendance (COA)?**

Cost of Attendance is a document that is provided at the time of a scholarship application, by the applicant from their educational institution, that outlines the costs associated to attend the program for one (1) year.

**10. What types of educational expenses are eligible for a scholarship?**

Educational expenses that are eligible to be reported on the Cost of Attendance include:

- Tuition and fees
- On-campus room and board (or a housing and food allowance for off-campus students)
- Allowances for books, supplies, transportation, loan fees, and, if applicable, dependent care

**11. Can grantees participate in another loan repayment or scholarship program that has a service obligation?**

No. You can only have one (1) service obligation (i.e., loan repayment or scholarship) at a time, and they cannot overlap. Applicants must attest that they are not receiving any type of assistance from another program while under an HCAI program agreement. Applicants currently participating in another program who will not complete their service obligation before the start of the grantee's agreement date of the year of application are not eligible to apply. This may include employer-sponsored, local, regional, state and/or national programs.

**12. If I am currently participating in the National Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF), am I eligible?**

Yes. Applicants/grantees enrolled in or currently pursuing loan forgiveness through the PSLF are eligible to apply. PSLF is not considered a service obligation. Grantees granted PSLF must provide supporting documentation from PSLF and their lender demonstrating the date and amount forgiven. Award amounts are subject to review and adjustment by HCAI and may result in a proration of award (for partial PSLF forgiveness), request for withdrawal from HCAI program (for full PSLF forgiveness), and/or return of funds to HCAI for any duplicative funds received.

**13. If I am currently participating in an income-based repayment plan, am I eligible?**

Yes, applicants/grantees currently participating in an income-based repayment plan are eligible to apply.

**14. Do applicants have to be a U.S. citizen to apply?**

Applicants do not need to be U.S. citizens to apply, however, they must be eligible to work in the United States and be fully licensed (if required) in California for the terms of the grantee agreement.

## **Application**

**15. If awarded, do I have to re-apply each year?**

Yes. Applicants must apply each year and must not have an existing service obligation.

**16. What is considered direct patient/client care?**

Direct patient/client care is the provision of health care services provided directly to individuals being treated for or suspected of having physical or mental illness. Direct patient/client care includes both; face-to-face and telehealth based preventative care and first-line supervision. This includes assessment, treatment, counseling, procedures, self-care, patient/client educational and documentation relating to patient/client encounters with regards to physical or mental health services.

**17. How long is the application review process?**

Once the application cycle closes, all applications are thoroughly reviewed to ensure all required information and documents are included. Please refer to the “Key Dates” section of your programs grant guide at [Loan Repayments, Scholarships, & Grants - HCAI](#).

**18. What are the common reasons for an application to be deemed ineligible?**

- Required documentation is **not**:
  - Completed
  - An official HCAI form
  - An acceptable file format (i.e., .jpg, .doc, .docx, and .pdf)
  - Signed by required parties
  - Providing the required amount of direct patient/client care hours
  - Submitted by the application cycle deadline
- Practice site is not eligible for the program
- Non-qualifying student loan debt
- Missing required professional license/registration/certification to practice your profession

**19. What are some common reasons for an application not to be awarded?**

- Insufficient funding
- Did not meet the scoring criteria

**20. May I request an extension to file my application if I cannot obtain all required documents by the deadline?**

No. All documents must be submitted by the application due date. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

**21. Do I have to be bilingual in order to apply for the loan repayment/scholarship program?**

No, you do not have to be bilingual to apply for the loan repayment/scholarship program.

**22. If I am not awarded this application cycle, may I apply for the next open application cycles?**

Yes. We encourage all eligible applicants to reapply if they were not awarded in the previous year/cycle.

**23. If I am NOT selected to be a loan repayment/scholarship recipient and I re-apply, do I need to resubmit my entire application, or can you reuse the materials I have already submitted?**

Applicants must resubmit a complete application packet each time they apply. We do not reuse or return any documentation previously submitted.

## **Award**

### **24. How will I know if I have been awarded?**

All applicants who have been awarded will be **contacted via email from [no-reply@hcai.ca.gov](mailto:no-reply@hcai.ca.gov)** with an official award notification. This will be followed by a separate email from DocuSign ([esign@hcai.ca.gov](mailto:esign@hcai.ca.gov)) containing their official grant agreement for review, completion and signature within 14 days of the award notification. Applicants will have seven (7) days to accept and sign their agreement or decline their contract via DocuSign.

### **25. If awarded, do I have to stay with my current employer for the duration of my service obligation?**

No, grantees can change employers. However, grantees must notify HCAI of changes in employment and continue to meet the terms of their contract. Grantees are required to contract their Program Officer to verify employment eligibility and submit a new Employment Verification Form (EVF) for each new employer. HCAI staff must be notified within 30 days of any employment changes. Reasons can include change in worksite, duties, or hours.

### **26. If chosen for an award, will funds be paid directly to my loan provider?**

No, funds will be disbursed directly to grantees via a mailed paper check, to the mailing address on file in the “Profile” section of their [HCAI Funding eApp Portal](#). **Direct deposit is not available.**

### **27. If funds are paid to me directly, will I be liable for taxes?**

HCAI does not provide tax advice and this section may not be construed as tax advice from HCAI. Grantee should seek advice from an independent tax consultant regarding the financial implication(s) of any funds received from HCAI. HCAI does not withhold taxes from payments to Grantees.

Payments made under certain State Loan Repayment Programs may be exempt from federal taxes under 26 U.S.C. § 108(f)(4):

“In the case of an individual, gross income shall not include any amount received under section 338B(g) of the Public Health Service Act, under a State program described in section 338I of such Act (enacted by Pub L. 108-357, § 320(a) in 2004), or under any other State loan repayment or loan forgiveness program that is intended to provide for the increased availability of healthcare services in underserved or health professional shortage areas (as determined by such State).”

### **28. What is a Progress Report?**

The purpose of a progress report is to confirm the grantee is complying with the terms of their agreement and working the required number of direct patient/client care hours. Each program has progress reports that a grantee must complete over the course of their service obligation. The number of progress reports will

vary based on the program. Please refer to your program's grant guide for progress report due date(s) and/or refer to the "Payments/Deliverables" tab on your Funding eApp account.

**29. How do I access and submit my Progress Report?**

Grantees will receive an email when their progress report is available from HCAI eApp ([no-reply@hcai.ca.gov](mailto:no-reply@hcai.ca.gov)). Grantees will be able to click on the link in the notification and/or navigate to their profile here [HCAI Funding eApp Portal](#). Once the progress report is completed and signed, the grantee will log back into their account to upload the progress report and submit.

**30. If awarded a loan repayment, when will I receive my award?**

Payments will be made in arrears, after every one-year of service. Payment is contingent upon receipt and approval of progress reports. Upon approval of progress reports, a request of funds is sent to HCAI's accounting for payment processing. The entire process may take up to 8-10 weeks from the date HCAI approves the progress report to the issuing of payment by the State Controller's Office (SCO).

If corrections or additional documentation is needed, you will be contacted by HCAI staff. Once the grantee receives the check, it is their responsibility to deposit the payment in their bank account and issue a payment to their lender.

**31. If awarded a scholarship, when will I receive my award?**

Payments will be made in advance, upon the execution of the grantee's contract. At time of contract execution, request of funds is sent to HCAI's accounting for payment processing. The entire process may take up to 8-10 weeks from the date HCAI approves the progress report to the issuing of payment by the State Controller's Office (SCO).

If corrections or additional documentation is needed, you will be contacted by HCAI staff. Once the grantee receives the check, it is their responsibility to deposit the payment in their bank account and issue a payment to their lender.

**32. Do I have to show that I have applied all payments received from HCAI to my educational loan and/or, do I have to apply all the funds I receive at once or can I use it to make monthly payments?**

HCAI reserves the right (upon request) to require grantees to provide proof, that all funds received were used to pay towards qualifying educational debt, and grantees must continue to make their periodic payments on all outstanding loans or adhere to arrangements made with your lender. The grantee may apply all funds at once or make monthly payments as long as the entire award amount is only used and applied to their outstanding educational debt.

**33. What happens if a grantee is unable to fulfill the terms of their contractual obligation and complete their service obligation?**

Grantees may be considered in breach of their contract if they are unable to comply with the terms of their agreement and will not be eligible to apply to any HCAI programs in the future. Please refer to Section G: Breach of your grant agreement for additional information.