

USACE - New York District

Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP)

Information Sheet

Description:

The New York District Student Loan Repayment Program is an annual program funded by the District's Divisions under the authority of 5 U.S.C. 5379, 5 C.F.R. Part 537, and DoDI 1400.25, Vol. 537. This program is locally controlled and based on availability of funding by the individual Divisions. The purpose of this program is to repay federally made, insured, or guaranteed student loans to attract job candidates or retain highly qualified current employees. **Any eligible employee may apply**; however, the criteria for selection is based on several key factors, such as: hard to fill and retain career fields; federal years of service, necessary educational disciplines, and supervisor endorsement. These factors are evaluated annually and are all based on attrition trends. The opening of the SLRP application period may vary from year to year.

A position may be considered "hard to fill" based on several factors, including:

- The success of recent efforts to recruit suitable candidates for similar positions, including indicators such as offer acceptance rates, the proportion of positions filled, or the length of time required to fill positions
- Recent turnover in the same or similar positions, or
- Any special qualifications needed for the position

References:

- a. ER 690-1-1217, Hiring and Retention Incentives, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 10 July 2017
- b. HR-11, NAD Matrix of Delegated Authorities Policy, 13 March 2018

Criteria/Eligibility:

Any employee (as defined in 5 U.S.C. 2105) is eligible to apply under the following criteria:

1. Permanent or term (with at least 3 years left in term position) workforce member;
and
2. Must have a federally insured student loan.

Loans eligible for payment are those made, insured, or guaranteed under parts B, D, or E of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 or a health education assistance loan made or insured under part A of title VII or part E of title VIII of the Public Health Service Act.

Loans made or insured under parts B, D, and E of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 include the following:

- Federal Family Education Loans (FFEL)
 - Subsidized Federal Stafford Loans
 - Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loans
 - Federal PLUS Loan
(The parent must be named on the loan from a federal lending institution and making payments on a current outstanding balance for children only. Not for a spouse or private student loans.)
 - Federal Consolidation Loans
- William D. Ford Direct Loan Program (Direct Loans)
 - Direct Subsidized Stafford Loans
 - Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loans
 - Direct PLUS Loans
(The parent must be named on the loan from a federal lending institution and making payments on a current outstanding balance for children only. Not for a spouse or private student loans.)
 - Direct Subsidized Consolidation Loans
 - Direct Unsubsidized Consolidation Loans
- Federal Perkins Loan Program
 - National Defense Student Loans (made before July 1, 1972)
 - National Direct Student Loans (made between July 1, 1972, and July 1, 1987)
 - Perkins Loans (made after July 1, 1987)
- Loans made or insured under part A of title VII or part E of title VIII the Public Health Service Act include the following:
 - Loans for Disadvantaged Students (LDS)
 - Primary Care Loans (PCL)
 - Nursing Student Loans (NSL)
 - Health Professions Student Loans (HPSL)
 - Health Education Assistance Loans (HEAL)

Limitations:

Although the student loan is not forgiven, if selected, payments will be made to the loan holder in a lump sum payment of up to a maximum of \$10,000 for an employee in a calendar year. You must apply to the SLRP each year and if selected, a new Continued Service Agreement (CSA) must be completed. Being accepted into the program one year does not guarantee acceptance in subsequent years.

NOTE: If you are currently receiving federal student loan repayment funding from your organization (or any other organization), by Federal law, the employee can only receive \$10,000 per calendar year towards student loan repayment. As long as you are not receiving \$10,000 per calendar year from your organization or another organization, you may apply to the SLRP for the difference between \$10,000 and what you are currently receiving.

Although applicants can apply for the SLRP funding up to the maximum of \$10,000 per calendar year, the amount approved can differ, based upon availability of funding. Student loan repayment total cannot be more than \$60,000 for any one employee.

Continued Service Agreement (CSA):

An employee receiving the SLRP benefit must:

- Complete and sign a new CSA to remain within the New York District Workforce for a period of three years, including other requirements for participation in the SLRP. The CSA will be completed with the designated command HR POC upon acceptance in the SLRP, with a copy retained by the approved SLRP recipient and the designated command HR POC.
- Reimburse the paying agency for all benefits received if he or she is separated voluntarily or separated involuntarily for misconduct, unacceptable performance, or a negative suitability determination under 5 CFR part 731.
- Reimburse the paying agency for all benefits received if he or she declines the SLRP once funding is provided and payments have started.
- Maintain an acceptable level of performance in order to continue to be eligible to receive SLRP funding.
- A period of leave without pay, or other periods during which the employee is not in a pay status, do not count towards completion of the required service period. The service completion date must be extended by the total amount of time spent in non-pay status. However, as provided by 5 CFR 537.107(b), absence because of uniformed service or compensable injury is considered creditable toward the required service period upon reemployment.

CSA for Subsequent Years of Receiving SLRP Benefit:

The CSA for an employee receiving the SLRP benefit is as follows:

- First payment (up to \$10,000) – 3-year CSA with New York District
- Second payment (up to \$10,000) – 1 additional year under CSA with New York District
- Third payment (up to \$10,000) – 1 additional year under CSA with New York District
- Fourth payment (up to \$10,000) – 1 additional year under CSA with New York District
- Fifth payment (up to \$10,000) – 1 additional year under CSA with New York District
- Sixth payment (up to \$10,000) – 1 additional year under CSA with New York District

The minimum CSA for an employee receiving the SLRP benefit is 3 years. If an employee does not have an existing CSA to extend for the subsequent benefit years, then a new 3-year CSA would be required.

Recent CSA changes:

1. Payment Method: Lump sum only
2. Tax withholding for lump sum payments: DFAS will deduct the appropriate amount of taxes from the approved student loan repayment benefit before the balance is issued as a loan repayment to the holder of the loan.
3. Approving Official (designated command HR POCs) signature REQUIRED on all CSAs by DFAS.

Application Process:

The application process is completed by submitting the following:

1. SLRP Application Form
2. Loan Documentation
3. Employee's most recent SF-50 (with SSN redacted)

Submit to POC as indicated by SLRP notification via encrypted email.

Approvals:

Under 5 CFR 537.103, each agency must establish a plan that designates the officials who are authorized to review and approve offers of student loan repayment benefits. The New York District Commander has been delegated the authority to approve student loan repayments pursuant to HR-11. Therefore, applications will be reviewed by the responsible Division and recommended for approval by the District Commander via an ENG FORM 6103.

Recommendations to the District Commander must include the first three pages of the SLRP application and a MFR signed by the Division Chief.

The review of applications by the Division must include a review board of at least 3 independent Division supervisors who provide their consensus and recommended ranking of applicants or selections to the Division Chief. Selection of none, any, or all of the applicants is dependent on the Division's budget and justifications provided in the applications received.

Annual Reporting:

Agencies are required to report annually to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) on their use of the student loan repayment authority. Before March 31 of each year, agencies must submit their reports for the previous calendar year. The reports must contain:

1. The number of employees who received student loan repayment benefits;
2. The job classification of the employees who received student loan repayment benefits; and
3. The cost to the Federal Government of providing student loan repayment benefits.