

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
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April 1, 2022

Michael J. Rodrigues, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State House; Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

Aaron Michlewitz, Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
State House; Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

Cindy F. Friedman, Chair
Committee on Healthcare Financing
State House; Room 313
Boston, MA 02133

John J. Lawn, Chair
Committee on Healthcare Financing
State House; Room 236
Boston, MA 02133

Anne M. Gobi, Chair
Committee on Higher Education
State House; Room 413-A
Boston, MA 02133

David M. Rogers, Chair
Committee on Higher Education
State House; Room 43
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairs:

Section 2A of Chapter 102 of the Acts of 2021, within account 1599-2027, requires that not less than \$16,500,000 shall be expended on a loan repayment assistance program for human service workers and home health workers.

“provided, that not less than \$16,500,000 shall be made available for a loan repayment assistance program for human service workers and home health workers; provided further, that eligible program participants shall be employees who provide treatment, support or services to clients or their families through home-based and community-based human service organizations and home-based health service agencies in programs funded by the executive office of health and human services, the executive office of elder affairs, the department of housing and community development or the department of early education and care; provided further, that the program shall be administered by the executive office of health and human services, in collaboration with the executive office of education; provided further, that there shall be a board consisting of representatives from the human services sector to make recommendations on the criteria for the program including, but not limited to: (i) eligible workers; (ii) recipient income requirements; (iii) loan repayment assistance levels; and (iv) work commitments necessary for eligibility; provided further, that the board shall consist of: 3 persons to be appointed by the governor; 2 persons to be appointed by the president of the senate; 1 person to be appointed by the minority leader of the senate; 2 persons to be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

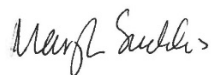
and 1 person to be appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives; provided further, that not later than April 15, 2022, the executive office of health and human services shall submit a report to the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee on health care financing and the joint committee on higher education detailing the criteria established for the program; provided further, that annually, not later than June 30, the executive office shall provide a report to the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee on health care financing and the joint committee on higher education, detailing expenditures from this item by service category and organization, including average loan repayment per worker;”

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) is actively taking steps toward the development of a loan repayment assistance program for human service workers and home health workers. As outlined in the March 1st report submitted to the legislature detailing the progress on the Human Service Workers and Home Health Workers Grant Program, EOHHS is procuring a vendor to provide workforce expertise and project management across a series of workforce initiatives both in the ARPA spending bill and the Home and Community-Based Services ARPA Enhanced FMAP approved projects. The vendor will identify key workforce challenges and gaps, best practices, and successful solutions to inform the development of a loan repayment program that is targeted to address specific professions, providers, or subsets of the workforce. This vendor will also conduct extensive stakeholder interviews to ensure that critical external insights are captured during this process. As of March 31st, EOHHS has notified the selected bidder and intends to begin work with the vendor in the coming weeks, assuming a timely and successful contract negotiation.

Pursuant to the legislation, EOHHS and the Executive Office of Education will continue to work with legislative leadership to establish a diverse board of stakeholders to help develop recommendations and criteria for the loan forgiveness program.

EOHHS looks forward to and appreciates our continued partnership with the legislature and will provide a report outlining the loan repayment criteria as soon as it is available as well as any pertinent findings from the workforce vendor. Should you need additional information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly at any time.

Sincerely,



Marylou Sudders

Cc: Senate President Karen Spilka
Speaker of the House Ronald Mariano
Secretary James Peyser, Executive Office of Education