

Introduced by

Legislative Management

(Human Services Committee)

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15-10 and a new section to
2 chapter 43-45 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to loans and grants for certain
3 behavioral health professionals; to provide for a transfer; and to provide for an appropriation.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 15-10 of the North Dakota Century Code is created
6 and enacted as follows:

7 **Student loan repayment grants - Behavioral health professionals.**

- 8 1. The state board of higher education shall administer a grant program to assist with the
9 repayment of student loans incurred by behavioral health professionals.
- 10 2. To be eligible for a student loan repayment grant under this section, an applicant must:
11 a. Be employed as a behavioral health professional in a clinical setting in this state;
12 and
13 b. Have a student loan with the Bank of North Dakota or other participating lender.
- 14 3. The state board of higher education shall distribute grants awarded under this section
15 directly to the Bank of North Dakota or to another participating lender to assist in the
16 repayment of the applicant's outstanding student loan principal balance.
- 17 4. The maximum grant for which an applicant may qualify is one thousand five hundred
18 dollars per year and an applicant may not receive more than six thousand dollars in
19 grants under this section.
- 20 5. If in any year the grant applications exceed the amount appropriated for this program,
21 the state board of higher education shall prorate the grants among all eligible
22 applicants.
- 23 6. For purposes of this section, a "behavioral health professional" means any of the
24 following:

- a. A psychologist who has at least a master's degree and is licensed by or approved for exemption by the state board of psychologist examiners.
- b. A social worker who has at least a master's degree in social work from an accredited program and who is licensed in accordance with chapter 43-41.
- c. A registered nurse who has at least:
 - (1) A master's degree in psychiatric and mental health nursing from an accredited program;
 - (2) Two years of psychiatric clinical experience under the supervision of a registered nurse meeting the requirements of paragraph 1; or
 - (3) Two years of psychiatric clinical experience under the supervision of a:
 - (a) Physician;
 - (b) Psychiatrist;
 - (c) Psychologist trained in a clinical program; or
 - (d) Licensed addiction counselor.
- d. A licensed addiction counselor.
- e. A licensed marriage and family therapist.
- f. A licensed professional counselor with at least a master's degree in counseling from an accredited program who has:
 - (1) Completed training beyond the master's level, as required by the national academy of mental health counselors; or
 - (2) At least two years of clinical experience in a mental health agency or setting under the supervision of a psychiatrist or psychologist.
- g. A physician assistant with a mental health certification.

SECTION 2. A new section to chapter 43-45 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

Addiction counseling internship - Loan program - Revolving fund - Continuing appropriation.

1. a. The Bank of North Dakota shall develop and implement a program under which loans may be provided to qualified individuals participating in an unpaid internship at a licensed substance abuse treatment facility in this state, in order to obtain licensure as an addiction counselor.

- 1 **b.** The Bank of North Dakota shall determine all terms applicable to the time and
2 manner in which loans made under this section must be repaid, except that:
3 (1) The Bank shall waive repayment of all principal and interest for the period of
4 time that an individual who received a loan under this section serves as a
5 licensed addiction counselor in this state; and
6 (2) The Bank shall forgive twenty-five percent of the total amount loaned to an
7 individual, together with all accrued interest, for each twelve-month period
8 that the individual serves as a licensed addiction counselor in this state.
9 **c.** Interest on outstanding loans under this section must accrue at the Bank of North
10 Dakota's current base rate, but may not exceed six percent per annum.
11 **d.** The maximum loan for which an applicant may qualify under this section is
12 twenty-five thousand dollars.
13 **e.** This subsection is applicable only to individuals beginning an unpaid internship
14 after June 30, 2015.

- 15 **2.** The Bank of North Dakota shall maintain a revolving loan fund for the purpose of
16 making loans under this section. All moneys transferred into the fund, interest upon
17 moneys in the fund, and payments to the fund of principal and interest on loans under
18 this section are appropriated to the Bank on a continuing basis.

19 **SECTION 3. APPROPRIATION - STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT GRANTS -**

20 **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS.** There is appropriated out of any moneys in the
21 general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$180,000, or so much
22 of the sum as may be necessary, to the state board of higher education for the purpose of
23 administering a grant program to assist with the repayment of student loans incurred by
24 behavioral health professionals, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2015, and ending June 30,
25 2017.

26 **SECTION 4. APPROPRIATION - TRANSFER - ADDICTION COUNSELOR INTERNSHIP**
27 **LOAN PROGRAM - REVOLVING FUND.** There is appropriated out of any moneys in the
28 general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$1,000,000, or so
29 much of the sum as may be necessary, which the director of the office of management and
30 budget shall transfer to the Bank of North Dakota, for purposes of the addiction counselor
31 internship loan program revolving fund, as created by section 2 of this Act.

1 **SECTION 5. APPROPRIATION.** There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general
2 fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$200,000, or so much of the
3 sum as may be necessary, to the department of human services for the purpose of providing
4 annual grants to private entities that provide clinical training experiences for individuals pursuing
5 licensure as addiction counselors, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2015, and ending June 30,
6 2017.

7 1. The department of human services shall consider applications for grants under this
8 section each year in chronological order.

9 2. Grants awarded to an entity under this section must be in the amount of \$5,000 for
10 each individual enrolled in a clinical training program and completing at least
11 700 hours of clinical training eligible toward obtaining licensure as an addiction
12 counselor.

13 3. The department of human services may not expend more than fifty percent of the
14 amount appropriated for purposes of this section during the first year of the biennium.