

Student Loan Repayment Assistance Program
H.171/Act 45

§ 3543. STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE

1. There is an established need-based student loan repayment assistance program for the purpose of providing student loan repayment assistance to any individual employed by a regulated, privately operated center-based child care program or family child care home.
2. An eligible individual shall:
 - a. Work in a privately operated center-based child care program or in a family child care home that is regulated by the Division for at least an average of 30 hours per week for 48 weeks of the year;
 - b. Receive an annual salary of not more than \$50,000.00; and
 - c. Have earned an associates or bachelor's degree with a major concentration in early childhood, child and human development, elementary education, special education with a birth to age eight focus, or child and family services within the preceding five years.
 - d. To participate in the program set forth in this section, an eligible individual shall submit to the Department for Children and Families documentation expressing the individual's intent to work in a regulated, privately operated center-based child care program or family child care home for at least the 12 months following the annual loan repayment award notification.
 - e. A participant may receive up to \$4,000.00 annually in student loan repayment assistance, which shall be distributed by the Department in four allotments.
 - f. The Department shall distribute at least one-quarter of the individual's total annual benefit after the individual has completed three months of employment in accordance with the program.
 - g. The remainder of an individual's total annual benefit shall be distributed by the Department every three months after the initial payment.
 - h. The Department shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines necessary to implement the provisions of this section.
 - i. Student loan repayments shall be available pursuant to this section on a first-come, first-served basis until appropriated funds are depleted.
 - ii. The Department may contract for the administration of the program.
 - iii. Administration costs shall not be more than 10 percent of the total appropriation received to implement this section.
 - iv. An individual shall not simultaneously participate in the student loan repayment assistance program set forth in this section and either of the scholarship programs set forth in section 3541 or 3542 of this title.

Sec. 7. EVALUATION; EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

1. On or before October 1, 2025, the Department for Children and Families' Child Development Division, in consultation with stakeholders, shall submit a report to the

House Committees on Commerce and Economic Development and on Human Services and to the Senate Committees on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Health and Welfare:

- a. evaluating the effectiveness of the scholarship and student loan repayment programs established in 33 V.S.A. chapter 35, subchapter 5 at recruiting and retaining providers in Vermont's child care and early learning system; and
- b. recommending whether the scholarship and student loan repayment programs established in 33 V.S.A. chapter 35, subchapter 5 shall be repealed in accordance with Sec. 8 of this act, retained and funded in their current states, or retained with amendment.