

What You Need to Know About The Ohio Dentist Loan Repayment Program (ODLRP)

How does the ODLRP determine which clinicians will receive loan repayment?

ODLRP contracts will be awarded to eligible applicants who desire to practice in dental health resource shortage areas, as determined by the director of health, or federally designated dental health professional shortage areas (HPSAs). Areas with high population-to-dentist ratios shall have the greatest priority. Other considerations are the applicant's background, career goals, the length of time the applicant is willing to provide dental services in a dental health care resource shortage area and the amount of educational expenses for which reimbursement is being sought. Applicants must be engaged in the practice of general or pediatric dentistry. Persons currently receiving National Health Service Corps (NHSC) tuition or loan repayment are not eligible.

What educational expenses are covered by the ODLRP?

ODLRP will pay all or part of the principal and interest of a government or commercial educational loan taken by an individual for expenses incurred while the individual was enrolled in an accredited dental college or residency program, including tuition, fees, books and laboratory expenses, as well as room and board in amounts determined to be reasonable by the director of health. Currently, awards may not exceed \$25,000 per year in the first two years, or \$35,000 each year for the third and fourth years.

How is community need determined?

The director of health designates dental health resource shortage areas in the state that experience special dental health problems and dentist practice patterns that limit access to dental care and the federal Health Resources and Services Administration, Office of Shortage Designation determines dental HPSAs. These designations may apply to a geographic area, one or more facilities within a particular area, or a population group within a particular area.

When will ODLRP awards be made?

The deadline for applications is March 1, 2010 for contracts beginning in July, 2010. Payments are made once yearly to the appropriate lending institutions.

What are the conditions of the awards?

Clinicians must provide dental services at the dental health site(s) they have agreed upon, practicing a minimum of 40 hours per week. Participants must agree to provide dental services for Medicaid-eligible persons and to provide dental care without regard to a patient's ability to pay. *Clinicians who fail to complete their service obligation according to the terms specified in their contract will have a default penalty of three times the amount of loan repayment made on their behalf.*

How do clinicians learn of vacancies in underserved areas?

The Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Oral Health Services (BOHS) has information on qualified sites and their recruitment needs. For more information, or to receive an application, interested candidates may contact Mona Taylor at 614.466.4180 or by e-mail at mona.taylor@odh.ohio.gov or Sandy Brado at 330.643.1300 or by e-mail at sandy.brado@odh.ohio.gov. For more information, visit the BOHS web site at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/ohs/oral/oral1.aspx>; scroll down to the Safety Net Dental Program topic and click on Loan Repayment Programs or visit <http://ohiodentalclinics.com> for potential job opportunities.