
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2240 Session of
2020

INTRODUCED BY ROZZI, HILL-EVANS, FREEMAN, HOWARD, McCLINTON,
CALTAGIRONE, JOHNSON-HARRELL, O'MARA, GALLOWAY, ZIMMERMAN,
SCHWEYER AND MADDEN, JANUARY 21, 2020

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, JANUARY 21, 2020

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Student Loan Forgiveness for Farmers Program
2 and prescribing powers and duties of the Pennsylvania Higher
3 Education Assistance Agency.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Student Loan
8 Forgiveness for Farmers Act.

9 Section 2. Definitions.

10 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
11 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
12 context clearly indicates otherwise:

13 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance
14 Agency.

15 "Agricultural product." Any agricultural commodity or
16 product, whether in raw or prepared form, including any
17 commodity or product derived from livestock that is intended for
18 human or livestock consumption or seed.

1 "Approved institution of higher learning." An educational
2 institution offering postsecondary and graduate programs of
3 education, including vocational schools located in this
4 Commonwealth and approved by the agency.

5 "Award." A student loan forgiveness award under this act.

6 "Program." The Student Loan Forgiveness for Farmers Program
7 established under section 3.

8 Section 3. The Student Loan Forgiveness for Farmers Program.

9 (a) Establishment.--The Student Loan Forgiveness for Farmers
10 Program is established and shall be administered by the agency.

11 (b) Purpose.--The agency may grant student and training loan
12 forgiveness awards through the program for the purpose of
13 alleviating the burden of student loan debt for young and
14 beginning farmers.

15 (c) Eligibility criteria.--Awards shall be made on a
16 competitive basis to applicants who meet the eligibility
17 criteria under section 4 with special consideration of
18 applicants who are economically or historically disadvantaged.

19 (d) Rules and regulations.--The agency shall promulgate
20 rules and regulations regarding the determination of award
21 recipients.

22 Section 4. Loan forgiveness eligibility.

23 To be eligible for an award, an applicant must:

24 (1) Have graduated with a degree from an approved
25 institution of higher learning with an outstanding student
26 loan debt from obtaining the degree.

27 (2) Operate a farm or a component of a farm in this
28 Commonwealth on a full-time basis.

29 (3) Agree to operate the farm or component of the farm
30 for no less than five years after receiving the award.

1 (4) Have not produced an agricultural product for more
2 than 10 consecutive years.

3 Section 5. Awards.

4 At least 10 awards may be granted to qualified applicants in
5 the amount of up to \$10,000 per year, per applicant, not to
6 exceed a duration of five years and not to exceed the total
7 amount of the applicant's student training or loan debt. The
8 agency may grant the awards within the amount appropriated for
9 awards and based on the availability of funds. No one applicant
10 may receive more than a total of \$50,000 upon the end of a five-
11 year period.

12 Section 6. Priority.

13 (a) First priority.--First priority shall be given to
14 veterans who apply to receive an award under the program.

15 (b) Second priority.--Second priority shall be given to
16 applicants who complete the second, third, fourth or fifth year
17 of full-time farm operation and reapply to receive an award
18 under the program.

19 (c) Third priority.--Third priority shall be given to
20 applicants who demonstrate economic need but did not receive an
21 award during the first year of the program's operation.

22 Section 7. Requirements for award recipients.

23 (a) Proof of eligibility.--An applicant who receives an
24 award under this act shall provide proof of eligibility under
25 section 4 to the agency for each year for which the applicant
26 receives an award.

27 (b) Farm operation requirement.--If an award recipient is
28 unable to operate a farm or component of a farm for the five-
29 year period required under section 4(3), the award recipient
30 shall not:

1 (1) Receive an additional award.

2 (2) Be required to repay any award already received by
3 the award recipient under this act.

4 Section 8. Effective date.

5 This act shall take effect in 60 days.