

Missouri Professional and Practical Nurse Student Loan Program

Endless Opportunities

2012



Missouri's Professional and Practical Nursing Student Loan Program (NSL) provides forgivable student loans to eligible Missouri undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate, and doctoral nursing students in exchange for service in underserved communities and facilities in the state. The NSL program is located within the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Service's Office of Primary Care and Rural Health.

Providing financial incentives to students to encourage practice in underserved areas is recognized as a critical mechanism in expanding access to care. Therefore, the goal of the NSL is to utilize financial incentives to train, support and expand the healthcare workforce within Missouri's underserved areas, thereby increasing access to healthcare services for underserved Missourians.

The NSL is supported by annual fees assessed on all Registered Nurse (RN) and Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) license renewals, \$5 and \$1 respectively. Currently these fees are collected biennially as RN license renewals are completed on odd years and LPN license renewals are completed on even years. Of these fees, 80% is made available to nursing students in the form of forgivable loans, while 20% is retained for program administrative costs. Administrative costs support a .8 FTE Health Program Representative III, a .1 FTE Broadband Manager and a .1 FTE clerical support position. Actual student loan and administrative costs are respectively appropriated at an annual amount of \$499,752 and \$89,426. According to the February/March/April 2012 issue of Missouri State Board of Nursing newsletter there are 91,792 RNs and 25,512 LPNs in Missouri. Accordingly, the program anticipates receiving approximately \$917,920 during upcoming RN renewal years and \$51,024 during upcoming LPN renewal years.

Current annual award levels, based on statute, are a one-time amount of \$2,500 for LPN students and \$5,000 for professional nursing students. Loans are repaid either through service in an underserved area, or via cash repayment at 9.5% simple interest. For repayment via service, participants provide one year of professional service for each school year a loan is received, up to a maximum of 5 years. The number of loans awarded per year varies based upon available funding, number of previous students anticipating continued funding, and number of eligible new applicants.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the NSL, an applicant must be a Missouri resident attending a Missouri institution. Missouri residents are those who have lived in this state for more than one year for any purpose other than to attend an educational institution. Priority is given to residents of designated underserved areas, minority persons and previous NSL recipients. Applicants must have been accepted by or currently attending a nursing program approved by the Missouri State Board of Nursing for participation in the program, which in the previous year had at least an 80% pass rate. Previous nursing students must have at least a 2.5 GPA to qualify. Students seeking education as a LPN, diploma level nurse, associate degree nurse, bachelor of science nurse, master of science nurse, advanced practice nurse, doctorate nurse practitioner, or are seeking a doctorate of education in nursing, are eligible to apply. Except for doctoral level applicants, students must be enrolled on a full-time basis.



PARTICIPATION

Since calendar year 2000, 660 students have participated, or are currently participating, in the NSL. Of these 660 students, 609 (92.3%) are female, and 51 (7.7%) are male (Table 1). 478 (72.4%) are White, 141 (21.4%) are African American, 7 (1.1%) are American Indian, 6 (0.9%) are Multi-Racial, and 1 (0.1%) is Asian (Table 2, Figure 1).

Table 1.
Gender of NSL Participants

Female	609	92.3%
Male	51	7.7%
Total	660	100%

Table 2.
Race of NSL Participants

African American	141	21.4%
American Indian	7	1.1%
Asian	1	0.1%
Pacific Islander	0	0%
White	478	72.4%
Multiple Races	6	0.9%
None	16	2.4%
Other	4	0.6%
Unknown	7	1.1%
Total	660	100%

Of the 660 participants in the NSL program, 299 (45.3%) sought an Associate degree, 200 (30.3%) sought a Bachelor degree, 91 (13.8%) sought LPN degree, 29 (4.4%) sought a Master of Science degree, 20 (3.0%) sought a Nursing Diploma, 18 (2.7%) sought an Advanced Practice degree, and 3 (0.5%) sought a Doctorate degree (Table 3).

Table 3.
Degree Type Sought by NSL Participants

LPN	91	13.8%
Diploma	20	3.0%
Associate Degree	299	45.3%
Bachelor Degree	200	30.3%
Master of Science	29	4.4%
Advanced Practice	18	2.7%
Doctorate	3	0.5%
Total	660	100%

Of the 660 NSL participants, 330 (50.0%) are in Forgiveness status (either completed or in progress); 111 (16.8%) are in Collections status (participant has been referred to the DHSS Office of General Counsel or the Attorney General's Office for collection purposes); 101 (15.3%) are in Cash Repayment status (participant is repaying loans via financial mechanisms); 73 (11.1%) are in Student status; 27 (4.1%) are in Default status (participant has earned no forgiveness and no collection of funds has been obtained); 13 (2.0%) are in Deferred status (participant is having difficulty obtaining qualifying employment or completing education; participants are permitted to request temporary deferral and no interest is added while in deferral); and 5 (0.7%) are Deceased (Table 4). Of the 582 living NSL participants who are currently in non-student status, 428 (73.5%) hold a current Missouri nursing license and 154 (26.5%) are currently not licensed as nurses in Missouri (Table 5).



Table 4.
Completion Status of NSL Participants

Forgiveness	330	50.0%
Collections	111	16.8%
Cash Repayment	101	15.3%
Student	73	11.1%
Default	27	4.1%
Deferred	13	2.0%
Deceased	5	0.7%
Total	660	100%

Table 5.
Missouri Nursing License Status of Non-student NSL Participants

Active MO License	428	73.5%
No Active MO License	154	26.5%
Total	582	100%

RETENTION ANALYSIS

In an effort to evaluate retention of NSL participants in underserved areas of Missouri, the 214 NSL participants who completed their loan obligation through earning forgiveness prior to December 31, 2010, were sent a one-page survey (Attachment A). Forgiveness is classified as performing work in qualifying employment (hands-on, direct patient care) in an underserved area for an amount of time equal to the length of given support (i.e. one year of support requires one year of service).

The last known contact address located in the DHSS Health Professional Incentives Programs (HPIP) Database was the primary source used when sending out surveys. In addition to the HPIP database, contact addresses were obtained via the Missouri Healthcare Workforce Registry Exchange (MoHWoRx) through information provided to the Missouri Division of

Professional Registration and Licensure at the time of nursing license renewal. Letters that were returned with updated addresses were re-sent to the correct address.

To determine if nurses were working within a designated underserved area in Missouri, March 20, 2012 was used as the time point for analyzing the Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) status of employment locations. HPSA designation changes are based upon analysis by the OPCRH utilizing criteria established by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and are reassessed every three years. Therefore, it is possible that a licensed nurse worked in qualifying employment to obtain forgiveness, but by the time of the analysis that employment location was no longer in a designated HPSA.



RESULTS

46.3% of persons submitted the form, leaving 53.7% of persons who did not submit the form. Table 6 shows the status end date and percentage of persons, along with the number of persons, who

submitted a form. Information is on all nurses participating in NSL since its inception, who had completed their forgiveness period as of Dec. 31, 2010.

Table 6.
Response Rate of NSL Participants

Year	Percentage of Forms Submitted	Forms Submitted by Year	Total Earning Forgiveness
2000	0.0%	0	2
2001	100.0%	1	1
2002	50.0%	2	4
2003	60.0%	6	10
2004	47.4%	9	19
2005	40.1%	17	42
2006	44.4%	12	27
2007	61.1%	11	18
2008	50.0%	16	32
2009	44.2%	19	43
2010	31.3%	5	16
Total	46.3%	99	214

A breakdown of status end date and percentage of persons, along with the number of persons, who were in a HPSA or forgivable employment in Missouri as of March 30, 2012 is shown below (Table 7). This Table includes combined

information from survey responses and from current contact information in NSL Program files. A map of former NSL participants serving in Missouri by county of employment is also attached (Figure 2).



Table 7.
NSL Participants in HPSA

Year	Percentage of HPSA or Forgivable Employment as of 3/20/2012 Per Year Submitted	Number in HPSA or Forgivable Employment as of 3/20/12 Per Year	Total Earning Forgiveness
2000	0.0%	0	2
2001	0.0%	0	1
2002	25.0%	1	4
2003	70.0%	7	10
2004	42.1%	8	19
2005	50.0%	21	42
2006	44.4%	12	27
2007	61.1%	11	18
2008	59.4%	19	32
2009	48.8%	21	43
2010	75.0%	12	16
Total	52.3%	112	214

With regard to the question, “Was the program beneficial?” 100% of the 98 respondents said “Yes”, the program was beneficial. Of the 214 persons surveyed, 39% responded with comments. Of this group, 98% commented positively, with comments such as; “I would recommend this program to friends & co-workers”, “I love the program and this is definitely an area of need and needs to continue”, “I couldn't have afforded school without this program”, and “This loan program provided me with the opportunity to finish my RN degree”. Only two comments expressed any dissatisfaction, with one noting that the qualification and process were “complex and rigid”, and the other expressed some trouble with receiving the first disbursement check. For a full list of comments please see Appendix 1.



DISCUSSION

Of the 214 nurses who have earned forgiveness through the NSL, more than 52%, or 112, are still currently practicing in designated HPSA. This rate of retention for program completers is comparable to national averages for other professional student service obligation programs (Pathman, et. al, Med. Care. Outcome of States' Scholarship, Loan Repayment, and Related Programs for Physicians. 42:6, 560-569.) Moving forward it is critical for the NSL to maintain a focus on recruiting and supporting qualified students. The application process for the NSL is structured to allow for a comprehensive analysis of need, competency, and likelihood of program completion, and must remain as such. It is important for the program to also look at the effectiveness of recruiting quality students given the current loan amounts in light of increasing educational costs. There may be a need to increase the loan amounts available, especially at the highest levels of nursing education.

In light of the expanded healthcare workforce data collection elements of DHSS's Health Professionals Registry, it will be important for the NSL to focus on areas of critical need within nursing as identified by the best available workforce data. Leveraging area specific data on the availability of healthcare professionals throughout Missouri will enable the NSL program to be more specific in the provision of its student loans, with a better focus on meeting the healthcare needs of Missourians through an evolving health professional workforce.

A consistent focus on evaluation and retention will also be important as the program moves forward. Current mechanisms in place to survey participants after their obligation period are inconsistent and fragmented. As such, the program will work to implement mechanisms that allow for expanded data collection upon students completion of forgiveness, more robust analysis of the impact of students who have completed service through the program, and improved program evaluation measures. These steps will include a standard cycle of surveying former participants after completion of the program, publication of NSL data and impact on an annual basis, and encouraging a broad base of stakeholders in influencing and guiding the program.

CONCLUSION

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Equity, Office of Primary Care and Rural Health, Professional and Practical Nursing Student Loan Program, is committed to the development of a high-quality and effective nursing workforce within Missouri. Through the expansion of data collection efforts, this program will continue to evolve along with the nursing workforce to enhance the health of all Missourians.

Figure 1.

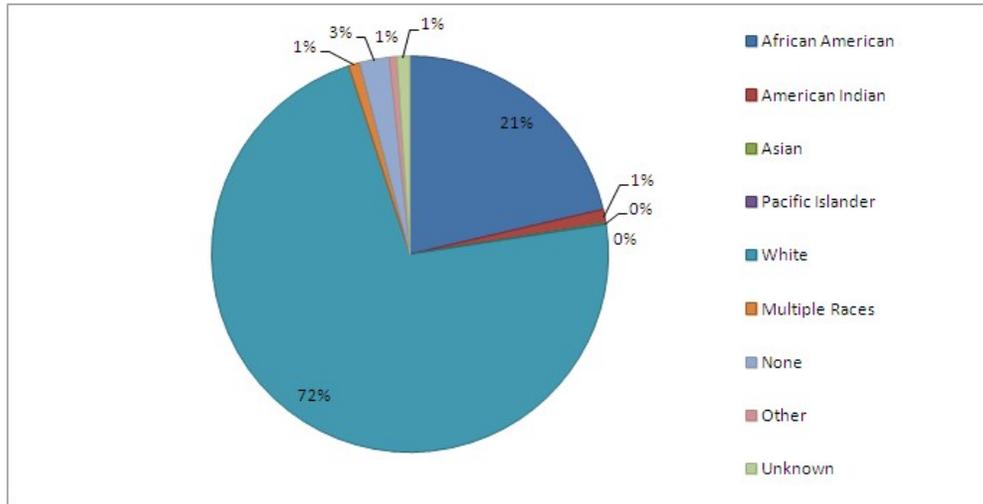
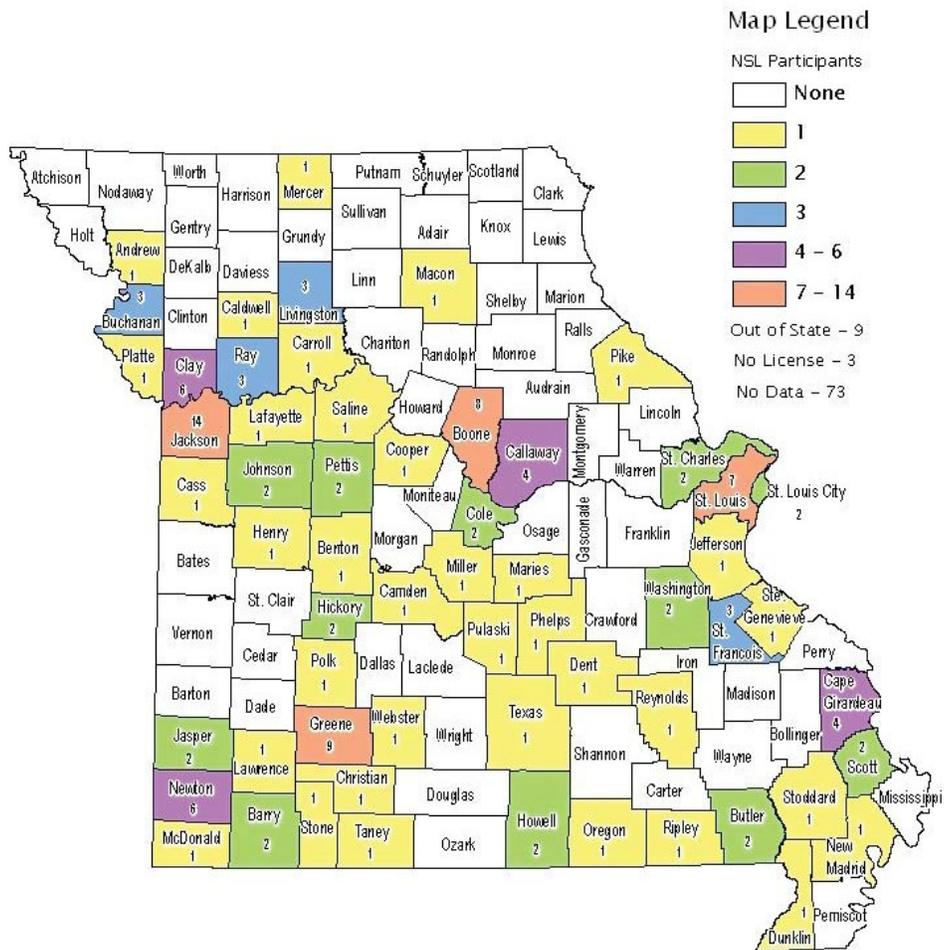


Figure 2.

Current Location of Past NSL Participants
June 2012





Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
 P.O. Box 570, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0570 Phone: 573-751-6400 FAX: 573-751-6010
 RELAY MISSOURI for Hearing and Speech Impaired 1-800-735-2966 VOICE 1-800-735-2466
Margaret T. Donnelly
 Director



Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon
 Governor

January 6, 2012

«SAL» «IDFY_FNAME» «IDFY_LNAME»
 «ADDR_ADDRESS_1»
 «ADDR_ADDRESS_2»
 «ADDR_CITY», «ADDR_STATE» «ADDR_ZIP_CODE»

Dear «SAL» «IDFY_LNAME»:

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) is seeking assistance from successful participants of the Professional and Practical Nurse Student Loan Program in an effort to determine the value and effectiveness of the program. To assist in this effort, please complete the questions below. A postage paid return envelope has been provided for your convenience.

Any feedback is appreciated. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Program via our toll-free number, 800-891-7415, or via email to Gail.Ponder@health.mo.gov. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

L. Gail Ponder
 Center for Health Equity
 Professional and Practical Nurse
 and PRIMO Student Loan Coordinator

Current place of employment: _____

County of employment: _____

Did you find the Professional and Practical Nurse Student Loan Program beneficial to achieving your nursing education? _____ Yes _____ No

Please provide any comments regarding the program: _____

www.health.mo.gov

Healthy Missourians for life.

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services will be the leader in promoting, protecting and partnering for health.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER: Services provided on a nondiscriminatory basis.

COMMENTS

As a single mother I could not have obtained an education without several sources of financial aid. Because of my education my daughters are able to obtain their education also. Great program! Wish it could be expanded. I wish there was a program to help me with my other loans or pay my grad school!

Helped me achieve my goal by providing necessary funds required to obtain my nursing degree. I am a second career nurse and this loan abled me to return to school and pursue a degree that encompassed job security and opportunity. Thank you. I am very thankful for this student loan program. It really helped me get through nursing school.

I believe anyone seriously dedicated to moving forward in their education in order to provide for themselves and their family, therefore, becoming a contributing citizen in this country, needs all the financial help they can get to make that happen.

I believe if it were not for this program I would of not been able to afford nursing school. I benefited greatly from the Student Loan Program in that it allowed me to be able to stay in school and finish my degree. I encourage anyone who asks me about nursing and what resources are available to look into the Student Loan Program. I hope this program is able to stay active despite financial cutbacks.

I can't express how thankful and grateful I was to have this opportunity and participate in the Nurse Student Program! I don't know where I would be without this awesome program. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I couldn't have afforded school without this program as a single mom. Thanks for the wonderful opportunity.

I feel that my education has been very beneficial to my employment at a pediatric office.

I feel the student loan program was not only beneficial but made a significant impact on my ability to meet my financial needs while going to school and enforced the value of nursing to our community because our state was willing to support nursing education.

I have been employed for 12 yrs now and I appreciate the trust that was given me by allowing me to participate in this program. I highly recommend continuing it. It was valuable to me. Thank you.

I look at the cost of my education some I'm still paying on. It was worth it all. I'm glad I found this program. Thank you!

I love the program and this is definitely an area of need and needs to continue.

I would recommend this program to friends & co-workers. I would use it again in the future.

Wonderful program. Thanks so much.

If I would not have had this loan, I would not have had enough money to go to school. I am now a RN. If not for the program I could not have provided for family. I decreased by hours from 40-32 and drove 40 miles to school. The money helped a lot.

It made all the difference when I had to go part time in order to do the RN Bridge Program. The program really helped with expenses. This is my 31st year at work here!

It was a great alternative to a loan and most counties in Missouri qualify to fulfill obligation.

It was wonderful to have the extra support with tuition.

Made it possible to achieve nursing career.

Not sure if would have been able to complete my education without financial help I received. Please continue funding this important program!

PRIMO (Nurse Loan) provided me with excellent opportunities and experiences I would not have gotten otherwise. The loans were a plus too! I recommend the program to anyone that might use it.

Program very beneficial. It would have been hard for me to pay for school without this program. Thank you very much.

Thank you! This is a great program. I have worked in an "underserved" area for my entire career and it has been rewarding.

Thank you! This program allowed me to get out of school with no student loan debt.

The Nurse Student Loan Program was very beneficial to my nursing education. The follow up paperwork on the loan was easy to fill out for me and my employer. We need more nurses-don't give up on this loan program.

The program blessed me and many lives was positively affected by the program (i.e. my parents died at home because of the wings the program gave me). Thank you and I will forever be indebted to you all. It was not in vain.

This is a great program. It was very beneficial. More need to work in an area of need and pay back student loans. A win-win situation!

This loan program provided me with the opportunity to finish my RN degree. Without it, I would not have been able to afford the costs for school.

This program allowed me to attend a full time program and still be able to support my children and assisted with the cost of tuition. This program helped relieve a big burden and allowed me to concentrate on my studies. Thank you so much.

This program assisted me in going from a minimum wage job to having a professional career. Thank you!

This program assisted me to know what medical profession I wanted to go into and helped to achieve my goal. Had many wonderful experiences!

This program enabled me to finish the Master's of Nursing program & serve a rural population. Have only ever practiced in Lafayette and Ray counties.

This program helped me to work just 50% and concentrate on my studies. I was able to finish sooner by utilizing your program. Thank you for the opportunities you provide.

This program was a huge help to me during school. Not only did it help pay tuition but expenses so I could study more.

This program was a necessary need for me to be successful and complete school. I could not have done it and raised four children as a single parent. I tell nursing students about it all the time. Do not get rid of this program!

This program was extremely helpful for myself and my daughter who also completed the program. It cut down on the amount of student loans and allowed me to attend school with one less financial worry. It is a program that is very much needed and appreciated.

This program was extremely helpful! I tell all my friends in nursing school about this loan but everyone I ask has a hard time getting the loan now, maybe because of the number of applicants?

This program was significant in assisting me with achieving my educational goals. I couldn't have completed without it. Thank you to all!

Very helpful financially to get me into my nursing career. It was difficult to get the first disbursement of the check in the beginning.

Without this help I am not sure I could have finished my education.

Wonderful program! I would not have been able to complete program without it! Thank you.

Would have not been able to finish undergrad without funding. I now have my masters and my Neonatal & Pediatric Nurse Practitioner degrees! Thank you!

Yes without this loan I don't know how I would of provided care for my children.

Yes, without the loan program I wouldn't have been able to go through the ADN program right after LPN school. Thank you.

As a single mother of two not receiving child support it was heaven sent. I am very thankful I was able to go back to school and get a degree that I could support myself and my children. This was a very good program.

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Office of Primary Care and Rural Health

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Jefferson City, MO 65102

Phone: 573-751-6219 or (toll-free) 800-891-7415

<http://health.mo.gov/living/families/primarycare/healthproloans/index.php>

info@health.mo.gov

Alternate forms of this publication for persons with disabilities may be obtained by contacting the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Office of Primary Care and Rural Health at 800-891-7415. Hearing- and speech-impaired citizens can dial 711.

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