

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH LEGISLATURE
SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 986

Introduced by Linehan, 39.

Read first time January 05, 2024

Committee: Education

1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to the Teach in Nebraska Today Act; to amend
2 sections 79-8,146, 79-8,147, 79-8,148, 79-8,149, 79-8,150, 79-8,151,
3 and 79-8,152, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2022; to
4 terminate provisions relating to loan repayment assistance under the
5 act as prescribed; to provide for grants to teachers under the act
6 as prescribed; to increase the program amount limitation; to
7 harmonize provisions; to repeal the original sections; and to
8 declare an emergency.
9 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. Section 79-8,146, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
2 2022, is amended to read:

3 79-8,146 Sections 79-8,146 to 79-8,153 and section 5 of this act
4 shall be known and may be cited as the Teach in Nebraska Today Act.

5 Sec. 2. Section 79-8,147, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
6 2022, is amended to read:

7 79-8,147 For purposes of the Teach in Nebraska Today Act:

8 (1) Default has the same meaning as in 20 U.S.C. 1085, as such
9 section existed on January 1, 2022;

10 (2) Department means the State Department of Education;

11 (3) Grant means a grant for beginning or continuing service as a
12 classroom teacher under the Teach in Nebraska Today Act;

13 (4) ~~(3)~~ Program means the Teach in Nebraska Today Program created in
14 section 79-8,148; and

15 (5) ~~(4)~~ Teaching full-time means (a) teaching an average of at least
16 four hours per contract day performing instructional duties as a full-
17 time employee of an approved or accredited public, private,
18 denominational, or parochial school in this state or (b) teaching an
19 average of at least four hours per contract day performing dual-credit
20 instructional duties for students of approved or accredited public,
21 private, denominational, or parochial schools in this state while
22 employed full-time at an accredited public or private nonprofit college
23 or university in this state.

24 Sec. 3. Section 79-8,148, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
25 2022, is amended to read:

26 79-8,148 The Teach in Nebraska Today Program is created. The
27 department shall administer the program. The purpose of the program is to
28 attract individuals to the teaching profession who have expressed an
29 interest in teaching and to support the employment of those individuals
30 as classroom teachers by providing student loan repayment assistance or
31 grants for service as a classroom teacher in this state.

1 Sec. 4. Section 79-8,149, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
2 2022, is amended to read:

3 79-8,149 (1) Prior to the effective date of this act, student
4 ~~Student~~ loan repayment assistance under the program shall be available to
5 an individual who applies for the assistance and who:

6 (a) Is a resident of the State of Nebraska; and

7 (b) Is teaching full-time or has a contract to teach full-time at
8 the time of application for the program.

9 (2) The amount of repayment assistance awarded to an eligible
10 applicant pursuant to this section shall be limited to five thousand
11 dollars per year. An eligible applicant may be awarded repayment
12 assistance for applications approved prior to the effective date of this
13 act for up to five years. ~~The five years of awards are not required to be~~
14 ~~consecutive but shall not extend beyond eight years in total.~~

15 (3) If the funds available for repayment assistance in any year are
16 insufficient to provide assistance to all eligible applicants described
17 in subsection (1) of this section, the department shall establish
18 priorities for awarding repayment assistance with renewal applications
19 given priority over initial applications. For initial applications,
20 priority shall be given to applicants who demonstrate financial need.

21 (4) An eligible applicant may receive repayment assistance under the
22 program for the repayment of a student loan received through any lender
23 which was incurred in the applicant's own name for his or her own
24 educational expenses at any accredited public or private nonprofit
25 college or university in this state or any other state. If the loan is
26 not a state or federal guaranteed student loan, the note or other writing
27 governing the terms of the loan must require the loan proceeds to be used
28 for expenses incurred by the applicant to attend an accredited public or
29 private nonprofit college or university in this state or any other state.

30 (5) No additional applications for repayment assistance shall be
31 approved after the effective date of this act.

1 Sec. 5. (1) Beginning on the effective date of this act, a grant
2 under the program shall be available to an individual who applies for the
3 grant and who:

4 (a) Is a resident of the State of Nebraska;

5 (b) Is teaching full-time or has a contract to teach full-time at
6 the time of the application for the program;

7 (c) Has taught in Nebraska five years or less at the time of the
8 application or renewal; and

9 (d) Has an individual income that is less than fifty-five thousand
10 dollars per year; and

11 (2) The amount of a grant awarded to an eligible applicant pursuant
12 to this section shall be limited to five thousand dollars per year. An
13 eligible applicant may be awarded a grant for up to five years.

14 (3) If the funds available for grants in any year are insufficient
15 to provide grants to all eligible applicants described in subsection (1)
16 of this section, the department shall establish priorities to award
17 grants with renewal applications given priority over initial
18 applications. For initial applications, priority shall be given to
19 applicants who demonstrate financial need.

20 Sec. 6. Section 79-8,150, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
21 2022, is amended to read:

22 79-8,150 (1) Applications for student loan repayment assistance
23 must be submitted no later than June 10, 2023, and no later than June 10
24 of each year thereafter, on a form developed by the department. The
25 department shall determine whether to approve or deny each application
26 and shall notify each applicant of such determination no later than
27 September 10, 2023, and no later than September 10 of each year
28 thereafter. Repayment assistance awarded under the program shall be paid,
29 in whole or in part as provided in section 79-8,151, no later than
30 November 10, 2023, and no later than November 10 of each year thereafter
31 for an application approved prior to the effective date of this act. No

1 new applications for loan repayment assistance shall be approved after
2 the effective date of this act.

3 (2) Applications for a grant must be submitted no later than July
4 10, 2024, and no later than July 10 each year thereafter, on a form and
5 in a manner prescribed by the department. The department shall determine
6 whether to approve or deny each application and shall notify each
7 applicant of such determination no later than October 10, 2024, and no
8 later than October 10 of each year thereafter. Grants awarded under the
9 program shall be paid directly to the applicant no later than December
10 10, 2024, and no later than December 10 of each year thereafter.

11 Sec. 7. Section 79-8,151, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
12 2022, is amended to read:

13 79-8,151 (1) For applications approved prior to the effective date
14 of this act, student ~~Student~~ loan repayment assistance awarded under the
15 program may be applied to the principal amount of the loan and to
16 interest that accrues. The repayment assistance shall be paid in one of
17 the following three ways as directed by the applicant on his or her
18 application:

19 (a) Directly to the lender or loan servicer that holds the
20 outstanding balance of the student loan in one lump-sum payment;

21 (b) Directly to the lender or loan servicer that holds the
22 outstanding balance of the student loan in monthly payments. Such monthly
23 payments shall be made:

24 (i) In twelve equal payments; or

25 (ii) If requested by the applicant, in smaller amounts over a longer
26 period of time, not to exceed twenty-four months. In such case, payments
27 shall be equal for the first twelve months or until such time as the
28 applicant's payment amount is recalculated by the lender or loan servicer
29 and then, if adjusted, shall be equal for the next twelve-month period.

30 Any unpaid funds at the end of twenty-four months may be requested to be
31 paid in a lump-sum payment to the lender or loan servicer or shall be

1 considered forfeited by the applicant. Applicants who are awarded
2 repayment assistance in more than one year may have their awards divided
3 across no more than one hundred twenty monthly payments under the
4 program; or

5 (c) Directly to the applicant for the purpose of making the
6 applicant's student loan payments. This subdivision shall only be
7 available if the applicant is not in default on any student loan at the
8 time of application. Any individual receiving repayment assistance under
9 this subdivision must provide documentation that the full award was used
10 for student loan payments when (i) applying for repayment assistance
11 under the program in subsequent years and (ii) claiming an adjustment to
12 federal adjusted gross income pursuant to section 77-2716. Such
13 documentation shall be provided using a form prescribed by the
14 department.

15 (2) The department may contract with a third-party vendor to
16 administer the repayment assistance provided pursuant to the program.

17 Sec. 8. Section 79-8,152, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
18 2022, is amended to read:

19 79-8,152 The total amount of student loan repayment assistance
20 awarded pursuant to the program shall not exceed five million dollars ~~in~~
21 ~~any fiscal year.~~ The total amount of grants awarded pursuant to the
22 program shall not exceed ten million dollars in any fiscal year.

23 Sec. 9. Original sections 79-8,146, 79-8,147, 79-8,148, 79-8,149,
24 79-8,150, 79-8,151, and 79-8,152, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
25 2022, are repealed.

26 Sec. 10. Since an emergency exists, this act takes effect when
27 passed and approved according to law.