

Health Professional Bursary Program Policy

Revision Date: March 9, 2017

Program Description:

A bursary is an incentive intended to provide financial assistance to students enrolled in certain health related education programs who accept employment in a difficult-to-fill position.

Please contact RHAs to determine the availability of health professional bursaries.

Scope:

Bursaries are available for selected health occupations, targeting difficult-to-fill positions. Not all positions in a selected health occupation will be eligible for a bursary; availability of bursaries varies annually by location and current vacancies.

RHAs apply for bursary funding annually; applications approved for funding expire at the end of the fiscal year in which they are approved. Applications for Health Professional Bursaries must be for difficult-to-fill positions within RHAs or for targeted areas agreed to by the HR Planning Sub-Committee.

Bursaries are available to students only. Recipients must be actively enrolled in an education program for one of the selected health occupations in the table below in order to receive a bursary. Preference for health professional bursaries is given to residents of Newfoundland and Labrador; however, exceptions may be considered.

For licensed practical nurses, students must be enrolled in the 16-month Practical Nursing Program offered by the Centre for Nursing Studies or the College of the North Atlantic. For personal care attendants, students must be enrolled in the 30-week Personal Care Attendant/Home Support Worker Program that follows the provincial curriculum standards or equivalent for training of Home Support Workers in Community Settings and Personal Care Attendants in Nursing Home Settings.

RHA employees who are actively enrolled in an education program for one of the selected health occupations in the table below may also be eligible. Other health occupations may be considered by the HR Planning Sub-Committee upon request by the RHA.

Eligible Health Occupations:

Audiologist	Managers (clinical and non-clinical)	Pharmacy Technician
Behaviour Management Specialist	Medical Laboratory Technologist	Physiotherapist
Cardiology Technologist	Medical Physicist	Prosthetist-Orthotist Clinician
Cardiopulmonary Technologist	Medical Radiation Technologist	Prosthetist-Orthotist Technician
Cardiovascular Perfusion Technologist	Nuclear Medicine Technologist	Psychologist (Clinical)
Child Management Specialist	Occupational Therapist	Radiation Therapist
Combined LX Technologist	Orthopaedic Technologist	Recreation Development Specialist
Dietitian (Clinical)	Orthoptist	Respiratory Therapist
Dosimetrist	Paramedic (Advanced Care)	Social Worker
Electroneurophysiology Technologist	Pastoral Care Clinician	Speech-Language Pathologist
Genetic Counselor	Personal Care Attendant	
Licensed Practical Nurse	Pharmacist	

Amounts and Conditions:

1. A \$10,000 bursary is available for students with a required service obligation equaling two years (3,900 or 3,640 hours of work as applicable). A \$5,000 bursary with a required service obligation equaling one year (1,950 or 1,820 hours of work, as applicable) is also available. There are some circumstances where longer service obligations may be required.

Some exceptions apply:

- **Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Bursaries in St. John's** - For students actively enrolled in physiotherapy or occupational therapy programs, a \$6,000 bursary is available with a required service obligation to be completed in St. John's equaling two years (3,900 hours of work). A \$3,000 bursary with a required service obligation to be completed in St. John's equaling one year (1,950 hours of work) is also available. Physiotherapy and occupational therapy bursaries with service obligations outside of St. John's follow the amounts and conditions listed above.
 - **Licensed Practical Nurse and Personal Care Attendant Bursaries** - For students actively enrolled in the 16-month Practical Nursing Program offered by the Centre for Nursing Studies or the College of the North Atlantic, or students enrolled in the 30-week Personal Care Attendant/Home Support Worker Program that follows the provincial curriculum standards or equivalent for training, a \$5,000 bursary is available with a required service obligation equaling two years (3,900 hours of work).
 - Recipients must meet all conditions required by the RHA before being offered a bursary which includes meeting conditions of employment with the RHA offering the bursary.
2. RHAs cannot increase the amount of bursaries.
 3. Students are eligible for bursaries in the final year of their education program; exceptions to provide a bursary to a student in an earlier year of their education program may be considered by the Health Workforce Planning Division on a case-by-case basis and only in extenuating circumstances.
 4. Bursaries must be paid to the recipient prior to program completion.
 5. Program completion is defined as the last day of exams as per the program calendar. It is not the date of graduation.
 6. A signed service agreement is required for each recipient receiving a bursary. Service agreements signed with a RHA are legally binding contracts.
 7. Positions can be permanent fulltime, temporary full-time, permanent part-time or temporary part-time, depending on the approval, with a guarantee of at least nine months employment. If a position is part-time, then the bursary amount will be prorated based on the hours of work per year. In either case, the full service obligation must be satisfied.
 8. Positions for licensed practical nurses and personal care attendants may be temporary call-in positions.

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9. When offering part-time or temporary call-in employment, RHAs are responsible for tracking all shifts offered and worked to ensure that ample opportunities are made available to the recipient to work the required hours.
10. Bursaries may be subject to income taxation. The bursary will be recorded on the appropriate T4A/T4 that is issued to each recipient for funds disbursed in each calendar year.
11. Recipients of more than one incentive under the *Bursaries and Incentives Program* of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador with a service obligation to the same RHA to be employed in the same position will complete their service obligations concurrently.
12. RHAs must inform the Department of Health and Community Services in writing once a default occurs.
13. Interest on the amount to be repaid by the recipient is calculated retroactively from the date the money was advanced to or on behalf of the Recipient, and will compound on the outstanding balance as of the end of the month. The interest rate is the Bank of Canada prime rate plus two percentage points.
14. RHAs may only accept a bursary transfer to another RHA where the equivalent bursary may have been made available at the other RHA. Where a lesser or no bursary would be available in the other RHA, the recipient would then be responsible to pay the difference to the original RHA. The recipient must obtain the original RHAs permission to transfer as well as sign a new service agreement with the other RHA. Permission to transfer may be denied by the original RHA, in which case, the recipient may choose to remain in the original position as noted in the service agreement or default on the bursary.

Enhanced Bursary Option:

If RHAs have been unsuccessful in offering an approved bursary and can provide evidence that all avenues to attract a recipient currently enrolled in a health occupation program have been exhausted, RHAs may apply for an enhanced bursary for the position. Special consideration may be given where an RHA can provide workforce planning data (ex: anticipated turnover, retirements, service expansion, etc.) that shows an increased demand for the health occupation due to retirements or expanded health services.

RHAs may request an enhanced bursary in one of the following categories:

- **Category 1:** Approved bursary amounts may be doubled. Service obligation will also be doubled. In this instance, a limited supply of the health professional students exists and/or the bursary amount has been deemed unattractive.
- **Category 2:** Bursary equivalent to the cost of completing the particular education program including tuition, books and fees only to a maximum of \$20,000. RHAs can apply for this bursary to support an individual to complete a local education program or program via distance education. Proof of total program costs must be provided.
- **Category 3:** Category 3 is reserved for when an RHA is supporting a current employee to complete a health professional program that is not offered in the province or via distance education and all avenues of recruitment have been exhausted. (Ex: EEG program). RHAs will provide a bursary covering the full costs of tuition. Service requirements will be 1,820/1,950 hours of work per \$5,000 provided.

Regional Health Authority Responsibilities:

The RHAs responsibilities include the following:

1. Submitting applications for bursary funding to the Health Workforce Planning Division at the beginning of each fiscal year for consideration by the Human Resources Planning Sub-Committee, which includes providing a completed Application for Health Professional Bursary Funding (Form 6.0) and other supporting documentation, as necessary.
2. Recruiting an incumbent for the bursary.
3. Appropriately screening of students before offering a bursary to ensure suitability for employment including, but not limited to, criminal record checks, academic standing in the program, references from program instructors and previous employers, and interview with student.
4. Establishing a written service agreement with the recipient.
5. Submitting documentation to the Health Workforce Planning Division when the bursary has been awarded to the successful incumbent, which includes a completed bursary application form, verification of enrollment and signed service agreement.
6. Preparing bursary cheques for recipients with appropriate deductions.
7. Requesting reimbursement of funds from the Health Workforce Planning Division with supporting documentation on a quarterly basis.
8. Offering employment to the recipient within 30 days of program completion in accordance with the service agreement.
9. Ensuring that recipients who are offered or request permanent full-time or temporary full-time positions complete the 3,900 hour service obligation within two years. RHAs must ensure that recipients who are offered or request temporary call-in or part-time positions complete a 3,900 hour service obligation within four years. For recipients who choose to accept partial bursary amount (one or two installments), time frames for completing the service obligation will be prorated.
10. If an employment offer is not made within this timeframe the signed agreement will be null and void, and repayment will not be expected. The RHA also reserves the right to release a recipient from an agreement if deemed necessary.
11. Tracking the fulfillment of service agreements for bursary recipients.
12. When offering part-time or temporary call-in employment, RHAs are responsible for tracking all shifts offered and worked to ensure that ample opportunities are made available to the recipient to work the required hours.
13. Notifying the Health Workforce Planning Division once a recipient has defaulted.
14. Enforcing collection of defaulted amounts for recipients as per the *Bursaries and Incentives Program Collection Policy – RHA Receivables*.
15. Notifying the Health Workforce Planning Division of collected amounts of defaulted bursaries on a quarterly basis.
16. Preparing the appropriate T4/T4A for bursary recipients annually.

17. Providing evidence when applying for the enhanced bursary program as deemed appropriate.

Recipient Responsibilities:

The recipient's responsibilities include the following:

1. Reviewing and complying with the terms and conditions of the incentive and service agreement.
2. Providing RHAs with proof of active registration in their education program.
3. Notifying the RHA in writing if he/she is unable to fulfill the service agreement at least three (3) months prior to the termination date of the service agreement and arrange for repayment of the defaulted bursary amount in accordance with the service agreement and the *Bursaries and Incentives Program Collection Policy – RHA Receivables*.
4. Notifying the RHA of any change in contact information such as name, permanent or temporary address, and phone number provided at the time of signing the service agreement.
5. Applying for and accepting a position within 30 calendar days of program completion.
6. The student is responsible for informing the RHA and Department of Health and Community Services of any change in program completion date and contact information such as name, permanent address, phone number, etc.

Procedure:

1. The RHA submits an Application for Health Professional Bursary Funding and other supporting documentation, as necessary, to the Human Resource Planning Sub-Committee for approval at the beginning of each fiscal year. Approved bursaries expire at the end of each fiscal year.
2. The Human Resource Planning Subcommittee notifies all RHAs of approved bursaries for each fiscal year.
3. Recipients contact an RHA to determine if a bursary is available for a position, or the RHA recruits an incumbent for the bursary.
 - If RHAs have been unsuccessful in offering an approved bursary and can provide evidence that all avenues to attract a recipient currently enrolled in a health professional program have been exhausted, RHAs may apply for an enhanced bursary for the position. Special consideration may be given where an RHA can provide workforce planning data (ex: anticipated turnover, retirements, service expansion, etc.) that shows an increased demand for the health professional due to retirements or expanded health services.
 - Requests for enhanced bursary funding will be submitted to the Director of Health Workforce Planning and approved by the Department of Health and Community Services. Requests are subject to available funding.
4. The RHA facilitates the signing of a service agreement with the incumbent and submits the signed agreement, completed bursary application form and verification of enrollment to the Health Workforce Planning Division for approval.

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5. Upon receiving approval, the RHA issues the bursary cheque before the deadline of January 31st of each fiscal year, or 3 months prior to program completion, whichever occurs first. Bursaries awarded within less than 3 months before program completion must be taxed.
6. All bursary payments must be made to the recipient prior to program completion.
7. The RHA offers employment to the recipient within 30 days of program completion in accordance with the service agreement.
8. RHAs will invoice the Department of Health and Community Services for reimbursement on a quarterly basis.