

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 726 Session of 2023

INTRODUCED BY CIRESI, PROBST, HOWARD, T. DAVIS, MADDEN, ROZZI,
GUENST, SANCHEZ, DELLOSO, HILL-EVANS, PARKER, CERRATO AND
MALAGARI, MARCH 28, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MARCH 28, 2023

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of June 13, 1967 (P.L.31, No.21), entitled "An
2 act to consolidate, editorially revise, and codify the public
3 welfare laws of the Commonwealth," providing for Mental
4 Health Workforce Retention Program; and making an
5 appropriation.

6 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
7 hereby enacts as follows:

8 Section 1. The act of June 13, 1967 (P.L.31, No.21), known
9 as the Human Services Code, is amended by adding an article to
10 read:

11 ARTICLE XI-A

12 MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE RETENTION PROGRAM

13 Section 1101-A. Definitions.

14 The following words and phrases when used in this article
15 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
16 context clearly indicates otherwise:

17 "Eligible applicant." A mental health worker who satisfies
18 the eligibility requirements under section 1104-A.

19 "Grant." A grant issued by the department under this

1 article.

2 "Mental health worker." An individual who is employed in the
3 psychology, counseling, social work or human services field.

4 "Program." The Mental Health Workforce Retention Program
5 established under section 1102-A.

6 "Recipient." A mental health worker who is selected by the
7 department to receive a grant under the program.

8 Section 1102-A. Mental Health Workforce Retention Program.

9 The Mental Health Workforce Retention Program is established
10 within the department for the purpose of awarding grants to
11 mental health workers in accordance with this article.

12 Section 1103-A. Duties of department.

13 The department shall:

14 (1) Provide grants to eligible applicants in accordance
15 with the program.

16 (2) Administer the program, including adopting
17 regulations, policies, procedures and forms as are necessary
18 to implement the program which are not inconsistent with the
19 provisions of this article.

20 Section 1104-A. Eligibility.

21 To qualify for a grant under the program, a mental health
22 worker must be:

23 (1) a resident of this Commonwealth; and

24 (2) employed as a mental health worker focusing on
25 adolescents for at least seven consecutive years.

26 Section 1105-A. Application for grant.

27 (a) Application.--The department shall develop and publish
28 on its publicly accessible Internet website an application by
29 which an eligible applicant may apply for a grant.

30 (b) Application requirements.--An application for a grant

1 must be submitted to the department on or before the deadline
2 for submittal of the application, as established by the
3 department. The application must provide proof of eligibility as
4 required under section 1104-A.

5 Section 1106-A. Award of grants.

6 (a) Lottery system.--The department shall develop a lottery
7 system for selecting eligible applicants to receive a grant.

8 (b) Total distribution.--Of the total amount appropriated to
9 the department under section 1108-A(a), the department shall
10 distribute no more than \$1,000,000 in total grants to eligible
11 applicants in any fiscal year.

12 (c) Grant amount.--Each grant shall be in the amount of
13 \$5,000. No eligible applicant may receive more than one grant
14 for the duration of the program.

15 Section 1107-A. Tax applicability.

16 A grant awarded under the program shall not be considered
17 taxable income for the purposes of Article III of the act of
18 March 4, 1971 (P.L.6, No.2), known as the Tax Reform Code of
19 1971.

20 Section 1108-A. Funding.

21 (a) Appropriation.--The sum of \$5,000,000 is appropriated on
22 a continuing basis to the department from the General Fund for
23 the purposes of awarding grants to recipients under the program.
24 The appropriation shall not lapse at the end of any fiscal year.

25 (b) Unused money.--If the department awards grants totaling
26 less than \$1,000,000 in a fiscal year, the department shall
27 return the unused money for that fiscal year to the General
28 Fund.

29 Section 1109-A. Expiration of authority to award grants.

30 The department's authority to award grants under the program

1 shall expire June 30, 2028.

2 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023, or
3 immediately, whichever is later.