

164.757 District teacher certification loan fund.

- (1) For purposes of this section unless the context requires otherwise:
 - (a) "Critical shortage area" means an area in which there are insufficient numbers of fully certified staff in a particular subject, school, or geographic location;
 - (b) "Emergency certified teacher" means an individual who has not completed certification requirements but has been awarded a temporary certificate for a certification area in which no fully qualified teacher was available;
 - (c) "Qualified teacher" means a teacher who holds the appropriate certification for a position unless the superintendent of the employing local school district has documented evidence that the teacher is unsuitable for appointment;
 - (d) "Qualified teaching service" means teaching for at least seventy (70) days each semester or the equivalent in the certification area for which an individual received a forgivable loan in the Kentucky school district that recommended the individual for a loan or in another Kentucky private or public school district in the certification area for which an individual received a forgivable loan if no position was available in the recommending school district at the time when the individual completed his or her certification;
 - (e) "Semester" means a period which usually makes up one-half (1/2) of a school year or one-half (1/2) of a postsecondary institution's academic year; and
 - (f) "Summer term" means an academic period consisting of one (1) or more sessions of instruction between a spring and a fall semester at a postsecondary education institution.
- (2) To increase the number of qualified teachers in local school districts and to reduce the number of emergency certified teachers, there is hereby created the district teacher certification loan fund in the State Treasury. The loans shall be used to provide forgivable loans to emergency certified personnel, fully certified teachers who are willing to seek additional certification in hard-to-fill or critical shortage areas, and paraprofessionals in local school districts to become fully certified teachers and to continue service within the local district.
- (3) The fund shall be administered by the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority. The authority shall promulgate administrative regulations to specify the terms and conditions of the award, cancellation, and repayment of loans, including but not limited to the maximum amount that may be loaned per term and the maximum aggregate amount per applicant, the selection process, eligibility for renewal, the specific administrative procedures for utilizing the funds, and the rate of repayment.
- (4) To qualify for a forgivable loan, an applicant shall meet the following requirements:
 - (a) Be employed by a specific local district as a certified teacher, an emergency full-time or part-time teacher, an emergency substitute teacher, or a paraprofessional at the time he or she makes application for the loan;
 - (b) Be recommended by the superintendent as an individual that he or she would recommend to be employed in a teaching position for which the applicant is pursuing certification if the applicant fulfills all credentialing requirements;

- (c) Be endorsed by the school-based decision making council of the school in which he or she serves to receive a loan for the purposes of obtaining teacher certification in a specific certification area; except that the endorsement shall not be construed as a commitment of securing a position in the particular school in the future;
 - (d) Be admitted and enrolled as an undergraduate or graduate student in a Kentucky private or public postsecondary institution that offers a teacher certification program in the area for which he or she is seeking certification; and
 - (e) Be enrolled in a minimum of six (6) credit hours and not more than nine (9) credit hours during each semester of an academic term while employed concurrently in the school district and in not less than six (6) credit hours during the summer term. If a school district recommends an applicant for a loan under provisions of this section and grants a leave of absence to the employee to pursue certification, the employee shall be enrolled as a full-time undergraduate or graduate student as defined by the institution in which he or she is enrolled.
- (5) A participant in a local district alternative certification program as defined in KRS 161.048(2) may be eligible for a loan under provisions of this section to offset costs associated with the program. The authority shall establish by administrative regulation the specific requirements, notwithstanding requirements in subsection (4) of this section.
 - (6) A loan shall not be awarded or a promissory note cancellation shall not be granted to any person who is in default on any obligation to the authority under any program administered pursuant to KRS 164.740 to 164.785 until financial obligations to the authority are satisfied, except that ineligibility for this reason may be waived by the authority for cause.
 - (7) Recipients shall render one (1) semester of qualified teaching service for each semester or summer term for which a loan was received. Upon completion of each semester of qualified teacher service, the authority shall cancel the appropriate portion of the promissory notes.
 - (8) If the recipient of a loan fails to complete the certification at a participating institution or fails to render qualified teaching service in any semester following certification, unless the failure is temporarily waived for cause by the authority, the recipient shall immediately become liable to the authority for repayment of the sum of all outstanding promissory notes and accrued interest. Persons liable for repayment of loans under this subsection shall be liable for interest accruing from the dates on which the loans were disbursed.
 - (9) Failure to meet repayment obligations imposed by this section shall be cause for the revocation of a person's certification, subject to the procedures set forth in KRS 161.120.
 - (10) All moneys repaid to the authority under this section shall be added to the fund in this section. Any fund balance at the close of a fiscal year shall not lapse but shall

be carried forward to the next fiscal year and continuously appropriated for the purposes specified in this section.

- (11) The authority may execute appropriate contracts and promissory notes for administering this section.
- (12) If available funds are insufficient for all requested loans for eligible applicants during any fiscal year, the authority shall give priority consideration to eligible applicants who previously received loans. If funds are insufficient to make all requested renewal loans to eligible applicants, the authority shall reduce all loans to the extent necessary to provide loans to all qualified renewal applicants. If, after awarding all eligible renewal applicants, funds are not depleted, priority shall be given to loans for those applicants who are seeking certification in critical shortage areas.

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