

FY25 Home and Community Based Services Employee Scholarship Grant & Loan Forgiveness Program Questions & Answers

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We provide Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS) and Children’s Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS), as well as therapy in home. We are also about to turn in our 245I license application, and we provide Housing Stabilization Services. Would we qualify for this grant program?

Eligible organizations must primarily provide services to individuals who are 65 years of age and older in home and community-based settings and hold one of the following licenses:

- Assisted living facility as defined in [Sec. 144G.08 MN Statutes, subdivision 7](#)
- Adult day care facility as defined in [MN Statute 245A.02, subdivision 2a](#)
- Home care services provider as defined in [MN Statute 144A.43, subdivision 3](#)

The relevant license for home care services providers is typically 245D. If you are currently providing home care services as defined in MN Statute 144A.43, subdivision 3 and have a license covering those services, and your organization meets the other eligibility criteria listed in RFP section 1.4, you are eligible to apply.

We currently have an HCBS grant in place that expires on 6/30/2026. Just want to confirm that this is the same grant, and we have no need to re-apply at this time?

Current and past HCBS grantees are eligible to apply for the current funding cycle if there is a need for additional financial support for scholarships and/or loan forgiveness, even if an active grant or employee loan forgiveness awards are in place, as long as the organization still meets eligibility criteria.

Please note that when assessing the new application, the review committee will consider whether the organization previously received HCBS funding, any active open balances, rationale for applying for additional funds, and whether the application demonstrates the impact of past funding.

If a skilled site offers CNA training and it is not required for the role of an unlicensed professional, can the cost of training be paid to the skilled site?

Yes, scholarship funding grantees may pay tuition directly to the educational institution or training site or reimburse the employee upon completion of the course.

Training that leads to career advancement with the provider or in the field of long-term care is eligible: for example, an individual who works at least 10 hours per week in an unlicensed caregiving role could pursue CNA training.

See RFP section 2.2 for full details on eligible courses of study and in-house training, as well as eligibility criteria for scholarship recipients.

Can scholarship funds be used in collaboration with a high school-level CNA training class (to encourage students to pursue further education, such as obtaining their LPN credentials)?

To be eligible, a scholarship recipient must be employed in a caregiving role (providing direct care to patients/clients) and must work an average of at least 10 hours per week for the grantee HCBS organization while receiving a scholarship funded by the HCBS Employee Scholarship Grant and Loan Forgiveness Program.

Diploma programs as part of a Health Care Collaborative or other health care pathway program for secondary students leading to an HCBS career are eligible for scholarship funding, as long as the recipients meet the employment eligibility criteria.

See RFP section 2.2 for full details on eligible courses of study and in-house training, as well as eligibility criteria for scholarship recipients.

If an employee is currently in the process of obtaining their LALD licensure, would they be eligible for loan forgiveness?

Licensed assisted living director (LALD) is an eligible course of study. To be eligible, loans must have been incurred any time before the expected loan forgiveness award date of July 1, 2025. Additionally, the employee must agree to work for a minimum of two years, at least 45 weeks per year, for an average of at least 32 hours per week, for a qualifying HCBS employer. The two-year service commitment will begin on the loan forgiveness award date. See RFP section 2.2 for full details on loan forgiveness eligibility.

Would a community be eligible to apply twice?

Per RFP section 1.4, an organization may only submit one application. Organizations with multiple sites should submit one application and make clear which sites will be involved.

For the loan forgiveness, it states in the program description that recipients could receive \$12,000 over 2 years. Do we need to reapply or will the dollar amount for the 2nd year be automatically granted if approved for the 1st year?

Recipients of the loan forgiveness program who have been approved for the first year do not need to reapply for the second year. Loan forgiveness recipients will submit an annual confirmation of practice document signed by their employer to verify that they are fulfilling their service commitment. MDH will issue annual loan forgiveness award disbursements. See RFP section 2.2 for details.

On page 3 of the RFP it states that up to one-third of annual funding may be used for loan forgiveness to eligible HCBS employees. Does this mean we have to have a scholarship grant? Or may we apply only for loan forgiveness?

The language on page three of the RFP indicates how MDH may distribute overall program funds: one-third of the annual state funding allocation may be set aside for loan forgiveness awards, and two-thirds may be designated for scholarship grants.

This language does not apply to applicants. Eligible applicants may apply for scholarship funding, loan forgiveness for individual employees, or both.

If we are applying for one individual who has more than \$12,000 in loans, can they be sole the recipient of loan forgiveness over multiple years, as long as they don't receive more than \$12,000 each time?

Loan forgiveness awardees may receive an HCBS loan forgiveness award one time (typically \$12,000 awarded over two years); they are not eligible for multiple awards under the HCBS loan forgiveness program.

Page 9 of the RFP states: "The expected time period for loan forgiveness awards to individuals is July 1, 2025 – May 31, 2027. Loans incurred prior to the start date of July 1, 2025 are eligible for forgiveness." Does this mean that all loans must be incurred prior to July 1, 2025?

Yes, to be eligible, loans must have been incurred before the expected loan forgiveness award date of July 1, 2025.

If we plan to apply for loan forgiveness as a recruitment tool, but do not have the individual determined at the time of application, may we still apply, asking for the \$12,000, or do we need to specify by name who will be the recipient of the loan forgiveness grant at time of application?

An organization may apply for loan forgiveness without specifying the individual recipients at the time of application. You only need to indicate the number of slots (up to 5) you are requesting. If you don't have specific individuals identified, you may enter "unknown" for the nominations. You will have an opportunity to identify the employees after being notified of how many loan forgiveness slots your organization has received. See RFP page 24 for details on loan forgiveness nominations.

Our organization facilitates an in-house Certified Nursing Assistant training and certification program, conducted by an employee of the organization. We understand that staff time would not be an eligible cost under this grant, but would other costs be eligible from our in-house program, such as supplies and testing fees?

Generally, organizations applying for scholarship funding to offer in-house trainings must partner with a qualified educational institution to provide the training. If your organization has an in-house training program that meets state requirements and fulfills grant program criteria, it may be considered for scholarship funding.

Costs of supplies directly related to the training, purchased by the institution offering the training or employees attending the training, may be eligible for scholarship funding reimbursement. Exam fees paid by employees attending the training may be eligible for scholarship funding reimbursement. All expenses must be incurred during the grant period.

For more details on eligible and ineligible expenses, please refer to section 2.2 of the RFP.

Will the PowerPoint presentation from the RFP Informational Webinar held on Jan. 6, 2025, be made available?

Yes. A copy of the PowerPoint slides and questions/answers from the Jan. 6, 2025 RFP Webinar will be posted here:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/facilities/ruralhealth/funding/grants/index.html#hcb>

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