

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 54th Legislature (2014)

3 HOUSE BILL 2635

By: Proctor

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6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to higher education; stating intent
8 for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
9 to establish a public health and safety professional
10 incentive program; stating purpose of the program;
11 listing eligibility criteria for incentive payments;
12 authorizing the State Regents to make incentive
13 payments to persons who meet eligibility criteria;
14 establishing total amount of incentive payments;
15 requiring the execution of contracts; allowing the
16 Chancellor of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
17 Education to contract with other entities for
18 administration of the program; authorizing the
19 Chancellor to reduce payments under certain
20 circumstances; providing for codification; providing
21 an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

22 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

23 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
24 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 698.4 of Title 70, unless there
is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. It is the intent of the Oklahoma Legislature that, beginning
with the 2014-2025 school year, the Oklahoma State Regents for
Higher Education establish a public health and safety professional
incentive program for students enrolled in a program at an

1 accredited Oklahoma institution of higher education who declare an
2 intention to serve and who subsequently serve this state for a
3 minimum of five (5) consecutive years as a:

4 1. Law enforcement officer for a municipality, a county, a
5 political subdivision of the state or the state;

6 2. Firefighter for a municipality, a county, a political
7 subdivision of the state or the state;

8 3. Nurse for a health facility located in the state or for a
9 health institution or agency of a municipality, county, or political
10 subdivision of the state, or the state; or

11 4. Member of the Oklahoma National Guard.

12 B. Students meeting the criteria provided in this section shall
13 be given the opportunity to enter into participation in the program.

14 C. In order to qualify to receive incentive payments as
15 provided for in this section, the person shall:

16 1. Be a United States citizen or lawfully present in the United
17 States;

18 2. Be a resident of Oklahoma;

19 3. Complete any course work and training necessary for one of
20 the professions as listed in subsection A of this section;

21 4. Have secured admission to and enrolled in a full-time or
22 part-time program of study at an institution within The Oklahoma
23 State System of Higher Education;

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1 5. Be enrolled in a program of study leading to an associate or
2 a baccalaureate degree; and

3 6. Complete the first full year of eligible professional
4 service in one of the professions listed in subsection A of this
5 section within twenty-five (25) months from the date of graduation
6 from a higher education institution or application for the program.

7 D. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are
8 authorized to make incentive payments pursuant to the provisions of
9 this section to persons who actually render a minimum of five (5)
10 years of professional service in the state in a profession listed in
11 subsection A of this section. The total amount of the incentive
12 payments for any qualified person shall not exceed an amount equal
13 to twenty percent (20%) of the total amount of student loans
14 incurred by the person or an amount equal to twenty percent (20%) of
15 the average annual cost of four (4) years of undergraduate resident
16 tuition and fees for full-time enrollment at institutions within The
17 Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, as defined by the State
18 Regents, whichever amount is less.

19 E. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall
20 require the execution of appropriate contracts with eligible
21 persons. Persons failing to comply with the requirements of this
22 section shall not be eligible for the incentive payments provided
23 for in this section. The Chancellor of the Oklahoma State Regents
24 for Higher Education, with approval of the State Regents, may

1 contract with any other appropriate organization or unit of
2 government for the administration of the provisions of this section.

3 F. If insufficient funds are available for incentive payments
4 to qualified persons during any fiscal year, the Chancellor may make
5 reductions in the payments made to those qualifying.

6 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2014.

7 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
8 of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby
9 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
10 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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