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Sec. 61.9603. ELIGIBILITY. To be eligible to receive repayment assistance, an attorney must:

(1) apply to the board;

(2) have earned a law degree from an accredited law school;

(3) be an attorney licensed in this state;

(4) have an outstanding student loan balance; and

(5) be currently:

(A) employed as:

(i) a prosecuting [an] attorney by a district or county attorney's office that serves a rural county; or

(ii) a public defender by a county public defender's office that serves a rural county; or

(B) appointed as an attorney to represent indigent individuals who, in the most recent calendar year, provided services to those individuals in one or more rural counties for not less than:

(i) 200 hours; or

(ii) 10 cases [and

[(3) enter into an agreement to remain employed by the district or county attorney's office as provided by Section 61.9605].

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education, or a public or private out-of-state institution of higher education accredited by a recognized accrediting agency, including loans for undergraduate education, received by an eligible person through any lender [a school of law authorized by the board to award a degree that satisfies the law study requirements for licensure as an attorney in this state].

(b) The board may not provide repayment assistance for a student [an education] loan that is in default at the time of the attorney's application.

Sec. 61.9606. REPAYMENT. (a) [Except as provided by Section 61.9609(a), the board shall provide repayment assistance under this subchapter in the following amounts:

[(1) 60 percent of each payment due on an attorney's eligible loans during the first 12-month period after the attorney enters into the agreement under Section 61.9605;

[(2) 80 percent of each payment due on an attorney's eligible loans during the second 12-month period after the attorney enters into the agreement; and

[(3) 100 percent of each payment due on an attorney's eligible loans during the third 12-month period after the attorney enters into the agreement.

[(b)] The board shall deliver any repayment assistance made under this subchapter in this subchapter to Section 2.0002 to Section 5570.044 1.

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1 ~~federal law~~].

2 (b) [~~e~~] Loan repayment assistance received under this  
3 subchapter may be applied to the principal amount of the loan and to  
4 interest that accrues.

5 Sec. 61.96061. AMOUNT OF REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE. (a)  
6 Subject to Subsection (b), an attorney may receive loan repayment  
7 assistance under this subchapter for each year the attorney  
8 establishes eligibility for the assistance in an amount determined  
9 by the board not to exceed:

10 (1) for the first year, \$30,000;

11 (2) for the second year, \$40,000;

12 (3) for the third year, \$50,000; and

13 (4) for the fourth year, \$60,000.

14 (b) The total amount of repayment assistance received by an  
15 attorney under this subchapter may not exceed \$180,000.

16 Sec. 61.96062. LIMITATIONS. An attorney may receive loan  
17 repayment assistance under this subchapter for not more than four  
18 years.

19 Sec. 61.9607. ADVISORY COMMITTEE. (a) The board shall  
20 [~~may~~] appoint an advisory committee from outside the board's  
21 membership to assist the board in performing the board's duties  
22 under this subchapter.

23 (b) The advisory committee shall be composed of an equal  
24 number of members appointed by:

25 (1) the Texas District and County Attorneys  
26 Association;

27 (2) the Texas Indigent Defense Commission; and

1           (3) the Texas Judicial Council.

2           (c) The advisory committee shall make recommendations to  
3 the board regarding rules that:

4           (1) establish a method for documenting and verifying  
5 the number of hours worked or cases defended for purposes of Section  
6 61.9603(5)(B); and

7           (2) allocate repayment funding under this subchapter  
8 in a manner that incentivizes service in the most rural counties.

9           (d) In developing recommendations under Subsection (c)(2),  
10 the advisory committee shall consider:

11           (1) the population of the counties in which applicants  
12 for repayment assistance under this subchapter provide services;

13           (2) the degree of scarcity of prosecutors, public  
14 defenders, and indigent defense services providers in those  
15 counties; and

16           (3) for applicants who are attorneys appointed to  
17 represent indigent defendants:

18                   (A) the distances between counties in which an  
19 applicant provides indigent defense services;

20                   (B) the volume of cases handled by an applicant;  
21 and

22                   (C) the number of hours that an applicant  
23 provided indigent defense services in the applicable calendar year.

24           SECTION 3. Section 61.9608(a), Education Code, is amended  
25 to read as follows:

26           (a) The loan repayment assistance program established by  
27 this subchapter is funded from the rural criminal justice system

[district and county] attorney student loan assistance trust fund.

The trust fund is

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1 date of this Act, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
2 shall adopt rules necessary to administer Subchapter Y, Chapter 61,  
3 Education Code, as amended by this Act.

4 (b) Subchapter Y, Chapter 61, Education Code, as amended by  
5 this Act, applies only to loan repayment assistance initially  
6 provided under that subchapter on or after the effective date of  
7 this Act. A loan repayment assistance agreement entered into under  
8 that subchapter before the effective date of this Act is governed by  
9 the law in effect immediately before that date, and the former law  
10 is continued in effect for that purpose.

11 SECTION 7. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.