

## **OPTOMETRY SCHOLARSHIP-LOAN PROGRAM**

### **LOAN FORGIVENESS**

Congratulations on your recent graduation from the Optometry Scholarship-Loan (OSL) program. We wish you much success in your career endeavors and appreciate your commitment to repay your scholarship-loan by working full-time as an optometrist in North Carolina. Should you have any questions concerning the repayment of your OSL scholarship-loan, please contact Repayment Services at 549-8614, option # 2, or 1 (800) 700-1775, option # 2.

#### **How to apply for loan forgiveness.**

In order to qualify for loan forgiveness or service cancellation, you must first graduate from a doctor of optometry program, obtain licensure from the North Carolina Board of Optometry, and secure a full-time position as an optometrist in North Carolina. To apply for loan forgiveness or service cancellation you must follow the steps out-lined below. You are responsible for submitting the appropriate forms to the SEAA on time.

1. Submit verification of graduation from a doctor of optometry program to the SEAA.
2. Notify the SEAA of your intent to repay through loan forgiveness within 90 days of graduation.
3. Obtain licensure from the North Carolina Board of Optometry.
4. Secure a full-time position as an optometrist in North Carolina.
5. Complete an [Application for Proposed Practice Location](#) form and return it to the SEAA for approval.

#### **Am I required to work in a designated shortage area in North Carolina?**

The purpose of the OSL scholarship-loan program is to increase the number of qualified optometrists in the State of North Carolina. You are eligible for loan forgiveness as long as you practice full-time in the State of North Carolina within seven (7) years of graduation.

#### **What forms do I submit to the SEAA?**

Once you obtain licensure and secure full-time employment as an optometrist in North Carolina, you must submit an [Application for Proposed Practice Location](#) form to the SEAA for approval.

### **How long must I work to fulfill my scholarship-loan obligation?**

For each year of qualifying employment completed, the SEAA will forgive one year of funding, plus any accrued interest. Credit for service cancellation is approved annually by the SEAA at the end of each year of employment. You must complete your loan forgiveness obligation within seven (7) years of graduation from the OSL program.

### **What if I change my worksite?**

If there is a work site change before you complete your scholarship loan obligation, you must seek approval from the SEAA prior to the change to ensure the new site qualifies for loan forgiveness. Should you have a break in employment prior to completing your scholarship-loan obligation, you should notify the SEAA immediately of the status change.

### **What if I have a break in employment?**

If you have a break in employment prior to the completion of your obligation to the State of North Carolina, you may be eligible to postpone or defer payments. To apply for deferment, you must submit a [Postponement of Payment](#) form to the SEAA for approval. Eligible deferments include: personal illness, Family Medical Leave, full-time student enrollment, member of a National Guard or a reserve component who is ordered to active duty, and unemployment. If you do not qualify for a postponement, then you must repay the scholarship-loan in cash. For additional information on cash repayment, please click on the [OSL Cash Repayment](#) link.

### **Whom should I contact if I have additional questions concerning loan forgiveness?**

Additional information is available in the [OSL Policies and Procedures](#) or you may contact Repayment Services at the address and telephone numbers below between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

SEAA - Repayment Services  
P.O. Box 14223  
RTP, NC 27709-4223

(919) 549-8614, option # 2 (Local)

(800) 700-1775, option # 2 (Toll Free)

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