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NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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TITLE 183 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

CHAPTER 4 LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM UNDER THE RURAL HEALTH SYSTEMS
AND PROFESSIONAL INCENTIVE ACT

4-001 SCOPE AND PURPOSE: These rules and regulations are promulgated under the authority of and in compliance with Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 71-5650 to 71-5670, the Rural Health Systems and Professional Incentive Act. The purpose of these rules and regulations is to establish procedures for awarding loan repayment under the Act.

4-002 DEFINITIONS

Act means the Rural Health Systems and Professional Incentive Act.

Approved dental specialty means general practice, pediatric dentistry, and oral surgery.

Approved medical specialty means family practice, general practice, general internal medicine, general pediatrics, general surgery, obstetrics/gynecology, and psychiatry.

Commission means the Nebraska Rural Health Advisory Commission.

Department means the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health.

Health care means both somatic and mental health care services.

Rural means located within any county in Nebraska having a population of less than 15,000 inhabitants and not included within a metropolitan statistical area as defined by the United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

4-003 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS: An individual, in order to be eligible for loan repayment, must:

1. Be a dentist, mental health practitioner, nurse practitioner, occupational therapist, pharmacist, physical therapist, physician, physician assistant, or psychologist. Dentists must practice an approved dental specialty. Nurse practitioners, physicians, and physician assistants must practice an approved medical specialty;
2. Be licensed to practice in the State of Nebraska;
3. Not be enrolled in a residency program for dentists or physicians;

4. Not be practicing with a provisional license;
5. Enter practice in a designated health profession shortage area in Nebraska;
6. Submit an individual application containing information specified by the Commission;
7. Have the community or local entity providing the local match submit an application containing information specified by the Commission; and
8. Sign an agreement with the State of Nebraska and the local entity providing the local match.

4-003.01 An individual applying for or receiving loan repayment may not act as the local entity for purposes of providing the local match or verifying the individual's practice during the practice obligation.

4-004 SELECTION PRIORITIES: In consideration of granting loan repayment, the Commission may prioritize applicants using as a minimum:

1. The severity of shortage in the area where the applicant is practicing;
2. The potential impact on the area if the applicant does not remain in practice; and
3. The educational debt burden of the applicant.

4-005 DESIGNATION OF HEALTH PROFESSION SHORTAGE AREAS: The Commission will designate an area as being a health profession shortage area if, in addition to the factors mentioned in the Act, the following two criteria are met:

1. The area is a rational area for the delivery of health care services; and
2. One of the following conditions prevails within the area:
 - a. The area's population-to-practitioner ratio exceeds the acceptable ratio set by the Commission; or
 - b. The area's population-to-practitioner ratio is within a range set by the Commission and the area has one or more high need indicators as set by the Commission.

4-006 APPLICATION PERIOD: Applications will be accepted throughout the year.