FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PHEAA Launches the Student Loan Relief for Nurses Program with $5 million in COVID – State Fiscal Recovery Funds

Provides up to $7,500 in student loan relief for Pennsylvania nurses

Harrisburg, PA (November 18, 2021) – The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) announced today the launch of the Commonwealth's Student Loan Relief for Nurses (Student Loan RN) Program. The available funding for the program is expected to provide student loan relief for licensed Pennsylvania nurses who provided care throughout the COVID Pandemic.

As directed by the Governor’s Office, PHEAA is tasked with administering the Student Loan RN Program with $5 million in COVID – State Fiscal Recovery Funds, which was allocated to the Commonwealth as part of the federal American Rescue Plan. Since program demand is expected to exceed available resources, qualified applicants will be randomly selected from the final geographically diversified applicant pool.

Selected nurses will be eligible to receive up to $7,500 in relief to reduce their outstanding student loan debt, with financial relief up to $2,500 for each year of work for a maximum of 3 years.

“This program was created through the cooperative and bipartisan efforts of the Governor’s Office and my colleagues in the General Assembly,” said Representative Mike Peifer, PHEAA Board Chairman. “Few are more deserving of financial relief than the Pennsylvania nurses who have worked so selflessly on the front lines to care for our sick and injured despite the many risks of COVID.”

“The fearless dedication of nurses throughout the Commonwealth has been a key factor in our ability to successfully overcome healthcare challenges from day one of the pandemic,” said Senator Wayne D. Fontana, PHEAA Board Vice Chairman. “The Student Loan RN Program is intended to help strengthen our nursing workforce by incentivizing experienced nurses who have worked throughout the pandemic to continue in their nursing careers, while encouraging nurses who may be thinking about leaving the profession due to the strain of COVID to reconsider.”

Applications for financial relief will be available beginning January 1, 2022 and will be accepted through March 1, 2022. Recipients will then be randomly selected to ensure that student loan relief is provided to nurses working in communities that are geographically disbursed throughout Pennsylvania.

(more)
“I'm excited to announce today that PHEAA brought to life a proposal crafted and championed by Senator Collett; and I'm proud to have supported it from the beginning. This program will be a down payment to those frontline nurses whose dedication over the last year plus has not gone unnoticed,” said Senator Vincent J. Hughes, PHEAA Board Member. “Even before the pandemic, nurses were in demand and with the stresses of the past year and a half, many nurses have chosen to leave the profession for other opportunities. It is our goal that this program will show frontline nurses we appreciate them and the hard work they do day in and day out.”

As the program's administrator, PHEAA will make student loan payments directly to federal and private loan servicers on behalf of each recipient, provided that total payments do not exceed 100 percent of the nurse's outstanding student loan balance at the time of the application and payment of the relief funds.

Eligible applicants must be licensed through the PA Department of State, including Registered Nurses (RNs) and Practical Nurses (LPNs), have worked in-person at a qualifying nursing facility, and have begun employment prior to December 31, 2021. Applicants must also be certified by their employers.

To be added to a mailing list to receive program updates, including complete eligibility requirements, eligible loan types and qualified nursing facilities, please visit PHEAA.org/SLRN.

The Student Loan RN Program is part of the Commonwealth's COVID-19 Nursing Workforce Initiative (NWI), which will be used as a nurse recruitment and retention tool to ensure that Pennsylvania's healthcare workforce is properly prepared to address ongoing pandemic challenges. The NWI also provides apprenticeship and mentoring opportunities, as administered by the Pennsylvania Departments of Labor and Industry and Human Services.

###

About PHEAA

Created in 1963 by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) has evolved into one of the nation's leading student aid organizations. Today PHEAA is a national provider of student financial services, serving millions of students and thousands of schools through its loan guaranty, loan servicing, financial aid processing, outreach, and other student aid programs.

PHEAA's earnings are used to support its public service mission and to pay its operating costs, including administration of the PA State Grant and other state-funded student aid programs. As the only major federal loan servicer with a nonprofit public service mission, PHEAA devotes its energy and resources to help ease the financial burden of higher education for its primary stakeholders - Pennsylvania students and families.

PHEAA conducts its student loan servicing operations nationally as FedLoan Servicing and American Education Services (AES). PHEAA operates its digital technology division as Avereo.