Decision by the U.S. Department of Education Brings Significant Reform to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program

Last night, representatives from the NASW National office participated in an invitation-only meeting with the U.S. Department of Education (DoEd) where major changes to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program were shared. DoEd announced the reforms publicly this morning. The New York Times published an article offering a detailed overview of the changes, as well.

*The changes are substantial and will result in many social workers receiving student loan forgiveness and/or years of public service counted toward forgiveness.* This is an important first step in helping relieve the crushing burden of student loan debt felt by many social workers. It is estimated that these changes will impact well over 700,000 public service professionals. NASW is being recognized as a lead organization in this advocacy and partnership with DoEd—a partnership that will continue as they make additional reforms to PSLF.

NASW’s recent efforts in reforming the failing PSLF program include Sept 24th comments and memo sent to the U.S. Department of Education. These comments were submitted as part of 2+ years of focused advocacy around student loan debt relief that NASW has been working in coalition and leading.

These changes to PSLF are transformational, but some social workers will still face challenges accessing loan forgiveness. The National NASW office will be hosting trainings/webinars in the coming months to assist social workers in understanding and accessing the PSLF program. We will also continue to work with DoEd and our national coalition partners to communicate any barriers experienced by applicants and offer advice to help improve the program further.

We'll continue to provide updates on PSLF and other loan forgiveness alternatives as information becomes available.

In solidarity,
Dr. Claire Green-Forde
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