

Senate Bill 778

Sponsored by Senator FREDERICK

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Creates psychology provider incentive program within Oregon Health Authority to provide financial incentives to students enrolled in approved doctoral programs in psychology who complete courses that provide cultural competency training. Requires program to provide loan repayment subsidies to certain licensed psychologists. Establishes Psychology Provider Incentive Fund. Requires Department of Public Safety Standards and Training to guarantee full-time employment to certain licensed psychologists. Requires public employer to award hiring preference to certain licensed psychologists.

Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to mental health care provider incentives; and prescribing an effective date.

3 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

4 **SECTION 1. As used in sections 1 to 5 of this 2023 Act:**

5 (1) **“Approved doctoral program in psychology” means an approved doctoral program in**
6 **psychology, as defined in ORS 675.010, at an educational institution located in this state.**

7 (2) **“Licensed psychologist” has the meaning given that term in ORS 675.010.**

8 (3) **“Public employer” has the meaning given that term in ORS 408.225.**

9 **SECTION 2. (1) There is created within the Oregon Health Authority a psychology pro-**
10 **vider incentive program for the purpose of providing housing support and loan repayment**
11 **subsidies to students enrolled in approved doctoral programs in psychology and licensed**
12 **psychologists in this state.**

13 (2) **The psychology provider incentive program shall provide:**

14 (a) **Stipends for housing costs to a student enrolled in an approved doctoral program in**
15 **psychology who successfully completes at least four courses during the doctoral program**
16 **that provide cultural competency training.**

17 (b) **Loan repayment subsidies for a licensed psychologist who, as a student enrolled in**
18 **an approved doctoral program in psychology, completed the courses described in paragraph**
19 **(a) of this subsection.**

20 (3) **An individual who as a student received a stipend described in subsection (2)(a) of this**
21 **section may as a licensed psychologist receive the loan repayment subsidies described in**
22 **subsection (2)(b) of this section.**

23 (4) **The authority may receive gifts, grants or contributions from any source, whether**
24 **public or private, to carry out the provisions of this section. Moneys received under this**
25 **subsection shall be deposited in the Psychology Provider Incentive Fund established under**
26 **section 5 of this 2023 Act.**

27 (5) **The authority may partner with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to**
28 **carry out subsection (2)(a) of this section.**

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 (6) The authority and the commission may adopt rules to carry out this section.

2 **SECTION 3.** (1) The Department of Public Safety Standards and Training shall provide
3 guaranteed full-time employment in a position within the department to a licensed psychol-
4 ogist who:

5 (a) Applies to the department for a vacant position;

6 (b) As a student enrolled in an approved doctoral program in psychology, completed the
7 courses described in section 2 of this 2023 Act; and

8 (c) Is otherwise qualified for the position.

9 (2) The department shall enter into a contract with the licensed psychologist described
10 in subsection (1) of this section that includes a provision stipulating that the period of em-
11 ployment with the department must be for at least six consecutive months and not longer
12 than 12 consecutive months.

13 (3) The department may adopt rules to carry out this section.

14 **SECTION 4.** (1) A public employer shall grant a preference to a licensed psychologist who,
15 as a student enrolled in an approved doctoral program in psychology, completed the courses
16 described in section 2 of this 2023 Act and applies for a vacant civil service position or seeks
17 promotion to a civil service position with a higher maximum salary rate and who:

18 (a) Successfully completes an initial application screening or an application examination
19 for the position; and

20 (b) Meets the minimum qualifications and any special qualifications for the position.

21 (2) The public employer shall grant the preference to a licensed psychologist described in
22 subsection (1) of this section as follows:

23 (a) For an initial application screening used to develop a list of persons for interviews,
24 the public employer shall add five preference points to the licensed psychologist's score.

25 (b) For an application examination given after the initial application screening that re-
26 sults in a score, the public employer shall add preference points to the total combined ex-
27 amination score without allocating the points to any single feature or part of the
28 examination. The public employer shall add five preference points to the licensed
29 psychologist's score.

30 (c) For an application examination that consists of an interview, an evaluation of the li-
31 censed psychologist's performance, experience or training, a supervisor's rating or any other
32 method of ranking an applicant that does not result in a score, the public employer shall give
33 preference to the licensed psychologist. A public employer that uses an application exam-
34 ination described in this paragraph shall devise and apply methods by which the public em-
35 ployer gives special consideration in the public employer's hiring decisions to the licensed
36 psychologist.

37 (3) The preferences described in subsection (2) of this section are not a requirement that
38 the public employer appoint a licensed psychologist described in subsection (1) of this section
39 to a civil service position.

40 (4) A public employer shall appoint an otherwise qualified licensed psychologist described
41 in subsection (1) of this section to a vacant civil service position if the results of the licensed
42 psychologist's application examination, when combined with the preference, are equal to or
43 higher than the results of an application examination for an applicant who is not a licensed
44 psychologist described in subsection (1) of this section.

45 (5) If a public employer does not appoint a licensed psychologist described in subsection

1 (1) of this section to a vacant civil service position, the public employer shall provide in
2 writing at the written request of the licensed psychologist the public employer's reasons for
3 the decision not to appoint the licensed psychologist. The public employer may base a deci-
4 sion not to appoint the licensed psychologist solely on the licensed psychologist's merits or
5 qualifications with respect to the vacant civil service position.

6 (6) A violation of this section is an unlawful employment practice.

7 (7) A licensed psychologist described in subsection (1) of this section claiming to be
8 aggrieved by a violation of this section may file a verified written complaint with the Com-
9 missioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries in accordance with ORS 659A.820.

10 **SECTION 5.** The Psychology Provider Incentive Fund is established in the State Treas-
11 ury, separate and distinct from the General Fund. Interest earned by the Psychology Pro-
12 vider Incentive Fund shall be credited to the fund. The fund consists of moneys appropriated
13 to the fund by the Legislative Assembly and gifts, grants or other moneys contributed to the
14 fund by any source, whether public or private. Moneys in the fund are continuously appro-
15 priated to the Oregon Health Authority to carry out section 2 of this 2023 Act.

16 **SECTION 6.** (1) Sections 1 to 5 of this 2023 Act become operative on January 1, 2024.

17 (2) The Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, the Higher Education Co-
18 ordinating Commission and the Oregon Health Authority may take any action before the
19 operative date specified in subsection (1) of this section that is necessary to enable the de-
20 partment, the commission or the authority to exercise, on and after the operative date
21 specified in subsection (1) of this section, all of the duties, functions and powers conferred
22 on the department, the commission and the authority by sections 1 to 5 of this 2023 Act.

23 **SECTION 7.** This 2023 Act takes effect on the 91st day after the date on which the 2023
24 regular session of the Eighty-second Legislative Assembly adjourns sine die.

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