



Ohio Vision Project Student Loan Repayment Program

The OVP Loan Repayment Program seeks to assist doctors of optometry who are meeting the ocular health needs of those in underserved populations of Ohio. Similar to other national health-provider loan repayment programs, the OVP program is designed to act as an incentive for optometrists providing care for those most in need, such as patients living in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA), Medically Underserved Area/Populations (MUA/P), and those on Medicaid or Medicaid Managed Care.

The OVP Loan Repayment Program is retrospective and accepts applications from those who are already serving communities in great need of vision care. Loan repayment applicants will be reviewed based on their service over the past year and are eligible to apply annually. Special consideration will be given to those applicants who see Medicaid patients, provide *pro bono* care, volunteer in their community, and practice in a MUA/P or HPSA.

With the creation of the OVP Loan Repayment Program, Ohio stands out in optometry as the first in the nation to offer a program recognizing ODs who are committed to treating underserved populations. The program is open to any OOA Member OD with outstanding education loan debt, regardless of the number of years in practice. Award amounts will be granted up to \$5000. Applicants may submit annually. Previous year's awards have no bearing on current applications. The OVP awarded \$25,000 in loan repayment to OOA members in 2018.

Applications are reviewed under a blind scoring methodology overseen by the OVP Board of Trustees. Scored criteria includes:

Mandatory Criteria:

- Licensed Ohio OD
- Practicing in Ohio
- Member of the Ohio Optometric Association
- Medicaid or Medicaid Managed Care provider
- Must have qualifying unpaid student loans

Scored Criteria:

- Amount of outstanding loan debt
- Number of years in practice
- Practice located in Medically Underserved Area/Population (MUA/P) or Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) hrsa.gov/shortage
- Pro bono care (office-related)
- Volunteerism (Realeyes, iSee, InfantSEE, etc.)

Contact info@ooo.org for further information.