

# CANADA STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS FOR NURSES AND FAMILY DOCTORS IN UNDER-SERVED RURAL OR REMOTE COMMUNITIES

## 1. Overview

Many rural and remote communities in Canada lack the primary health care they need. As of April 2013, the Government of Canada started offering Canada Student Loan forgiveness to eligible family doctors, residents in family medicine, nurse practitioners, and nurses who work in under-served rural or remote communities. This change will help more Canadians get the health care they deserve.

Loan forgiveness can only be applied to outstanding Canada Student Loan balances. Canada Student Loans that have been converted to a line of credit, private loan, or an Ontario Medical Resident Loan, are not eligible for loan forgiveness.

Canada Student Loan forgiveness applies only to the federal portion of a student loan. It does not apply to the provincial portion of a student loan.

## 2. Eligibility

To be eligible for Canada Student Loan forgiveness you must have:

- started your current employment (full-time, part-time or casual) as an eligible medical professional (family doctor, resident in family medicine, nurse practitioner, or nurse) in an [under-served rural or remote community](#) on or after July 1, 2011;
- been employed for a full year (12 consecutive months) in an under-served rural or remote community (this does not apply to residents in family medicine);
- provided in-person services for a minimum of 400 hours in that community;
- a Canada Student Loan that is in good standing; and
- submitted an [Application for Canada Student Loan Forgiveness for Family Doctors and Nurses](#).

**Note:** You can apply for Canada Student Loan forgiveness for family doctors and nurses if you are enrolled in full-time or part-time studies, are currently repaying your student loan, or are in your 6-month non-repayment period. If your Canada Student Loan is in repayment, you must continue to make your regular monthly payments.

## Eligible medical professionals

If you practice as one of the medical professionals listed below, you could be eligible for Canada Student Loan forgiveness:

- family doctor;
- family medicine resident in training with an accredited medical school in Canada;
- registered nurse;
- registered psychiatric nurse;
- registered practical nurse;
- licensed practical nurse; or
- nurse practitioner.

***The Renfrew Victoria Hospital is in a community designated for Canada Student Loan forgiveness. You may be eligible for Canada Student Loan forgiveness if you meet other eligibility requirements.***

## 3. How much you could receive

As a **family doctor or resident in family medicine**, you could receive up to \$40,000 in Canada Student Loan forgiveness over a maximum of five years (\$8,000 per year).

If you are a **nurse or nurse practitioner** and you qualify, you could receive up to \$20,000 in Canada Student Loan forgiveness over a maximum of five years (\$4,000 per year).

**Note:** Loan forgiveness will apply to your outstanding loan principal balance after the end of your 12 months of service. You will be required to keep making regular interest payments.

Your five years of service in an under-served rural or remote community do not have to be consecutive. Provided you have a Canada Student Loan balance at the end of each year of service in an under-served rural or remote community, you will qualify for loan forgiveness for five years.

## Loan forgiveness period

A loan forgiveness period is a period of 12 consecutive months during which you have been employed or in practice and have provided in-person services for a minimum of 400 hours in an under-served rural or remote community.

You must complete a full 12-month loan forgiveness period before applying for this benefit and a subsequent loan forgiveness period may only begin after an approved period has ended.

The first loan forgiveness period cannot have started before July 1st, 2011. It is up to you to indicate in your application a loan forgiveness period that conforms to these criteria. Once you have completed your loan forgiveness period, you have 90 days to apply for this benefit. Your loan balance will then be reduced as of the day after the end of your loan forgiveness period.

## Exemptions

Residents in family medicine are exempt from the requirement of being employed in an under-served rural or remote community for 12 consecutive months. However, your loan forgiveness period must still be a period of 12 consecutive months during which you have provided 400 hours of in-person service in an under-served rural or remote community.

You must indicate the start of the loan forgiveness period on the application, and your application can be accepted only once a full year has passed since that start date. Once you have completed your loan forgiveness period, you have 90 days to apply for this benefit.

## Sick leave and parental leave

If you take a leave during the 12 months of service for less than one month and you are able to complete 400 hours of in-person service, you will still be eligible for loan forgiveness. If your leave is longer than one month and/or it prevents you from completing 400 hours of in-person service, you will be expected to provide documentation to show that you received one or more of the following Employment Insurance benefits:

- Maternity and Parental Benefits
- Sickness Benefits
- Compassionate Care Benefits
- Family Caregiver Benefits

## 5. Apply

Once you have completed a year of service in an under-served rural or remote community, you have 90 days to apply for loan forgiveness.

[Applications for Canada Student Loan forgiveness for Family Doctors and Nurses practicing in under-served rural or remote communities](#) are now available online.

Paper versions are also available through the [National Student Loans Service Centre \(NSLSC\)](#).

**Note:** To maintain your eligibility, you must re-apply every year. A reminder letter will be sent to you each year as long as the Canada Student Loans Program records indicate that you may be eligible.

Once your application for loan forgiveness has been approved, your Canada Student Loan balance will be reduced. Your monthly payments will also be reduced unless you opt out on your application form. You can request changes to your monthly payments at any time by contacting the [NSLSC](#).