

STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT

SECTION 1. GENERAL: When a Student Loan Repayment Program is offered by the Agency, it will be available to bargaining unit employees to help the Agency retain highly skilled employees whose educational accomplishments and experience facilitate and improve the Agency's ability to efficiently and effectively perform its mission. The Agency will administer the Student Loan Repayment Program pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 5379 and 5 C.F.R. § 537 and the DOD Student Loan Repayment Guidance in effect as of the effective date of this Article.

A. Discussion of Resources: The Parties recognize that benefits issued under the Student Loan Repayment Program are subject to budgetary constraints but agree to meet at the Union's request to discuss annual benchmarks and goals for the allocation of resources and to review the effectiveness of the program.

B. Equitable Administration: Eligibility for the program shall not be more restrictive than the criteria set forth by Title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.) 5379, Student Loan Repayments, 5 CFR Part 537, Repayment of Student Loans, and the above-mentioned DOD Guidance, and the program shall be administered in a fair and equitable manner.

SECTION 2. CONSIDERATION:

A. Written Determination: In recommending an employee for a student loan repayment, a supervisor will make a determination in writing, based on specific case justification, that the employee meets all criteria required by law and regulation. The employee must provide all necessary information to justify consideration. The Agency will make its determination on a recommendation for repayment of a student loan in a timely manner.

B. Approving Official: The Agency will notify the Union of the approving official for the Student Loan Repayment Program. Approval may be for repayment for more than one loan for the same individual.

C. Selection Process: In accordance with 5 C.F.R. § 537.103(d), the Agency's selection process for employees to receive student loan repayment benefits will ensure fair and equitable treatment.

E. Repayments: In accordance with 5 C.F.R. § 537.106(c), repayments of student loans are subject to maximum limits of \$10,000 per calendar year and a total of \$60,000 per employee.

F. Service Agreement: Any employee receiving this benefit must sign a service agreement. The length of the service agreement will be as directed by applicable law, or DOD Guidance, but is normally for three years.

G. Union Representation: Employees may be represented by the Union in any dispute regarding service agreements or payments.

Agreed: Agency:  Union: 

Date: 29 Jul 15