

FAQs for BH Fellows

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
The program information states that eligible participants can receive UP TO \$25,000 in student loan repayment for a bachelor's degree and up to \$45,000 for a Master's degree. What does the language "up to" mean?	This is the maximum amount that the program can reimburse. If your student loan debt is lower than this total, the program can only pay off up to these amounts, depending on the level of your degree (bachelor's or Master's).
Is the student loan repayment tax free?	See Program Guidance document for more information regarding taxes.
When is the student loan repayment made?	The student loan repayment is made directly to your loan servicer at the conclusion of your two year term as a BH Fellow. The conclusion of your two year term comes at the two year anniversary of the effective date of your BH Fellows contract (which may not always be the same day that you start your job, if you're not already in an eligible role, and may not be the exact day you have the Retreat with your cohort - ask the Program Coordinator for more information).
What is the cohort experience like?	Training is distributed throughout the two years that you serve as a Fellow, starting with a daylong retreat. Sessions are a mix of in-person and virtual, although at this time the majority are in-person. Training topics are broadly applicable to those serving in any of the BH Fellows-eligible roles, and are not specific to your job (any job specific training will be provided by your employer).
I was chosen as a fellow, will my current role change or will it be in addition to my current role?	As long as you are currently in a BH Fellows eligible role, your day to day job duties will not change.
Does the BH fellows program provide credit for past employment prior to being accepted or does the two years of employment only start counting once an individual is accepted into the program. For example if I began working in Behavioral Health in 2022 would that time count towards the two years of service?	The BH Fellows Program requires a two-year commitment at an approved provider within an eligible behavioral health role. Past work experience in the role is not counted toward the two-year commitment. If a selected applicant confirms interest in the program and returns a signed BH Fellows service contract, the individual's signed contract is countersigned by the Allegheny County DHS Director or designee, and the role in which the Fellow will serve the two-year term is approved. The participant will begin to accrue service credit under the contract as soon as it becomes effective.
Does this program offer forgiveness for private loans?	Yes.
Will my time in the BH Fellows program also count towards the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program under working in a participating service field?	Yes. Please submit documentation for all loans and indicate on your application if you are currently enrolled in a loan forgiveness program. If you are within two years of having your federal loans forgiven through PSLF, BH Fellows will not forgive those loans. However, you may still apply for forgiveness of loans not eligible for PSLF, such as private loans.
Can you transfer positions while in the program?	The BH Fellows program administrators expect Fellows to complete the full two-year term in the role to which they were accepted. However, we understand that in rare cases a transfer may be necessary. Fellows are allowed one position transfer during their two-year term. Please refer to the program guidance document for more details.
Are supervisors eligible? If employee is in direct care role, but offered a supervisor role are they still eligible.	Supervisors are eligible so long as the supervisory position is also a BH Fellows-eligible role.
How will the award money be distributed?	Paid in lump sum to the lender after the two year commitment.

Please explain the certificate program.	Individuals accepted into the BH Fellows program who do not already have a degree can take part in a human-services related certificate program through CCAC.
If I am in school for my masters, will the program pay for that debt?	The BH Fellows program will only pay for debt incurred before you commence your role as a BH Fellow. You may apply before completing your degree, in anticipation of completion, so as to allow time for application review and job matching prior to your graduation.
Do I need to be employed in an eligible role prior to applying to the BH Fellows program?	No, if you are not yet employed in an eligible role you may apply to the BH Fellows program without having secured employment in an eligible role first, and we will work to match you with our employers depending upon your interests, experience and qualifications.
Will this program provide loan forgiveness for my Ph.D./MD/JD and similar terminal degrees?	No, BH Fellows is only set up to forgive debt incurred while earning a master's or bachelor's degree.