
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ACCESS TO JUSTICE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the Hawai'i Justice
2 League Act of 2020.

3 SECTION 2. The legislature finds that many attorneys
4 graduate from law school with substantial educational debt that
5 prohibits many graduates from considering the practice of law in
6 less-populated rural areas of Hawai'i. A need exists for rural
7 clients to hire competent attorneys and the public is better
8 served by qualified attorneys serving those living in
9 underserved rural areas.

10 The legislature further finds that few new lawyers are able
11 to practice public interest law in underserved rural areas
12 because of the high cost of attending law school, the debt that
13 law school students graduate with, and the high cost of living
14 in Hawai'i. The increasingly high cost of attending law school
15 requires lawyers to seek out higher-paying jobs in areas more
16 heavily populated that allow for repayment of student loans.



1 The legislature also finds that loan repayment assistance
2 programs have been successfully used in Hawai'i to increase the
3 number of educators serving in hard-to-fill teaching positions,
4 and the legislature believes that loan repayment assistance
5 programs can also be used to encourage and enable lawyers to
6 pursue the practice of law in underserved rural areas within the
7 State of Hawai'i.

8 The legislature additionally finds that programs providing
9 educational loan repayment assistance will encourage law
10 students and other attorneys to seek employment in rural Hawai'i
11 and will enable rural communities to attract and retain
12 qualified attorneys.

13 The purpose of this Act is to establish the Hawai'i justice
14 league program in the University of Hawai'i William S. Richardson
15 School of Law to provide partial student loan repayment
16 assistance for lawyers who agree to pursue the practice of law
17 in underserved rural areas in Hawai'i.

18 SECTION 3. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by
19 adding a new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read
20 as follows:



1 "CHAPTER

2 HAWAII JUSTICE LEAGUE PROGRAM

3 § -1 Definitions. As used in this chapter, unless the
4 context requires otherwise:

5 "Lawyer" means a person admitted to practice law as
6 required by the rules of the supreme court of Hawaii.

7 "Loan repayment" means the payment, per year, of up to
8 twenty per cent of a Hawaii justice league program participant's
9 legal training costs, including the cost of in-state tuition at
10 the William S. Richardson School of Law, not exceeding \$35,000
11 per year, for a maximum of five years.

12 "Participant" means a lawyer who is receiving loan
13 repayment assistance through the Hawaii justice league program.

14 "Rural area" means all population, housing, and territory
15 not included within an urban area as defined by the United
16 States Department of Commerce, Census Bureau.

17 "Urban area" is as defined by the United States Department
18 of Commerce, Census Bureau.

19 § -2 Hawaii justice league program; loan repayment
20 assistance; established. (a) The Hawaii justice league program
21 is established to encourage lawyers to pursue public interest



1 work in Hawaii. The program shall be administered by the
2 University of Hawaii William S. Richardson School of Law. In
3 administering the program, the University of Hawaii William S.
4 Richardson School of Law shall:

- 5 (1) Adopt rules and develop guidelines to administer the
6 program;
- 7 (2) Identify and designate rural areas of the State as
8 defined by the United States Department of Commerce,
9 Census Bureau;
- 10 (3) Establish criteria and a certification process for
11 what constitutes eligible legal service work in
12 underserved rural areas in the State;
- 13 (4) Establish criteria for the selection of lawyers to
14 participate in the program;
- 15 (5) Beginning on July 1, 2021, and no later than July 1 in
16 each year thereafter, increase the per annum maximum
17 loan repayment amount for a cost-of-living adjustment.
18 The University of Hawaii William S. Richardson School
19 of Law shall use \$35,000 the first year, multiplied by
20 the United States Department of Labor Consumer Price
21 Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the previous



1 year to determine the adjusted per annum maximum loan
2 repayment amount for the next year. Each year
3 thereafter the new adjusted per annum maximum loan
4 repayment amount shall be used to determine the per
5 annum maximum loan repayment amount for the following
6 year;

7 (6) Publish the adjusted per annum maximum loan repayment
8 amount annually on the University of Hawaii William S.
9 Richardson School of Law website;

10 (7) Define and determine compliance with the service
11 commitments of the program;

12 (8) Collect and manage reimbursements from participants
13 who do not meet their service commitments under the
14 program;

15 (9) Publicize the program, particularly to maximize
16 participation by individuals who live in rural areas
17 of the State; and

18 (10) Solicit and accept grants and donations from public
19 and private sources for the program, including
20 maximizing the use of federal matching funds.



1 (b) The Hawaii justice league program shall partner with a
2 lending financial institution whose operations are principally
3 conducted in Hawaii to provide loan repayment assistance to
4 lawyers who make the service commitment under subsection (c).
5 The University of Hawaii William S. Richardson School of Law
6 shall make loan repayments directly to the financial institution
7 under this subsection to offset the loan repayment for which the
8 Hawaii justice league program participant would otherwise be
9 liable.

10 (c) The Hawaii justice league program shall provide loan
11 repayments on behalf of a lawyer who agrees to serve for at
12 least five consecutive years as a lawyer practicing law in rural
13 areas in Hawaii; provided that eligible lawyers, as applicable,
14 shall have graduated from an accredited law school within the
15 United States; provided further that preference shall be given
16 to graduates of the University of Hawaii William S. Richardson
17 School of Law as applicable.

18 (d) Eligibility to participate in the program shall be
19 determined by the University of Hawaii William S. Richardson
20 School of Law on a competitive basis and in accordance with
21 subsection (c).



1 (e) If a Hawaii justice league program participant fails
2 to satisfy the participant's service commitment under subsection
3 (c), the Hawaii justice league program participant shall be
4 liable for the repayment of the outstanding balance of the loan
5 to the lending financial institution under subsection (b). The
6 University of Hawaii William S. Richardson School of Law may
7 seek reimbursement for any loan repayment made by the university
8 on behalf of the Hawaii justice league program participant.

9 (f) In accordance with chapter 103D, the University of
10 Hawaii William S. Richardson School of Law may enter into
11 written contracts with collection agencies to collect delinquent
12 reimbursements of loan repayments. All payments collected,
13 exclusive of a collection agency's commissions, shall revert and
14 be credited to the Hawaii justice league revolving fund. A
15 collection agency that enters into a written contract with the
16 University of Hawaii William S. Richardson School of Law to
17 collect delinquent reimbursements of loan repayments pursuant to
18 this section may collect a commission from the participant in
19 accordance with the terms of, and up to the amounts authorized
20 in, the written contract.



1 § -3 Hawaii justice league revolving fund. (a) There
2 is established the Hawaii justice league revolving fund, which
3 shall be administered by the University of Hawaii William S.
4 Richardson School of Law, and into which shall be deposited:

- 5 (1) Any funds appropriated by the legislature for the
- 6 Hawaii justice league program;
- 7 (2) Gifts, donations, and grants from public agencies and
- 8 private persons;
- 9 (3) Reimbursements of loan repayments under the Hawaii
- 10 justice league program;
- 11 (4) Proceeds of the operations of the Hawaii justice
- 12 league program; and
- 13 (5) Interest earned or accrued on moneys deposited into
- 14 the fund.

15 (b) The University of Hawaii William S. Richardson School
16 of Law may expend moneys from the fund for the purposes of this
17 chapter, including the operational expenses of the Hawaii
18 justice league program.

19 § -4 Rules. The University of Hawaii William S.
20 Richardson School of Law shall adopt rules to administer this
21 chapter. The rules shall be adopted pursuant to chapter 91."



1 SECTION 4. The University of Hawaii William S. Richardson
 2 School of Law shall implement the Hawaii justice league program
 3 no later than June 30, 2021. The dean of the University of
 4 Hawaii William S. Richardson School of Law shall report to the
 5 legislature on the status of the Hawaii justice league program,
 6 including the most recently adjusted per annum maximum repayment
 7 amount, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each
 8 regular session beginning with the regular session of 2022.

9 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
 10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
 11 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for
 12 deposit into the Hawaii justice league revolving fund.

13 SECTION 6. There is appropriated out of the general
 14 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
 15 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for
 16 the purposes of establishing and administering the Hawaii
 17 justice league program.

18 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the University of
 19 Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

20 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

Hawaii Justice League; Loan Repayment; Public Interest; Access to Justice; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes the Hawaii justice league program to provide partial loan repayments on behalf of eligible lawyers that pursue public interest work in Hawaii. Provides for loan repayments by the University of Hawaii William S. Richardson School of Law. Establishes the Hawaii justice league revolving fund. Makes an appropriation. Takes effect 7/1/2050. (HD1)

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