



FAQ

PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS (PSLF) PROGRAM

What is the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program?

The PSLF Program is a federal loan debt relief program. Unlike Income Driven Repayment (IDR) plans, PSLF is not a payment plan. Rather, it is a separate program that incentivizes a career in the public service by forgiving the remaining balance on a federal loan after 10 years (or 120 payments) under a qualifying repayment plan while working full-time in the public service. (Note: Only certain loans and repayment plans qualify for PSLF.)

What must I do to qualify for forgiveness under the PSLF Program?

To qualify for PSLF, you must:

- 1. Be employed by a U.S. federal, state, local, or tribal government or not-for-profit organization;**
 - The following types of organizations do not qualify for PSLF: labor unions, partisan political organizations and for-profit organizations.
- 2. Work full-time for that agency or organization;**
 - If you meet your employer's definition of full-time or work at least 30 hours per week, whichever is greater.
- 3. Have Direct Loans under the William D. Ford Direct Loan Program;**
 - Loans from these federal student loan programs don't qualify for PSLF: the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program and the Federal Perkins Loan (Perkins Loan) Program, unless they are consolidated into a Direct Consolidation Loan.
 - Student loans from, or refinanced with, a private lender do not qualify for PSLF.
 - ***WARNING ABOUT CONSOLIDATING FFEL OR PERKINS LOANS**
 - On August 22, 2022, President Biden announced \$10,000 to \$20,000 in student debt cancellation for federal loan borrowers who have income below \$125,000, or household income below

\$250,000. It was unclear whether privately owned Federal Family Education (FFEL) loans and Perkins loans would qualify for cancellation.

- It was recently determined that borrowers who consolidate FFEL and Perkins loans with other federal loans (e.g., Direct loans) after September 29, 2022, may not be eligible for the \$10,000 or \$20,000 in debt cancellation. (Loans consolidated prior to September 29 remain eligible for debt cancellation.)
- However, FFEL and Perkins loans consolidated into a Direct loan prior to October 31, 2022, continue to be eligible to receive the benefits of the PSLF waiver.
- **Borrowers with individual income below \$125,000, or household income below \$250,000, should review their loans and carefully weigh the benefits of the one-time debt cancellation vs. PSLF loan forgiveness before consolidating their FFEL and Perkins loans into Direct loans.**

4. Repay your loans under 10 year standard repayment plan or an income-driven repayment (IDR) plan;

- There are four (4) IDR plans:
 1. Pay As you Earn (PAYE),
 2. Revised Pay as You Earn (REPAYE),
 3. Income Contingent Repayment (ICR), and
 4. Income Based Repayment (IBR).
- While payments made under the 10-year Standard Repayment Plan are qualifying payments, you would have to change to an IDR plan to benefit from PSLF. (Note: If you are on a 10-year Standard Repayment Plan, your loan would be paid in full after 120 payments and there would be no loan balance to be forgiven under PSLF.)
- For more information, see FAQ on Income Driven Repayment Plans.

5. Make 120 qualifying payments.

- A payment qualifies when it is made after October 1, 2007; under a qualifying IDR plan; for the full amount due as shown on your bill; within 15 days of your due date; and while you are employed full-time by a qualifying employer.
- You can't make a qualifying monthly payment while your loans are in an in-school status; during the grace period; in deferment; or in forbearance, except for the COVID-19 administrative forbearance. (See FAQ on COVID-19 Emergency Relief.)

Do I have to certify my employment in order to qualify for PSLF?

Yes. In order to qualify for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) you will need to certify that you have been employed by a qualified employer during the months in which you made your 120 payments. You should complete and submit the PSLF Certification and Application, which includes the employer certification, every year while you are making progress towards PSLF. The PSLF form is available at <https://www.afscme.org/member-resources/student-debt-resources>.

The employment certification section of the PSLF Application will need to be certified by a manager who has access to your employment or service records and is authorized by your employer to certify your employment. This will often be someone in the human resources department, though in some cases your direct supervisor or another individual may be authorized to certify your employment. Check with your employer to see who is allowed to certify your employment.

If you do not submit the *PSLF Application* annually, then at the time you apply for forgiveness, you will be required to submit employment certifications for each employer you worked for while making the required 120 qualifying monthly payments.

In order to take advantage of a limited-time PSLF waiver during the COVID-19 national emergency, it is recommended that you submit the PSLF Application for each qualifying employer you've had since October 2007, even if you had an ineligible loan type, repayment plan, or some other disqualifying factor. You must submit this form by **October 31, 2022**.

For more information, see FAQ on PSLF Temporary Waivers thru October 31, 2022.

How do I apply for PSLF?

Once you have made 120 qualifying payments and submitted the required employer certifications for each employer you worked for while making your payments, you should fill out and submit the PSLF Certification and Application. In Section 2 of the application, you should select "I believe I qualify for forgiveness under PSLF or TEPSLF right now." The PSLF and TEPSLF Certification and Application is available at <https://www.afscme.org/member-resources/student-debt-resources>

Where can I find additional information about the PSLF Program?

You can find additional information on the following websites:

AFSCME website:

<https://www.afscme.org/member-resources/student-debt-resources>

Student Borrower Protection Center website:

<https://protectborrowers.org/our-projects/pslf/>

Forgivemystudentdebt.org:

<http://www.forgivemystudentdebt.org>

Department of Education Federal Student Aid website:

<https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/public-service>