



BARRY GLASSMAN

HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Harford County Launches Student Loan Repayment Program for Volunteer Fire & EMS Providers; Help for First Responders Who Save Lives

BEL AIR, Md., (Sept. 28, 2020) - To ease the debt burden on lifesaving volunteers, Harford County will offer up to \$5,000 per year to help volunteer fire & EMS providers repay their college loans.

Harford County relies entirely on volunteers for its fire service, and has a combination of volunteer and paid EMS providers operating in 12 volunteer companies countywide. Harford's student loan repayment program was created by County Executive Barry Glassman, a former EMT with the Level Volunteer Fire Company, to recruit and retain public safety volunteers. The program, known as Harford's NEXT GEN Responder, is believed to be the first of its kind in Maryland.

"In addition to working paid jobs or school, our volunteer fire & EMS providers have to meet increasingly rigorous training standards at the same time they're volunteering countless hours to save lives in our community," County Executive Glassman said. "As it gets more difficult each year to attract younger volunteers, we hope this program will strengthen our fire & EMS service and show Harford County's support for these local heroes."

Anyone with student loans, including recent graduates and college students majoring in any field of study, is eligible for the program. To qualify, they must be a volunteer member of a Harford County VFC or ambulance company and earn 50 points in the LOSAP - or Length of Service Award Program - for qualifying service activities in the twelve months beginning on October 1 each year. Payments of up to \$5,000 per year, up to a maximum of \$20,000 over four years, will be made directly to the student loan issuer.

Qualifications and applications are online at <https://www.harfordcountymd.gov/2976/NEXT-GEN-Responders-Student-Loan-Relief>

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