



# EdFed

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America's Top Student Loan Consolidator

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## Repayment Assistance Programs, Part 1

Worried about how you'll pay back those massive private loans or those huge federal loans? Well maybe you don't have to pay them back at all; maybe your boss will repay them. One of the best-kept secrets of the student loan universe is that many employers will happily pay off your college debts as part of an employment incentive contract. In other words, we're in a highly competitive, global economy and most employers want to hire good people. And when they get talented workers, they strive to keep them.

As a result, all across the country, a variety of employers, including hospitals and law enforcement organizations, colleges, law firms, state agencies, and federal entities are all offering cash-strapped employees a beauty of a perk in the form of student loan repayment assistance. Now don't expect to hear your employer shouting from the rooftop about this. Indeed, you may have to lobby to get it if no such program currently exists at your place of employment. But there's no reason that even those of you working in corporate America can't ask your boss about creating a student loan repayment program as a retention tool. Not only will it help you, but the cubicle mate next to you who's always complaining about his student loans will also be glad. With the exception of federal or government agencies that offer loan repayment programs, other employers can pay off your loans for you, including private loans for those of you with those debts.

### The Feds Want You

One of the best programs I think you should know of is one that can help you if you're either looking for a job, currently working at a federal agency, or are willing to go to work in a government department or agency. It's called the Federal Student Loan Repayment Program, and it's remarkable in many aspects. Now, some of you might turn your nose up and frown at the prospect of working for the government. Before you do, however, let me point out the huge benefits of using your employment to get rid of your student loans.

Under the Federal Student Loan Repayment Program, the government allows any federal agency to repay your FFEL, direct, Perkins, or HEAL loans in order to attract or retain highly qualified workers in the federal government. Interestingly, each agency sets its own definition of highly qualified. Under the law, you don't even have to have a degree, certificate or some other diploma to qualify for this loan repayment assistance initiative. Therefore, even those of you who left college before you earned a degree – as one out of five students who take on college debts do drop out – can take advantage of this program.

The most comprehensive source of information about this program is maintained by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The place on their website where you can learn more about this program is [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov).