



2026 John R. Justice Loan Repayment Program

Guidelines and Application Procedures

***Application Due Date
July 31, 2025, 5:00 p.m.***



Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
1100 Bank Street, Richmond, VA 23219
www.dcjs.virginia.gov

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I. Introduction

The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) will provide educational loan repayment benefits to prosecutors and public defenders in Virginia, using federal funds available through the John R. Justice (JRJ) Grant Program. The purpose of the program is to encourage qualified attorneys to choose careers as prosecutors and public defenders and to continue in that service.

II. Amount of Program Funding and Benefit Amount

DCJS has approximately \$160,000 for benefits for a period of up to three years. Each selected beneficiary will receive up to \$10,000 contingent on number of eligible beneficiaries. A beneficiary may not receive more than \$60,000 in total lifetime benefits provided by JRJ grant funds.

III. Eligibility

a. Eligible Employment

- i. Prosecutor – A full-time employee of a Commonwealth’s Attorney’s office who is continually licensed to practice law and prosecutes criminal or juvenile delinquency cases in Virginia courts. This may also include supervision, education, or training of other persons prosecuting such cases.
- ii. Public Defender – An attorney who is continually licensed to practice law, is a full-time employee of the Virginia Indigent Defense Commission, and who provides legal representation to indigent persons in criminal or juvenile delinquency cases. This may also include supervision, education, or training of other persons providing such representation. An attorney employed as a full-time federal defense attorney in Virginia is also eligible.
- iii. Note: Elected officials are not eligible for JRJ funds. Prosecutors who are employees of the federal government are not eligible. Attorneys who are in private practice and not full-time employees of the Indigent Defense Commission or federal defenders are not eligible, even if they are court-appointed to provide indigent defense services.

b. Other Eligibility Requirements

- i. A beneficiary must be employed in Virginia.
- ii. A beneficiary must be employed full-time, which is not less than 75 percent of a forty-hour work week.
- iii. A beneficiary must be continually licensed to practice law.
- iv. A beneficiary must not be in default on repayment of any federal student loans.

See the Service Agreement for other eligibility requirements.

Eligible Student Loans

- v. A loan made, insured, or guaranteed under part B of subchapter IV of chapter 28 of Title

20 (Federal Family Education Loan Program).

- vi. A loan made under part C or D of subchapter IV of chapter 28 of Title 20 (William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan and Federal Perkins Loans).
- vii. A loan made under section 1078-3 or 1087e(g) of Title 20 (Federal consolidation loans and Federal Direct Consolidation loans, respectively).

c. Ineligible Loans

- i. A loan made to the parents of a dependent student under section 428B of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1078-2).
- ii. A Federal Direct PLUS Loan made to the parents of a dependent student.
- iii. A loan made under section 428C or 455 (g) of the higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1078-3 Federal consolidation loans) and 1087e(g) (Federal Direct Consolidation loans) to the extent that such loan was used to repay a loan described in clause (i) or (ii) above.

IV. Grant Application Deadline

Applications must be submitted via mail or email (vadcjsjrj@dcjs.virginia.gov) no later than 5:00 p.m. on July 31, 2025. Allow time for any possible delays in email or mail transport you may experience.

V. Amount Available

The amount of funding available for this solicitation of the FFY 2026 John R. Justice Repayment Program is approximately \$160,000. Repayment benefits made on any beneficiary's behalf cannot exceed \$10,000 in any calendar year or an aggregate total of \$60,000. This limitation should not, under any circumstances, be construed as an obligation of said benefits. This amount may be modified by the parties, subject to the limitations of 34 U.S.C. §§ 10671(d) and (e), to provide additional student loan repayment benefits without the need for an entirely new agreement. Such modifications include, but are not limited to, the possibility of payment increases or the extension of benefits beyond the initial three-year service obligation, in consideration for additional service commitment by the beneficiary, based upon terms to be determined by the parties.

The selection committee, to the extent practicable, will attempt to ensure that the awarded funds will be used to support all approved recipients.

VI. Grant Period

Grants will be awarded for a three-(3) year period as long as the beneficiary remains eligible.

VII. Suspension or Termination of Funding

Funding may be suspended (in whole or in part) or terminated for any of the following behaviors:

- a. Failure to adhere to the standard terms and conditions or special conditions.

- b. Failure to submit employment verification.
- c. Filing a false certification in this application or other report or document.

VIII. Application Forms and Instructions

Applicants must submit the following **no later than July 31, 2025**:

- The DCJS John R. Justice Program Application form, completed and signed.
- A letter from your employer verifying that you are employed full-time as an attorney engaged in eligible employment as defined above and indicating that your employer is aware of the JRJ service commitment contained in the required Service Agreement.
- A copy of the applicant's most recent loan account statement(s). If there is more than one qualifying loan, indicate the one for which DCJS should make payments if your application is accepted by placing it first on the list on the application form. If you have consolidated your qualifying loans with your spouse's loans, provide documentation showing the dollar amount each party held at the time of consolidation and calculate what percentage of the new combined loan is attributable to each person. DCJS will review the current loan balance and, based on the percentage attributable to the attorney requesting participation, will establish that portion as the "loan balance" eligible for repayment.
- A copy of the applicant's most recent IRS Form 1040 showing the applicant's adjusted gross income.
- The John R. Justice Student Loan Repayment Program Service (JRJSLRP) Agreement, with an original signature and date. The agreement is null and void if the applicant is not selected for loan repayment assistance. Note that, for those applicants selected to receive assistance, we are required to provide copies of their agreements to the U.S. Department of Justice. The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services is the state administrative agency referred to in the agreement.

Note: DCJS will **only** use the loan, salary documentation, and tax information provided by applicants to determine their eligibility for assistance and, in the event an applicant is selected, to arrange payments to lenders. DCJS will not otherwise disclose or disseminate the information.

If submitting by <i>mail</i>, applications should be submitted to:	Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Law Enforcement Grants and Programs 1100 Bank Street, 12th Floor Richmond, VA 23219 <i>Attention: John R. Justice Program</i>
If submitting by <i>email</i>, applications should be submitted to:	vadcjsjrj@dcjs.virginia.gov

IX. Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients will need to submit annual agreements to DCJS. Failure to comply in a timely manner may result in DCJS requesting repayment of grant funds and/or termination of the grant. DCJS will provide the grant reporting requirements at the time of grant award. In addition to quarterly reporting, DCJS may request other data for use in annual reporting to the Department of Justice General Assembly on the use of these funds.

X. Selection of Beneficiaries

The total amount of benefits paid with JRJ funds will be equally divided between prosecutors and public defenders.

Within those two employment categories, priority will be given to those attorneys who have the least ability to repay their student loans. The methodology that will be used to assess an applicant's ability to repay will be to consider the ratio of an applicant's total eligible educational debt to an applicant's adjusted gross income, as stated on their most recent federal tax return. The minimum ratio needed to receive benefits will be determined after all applications are received and the number of applications is compared with the total amount of funding available.

DCJS will attempt to assure widespread distribution of the funds throughout Virginia by making awards to those least able to repay their loans in each of the seven geographic regions. The potential funding amounts for the regions are based on their relative populations. These are estimates only; actual distribution will depend on the number of qualified applicants selected from each region and must adhere to the requirement that the total amounts distributed statewide be equally divided between prosecutors and public defenders.

XI. Benefits Distribution

DCJS will pay the awarded benefits in annual payments to the lender of the beneficiary's loan(s). The amount paid will not exceed the total qualifying loan balance. DCJS will not be held responsible for any late fees assessed by the lending institution. If the beneficiary has more than one eligible loan, they must work with the loan service provider to determine which loan they would like the payment to be applied to.

XII. Renewal of Benefits

Once approved for loan repayment, there is a rebuttable presumption that a beneficiary will be given priority consideration to receive funding during the second and third years of the three-year service agreement, depending on the availability of funds. Renewal is not automatic, and nothing shall obligate DCJS to renew a benefit in the same (or greater) amount previously received by a beneficiary.

XIII. Changes in Employment

Beneficiaries who change jobs but remain in continuous eligible employment in Virginia will continue to be eligible for current or renewed benefits to the same extent as those who did not change employment.

XIV. Contact Information

Please contact the following DCJS staff for questions regarding your John R. Justice Program application:

Carolyn Dellorso at Carolyn.Dellorso@dcjs.virginia.gov or telephone (804) 845-1200

Tracy Matthews at Tracy.Matthews@dcjs.virginia.gov or telephone (804) 371-0635