



In the Loop

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DOE Launches Application for New Income-driven Student Debt Repayment Plan

The Biden administration recently launched a beta website for its new student debt loan repayment plan, the Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) plan. The SAVE plan is an income-driven repayment plan that may reduce borrowers' monthly loan payments.

According to the DOE, 1 million additional borrowers will qualify for zero-dollar payments under the SAVE plan. Here's what you should know about SAVE:

- Instead of paying 10% of their discretionary incomes each month for student debt, qualified borrowers will be required to pay only 5%.
- Loan payments will be determined based on borrowers' incomes and family sizes.
- Individuals earning 225% of the federal poverty guidelines, or \$32,805 for a single borrower or \$67,500 for a family of four, can qualify for zero-dollar payments.
- Other borrowers may see their student debt reduced by half, with any remaining debt being canceled after making at least 10 years of payments.

Eligible borrowers can start submitting applications for the income-driven student loan debt repayment program on the DOE's website. The agency has stated that borrowers who sign up for the plan this summer will have their applications processed before student loan repayments resume in October. Borrowers who sign up during the beta application period will not need to enroll later.

Here's what you should know about the application process:

- Borrowers will be able to see their exact monthly payment amounts and choose the most affordable repayment plans for their circumstances.
- Individuals only need to apply once instead of yearly, as with past loan repayment requirements.
- Borrowers already enrolled in the existing Revised Pay As You Earn student debt loan repayment plan will be automatically switched to the new SAVE plan.

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- Most borrowers can complete their applications within 10 minutes, according to the Biden administration.
- Many of the application's sections can be automatically populated with information the government already has, such as data from federal tax returns.

Despite launching the application, some of the SAVE plan's benefits will not be implemented until next summer due to regulatory timelines. Additionally, the timing of any student debt relief from this plan will likely be uncertain. Similar to the Biden administration's original student debt relief plan, these actions will likely face legal challenges.

Borrowers can contact their loan servicers to confirm whether they qualify for student debt relief. Additionally, borrowers are encouraged to visit the DOE's website and sign up to receive email and text updates for the latest information.

The Link Between Health and Happiness

Happiness is not an isolated concept; it's complex and connected to your overall physical and mental health. Understanding and nurturing the link between health and happiness is crucial to maintaining a balanced and fulfilling life.

Physical Health

When your body functions optimally, your overall sense of well-being improves. In other words, physical health forms the foundation upon which happiness thrives. Here's how you can nurture the connection between physical health and happiness:

- **Be physically active.** Physical activity releases endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals, which elevate mood and reduce stress and anxiety. Exercise also improves cardiovascular health and boosts energy levels.
- **Eat nutritional foods.** A balanced diet fuels the body and mind for optimal performance. Fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats provide the necessary nourishment to support cognitive function, emotional stability and overall well-being.

- **Get sufficient rest.** Studies have consistently shown that quality sleep positively influences mood, cognitive performance and emotional resilience. Prioritizing regular and restful sleep patterns ensures better mental health, improved focus and increased happiness.

Mental Health

Your mental health is just as important to happiness as your physical health. It encompasses your emotional, psychological and social state. By nurturing your mind, you can enable happiness to flourish. You can promote happiness with the following positive mental health practices:

- **Practice self-care.** Various practices, such as stress management and healthy relationship management, can help you find joy and relaxation. Mindfulness practices can also effectively reduce anxiety, improve focus and foster a positive mindset.
- **Choose hobbies that bring you joy.** Incorporate hobbies into your daily life that bring joy or involve more time outside. These activities can help alleviate stress and boost mood.
- **Foster healthy relationships.** Positive social interactions, supportive friendships and a sense of belonging contribute significantly to happiness. By fostering meaningful connections, you can establish a strong support network.
- **Ask for help when needed.** Mental health professionals can provide guidance, therapy and tools to help you manage and overcome life's challenges. They can aid you in addressing any underlying mental health issues and help you find sustainable happiness and fulfillment.

Contact a health care professional for further information about how you can improve your physical or mental health.

