



# National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program

Full-Time & Half-Time Service Opportunities

## Fiscal Year 2024 Application and Program Guidance

March 2024

**Application Submission Deadline: May 9, 2024, 7:30 p.m. ET**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
Bureau of Health Workforce  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, Maryland 20857

**For questions**, call 1-800-221-9393 (TTY: 1-877-897-9910) Monday through Friday (except federal holidays) 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET.

*Authority: Section 338B of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254I-1),  
Section 331(i) of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254d(i))  
Future changes in the governing statute, implementing regulations and Program Guidance may also be applicable to National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program participants.*

Assistance Listings (AL/CFDA) Number 93.162

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Executive Summary</b> .....  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Privacy Act Notification Statement</b> .....   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program Overview</b> .....                                      | <b>7</b>  |
| What to Look for In 2024 .....  | 8         |
| <b>Application and Program Guidance</b> .....   | <b>8</b>  |
| Program Eligibility Requirements .....  | 9         |
| Service Obligations and Award Amounts .....   | 9         |
| Training and Licensure Requirements.....  | 19        |
| Program Compliance.....   | 34        |
| <b>Application Information</b> .....  | <b>45</b> |
| Application Deadline.....   | 45        |
| Completing an Application .....   | 45        |
| <b>Application Review and Award Process</b> .....   | <b>52</b> |
| Confirmation of Interest.....   | 53        |
| The National Health Service corps Loan Repayment Program Contract.....  | 54        |
| <b>Additional Information</b> .....   | <b>55</b> |
| Paperwork Reduction Act Public Burden Statement.....  | 55        |
| Resources for Applicants.....   | 56        |
| <b>Appendix: Glossary</b> .....   | <b>57</b> |
| FY 2024 National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program Application And Program<br>Guidance Glossary ..... | 57        |

## **Executive Summary**

The Health Resources and Services Administration is accepting applications for the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program. Licensed primary care providers in eligible disciplines can receive loan repayment assistance for their qualifying educational debt through the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program. For primary care medical providers assigned to a primary care Health Professional Shortage Area, which includes maternity care health professionals assigned to a Maternity Care Target Area, the initial contract can fund up to \$75,000 of loan repayment in exchange for two years of service at a National Health Service Corps-approved site. For mental and oral health care providers assigned to a mental or dental Health Professional Shortage Area, respectively, the initial contract can fund up to \$50,000 of loan repayment in exchange for two years of service at a National Health Service Corps-approved site. After the initial contract, participants may be eligible for continuation contracts that provide up to \$20,000 in loan repayment in exchange for each additional year of service. For details on Health Professional Shortage Areas, see the “Workforce Shortage Area” page on the [Health Resources and Services Administration’s Bureau of Health Workforce](#) website.

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Eligible Applicants</b>  | <p>Clinicians who provide direct clinical care under the following disciplines and specialties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Care Medical</li> <li>• Oral</li> <li>• Behavioral and Mental Health</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Funding</b>              | <p><b>Full-Time Service:</b><br/>Up to <b>\$75,000</b> for a two-year service obligation for primary care medical providers assigned to a primary care Health Professional Shortage Area, which includes maternity care health professionals assigned to a Maternity Care Target Area.</p> <p>Up to <b>\$50,000</b> for a two-year service obligation for mental and oral health care providers assigned to a mental or dental Health Professional Shortage Area, respectively.</p> <p><b>Half-Time Service:</b><br/>Up to <b>\$37,500</b> for a two-year service obligation for primary care medical providers assigned to a primary care Health Professional Shortage Area, which includes maternity care health professionals assigned to a Maternity Care Target Area.</p> <p>Up to <b>\$25,000</b> for a two-year service obligation for mental and oral health care providers assigned to a mental or dental Health Professional Shortage Area, respectively.</p> <p><b>Spanish Language Award Enhancement</b> Up to \$5,000 for eligible applicants. (See <a href="#">Applying for Spanish Language Award Enhancement</a> section for details).</p> |
| <b>Service Obligation</b>   | <p>You have a choice of service options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-year <b>full-time</b> clinical practice at a National Health Service Corps-approved site.</li> <li>• Two-year <b>half-time</b> clinical practice at a National Health Service Corps-approved site.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Where Members Serve</b>  | <p>National Health Service Corps clinicians must work at a National Health Service Corps-approved service site located in a Health Professional Shortage Area. <a href="#">Health Professional Shortage Areas</a> can be found around the country in rural, urban, and frontier communities.</p> <p>National Health Service Corps-approved service sites are generally outpatient facilities providing primary medical, oral, and/or mental and behavioral health services. Visit the <a href="#">Health Workforce Connector</a> to search for training and employment opportunities at National Health Service Corps-approved service sites.</p>  |
| <b>Application Deadline</b> | <p>May 9, 2024</p>   |
| <b>Tax Liability</b>        | <p><b>Not taxable</b></p>  |



### A Letter from Luis Padilla, MD

Dear Potential Applicant,

Thank you for your consideration and time in applying to a [National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program](#). For more than 50 years, the National Health Service Corps has fulfilled its mission to connect a highly qualified, diverse group of health care professionals to people with limited access to health care. As we move forward, we need clinicians like you who are committed to serving in communities that need you most. In exchange, we may be able to pay all of your outstanding, eligible student loan debt. The aim for this additional support is to recruit and retain a high-quality primary care workforce dedicated to serving in Health Professional Shortage Areas.

As a former National Health Service Corps scholar, I completed my service obligation at a large health center network in Washington, D.C., so I understand how busy you are. To that end, we have streamlined the application process to make it easier for you to [compare programs](#) and apply to the one that is the best fit for you. Please take advantage of the [Health Workforce Connector](#), which contains a searchable database for all approved service sites.

Again, thank you for taking time to read each program's Application and Program Guidance and considering applying.

/Luis Padilla, MD/

[Luis Padilla, MD](#)

Associate Administrator for Health Workforce  
Director of the National Health Service Corps  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

## **Privacy Act Notification Statement**

### **General**

This information is provided pursuant to the Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-579), as amended, for individuals supplying information for inclusion in a system of records.

### **Statutory Authority**

Section 338B of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. § 254l-1),; Section 331(i) of the Public Health Service Act (42 § U.S.C. 254d(i)).

### **Purposes and Uses**

The purpose of the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program is to recruit and retain medical, nursing, oral, and behavioral/mental health clinicians in eligible communities of need designated as [Health Professional Shortage Areas](#). The information that applicants supply will be used to evaluate their eligibility, qualifications, and suitability for participating in the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program. In addition, information from other sources will be considered (e.g., credit bureau reports and National Practitioner Data Bank reports).

Certain parts of an applicant's application may also be disclosed outside the Department, as permitted by the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act, to the Congress, the National Archives, the Government Accountability Office, and pursuant to court order and various routine uses as described in the [System of Record Notice 09-15-0037 for Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program Records](#) on the Federal Register website. You will be notified if your information will be shared.

### **Effects of Nondisclosure**

Disclosure of the information sought is required, except for the replies to questions related to Race/Ethnicity (Section 3 of the online application for National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program). An application may be considered incomplete if all required information is not submitted with the application.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy Statement**

In accordance with applicable federal laws and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services policy, the Department does not discriminate on the basis of any non-merit factor, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability (physical or mental), age, status as a parent, or genetic information.

## National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program Overview

For more than five decades, the National Health Service Corps has worked to position dedicated health professionals in communities across the country with the greatest need for health care services. The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program awards eligible primary care providers (see the [Eligible Primary Care Providers and Clinical Practice Requirements](#) section) financial assistance towards repayment of their outstanding qualifying educational loans. In return, participants commit to provide culturally competent primary health care services to underserved populations in Health Professional Shortage Areas. The vast majority of NHSC providers (more than 84 percent) continue to practice in underserved communities after their service obligation ends. We have a National Health Service Corps alumni body committed to service.

The National Health Service Corps has several loan repayment programs, including:

- The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program
- The National Health Service Corps Substance Use Disorder Workforce Loan Repayment Program
- The National Health Service Corps Rural Community Loan Repayment Program

You may only participate in *one* of these programs at a time. If you apply and are deemed eligible for more than one, the National Health Service Corps team may contact you to [determine which program you prefer](#). However, the National Health Service Corps cannot guarantee that you will be offered your preferred program.

Under the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program, the Secretary of Health and Human Services ("Secretary") will fund repayment for *up to \$75,000* of the *eligible* graduate and/or undergraduate educational loans of applicants selected to participate in the program (see the [What Loans Are Eligible For Repayment](#) section). Providers with demonstrated Spanish language competence who are able to deliver care in Spanish may qualify for up to an additional \$5,000 in loan repayment. In return for loan repayment, applicants must provide primary health services in a Health Professional Shortage Area (designated by the Secretary). An applicant becomes a participant in the Loan Repayment Program after the Secretary or the Secretary's designee countersigns a National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN 2024

For Fiscal Year 2024, we expect to make approximately 1,200 new awards.

- In addition to placing loan repayment program participants in Health Professional Shortage Areas in need of primary care medical, oral, and mental health providers, we will also use a designation of Maternity Care Target Areas<sup>1</sup>, located within primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas, to distribute maternity care health professionals. Maternity care health professionals are obstetricians/gynecologists, family medicine physicians who practice obstetrics, and certified nurse midwives. Maternity care health professionals will be considered for awards using either the primary care Health Professional Shortage Area score or the Maternity Care Target Area score, whichever is higher.
- The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program will have designated funding to support health professionals committing to provide primary health services in Indian Health Service facilities, Tribally Operated 638 Health Programs, and Urban Indian Health Programs.
- In fiscal year 2024, the National Health Service Corps aims to maximize the award amount up to \$75,000 for primary care medical providers assigned to a primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas and maternity care health professionals assigned to a Maternity Care Target Area of greatest need.
- The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program aims to address language access barriers to health care. The National Health Service Corps will provide a one-time Spanish Language Award Enhancement of up to \$5,000, for a total loan repayment award of up to \$80,000, for primary care medical providers and maternity care health professionals, and up to \$55,000 for mental and oral health care providers. This award enhancement will be afforded to providers who demonstrate Spanish-language proficiency through an assessment administered by a General Services Administration-approved vendor, and whose sites confirm that the applicant will provide Spanish speaking services to limited English proficiency patients.

### Application and Program Guidance

You, as the applicant, are responsible for reading and complying with the instructions included in this Application and Program Guidance before proceeding with your application. The Guidance explains the National Health Service Corps policies, and the rights and liabilities of individuals selected to participate in the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program (including the financial liabilities and legal obligations of the individual) that are stated in the National Health Service Corps program statute and contract.

### Key Dates

Key dates for National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program applicants:

---

<sup>1</sup> Maternity Care Target Areas are authorized under Section 332(k)(1) of the Public Health Service Act.

- **Applications Open:** March 19, 2024
- **Application Submission Deadline:** May 9, 2024
- **Notification of Award:** on or before September 30, 2024
- **Employment Start Deadline:** July 18, 2024
- **National Health Service Corps Scholars Service Obligation Completion Deadline:** July 31, 2024
- **Contract Termination Deadline:** 60 days from the effective date of the contract, OR before funds are received (upon written request to terminate the contract).

## **PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

To be eligible for a National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program award, an applicant must:

1. Be a United States citizen (either U.S. born or naturalized) or U.S. national.
2. Have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration in the discipline in which they are applying to serve.
3. Participate or be eligible to participate as a provider in the Medicare, Medicaid, and Children’s Health Insurance Programs, as appropriate.
4. Be eligible for federal employment. Most National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program participants should expect to serve their obligation as a salaried, non-federal employee of a public or private entity approved by the National Health Service Corps. However, there may be vacancies that require federal employment, which include a security clearance component. In light of the potential for federal employment, an applicant must be eligible to hold an appointment as a Commissioned Officer of the Public Health Service or as a federal civil servant. For more information, visit the [Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service](#) website.
5. Be employed by, or have accepted a position at, a National Health Service Corps-approved service site where employment and provision of care to patients will begin no later than July 18, 2024.
6. Submit a complete application on or before **May 9, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. ET.**

## **SERVICE OBLIGATIONS AND AWARD AMOUNTS**

- Program participants must remain working at a National Health Service Corps-approved service site, throughout the contract period. A participant’s National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program service obligation begins on the date that the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract is countersigned by the Secretary or their designee. The service obligation end date is determined in whole years from the start date. For example, the last day of the service obligation for a participant with a two-year service obligation that began on July 18, 2024, would be July 17, 2026. Adjustments in the end date will be made by the National Health Service Corps if a participant is away from the National Health Service Corps-approved service site for more than seven weeks (roughly 35 workdays) per service year.

- Primary care medical providers assigned to a primary care Health Professional Shortage Area and maternity care health professionals assigned to a Maternity Care Target Area can choose to serve in either full-time clinical practice or half-time clinical practice. An award for full-time service is up to \$75,000 in loan repayment or up to \$80,000 with the one-time Spanish language award enhancement; an award for half-time service is up to \$37,500 in loan repayment or up to \$42,500 with the one-time Spanish language award enhancement. Both award types require a two-year service obligation. Read more in the [Practice Agreement Types](#) and [Eligible Primary Care Providers and Clinical Practice Requirements](#) sections of this Guidance.
- Mental or Oral health care providers assigned to a mental or dental Health Professional Shortage Area, respectively, can choose to serve in either full-time clinical practice or half-time clinical practice. An award for full-time service is up to \$50,000 in loan repayment or up to \$55,000 with the one-time Spanish language award enhancement; an award for half-time service is up to \$25,000 in loan repayment or up to \$30,000 with the one-time Spanish language award enhancement. Both award types require a two-year service obligation. Read more in the [Practice Agreement Types](#) and [Eligible Primary Care Providers and Clinical Practice Requirements](#) sections of this Guidance.
- Award amounts are based on the outstanding balance of an applicant’s qualifying educational loans. Participants must complete the two-year service obligation regardless of the amount of their award.
- Participants must apply all loan repayments received through the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program to their qualifying graduate and/or undergraduate educational loans.
- By statute, National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program funds are exempt from federal income and employment taxes. These funds are not included as wages when determining Social Security benefits.

## WHAT LOANS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR REPAYMENT?

National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program awards are based on the participant’s outstanding eligible educational loans. This includes the principal, interest, and related expenses of outstanding government (federal, state, or local) and commercial (i.e., private) student loans for undergraduate or graduate education obtained by the participant for school tuition, other reasonable educational expenses, and reasonable living expenses. The educational loans must be obtained **prior** to the date the participant applies.

If a current National Health Service Corps participant obtains additional educational loans toward another health professions degree that will result in a **change in discipline** (for example, a Licensed Professional Counselor obtains a doctorate in clinical psychology), they will need to apply to the National Health Service Corps as a new participant in a subsequent application cycle and will be reviewed competitively against other applicants. If a prior National Health Service Corps participant obtains additional educational loans within the **same** discipline in which they performed their service obligation, those loans are **not** eligible for repayment.

**Consolidated or refinanced loans** may be considered for repayment if they are from a government (federal, state, or local) or private student loan lender and include *only qualifying* educational loans of the applicant. For loans to remain eligible, applicants must keep their eligible educational loans segregated from all other debts.

Loans that do *not* qualify for loan repayment include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) Loans with a service obligation that will **not** be fulfilled before the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program application deadline, which is May 9, 2024.
- (2) Loans **consolidated/refinanced with ineligible (non-qualifying) debt** of the applicant, or with loans owed by any other person.
- (3) Loans for which the associated documentation **cannot identify** that the loan was solely applicable to the undergraduate or graduate education of the applicant.
- (4) Loans **not** obtained from a government entity or private student loan lending institution. Most loans made by private foundations to individuals are **not** eligible for repayment.
- (5) Loans that have been repaid in full.
- (6) [Primary Care Loans](#), as described on the “Apply for a Loan Program” page on the Health Resources and Services Administration’s Health Workforce website.
- (7) Parent PLUS Loans (made to parents).
- (8) Personal lines of credit.
- (9) Loans subject to cancellation.
- (10) Residency and Relocation loans.
- (11) Credit card debt.

Applicants must provide documentation that proves that their educational loans were contemporaneous with the education received. The Health Resources and Services Administration will verify loans by contacting lenders/holders and reviewing the applicant’s credit report.

**Note:** If all loans are paid in full as a result of an individual receiving loan forgiveness under a program such as the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, and the effective date of the loan forgiveness is **after** the Secretary (or the Secretary’s designee) has countersigned the contract and the NHSC award has been disbursed, the participant is still obligated to serve the full length of their NHSC service obligation.

### **Eligible Primary Care Providers and Clinical Practice Requirements**

Clinical practice requirements differ based on discipline, Health Professional Shortage Area category, full- or half-time status, and other factors. Details are in the footnotes and after the primary care charts on the following pages.

**Note:** Direct Clinical Care in the Full-Time and Half-Time columns refers to care at a National Health Service Corps-approved site and approved alternative settings.

Every participant is required to engage in the full-time or half-time (as applicable) clinical practice of the profession for which they applied and were awarded a National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract, at their National Health Service Corps-approved service site(s). Loan repayment amounts are linked to full- or half-time status.

Read the following section carefully, as the clinical practice requirements for full-time and half-time providers have changed.

- 1) **Full-Time Clinical Practice.** Full-time clinical practice is defined, for the purposes of the National Health Service Corps, as a minimum of 40 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks each service year. The 40 hours per week may be compressed into no less than 4 days/week, with no more than 12 hours of work to be performed in any 24-hour period. As noted in the practice requirements by discipline chart below, participants must spend a designated minimum number of hours/weeks providing direct clinical care. Participants do not receive service credit for hours worked over the required 40 hours/week and excess hours cannot be applied to any other work week. Also, time spent “on call” will not be counted towards the service obligation, except to the extent the provider is providing direct clinical care during that period. Additional rules apply based on discipline and practice location. (See table and [special circumstances](#) section below)
- 2) **Half-Time Clinical Practice.** Half-time clinical practice is defined, for the purposes of the National Health Service Corps, as 20-39 hours/per week, for a minimum of 45 weeks each service year. The minimum 20 hours/week may be compressed into no less than 2 days/ week, with no more than 12 hours of work to be performed in any 24-hour period. As noted in the practice requirements by discipline chart below, participants must spend a designated minimum number of hours/weeks providing direct clinical care. Participants do not receive service credit for hours worked over the required 20 hours/week and excess hours cannot be applied to any other work week. Also, time spent “on call” will not be counted towards the service obligation, except to the extent the provider is providing direct clinical care during that period. Additional rules apply based on discipline and practice location. (See table and [special circumstances](#) section below)

**Primary Care: Medical Providers Must serve in Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas**

| Disciplines  | Specialty   | Full Time (40 hours/week)   | Half-Time (20-39 hours/week)   |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Physicians:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Allopathic</b></li> <li>• <b>Osteopathic</b></li> </ul> | Family Medicine, General Internal, Medicine, General Pediatrics, Geriatrics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 36 hours/week, which may include up to 8 hours/week in teaching activities or in approved alternative settings.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 18 hours/week, which may include up to 4 hours/week in teaching activities or in approved alternative settings.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Physician Assistants</b>  | Adult, Family, Pediatric, Women’s Health, Geriatrics                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 36 hours/ week, which may include up to 8 hours/week in teaching activities or in approved alternative settings.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 18 hours/week, which may include up to 4 hours/week in teaching activities or in approved alternative settings.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Nurse Practitioners</b>   | Adult, Family, Pediatric, Women’s Health, Geriatrics                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 36 hours/ week, which may include up to 8 hours/week in teaching activities or approved alternative settings.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week.</li> </ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 18 hours/week, which may include up to 4 hours/week in teaching activities or approved alternative settings.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week.</li> </ul>    |

**Maternity Care Health Professionals Must Serve in Maternity Care Target Areas in Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas.**

| Disciplines  | Specialty   | Full-Time (40 hours/week)  | Half-Time (20-39 hours/week)   |
|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Physicians:<br/>Allopathic,<br/>Osteopathic</b> | Family Medicine Physicians who practice obstetrics Obstetrics/ Gynecology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 36 hours/week, which may include up to 8 hours/week in teaching activities and up to 12 hours/week in approved alternative settings.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 18 hours/week, which may include up to 4 hours/week in teaching activities and up to 4 hours/week in approved alternative settings.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week.</li> </ul> |

| Disciplines                         | Specialty | Full-Time (40 hours/week)   | Half-Time (20-39 hours/week)  |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|---|---|
| <b>Certified Nurse<br/>Midwives</b> | N/A       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 36 hours/week, which may include up to 8 hours/week in teaching activities and up to 12 hours/week in approved alternative settings.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 18 hours/week, which may include up to 4 hours/week in teaching activities, and up to 4 hours/week in approved alternative settings.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week.</li> </ul> |

**Primary Care: Oral Health Providers: Must serve in Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas**

| Disciplines  | Specialty                                 | Full-Time (40 hours/week)   | Half-Time (20-39 hours/week)   |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Dentists:<br/>Doctor of Dental<br/>Surgery,<br/>Doctor of Medical<br/>Dentistry</b> | General Dentistry,<br>Pediatric Dentistry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 36 hours/ week, which may include up to 8 hours/week in teaching activities or in approved alternative settings <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 18 hours/week, which may include up to 4 hours/week in teaching activities or in approved alternative settings.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Dental<br/>Hygienists</b>   | N/A                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 36 hours/ week, which may include up to 8 hours/week in teaching activities or in approved alternative settings <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 18 hours/week, which may include up to 4 hours/week in teaching activities or in approved alternative settings.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week.</li> </ul> |

**Primary Care: Mental Health Providers: Must serve in Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas**

| Disciplines                                       | Specialty   | Full-Time (40 hours/week)  | Half-Time (20-39 hours/week)   |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Physicians:<br/>Allopathic<br/>Osteopathic</b> | Psychiatry<br>(Both General Child<br>and Adolescent<br>Psychiatrists are<br>eligible) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 36 hours/week, which may include up to 8 hours/week in teaching activities, and up to 20 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 18 hours/week, which may include up to 4 hours/week in teaching capacity, and up to 10 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week.</li> </ul> |

| Disciplines                         | Specialty                           | Full-Time (40 hours/week)  | Half-Time (20-39 hours/week)   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Nurse Practitioners</b>          | Mental Health and Psychiatry        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 36 hours/week, which may include up to 8 hours/week in teaching activities, and up to 20 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 18 hours/week, which may include up to 4 hours/week in teaching activities, and up to 10 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Physician Assistant</b>          | Mental Health and Psychiatry        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 36 hours/week, which may include up to 8 hours/week in teaching activities, and up to 20 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 18 hours/week, which may include up to 4 hours/week in teaching activities, and up to 10 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Health Service Psychologists</b> | <i>All specialties are eligible</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 36 hours/week, which may include up to 8 hours/week in teaching activities and up to 20 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 18 hours/week, which may include up to 4 hours/week in teaching activities, and up to 10 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week.</li> </ul> |

| Disciplines                             | Specialty                           | Full-Time (40 hours/week)  | Half-Time (20-39 hours/week)   |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Licensed Clinical Social Workers</b> | <i>All specialties are eligible</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 36 hours/week, which may include up to 8 hours/week in teaching activities, and up to 20 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 18 hours/week, which may include up to 4 hours/week in teaching activities, and up to 10 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Psychiatric Nurse Specialists</b>    | <i>All specialties are eligible</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 36 hours/week, which may include up to 8 hours/week in teaching activities, and up to 20 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 18 hours/week, which may include up to 4 hours/week in teaching activities, and up to 10 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Marriage and Family Therapists</b>   | <i>All specialties are eligible</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 36 hours/week, which may include up to 8 hours/week in teaching activities, and up to 20 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 18 hours/week, which may include up to 4 hours/week in teaching activities, and up to 10 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week.</li> </ul> |

| Disciplines                      | Specialty                           | Full-Time (40 hours/week)  | Half-Time (20-39 hours/week)   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Licensed Professional Counselors | <i>All specialties are eligible</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 36 hours/week, which may include up to 8 hours/week in teaching activities, and up to 20 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct Clinical Care:</b> At least 18 hours/week, which may include up to 4 hours/week in teaching activities, and up to 10 hours/week in approved alternative settings or performing services as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings as directed by the site.</li> <li>• <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week.</li> </ul> |

The following definitions apply to both full-time and half-time clinical practice:

- **Administrative Duties:** may include charting, administrative care coordination activities, training, laboratory follow-up, patient correspondence, attending staff meetings, activities related to maintaining professional licensure and other non-treatment related activities pertaining to the participant’s approved National Health Service Corps practice. Any time spent in a management role is also considered to be an administrative activity. The duties of a medical director are also considered primarily administrative, and National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program applicants serving in such a capacity should keep in mind that they **cannot** count more than four hours per week of administrative and/or management time (two hours in the case of half-time participants) toward the total required 40 hours per week (or 20-39 hours in the case of half-time participants).
- **Teaching Activities:** to qualify as clinical practice, National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program participants engaged in teaching activities must provide clinical education to students and residents in their area of expertise. All teaching must be conducted as directed by the National Health Service Corps-approved service site, subject to the National Health Service Corps limits on the number of hours per week allowed for teaching. Teaching activities cannot count more than eight hours per week (four hours in the case of half-time participants) toward the total required 40 hours per week (or 20-39 hours in the case of half-time participants). The clinical education may:
  - (1) Be conducted as part of an accredited clinical training program;
  - (2) Include the clinical supervision of a student/resident that is required for that student/resident to receive a license under state law; or
  - (3) Include mentoring that is conducted as part of the Health Careers Opportunity Program or the Centers of Excellence Program.

National Health Service Corps participants **may** count hours treating patients while a student or resident observes as direct clinical care, instead of teaching.

## **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

### ***Clinical Practice Service Requirements at Teaching Health Centers***

If a participant is serving a Federal Assignment or Private Practice Agreement and working at a Health Resources and Services Administration Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program awardee as authorized under 42 U.S.C. § 256h, they are allowed to count teaching activities up to 20 hours/week toward the direct clinical care requirement; the remaining 20 hours must be spent providing direct clinical care at approved site(s), of which 8 hours/week may be spent providing direct clinical care in an approved alternative setting to address continuity of care (e.g., hospital, nursing home, or shelter) and performing clinical-related administrative duties up to 4 hours/week.

### ***Clinical Practice Service Requirements at School-Based Clinics***

School-based clinics must be approved as National Health Service Corps-approved service sites. Participants serving at school-based clinics as their primary service site(s) must provide required documentation (e.g., In-Service Verification Forms) that demonstrates they are meeting their National Health Service Corps service obligation at that facility and that the school-based clinic is in the approved Health Professional Shortage Area.

Providers who work at school-based clinics that are not open year-round will not receive National Health Service Corps service credit for any period of time they are not serving at a school-based clinic. Providers who work at school-based clinics that are not open year-round may meet the National Health Service Corps' clinical practice requirements by:

- Working at an additional National Health Service Corps-approved service site (or sites) when the school clinic is closed. The additional site (or sites) must satisfy the Health Professional Shortage Area requirements identified in the participant's initial National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract.
- Extending their National Health Service Corps service obligation to fulfill the National Health Service Corps' annual clinical practice requirements.

### ***Clinical Practice Service Requirements at an Indian Health Service Hospital or Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services-Approved Critical Access Hospital***

Physicians (including psychiatrists), physician assistants (including those with a mental health specialization), nurse practitioners (including those with a mental health specialization), and certified nurse midwives may serve in the full-time or half-time clinical practice at an Indian Health Service Hospital or Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services-approved Critical Access Hospital with an affiliated outpatient clinic. Applicants must list in their application both the Indian Health Service Hospital and its affiliated outpatient clinic or both the Critical Access Hospital and its affiliated outpatient clinic. The following requirements apply:

| Hourly Schedule  | Minimum Hours    | Minimum hours providing direct clinical care in the affiliated outpatient clinic | Hours that may be spent in Teaching Activities   | Administrative Duties | Remaining hours that may be spent providing direct clinical care at the hospital or affiliated outpatient clinic |
|------------------|------------------|--|--|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Full-time</b> | 40 hours/week    | At least 24 hours/week   | Up to 8 hours/week (as part of the minimum 24 hours/week spent providing direct clinical care) | Up to 4 hours/week    | Up to 12 hours/week  |
| <b>Half-time</b> | 20-39 hours/week | At least 14 hours/week   | Up to 4 hours/week (as part of the minimum 14 hours/week spent providing direct clinical care) | Up to 2 hours/week    | Up to 4 hours/week   |

## TRAINING AND LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS

National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program applicants must demonstrate satisfactory professional competence, professional conduct, and meet discipline/specialty-specific education, training, and licensure requirements, as described below.

National Health Service Corps applicants must have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration at the time they submit their application, as applicable, that authorizes the independent practice of the applicant’s discipline without supervision in the state where their National Health Service Corps-approved service site is located<sup>2</sup>, and in accordance with state requirements and national certification organization standards.

Clinicians who are in residency programs may apply to the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program with a provisional license; however, they may not accept an award until they possess a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license.

---

<sup>2</sup> Applicants who intend to practice under the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program as (i) federal employees, (ii) federal contractors, or (iii) employees of a tribal health program in a state in which the tribal health program provides services described in its contract must have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable) in a state.

The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program requires documentary proof of completion of discipline-specific advanced training (medical residency, certification, fellowships, etc.), licensure status, and any other requirement set forth below. While an applicant may be licensed in the state of intended practice, they may need to meet additional requirements to be eligible for the National Health Service Corps. For example, see the [Telehealth and Home Health Policies](#) section for licensure requirements pertaining to participants providing telehealth services.

*Required Credentials for Eligible Disciplines*

**Licensure, Certification and/or Registration Requirements:** In addition to any specific requirements provided below, **all** clinicians must possess a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration, as applicable, that enables the unsupervised practice of the relevant profession as required by applicable state or federal law.

**Discipline: Primary Care Physicians (Allopathic and Osteopathic)**

| Specialties   | Education Requirements   | Certification Requirements   | Notes  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family Medicine</li> <li>General Internal Medicine</li> <li>General Pediatrics</li> <li>Obstetrics/Gynecology</li> <li>Geriatrics</li> </ul> | A certificate of completion of an M.D. or D.O. at an accredited school of allopathic or osteopathic medicine located in a state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory. A school of osteopathic medicine accredited by the American Osteopathic Association Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation. | Completed (or will complete and begin working by July 18, 2024) a residency program in primary care or fellowship in addiction medicine, approved by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. | Providers of geriatric services must show specific advanced training in geriatrics, including but not limited to, a residency, fellowship, or certification in geriatric medicine. |

**Discipline: Psychiatrists (Allopathic and Osteopathic)**

| Specialties   | Education Requirements  | Certification Requirements   | Notes |
|---|---|--|-------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Psychiatry</li> <li>Child and Adolescent Psychiatry</li> </ul> | Certificate of completion of an M.D. or D.O. at an accredited school of allopathic or osteopathic medicine located in a state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory. | Completed (or will complete and begin working by July 18, 2024) a residency program in primary care, approved by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. | N/A   |

**Discipline: Physician Assistants – Primary Care or Mental Health**

| Specialties  | Education Requirements  | Certification Requirements   | Notes      |
|--|---|--|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult</li> <li>• Family</li> <li>• Pediatric</li> <li>• Women’s Health</li> <li>• Geriatrics</li> <li>• Mental Health &amp; Psychiatry</li> </ul> | <p>Certificate of completion or an associate, bachelor’s, or master’s degree from a physician assistant educational program accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the physician assistant.</p> | <p>National certification by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants.</p> | <p>N/A</p> |

**Discipline: Nurse Practitioners – Primary Care or Mental Health**

| Specialties  | Education Requirements   | Certification Requirements  | Notes      |
|--|--|---|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult</li> <li>• Family</li> <li>• Pediatric</li> <li>• Women’s Health</li> <li>• Geriatrics</li> <li>• Mental Health &amp; Psychiatry</li> </ul> | <p>Master’s degree, post-master’s certificate, or doctoral degree from a school accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, in one of the primary care nurse practitioner specialties.</p> | <p>National certification by the American Nurses Credentialing Center, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (formerly the National Certification Board of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners and Nurses), or the National Certification Corporation in one of the primary care nurse practitioner specialties.</p> | <p>N/A</p> |

**Discipline: Certified Nurse Midwives**

| Specialties | Education Requirements   | Certification Requirements  | Notes      |
|-------------|--|---|------------|
| <p>None</p> | <p>Master’s degree or post-baccalaureate certificate from a school accredited by the American College of Nurse Midwives.</p> | <p>National certification by the American Midwifery Certification Board (formerly the American Colleges of Nurse Midwives Certification Council).</p> | <p>N/A</p> |

**Discipline: Dentists (DDS and DMD)**

| Specialties  | Education Requirements  | Certification Requirements | Notes      |
|--|---|----------------------------|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Dentistry</li> <li>• Pediatric Dentistry</li> </ul> | <p>DDS or DMD degree from a program accredited by the American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Accreditation.</p> <p>Pediatric dentists must have also completed a two-year training program in the specialty of pediatric dentistry that is accredited by the American Dental</p> | <p>None</p>                | <p>N/A</p> |

| Specialties | Education Requirements                           | Certification Requirements | Notes |
|-------------|--|----------------------------|-------|
|             | Association, Commission on Dental Accreditation. |                            |       |

**Discipline: Registered Dental Hygienists**

| Specialties | Education Requirements  | Certification Requirements  | Notes |
|-------------|---|---|-------|
| None        | Graduated from a four-year program accredited by the American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Accreditation with a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene;<br><b>OR</b><br>Graduated from a two-year dental hygiene training program accredited by the American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Accreditation with a diploma, certificate, or associate degree AND have a least one year of experience as a licensed dental hygienist. | Successfully passed the National Board of Dental Hygiene Examination. | N/A   |

**Discipline: Health Service Psychologists**

| Specialties | Education Requirements  | Certification Requirements   | Notes  |
|-------------|---|--|--|
| None        | Doctoral degree (Doctor of Philosophy or equivalent) directly related to clinical or counseling psychology from a program accredited by the American Psychological Association, Commission on Accreditation | Passed the Examination for Professional Practice of Psychology;<br><b>AND</b><br>Have the ability to practice independently and unsupervised as a health service psychologist. . | Health Service Psychologists who work at schools that are National Health Service Corps-approved service sites must be primarily engaged in direct clinical and counseling services and must meet the clinical practice requirements for the <i>entire</i> calendar year. Psychologists focused on career or guidance counseling are <b>not</b> eligible |

**Discipline: Licensed Clinical Social Workers**

| Specialties | Education Requirements  | Certification Requirements  | Notes |
|-------------|---|---|-------|
| None        | Master's degree or doctoral degree in social work from a school accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and affiliated with an education institution accredited by the U.S. Department of Education nationally recognized accrediting body | Successfully passed the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Clinical or Advanced Generalist licensing exam prior to July 1, 1998, or the ASWB Clinical Exam on or after July 1, 1998;<br><b>OR</b><br>Successfully passed the Licensed Clinical Social Workers Standard Written Examination and the Clinical Vignette Examination and completed the state required number of years or hours of clinical social work experience under the supervision of a licensed independent social worker and passed the clinical level of the ASWB exam. | N/A   |

**Discipline: Psychiatric Nurse Specialists**

| Specialties | Education Requirements   | Certification Requirements  | Notes |
|-------------|--|---|-------|
| None        | Master's degree or higher degree in nursing from a program accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education with a specialization in psychiatric/mental health and two years of post-graduate supervised clinical experience in psychiatric/mental health nursing;<br><b>OR</b><br>Baccalaureate or higher degree in nursing from a program accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission or Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education | Certification by the American Nurses Credentialing Center as a Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse, Clinical Specialist in Adult Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing, or Clinical Specialist in Child and Adolescent Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing. | N/A   |

**Discipline: Marriage and Family Therapists**

| Specialties | Education Requirements   | Certification Requirements   | Notes |
|-------------|--|--|-------|
| None        | <p>Master’s or doctoral program in marriage and family therapy from a program accredited by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education;</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Graduate degree in another mental health field (psychiatry, psychology, clinical social work, psychiatric nursing, etc.) and completed a Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education accredited post-graduate degree clinical training program in marriage and family therapy</p> | <p>Have at least two years of post-graduate supervised clinical experience as a Marriage and Family Therapist;</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Be a Clinical Fellow member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy;</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Successfully passed the Marriage and Family Therapist Standard Written Examination</p> | N/A   |

**Discipline: Licensed Professional Counselors**

| Specialties | Education Requirements   | Certification Requirements            | Notes   |
|-------------|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| None        | <p>A master’s or higher degree with a major study in counseling from a school accredited by a U.S. Department of Education nationally recognized regional or state institutional accrediting agency;</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Have at least two years of post-graduate supervised counseling experience.</p> | License, certificate, or registration | <p>If an licensed professional counselor license, certificate or registration is not available in the state of intended practice, have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration, as applicable, to practice independently and unsupervised as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (or as another discipline meeting the licensed professional counselor educational requirements) in a state and be practicing independently and unsupervised as required by applicable state or federal law (e.g. licensed mental health counselor can apply as</p> |

| Specialties | Education Requirements | Certification Requirements | Notes   |
|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------|---|
|             |                        |                            | <p>an licensed professional counselor)</p> <p>Licensed Professional Counselors who work at schools that are National Health Service Corps-approved service sites must be primarily engaged in direct clinical and counseling services and must meet the clinical practice requirements for the <i>entire</i> calendar year. Psychologists focused on career or guidance counseling are <b>not</b> eligible.</p> |

**ELIGIBLE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS-APPROVED SERVICE SITE TYPES**

National Health Service Corps-approved service sites are health care facilities that generally provide outpatient primary health services to populations residing in tribal, urban or rural Health Professional Shortage Areas.

**Note:** In order to apply for the loan repayment program, the applicant’s site must be a National Health Service Corps-approved service site by the time of the applicant’s submission.

The following types of sites are eligible for National Health Service Corps service site approval:

***Auto-Approved Sites***

- Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Federally Qualified Health Center Look-Alikes
- Indian Health Service Facilities, Tribally Operated 638 Health Programs, Dual-Funded (Tribal Health Clinic and Federally Qualified Health Center 330 Funded), Urban Indian Health Programs and Indian Health Hospitals (with an affiliated outpatient clinic)
- Federal Prisons
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement Health Service Corps Facilities

***Other Eligible Sites***

- State Prisons
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Certified Rural Health Clinics
- Critical Access Hospitals
- Community Mental Health Centers
- State or Local Health Departments
- Community Outpatient Facilities

- Private Practices
- School-Based Clinics (*that are not affiliated with a Federally Qualified Health Center or Look-Alike*)
- Mobile Units (*that are not affiliated with a Federally Qualified Health Center or Look-Alike*)
- Free Clinics
- Substance Use Disorder Treatment Facilities

Some site categories are potentially eligible if certain conditions are met:

- Applicants should be aware that certain National Health Service Corps-approved service sites must opt in for comprehensive primary behavioral/mental health care services for providers to be eligible for a loan repayment program award to provide behavioral/mental health services. To do so, sites must submit the National Health Service Corps Comprehensive Behavioral Health Services Checklist and supporting documentation. Auto-approved service sites, state prisons, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration-Certified Opioid Treatment Programs are exempt from this opt-in requirement.
- Critical Access Hospitals and Indian Health Service Hospitals and their affiliated outpatient clinics may be approved as National Health Service Corps service sites.

### ***Ineligible Site Types***

The following are ***not*** eligible to become National Health Service Corps-approved service sites, even if they are in a Health Professional Shortage Area:

- Inpatient hospitals (except Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services-certified Critical Access Hospitals and some Indian Health Service hospitals)
- Clinics that exclusively provide care to veterans and active-duty military personnel (e.g., Veterans Health Administration medical centers, hospitals and clinics, and military treatment facilities)
- Other types of inpatient facilities and inpatient rehabilitation programs
- Residential facilities
- Local/county/city/private correctional facilities
- Home-based health care settings of patients or clinicians
- Specialty clinics and/or service specific sites limited by gender identity, organ system, illness, categorical population or service (e.g., clinics that only provide sexually transmitted diseases/human immunodeficiency virus/tuberculosis services)

**For more information about site eligibility and necessary documentation, visit the [National Health Service Corps website](#). Search the [Health Workforce Connector](#) for all National Health Service Corps-approved service sites.**

### **Practice Agreement Types**

There are three (3) practice types available to National Health Service Corps participants:

- (1) **Federal Assignment.** National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program participants serving as federal employees are either Federal Civil Service employees or active members of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps and will typically be working at a federal site (e.g., an Indian Health Service hospital). Participants assigned as civil servants may request to serve half-time (subject to federal personnel regulations); U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps Commissioned Officers must serve full-time.
  
- (2) **Private Practice Assignment.** Under a Private Practice Assignment, a National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program participant is employed by a public or private entity and is subject to the personnel system (i.e., employment policies) of the entity to which they are assigned. In addition, the site assures that the participant will receive a salary and malpractice coverage at least equal to what they would have received as a civilian employee of the U.S. Government. Malpractice insurance, including tail coverage, can be provided through a commercial carrier or through the Federal Tort Claims Act, if available to the site. The Private Practice Assignment service option is available to both full-time and half-time participants.
  
- (3) **Private Practice Option.** Under the Private Practice Option, a National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program participant is either (a) self-employed (e.g., a solo practitioner or co-owner of the site at which the participant works); (b) part of a group practice; (c) an independent contractor; or (d) a salaried employee of an eligible, National Health Service Corps-approved service site who is **not** receiving salary and malpractice coverage at least equal to what they would receive as a Federal Civil Servant. To serve under the Private Practice Option, the participant must submit a Private Practice Option request (application) and, if the National Health Service Corps approves the request, the participant must enter into a Private Practice Option Agreement that stipulates the special provisions that apply to those serving under the Private Practice Option. The Private Practice Option service option is open only to full-time participants.

**NOTE:** Federal Assignment and Private Practice Assignment require the National Health Service Corps-approved service site to accept Medicare assignment, enter into the appropriate agreements under Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program, and utilize a schedule of discounts (including, as appropriate, waivers) of fees based on a patient’s ability to pay (see the Glossary in the Appendix section, for the definition of “National Health Service Corps-approved Service Site”). The Private Practice Option requires the individual to comply with the same billing requirements.

| If an applicant is ...   | and their salary and malpractice/tail coverage are...   | they will serve under a:    |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
| A federal Civil Service employee or an active member of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps  | provided by a Federal Government entity   | Federal Assignment          |
| <b>NOT</b> a federal employee but an employee of a National Health Service Corps-approved service site   | <i>at least equal to</i> what they would earn as a civilian employee of the U.S. Government   | Private Practice Assignment |
| <b>NOT</b> a federal employee but an employee of a National Health Service Corps-approved service site   | <i>less than</i> what they would earn as a civilian employee of the U.S. Government           | Private Practice Option     |
| <b>NOT</b> a federal employee but an independent contractor to a National Health Service Corps-approved site, or a member of a group practice in an eligible Health Professional Shortage Area site, or a solo practitioner in a National Health Service Corps-approved service site | whatever income they earn or generate; whatever malpractice coverage they purchase or receive | Private Practice Option     |

### Telehealth and Home Health Policies

**Telehealth.** Participants will not receive service credit for telehealth delivered services that exceed more than 75 percent of the minimum weekly hours required to provide direct clinical care, under the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract. National Health Service Corps participants must comply with all applicable telemedicine policies of their site as well as all applicable federal and state rules and policies regarding telemedicine services.

National Health Service Corps participants who are performing telehealth are encouraged to visit the Health Resources and Services Administration’s [Telehealth Resource Centers](#) website and use the resources provided. These centers provide free telehealth technical assistance and training for providers using telehealth.

Subject to the restrictions below, the National Health Service Corps will consider telehealth as direct clinical care when both the **originating site** (location of the patient) and the **distant site** (location of the National Health Service Corps participant) are located in a Health Professional Shortage Area and are National Health Service Corps-approved. All National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program participants who are providing telehealth services are subject to the following requirements:

- a. Participants must practice in accordance with applicable licensure and professional standards.
- b. Participants must be available to provide in-person care at each telehealth site on the Loan Repayment Program application, regardless of whether such sites are distant or originating.
- c. Sites may direct telehealth to be conducted to or from an approved **alternative setting**, but participants will only receive credit for telehealth conducted in compliance with National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program guidelines. Approved alternative settings such as hospitals, nursing homes, and shelters, must be **in a HPSA** and must provide services that are appropriate for the discipline and specialty of the clinician and the services provided. Services at alternative sites must be an **extension** of the comprehensive primary care provided at the National Health Service Corps-approved service site.
- d. Self-employed clinicians are **not** eligible to earn National Health Service Corps service credit for telehealth services.
- e. Telehealth services must use an interactive telecommunications system. Telephone and email systems do **not** meet the telehealth requirements.

**Home Health.** The National Health Service Corps does **not** recognize the homes of patients or providers as National Health Service Corps-approved service sites. As such, home visits may only be conducted at the direction of the National Health Service Corps-approved service site and may only be counted in the alternative setting allotment for direct clinical care (see the [Eligible Primary Care Providers and Clinical Practice Requirements](#) section).

#### **HOW LOAN REPAYMENT AWARDS ARE DETERMINED**

The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program determines loan repayment awards using rankings of Health Professional Shortage Areas, Maternity Care Target Areas, funding priorities, and other selection factors.

#### **Health Professional Shortage Areas**

The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program statute requires that providers work in Health Professional Shortage Areas of greatest need. The Secretary determines Health Professional Shortage Areas for the following categories: *Primary Care, Dental Health, and Mental Health*.

Eligible applications are prioritized and awarded based on descending order of the Health Professional Shortage Area score for the applicant's intended site of service (i.e., your work site).

If an applicant is serving or will serve at multiple National Health Service Corps-approved service sites with different Health Professional Shortage Area scores, the lowest score will determine the order in which the application will be reviewed. Health Professional Shortage Area data as of the application submission deadline will be used for the Fiscal Year 2024 award cycle. Some participants may be required to serve in specific types of Health Professional

Shortage Areas. For example, mental health providers will be evaluated, and slots allocated based on Mental Health, Health Professional Shortage Area scores.

### **Maternity Care Target Area**

A Maternity Care Target Area is a geographic area within a Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Area that has a shortage of maternity care health professionals. A higher Maternity Care Target Area score indicates greater need for maternity care health professionals. The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program will review and approve applications from maternity care health professionals by descending Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Area or Maternity Care Target Area score, whichever is higher, and based on the information in the Funding Priorities section of this document. Maternity care health professionals are obstetricians/gynecologists, family medicine physicians who practice obstetrics, and certified nurse midwives.

**Note:** Maternity care health professionals must serve in a Maternity Care Target Area within a Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Area. Maternity care health professionals serving exclusively in a Mental Health, Health Professional Shortage Area are not eligible for an award.

### **Funding Priorities**

Consistent with the National Health Service Corps enabling statute and policy, priorities in funding will be applied to eligible and qualified applicants as follows:

- **Current (or former) National Health Service Corps Participants with Remaining Eligible Loans**

Former National Health Service Corps members include scholarship recipients and former participants of the various National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Programs who have completed their service obligation and have remaining eligible student loans.

- **Characteristics Likely to Remain Practicing in a Health Professional Shortage Area**

The National Health Service Corps will also give priority to an applicant who has (and whose spouse, if any, has) characteristics that indicate a higher likelihood of continuing to practice in a HPSA after the service obligation is completed. The program will assess the applicant's education, training, and experience in working with underserved populations by considering the following factors to determine this priority:

- a. **Applicants who have completed** postgraduate medical or dental training program funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration through the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education Payment Program or a Health Resources and Services Administration-funded Advanced Nursing Education Nurse Practitioner Residency Program or Advanced Nursing Education Nurse Practitioner Residency Integration Program.
- b. The duration of the applicant's tenure at the current National Health Service Corps-approved service site; and

- c. The characteristics of the applicant’s spouse, if applicable, that indicate they are likely to remain in a Health Professional Shortage Area. In the event this funding priority must be executed, the National Health Service Corps may consider a spouse’s employment status and their proximity to a Health Professional Shortage Area. The National Health Service Corps will contact the applicant directly to retrieve documentation that determines the distance between the spouse’s place of employment and the National Health Service Corp’s applicant’s approved service site. All information collected be compiled and ranked to determine final issuance of an award.
- **Training in a Specialty Determined by the Secretary to be Needed by the National Health Service Corps**  
 The National Health Service Corps will also give priority to an applicant who has training in a health profession or specialty determined by the Secretary to be needed by the National Health Service Corps. The Secretary has determined that completers of the following programs have training in a specialty needed by the National Health Service Corps:
    - a. **Applicants who have completed a Health Resources and Services Administration-funded Addiction Medicine Fellowship Program<sup>3</sup>.** The National Health Service Corps has identified a need for addiction medicine specialists trained in community-based settings. Accordingly, the National Health Service Corps will give priority to applicants who have completed a Health Resources and Services Administration-funded Addiction Medicine Fellowship Program. The Addiction Medicine Fellowship Program trains addiction medicine specialists who work in underserved, community-based settings that integrate primary care with mental health disorders and substance use disorder prevention and treatment services.
    - b. **Applicants who have completed a Health Resources and Services Administration-funded Graduate Psychology Education Program<sup>4</sup>.** The National Health Service Corps has identified a need for specialists with addiction medicine training in community-based settings. Accordingly, the National Health Service Corps will give priority to applicants who have completed a Health Resources and Services Administration-funded Graduate Psychology Education Program<sup>4</sup>. The Graduate Psychology Education Program trains addiction medicine specialists who work in underserved, community-based settings that integrate primary care with mental health disorders and substance use disorder prevention and treatment services. Program completers will have completed at least twenty-five (25) percent of the time in the experiential training site(s) delivering opioid use disorder and other substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery services.

---

<sup>3</sup> The Addiction Medicine Fellowship program is authorized under 42 U.S.C. § 294k(a)(1) (Section 760(a)(1) of the Public Health Service Act). Funding was awarded under Notice of Funding Opportunity number HRSA-20-013.

<sup>4</sup> The Graduate Psychology Education Program is authorized by 42 U.S.C. § 294e–1(a)(2) (Section 756(a)(2) of the Public Health Service Act). Funding was awarded under Notice of Funding Opportunity number HRSA-22-043.

- **Disadvantaged Background** (see the [Required Supporting Documentation section](#)). Consistent with the governing statute, the National Health Service Corps will also give priority to an applicant who has (and whose spouse, if any, has) characteristics that indicate a higher likelihood of continuing to practice in a Health Professional Shortage Area after the service obligation is completed and who comes from a disadvantaged background. The applicant may submit certification from their school on the National Health Service Corps-approved Disadvantaged Background form that they:
  - (i) were identified as having a “disadvantaged background” based on environmental and/or economic factors, or
  - (ii) received a federal Exceptional Financial Need Scholarship. Applicants may also self-attest to having a disadvantaged background by uploading a document that validates that they meet the criteria included on the disadvantaged background form. (An Examples of documents that would satisfy this requirement include: a Federal Student Aid report).

### Selection Factors

Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria outlined Funding Priorities section, must also demonstrate the following:

- (1) **History of honoring prior legal obligations.** The National Health Service Corps will perform a hard inquiry<sup>5</sup> with credit bureaus prior to making the award decision. Applicants who do **not** have a history of honoring prior legal obligations, as evidenced by one or more of the following factors, will **not** be selected:
  - a. Default on any federal payment obligations, e.g., Department of Education student loans, Health Education Assistance Loans, Nursing Student Loans, Federal Housing Administration Loans, federal income tax liabilities, federally guaranteed/insured loans (e.g., student or home mortgage loans) or any non-federal payment obligations (e.g., court-ordered child support payments or state tax liabilities), unless the obligation was subsequently satisfied.
  - b. Write-offs/charge-offs of any federal or non-federal debts as **uncollectible** or **waiver** of any federal service or payment obligation.
  - c. Default on a prior service obligation. Applicants who have defaulted on a prior service obligation to the federal government, a state or local government, or other entity, will not be selected, unless the obligation was subsequently satisfied.
  - d. Judgment liens arising from federal debt.

---

<sup>5</sup> According to the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, these inquiries “are typically inquiries by lenders after you apply for credit. These inquiries will impact your credit score because most credit scoring models look at how recently and how frequently you apply for credit.” (Source: <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/>).

- e. Failure/refusal to provide appropriate permission/consent for the National Health Service Corps to access the participant's credit report and failure/refusal to unlock and unfreeze a frozen credit report.
- (2) **Do not have negative report on the National Practitioner Data Bank.** The National Health Service Corps will request and review the applicant's National Practitioner Data Bank report.
- (3) **Are not in breach of any service obligation.** Applicants will **not** be selected for an award if they are in breach of a health professional service obligation to a federal, state, or other entity.
- (4) **Do not have an existing current service obligation and agree not to incur any service obligation that would be performed concurrently with, or overlap with, their National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program service obligation.** Participants who subsequently enter into other service obligations (e.g., State Loan Repayment Program) will be subject to the breach of contract provision (see the [Breaching the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program Contract](#) section).

**Exceptions:**

- a. Applicants who are already obligated to a federal, state, or other entity (e.g., National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Programs, Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program, active military duty, State Loan Repayment Program, Indian Health Service Loan Repayment Program, or any other entity that obligates you to remain employed at a certain geographical location) for professional practice or service may be eligible for the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program, if they will completely satisfy that obligation by the following applicable dates:
  - For National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program and Nurse Corps Scholarship Program: **July 31, 2024.**
  - For National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Programs participants, Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program participants, active military duty, State Loan Repayment Program participants or Indian Health Service Loan Repayment Program participants: **July 18, 2024**
- b. Members of a reserve component of the Armed Forces or National Guard who are **not** on active duty prior to receiving a Loan Repayment Program award **are** eligible for the program. If military obligations in combination with the participant's other absences from the service site will exceed seven weeks per service year, the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program service obligation end date will be extended. If the reservist is deployed, they are expected to return to the National Health Service Corps-approved service site where they were serving prior to deployment or apply for a transfer to another National Health Service Corps-approved service site.

- (5) **Are not currently excluded, debarred, suspended, or disqualified by a federal agency.** Applicants are required to report certain information, which is described in the “Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Disqualification and Related Matters” section of the online application. The applicant must sign the certification that is applicable to their situation. As a condition of participating in the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program, a participant must agree to provide immediate written notice to the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program if the participant learns that they failed to make a required disclosure or that a disclosure is now required due to changed circumstances. The National Health Service Corps will verify each participant’s status through the [U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Do Not Pay](#) site.

## PROGRAM COMPLIANCE

To qualify for the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program, applicants must either 1) be working at a National Health Service Corps-approved service site or 2) have accepted an offer of employment at a National Health Service Corps-approved service site by the date they submit their application and will begin meeting the National Health Service Corps clinical practice requirements at the National Health Service Corps site they identified (in their application) by July 18, 2024. However, all applications regardless of employment start date must be submitted by the application closing deadline, which is May 9, 2024.

### *Dates of the Service Obligation*

The participant’s award letter will note the beginning and projected end dates of the service obligation. In addition, this information is contained in the participant profile on the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). Participants will not receive service credit for any employment at a National Health Service Corps-approved service site prior to the effective date of their National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract.

The last day of the service obligation is determined in whole years from the start date. For example, the last day of service for a participant with a two-year full-time service obligation that began on July 15, 2024, would be July 14, 2026. The end date may be extended if a participant is away from the site for more than seven weeks (roughly 35 workdays) per service year (see the [Worksite Absences](#) section).

### *Role of the Site Point of Contact*

To complete an application and track their work hours during their service, National Health Service Corps participants work closely with a site point of contact for each work site. The site point of contact is the on-site official who has agreed to and is qualified to perform the applicant’s initial employment verification, as well as the participant’s In-Service Verifications (see the [Service Verification](#) section) throughout the obligated service period.

### *Employment Status*

Most National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program participants are employees or independent contractors of their work sites. Employment contract negotiations are solely the responsibility of the clinician and are between the clinician and the service site. Applicants may want to seek legal guidance from private counsel before entering into an employment contract.

The participant's service contract with the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program is separate and independent from the participant's employment contract with the service site. The participant must meet the hours per week specified in their National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract even if their employment contract stipulates fewer hours (and their salary is based on those hours).

### *Worksite Absences*

The information provided below pertains to compliance with the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program service obligation and is **not** a guarantee that a service site will allow any particular amount of leave. Leave must be approved by the service site; therefore, participants **cannot** receive credit for leave if they are unemployed.

- (1) Full-time participants are allowed to spend no more than seven weeks (35 full-time workdays or 280 full-time working hours) per service year away from the National Health Service Corps-approved service site for vacation, holidays, continuing professional education, illness, or any other reason.
- (2) Half-time participants are allowed to spend no more than seven weeks (35 half-time workdays or 140 half-time working hours) per service year away from the National Health Service Corps-approved service site for vacation, holidays, continuing professional education, illness, or any other reason.

If a participant works more than the minimum number of hours per week (40 for full-time participants, 20 for half-time participants), the only time spent away from the site that will need to be reported (see the [Service Verification](#) section) and deducted from the allowed absences per service year (as set forth in the Eligible Primary Care Providers and Clinical Practice Requirements section) are the hours of absence that cause a participant's work hours to fall below the National Health Service Corps' required minimum number of hours per week. For example, a half-time participant who works 32 hours a week would **not** need to report 12 hours of sick leave because the participant has still met the National Health Service Corps' minimum service requirement of 20 hours a week.

Absences over 280 full-time working hours or 140 half-time working hours (which translates into seven weeks or 35 workdays) will result in the extension of the participant's service obligation. Participants who have a medical or personal emergency that will result in an extended period of absence *will need to request a suspension* of the National Health Service Corps service obligation and provide supporting documentation. The National Health Service Corps **cannot** guarantee that a suspension request will be approved. If a suspension is requested and approved, the participant's service obligation end date will be extended accordingly (see the [Suspensions of Service Obligations](#) section).

### *Service Verification*

Every six months, National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program participants must submit service verification documentation certifying their compliance or noncompliance with the clinical practice requirements. The In-Service Verification will also record the time spent away from the service site during the six-month period and hours that fall below 40 (full-time) and 20 (half-time) hours/week. The site point of contact verifies the accuracy of these submissions. It is the participant's responsibility to ensure that the site point of contact completes the verification in a timely manner and that it is accurate.

Participants who fail to ensure that their In-Service Verification forms are completed and submitted on time risk not receiving service credit and being recommended for default. Participants who do not submit In-Service Verifications or who are consistently late in submitting them may not be selected for a National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program continuation contract.

### *Transitioning from the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program to the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program*

National Health Service Corps Scholars completing their service obligation who wish to be considered for a Fiscal Year 2024 National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program award will be able to complete an application by accessing their [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) account and submitting a complete application by the deadline of May 9, 2024. Scholar applicants will receive funding priority (see the [Funding Priorities](#) section).

National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program participants intending to *remain* at the same National Health Service Corps-approved service site where they will complete their National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program service obligation are eligible to apply for the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program, so long as the scholarship obligation will be fulfilled on or before July 31, 2024.

Scholars who intend to transfer to another National Health Service Corps-approved service site must complete their National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program obligation at their current National Health Service Corps-approved service site by July 31, 2024. When completing the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program application, scholar applicants who intend to transfer to a new service site will need to submit the new site for the National Health

Service Corps Loan Repayment Program so that Health Resources and Services Administration can verify future employment.

### *Continuing Service After Initial Two-year Contract*

National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program participants may be eligible for a continuation contract, which extends an initial loan repayment contract, one year at a time, allowing pay off all qualifying educational loans. To remain eligible for a continuation contract, the individual must have unpaid qualifying educational loans, apply for the continuation contract before the initial two year loan repayment contract ends, have applied all previously received National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program payments to reduce their qualifying educational loans, continue to serve at a National Health Service Corps-approved service site, and meet all other program eligibility criteria in effect at the time the participant is being considered for a continuation contract. There is **no guarantee** that a participant will receive a continuation contract for continued participation in the program beyond the initial contract. Continuation contracts will be made at the government's discretion and are subject to the availability of appropriated funds. For more information on continuation awards, visit the [Determine Your Eligibility and Apply for a Continuation Contract](#) page on the NHSC website.

**NOTE:** Participants who complete their initial two-year contract and will not be continuing their service with the National Health Service Corps will receive a **completion letter** after all In-Service Verifications are completed.

### *Changes and Disruptions to Your Service Obligation*

The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program provides detailed information about the responsibilities of program participants. The contract can only be terminated in specific and rare circumstances. See the [Withdrawal Process](#) section for information on terminating a contract.

## **APPLICATION WITHDRAWAL AND CONTRACT TERMINATION**

### **Withdrawal Process**

After submitting an application, and even after signing the contract through the Confirmation of Interest process, an applicant may withdraw their application any time **before** the contract is countersigned by the Secretary or their designee (see the [Application Review and Award Process](#) section). To withdraw an application simply call the Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Care Center at 1-800-221-9393 or TTY: 1-877-897-9910. Once the application has been withdrawn, the applicant will **not** incur a service or payment obligation.

### **Contract Termination**

An applicant becomes a participant in the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program only upon entering into a contract with the Secretary of HHS. The contract becomes fully executed (and effective) on the date that the Secretary (or the Secretary's designee) countersigns the contract. The Secretary may terminate a National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract, if within sixty (60) days following the contract's execution date, the participant:

- (1) Submits a written request to terminate the contract via BHW Customer Service Portal no later than sixty (60) days after the contract has been executed; OR
- (2) At any time if the individual who has been awarded such contract has not received funds due under the contract.

A written request for contract termination should be submitted through the Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal. If due to timing, the NHSC LRP funds have been disbursed to the participant, they will receive separate instructions via the Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal or directly from a NHSC representative outlining the process for returning the awarded funds.

Requests to terminate the contract after sixty (60) days will not be considered unless the individual who has been awarded such contract has not received funds due under the contract. Participants who do not meet the conditions for contract termination will be expected to perform their obligations under the contract. Failure to fulfill the terms of the contract may be considered a breach of contract.

### **Conversion to Full-Time or Half-Time Status**

At the discretion of the Secretary or their designee, and upon written request, a waiver may be granted to allow a full-time participant to complete the service obligation through half-time service by extending the time commitment of the service obligation. The following conditions must be met to be considered for half-time service:

- (3) A participant's National Health Service Corps-approved service site agrees in writing that the participant may convert to half-time clinical practice (as defined by the National Health Service Corps);
- (4) A participant is a federal employee or a Private Practice Assignee (see the [Practice Agreement Types](#) section). The half-time option is **not** authorized for Private Practice Option practitioners; and
- (5) A participant agrees in writing (by signing an addendum to the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program full-time contract) to complete the remaining service obligation through half-time clinical practice for twice as long as the full-time commitment.

Requests must be submitted through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). Once the conversion to half-time service becomes effective, the participant's service obligation end date and allowable leave will be adjusted accordingly. **Participants will not be allowed to switch back to full-time service once they have converted to half-time service.**

Half-time participants are only allowed to convert to full-time service at the point they enter a new full-time National Health Service Corps continuation contract under the following conditions:

- (1) The participant has completed their existing half-time service obligation. Participants will **not** be allowed to switch from half-time to full-time status within a service contract period (e.g., six months into a two-year half-time contract);
- (2) The participant's National Health Service Corps-approved service site agrees via the online Employment Verification that the participant will convert to full-time clinical practice (as defined by the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program above); and
- (3) The participant agrees to perform one year of full-time clinical practice at their National Health Service Corps-approved service site.

#### **Leaving an Approved Service Site Prior to Completion of Service Obligation**

If a participant feels they can no longer continue working at their National Health Service Corps-approved service site(s), they should discuss the situation and/or concerns with site management and must contact the National Health Service Corps immediately through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). If the participant leaves their National Health Service Corps-approved service site(s) without prior approval of the National Health Service Corps, they may be placed in default as of the date they stopped providing direct clinical care at the National Health Service Corps-approved service site and become liable for the monetary damages specified in their National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract. **Participants who are terminated for cause by their service site will be placed in default. For details, see the [Breaching the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program Contract](#) section.**

#### **Transferring to Another Approved Service Site**

The National Health Service Corps expects that participants will fulfill their obligation at the National Health Service Corps-approved service site(s) identified in the Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal and in the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program Application. However, the National Health Service Corps understands that circumstances may arise that require a participant to leave the initial service site and complete service at another National Health Service Corps-approved service site. Participants who require a site change to another National Health Service Corps-approved service site must request a transfer through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). Approval of all transfer requests is at the National Health Service Corps' discretion and may depend on the circumstances of the participant's resignation or termination from the current service site.

The site change must be approved and processed by the National Health Service Corps prior to the participant beginning work at the new site. If a participant begins employment at a site before obtaining National Health Service Corps approval, they may **not** receive service credit for the time period between their last day providing direct clinical care at the prior service site and resumption of service at the transfer site following National Health Service Corps approval. If the proposed site is not approved by the National Health Service Corps and the participant refuses assignment to another National Health Service Corps-approved service site, they may be placed in default. For details, see the [Breaching the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program Contract](#) section.

### **Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave**

The Health Resources and Services Administration will automatically approve requests for maternity/paternity/adoption leave of 12 weeks or less, if documented in the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). If participants plan to be away from their site for maternity/paternity/adoption leave, they are required to inform the National Health Service Corps before taking the leave. The National Health Service Corps will allow participants to be away from their site within the timeframes established by either the Family Medical Leave Act (up to 12 weeks) or the participant's state of residence; however, the participant must also adhere to the leave policies of their National Health Service Corps-approved service site. If participants plan to take more than 12 weeks, they are required to request a medical suspension (see the [Suspensions of Service Obligations](#) section), which may or may not be approved by the National Health Service Corps. Requests should be submitted through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). Remember that a participant is required to serve a minimum of 45 weeks per service year and is allowed to be away from the National Health Service Corps-approved service site for no more than seven weeks (35 workdays) per service year; therefore, a participant's obligation end date will be extended for each day of absence over the allowable seven weeks (35 workdays).

### **Suspensions Of Service Obligation and Payment Obligation**

The National Health Service Corps requires participants to fulfill their service obligation without excessive absences or significant interruptions in service. Participants are allowed seven weeks (35 workdays) of leave per service year. If circumstances prevent a participant from staying within this timeframe, the Secretary may suspend or waive the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program service obligation or payment obligation. For details, see the [Waivers and Cancellation of the Service Obligation](#) section.

**Suspension.** A suspension of the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program commitment may be granted if compliance with the commitment by the participant: (i) is temporarily impossible, or (ii) would involve a temporary extreme hardship such that enforcement of the commitment would be unconscionable. Periods of approved suspension of service will extend the participant's service obligation end date. The major categories of suspension are set forth below. Suspension requests are submitted through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#).

- a. **Leave of Absence for Medical or Personal Reasons.** A suspension may be granted for up to one year if the participant provides independent medical documentation of a physical or mental health disability, or personal circumstances, including a terminal illness of an immediate family member (e.g., child or spouse), which results in the participant's temporary inability to perform the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program's service obligation.
- b. **Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave.** If the participant's maternity/paternity/adoption leave during a service year will exceed the time that is permitted under the Family Medical Leave Act (up to 12 weeks) or state law where the participant resides, a suspension may be granted by the National Health Service Corps based on documented medical need.
- c. **Call to Active Duty in the Armed Forces.** Participants who are military reservists and are called to active duty must submit a request for a National Health Service Corps service suspension through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). The period of active military duty will **not** be credited towards the National Health Service Corps service obligation. Suspensions for active-duty military assignment are granted for up to one year, beginning on the activation date described in the reservist's call to active-duty order. A copy of the order to active duty must be provided to the National Health Service Corps with the request for a suspension. In the event that the National Health Service Corps participant's period of active duty with the armed forces entity is extended beyond the approved suspension period, the participant must contact the National Health Service Corps through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) for guidance on how to request an extension of the suspension period.

### **Unemployment During Service Obligation**

Participants who resign or are terminated from their National Health Service Corps-approved service site(s) must contact the National Health Service Corps immediately through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). If the National Health Service Corps deems the participant is eligible for a transfer, the National Health Service Corps will give the participant a specific period of time in which to obtain employment at an approved service site identified by the National Health Service Corps or at another suitable National Health Service Corps-approved service site identified by the participant (see the [Transferring to Another Approved Service Site](#) section).

Although the National Health Service Corps may assist unemployed participants with identifying suitable positions at National Health Service Corps-approved service sites (referred to as "site assistance"), **it is the participant's responsibility to obtain employment at a National Health Service Corps-approved service site.** The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract is **not** limited to service in a particular geographic area; the participant may

need to relocate in order to fulfill their National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program service obligation.

- Approval of a transfer or reassignment is at the National Health Service Corps' discretion, and available service opportunities may **not** be in the participant's preferred geographic area.
- Participants who voluntarily resigned from their sites without prior approval from the National Health Service Corps, were terminated for cause, or are deemed ineligible for site assistance may **not** receive a transfer to another site, may be disqualified from continuation contract eligibility, and may be placed in default and become liable for the monetary damages specified in the participant's National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract. For details, see the [Breaching the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program Contract](#) section.

### **Work at an Unapproved Satellite Clinic**

Participants who are asked by their service site to work at a satellite clinic that is **not** listed in the provider's profile on the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) must immediately notify the National Health Service Corps through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). Time spent at unapproved clinics will **not** count towards the participant's service obligation.

### **Breaching the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program Contract**

While the National Health Service Corps will work with participants to assist them to the extent possible to avoid a breach, failure to complete service for any reason is a **breach** of the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract. Participants should make sure that they understand the following monetary damages that are required by federal law when a Loan Repayment Program contract is breached.

A participant who breaches a commitment to serve in a full-time clinical practice will become liable to the United States for an amount equal to the sum of the following:

- (1) The amount of the loan repayments paid to the participant representing any period of obligated service *not* completed;
- (2) \$7,500 multiplied by the number of months of obligated service *not* completed; AND
- (3) Interest on the above amounts at the maximum legal prevailing rate, as determined by the Treasurer of the United States, from the date of breach.

Except the amount the United States is entitled to recover shall not be less than \$31,000.

A participant who breaches a commitment to serve in a half-time clinical practice will become liable to the United States for an amount equal to the sum of the following:

- (1) The amount of the loan repayments paid to the participant representing any period of obligated service *not* completed;
- (2) \$3,750 multiplied by the number of months of obligated service *not* completed; AND
- (3) Interest on the above amounts at the maximum legal prevailing rate, as determined by the Treasurer of the United States, from the date of breach.

Except the amount the United States is entitled to recover shall not be less than \$31,000.

**Thus, a participant who breaches a full-time or half-time service commitment will owe no less than \$31,000.**

Any participant who breaches the contract will receive a **default notice** from the Debt Collection Center that specifies the amount the United States is entitled to recover, as set forth above. The debt will be due to be paid within one year of the date of the default. During the one-year repayment period, the debt will be reported to the credit reporting agencies as “current.” Failure to pay the debt by the due date has the following consequences:

- (1) **The debt will be reported as delinquent to credit reporting agencies.** If the debt becomes past due (i.e., remains unpaid at the end of the one-year repayment period), it will be reported as “delinquent.”
- (2) **The debt may be referred to a debt collection agency and the Department of Justice.** Any National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program debt past due for 45 days may be referred to a debt collection agency. If the debt collection agency is unsuccessful in collecting payment, the debt will be referred to the Department of Justice for filing of a lawsuit against the defaulter.
- (3) **Administrative Offset.** Federal or state payments due to the participant (e.g., an Internal Revenue Service or state income tax refund) may be offset by the Department of Treasury to pay a delinquent National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program debt. Also, defaulters who are federal employees may have up to 15 percent of their take-home pay garnished to pay a delinquent National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program debt.
- (4) **Licensure Sanctions.** In some states, health professions licensing boards may impose sanctions, including suspension or revocation of a defaulter’s professional license, if the defaulter fails to satisfactorily address repayment of their National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program debt.

### **Bankruptcy and Default**

The participant should also be aware that it is **not** easy to discharge a National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program debt by filing for bankruptcy. A financial obligation under the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program is **not** dischargeable in bankruptcy for seven years after the debt becomes due (i.e., for seven years from the end of the one-year repayment period). After the seven-year period of absolute non-discharge expires, the debt may be discharged in bankruptcy only if a bankruptcy court determines that it would be unconscionable **not** to discharge the debt.

### **Sample Default Scenarios**

#### **Scenario 1**

Dr. Jane Smith entered into a two-year National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Payment full-time service contract effective January 14, 2024. Her service end date is January 13, 2026. She received \$75,000 in Loan Repayment Program financial support to apply toward her

qualifying educational loans. She was terminated for cause by her service site at the end of her workday on March 31, 2024. The National Health Service Corps determines that she defaulted on her Loan Repayment Program contract on April 1, 2024, and served 78 days of her two-year (731-day) service obligation.

Dr. Smith is liable to the United States for: (1) \$66,997 for the loan repayments received for obligated service **not** completed (653 days not completed /731 day service obligation x \$75,000) and (2) \$165,000 for the months of service **not** completed (\$7,500 x 22). Her total Loan Repayment Program debt of \$231,997 will begin accruing interest at the maximum legal prevailing rate as of her default date (April 1, 2024). Dr. Smith will receive a default notice from the Debt Collection Center that specifies the amount the United States is entitled to recover, as set forth above. The debt will be due to be paid within one year of the date of the default.

**Scenario 2:** Dr. Smith entered into a 2-year National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program full-time service contract effective January 14, 2024. Her service end date is January 13, 2026. She received \$50,000 in Loan Repayment Program financial support to apply toward her qualifying educational loans. She was terminated for cause by her service site at the end of her workday on March 31, 2024. The National Health Service Corps determines that she defaulted on her Loan Repayment Program contract on April 1, 2024, and served 77 days of her 2-year (731-day) service obligation.

Dr. Smith is liable to the United States for: (1) \$44,733 for the loan repayments received for obligated service not completed (654/731 x \$50,000) and (2) \$165,000 for the months of service not completed (\$7,500 x 22). Her total Loan Repayment Program debt of \$209,733 will begin accruing interest at the maximum legal prevailing rate as of her default date (April 1, 2024). Dr. Smith will receive a default notice from the Debt Collection Center that specifies the amount the United States is entitled to recover, as set forth above. The debt will be due to be paid within one year of the date of the default.

### **Waivers and Cancellation of the Service or Payment Obligation**

**Waiver.** A waiver permanently relieves the participant of all or part of the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program service or payment obligation. A waiver may be granted **only** if the participant demonstrates that compliance with their commitment is permanently impossible or would involve an extreme hardship such that enforcement of the commitment would be unconscionable (*See 42 CFR §62.28*). A waiver request and supporting documents must be submitted electronically through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). The participant will be contacted by the Health Resources and Services Administration if supplemental medical and/or financial documentation is necessary to complete the waiver request.

**NOTE:** Waivers are **not** routinely granted and require documentation of compelling circumstances.

**Cancellation.** The National Health Service Corps obligation will be cancelled in its entirety in the event of a program participant’s death. No liability will be transferred to the participant’s heirs.

## **Application Information**

### **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

A complete online application must be submitted via the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) by **May 9, 2024, 7:30 p.m. ET**. All supporting documentation for the application must be uploaded before an individual can submit a complete application package. Applicants must upload all documents; the National Health Service Corps will **not** accept documentation by fax or mail. The electronic Employment Verification (see below) must also be completed before an applicant can submit their application.

Applicants should keep a copy of the completed application package for their records. Applicants are responsible for submitting a complete and accurate online application, including ALL required documentation in a legible format. If during the initial review of the application, the National Health Service Corps discovers that documentation is missing, or not legible, the application may be deemed “incomplete” and rejected. If the answers provided in the online application do not match the supporting/ supplemental documents, or if the documentation provided does not accurately verify the answers provided, the application will be rejected.

### **COMPLETING AN APPLICATION**

A **complete** National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program Online Application consists of:

- (1) Online application, including the electronic employment verification (completed by the site point of contact);
- (2) Required supporting documentation; and
- (3) Additional supplemental documentation (if applicable).

The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program will not accept requests to update a submitted application or permit the submission/ resubmission of incomplete, rejected, or otherwise delayed application materials after the deadline. In addition, National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program staff will **not** fill in any missing information or contact applicants regarding missing information.

#### *Online Application*

Applicants are required to complete each of the sections below to be able to submit an online application.

- (1) **National Health Service Corps Eligibility.** If an individual does not pass the initial screening portion of the online application, they will not be able to continue with the application. Refer to the [Required Credentials for Eligible Disciplines](#) section of the Guidance for further details.

- (2) **Program Eligibility.** Answers to this section will determine the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program that is optimal for you to apply for an award.
- (3) **General Information.** Answers to this section pertain to the applicant's name, social security number, mailing and email addresses, and other contact information. Answers also pertain to individual background.
- (4) **Discipline, Training and Certification.** Answers to this section pertain to the applicant's education, training, and licensure/certification.
- (5) **Employment.** In this section, applicants will select the National Health Service Corps approved service site(s) where they are providing or will provide direct clinical care. If any of the service sites are not listed in the search results, applicants are required to select the option below the search tool, which states to "Click this box if your site is not listed in the search results." The applicant must confirm that the address selected or entered in the search box is an exact match to the street and suite number of their service site(s). If selected, the applicant is provided instructions on how to resolve the site concern. The National Health Service Corps is no longer accepting Site Applications. If any of the sites where the applicant provides care are not currently a National Health Service Corps-approved service site, the provider is not eligible.
- (6) **Employment Verification.** Once an applicant selects the National Health Service Corps-approved service site(s) at which they are or will be working, the applicant will need to initiate an electronic Employment Verification. Once initiated, the designated Point(s) of Contact at the National Health Service Corps-approved service site will be notified electronically through the Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal that an Employment Verification has been requested by the applicant. Once completed by the site(s) Point(s) of Contact, the applicant will be notified. The site must complete the electronic Employment Verification before an applicant will be allowed to submit the application. If an Employment Verification is not submitted by every site identified by the applicant, the application cannot be submitted. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the Employment Verification is completed by the site Point of Contact. The National Health Service Corps will make no exceptions.

**NOTE:** When serving at an Indian Health Service Hospital or Critical Access Hospital all applicants must include the hospital-affiliated outpatient clinic in their application. This allows the National Health Service Corps to verify that all service requirements are met at the time of submission.

Applicants who work at more than one site (e.g., several satellite clinics) must include all service locations by selecting from the drop-down menu and initiating an electronic Employment Verification for each site when completing the loan repayment program application. Selecting a site where the applicant is not providing direct clinical care will disqualify the application. Applicants must provide the exact address, including any applicable suite number, of each service site where they work or intend to work.

For the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program, the site point of contact is the National Health Service Corps on-site official who has agreed to and is qualified to perform the applicant's initial employment verification, as well as the participant's In-Service Verifications – including verification that the participant is meeting their service obligations – throughout the obligated service period. Once initiated by the applicant, the point of contact must complete the online Employment Verification. If an applicant is working at multiple sites, each Employment Verification should reflect the hours worked at each site. The total hours from all the Employment Verifications must total 40 hours weekly for full-time employment and 20 hours weekly for half-time employment. After the site point of contact completes the Employment Verification, the applicant must submit the complete application **by the May 9, 2024, 7:30 p.m. ET. application deadline.**

The point of contact will receive periodic reminders to complete the Employment Verification; however, **it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the Employment Verification is complete and accurate, within a timeframe that will allow submission of the National Health Service Corps application by the application deadline.** The applicant will receive notification through the Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal that the point of contact has completed the Employment Verification and should work to complete and submit the application as soon as possible. The applicant must contact the point of contact to resolve any concerns regarding the responses provided on the Employment Verification.

Applicants will have the ability to edit their application prior to the application submission deadline and initiate a new Employment Verification if necessary (e.g., the site mistakenly stated that the applicant was not employed at the site or that the start work date is later than July 18, 2024). However, the site must complete the corrected Employment Verification before the applicant can resubmit the application, which must be done before the application deadline. The resubmitted application with corrected Employment Verification must be received by the May 9, 2024, deadline or the applicant will be ineligible for an award. Errors made by applicants and/or site point of contact **cannot** be corrected after the application deadline.

Most National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program participants are employees or independent contractors of non-federal facilities in or serving Health Professional Shortage Areas that have been approved by the National Health Service Corps for performance of the service obligation. Employment contract negotiations are solely the responsibility of the clinician and are between the clinician and the service site. The National Health Service Corps strongly discourages service sites from considering the loan repayment funds as income to the clinician when negotiating the clinician's salary. The terms of the employment contract should be carefully reviewed and fully understood by the clinician before the employment contract is signed. Applicants may want to seek legal guidance from private counsel before entering into an employment contract.

It is important to remember that the participant's service contract with the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program is separate and independent from the participant's employment contract with the service site. The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program requires a participant to work a specified minimum number of hours per week (as outlined below). If the participant's employment contract stipulates fewer hours (and their salary is based on those hours), the participant is still required to meet the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program service obligation requirements. The participant's site point of contact must verify (1) the participant's total work hours (paid and unpaid) and (2) National Health Service Corps full-time or half-time work status (see the [Service Verification](#) section) every six months during their period of obligated service.

- (7) **Loan Information.** Answers in this section pertain to each qualifying educational loan for which an applicant is seeking repayment. All loans submitted will be verified to determine whether they are eligible for repayment under the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program through a review of the supporting documents, by contacting lenders/holders, and by checking the applicant's credit report. Applicants are strongly encouraged to view the link provided in the application for detailed instructions on the types of documents that need to be provided to help the National Health Service Corps verify loan information.

#### **Applying for Spanish Language Award Enhancement.**

National Health Service Corps applicants interested in the one-time supplemental award enhancement must exhibit Spanish language proficiency. In addition, the applicant's site point of contact must verify on the employment verification form that the applicant directly provides oral Spanish speaking services to patients with limited English proficiency.

Once the application cycle has closed, applicants that were determined eligible will receive an e-mail with detailed instructions on how to access and take a verbal proficiency language skills assessment. The assessment can take up to 30 minutes. The applicant must score a 3+ on the assessment to be eligible to receive the one-time supplemental award enhancement. Proficiency assessment results will be auto generated into the applicant's application.

The National Health Service Corps will provide a one-time Spanish language award enhancement for eligible applicants of up to \$5,000, in addition to their base loan repayment award. The amount of the enhancement will depend on the amount of the applicant's outstanding qualifying loans balance and will only be awarded if the applicant's outstanding qualifying loans balance is greater than the applicant's base National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program award.

#### ***Required Supporting Documentation***

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide/upload supporting documentation into the online application. All information in the supporting documentation must match answers provided in the online application or the application will be deemed ineligible. An application will not be considered complete, and an applicant may not submit an application, unless it contains each of the following required supporting documents:

- (1) **Proof of Status as a U.S. Citizen or U.S. National.** This can be a copy of a birth certificate, the identification page of a current U.S. passport, or a certificate of citizenship or naturalization. **Copies of a driver's license or a Social Security card are NOT acceptable documents.**
- (2) **Health Professional License.** Applicants will be required to submit proof of their current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate, or registration (whichever is applicable), **with an expiration date**, in the state in which they intend to practice under the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program or from any state if practicing in a federal facility.
- (3) **Loan Information Verification.** Applicants will be required to provide two types of documentation for each loan that is being submitted for consideration: (a) an account statement and (b) a disbursement report.
  - a. **Account Statement.** This document provides current information on qualifying educational loans. Often borrowers receive monthly statements indicating the status of their loan balance. This document should:
    - i. be on official letterhead or other clear verification that it comes from the lender/holder;
    - ii. include the name of the borrower (i.e., the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program applicant);
    - iii. contain the account number;
    - iv. include the date of the statement (**cannot** be more than 30 days from the date of Loan Repayment Program application submission);
    - v. include the current outstanding balance (principal and interest) or the current payoff balance; and
    - vi. include the current interest rate.
  - b. **Disbursement Report.** This report is used to verify the originating loan information and should:
    - i. be on official letterhead or other clear verification that it comes from the lender/holder;
    - ii. include the name of the borrower;
    - iii. contain the account number;
    - iv. include the type of loan;
    - v. include the original loan date (must be prior to the date of the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program application submission);
    - vi. include the original loan amount; and
    - vii. include the purpose of the loan.

**NOTE:** For all **federal** loans, the Student Aid Summary report on the [Federal Student Aid](#) website is used to verify the originating loan information. The applicant will need a Federal Student Aid Identification to log in to their secured area—[create a Federal Student Aid Identification](#) on the Federal Student Aid website. If the applicant has multiple federal loans, they will only need to access one Student Aid Summary report. The Student Aid Summary report will contain information on all their federal loans.

For all other loans, the disbursement report can be satisfied through various types of documents including a promissory note, a disclosure statement, and letters directly from the lender containing the required information (as indicated in (b) above). The applicant may be able to obtain this disbursement information on their lender's website; however, all documentation must be on official letterhead from the lender.

*Additional Supplemental Documentation (if applicable)*

The following additional documents will be required for submission only if the applicant's responses on the online application indicate that they are relevant. Only applicants who have these documents listed on their "Supporting Documents" page of the online application should submit them. These documents will be added to their Supporting Documents list once the online application has been submitted.

- (1) **Primary Care Specialty Certification.** If an applicant selects a primary care medical, oral, mental, or maternal health specialty, they will be required to upload a copy of the certificate of completion or diploma from the training program where they matriculated.
- (2) **Postgraduate Training Verification.** This document verifies that the applicant completed the Addiction Medicine Fellowship Program, Advanced Nursing Education Nurse Practitioner Residency Program, or the Advanced Nursing Education Nurse Practitioner Residency Integration Program or The Graduate Psychology Education Program. This documentation is in addition to the postgraduate training related to the applicant's practice area. Such documentation may include an official completion certificate.
- (3) **Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education Identification Number.** Applicants who have completed a postgraduate medical or dental training program funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration through the **Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education** Program are required to submit the residency identification number and residency completion certificate, if available. Use the [Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education](#) or [The Commission on Dental Accreditation](#) websites to look up your program identification number.
- (4) **Verification of Disadvantaged Background.** This document certifies that the applicant comes from a disadvantaged background and either participated in, or would have been eligible to participate in, federal programs such as Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students or Loans to Disadvantaged Students. This document may be completed by a school official. Applicants may also self-attest to having a disadvantaged background based on environmental and/or economic factors or having received a federal Exceptional Financial Need Scholarship by uploading a document that validates that they meet the criteria included on the National Health Service Corps-approved Disadvantaged Background Form (Federal student aid report, etc.).

- (5) **Verification of Existing Service Obligation.** If the applicant has an existing service obligation, they must submit verification from the entity to which the obligation is owed that the existing service obligation will be completed before the applicable deadline, as described in the [Selection Factors](#) section.
- (6) **Proof of Name Change.** Applicants will be required to provide legal documents (marriage license or divorce decree) if the name on the proof of citizenship document is different from the name in the application.
- (7) **Payment History.** Former National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program and Students to Service Loan Repayment Program participants seeking a new two-year Loan Repayment Program award must provide verification that all previous National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program funds were used to repay the approved qualifying educational loans as part of the applicant’s most recent National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract. Generally, this information is in the form of a payment history, which varies in name (i.e., Payment History, Financial Activity Summary, or Transaction History Report) that is provided by the lender servicer for each of the approved loans. The verification document must be uploaded to the application and clearly show that the entire award amount was applied to the approved loans during the most recent National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program service period. Documentation requirements include the following:

- a. An official document or printed webpage that includes the lender’s name, the account holder’s name, the loan account number, and must reflect all payments made during the contract period.
- b. The payment history must show that all National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program funds received have been paid toward their qualifying educational loans that were approved by the National Health Service Corps with the most recent contract.
- c. For loans consolidated during the most recent contract period, loan documents, including the lending institution’s list of the loans included in the consolidation and their original disbursement dates, are required. If the applicant’s loans were consolidated and the National Health Service Corps does **not** receive an itemized loan list, the applicant will **not** be given credit for payments made toward those loans. If the applicant consolidated their qualifying educational loans with non-qualifying debt, the National Health Service Corps **cannot give** credit for payments made toward the consolidated loans.

**NOTE:** Cancelled checks, bank statements, and “Paid in Full letters” **will not** be accepted as proof that loan payments were properly applied.

## **Application Review and Award Process**

Applicants receive a receipt in the form of a submission pop-up immediately upon submitting the online application. Applicants can view the overall status of their application, as well as a copy (.pdf) of their submitted application, uploaded supporting documents, and completed Employment Verifications by logging into the application account that was set up when the applicant registered to apply. **It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the entirety of the application and required supporting documents (including Employment Verifications) and applicable supplemental documents are accurately submitted.**

Once the online application has been submitted, applicants will have an opportunity to make edits to their online application, including the ability to upload new documents, cancel and reinstate employment verifications, change answers to questions and loan data, and withdraw their applications from consideration. The applicant must make final edits and resubmissions before the close of the application cycle (May 9, 2024, and 7:30 p.m. ET).

**Each time the application is reopened for editing, or to check specific elements of the application, the applicant must:** 1) complete the "Self-Certifications" section, and 2) click the "Submit" button to resubmit their application, or the application will **not** be submitted. The National Health Service Corps advises that applicants submit their complete applications as early in the open application period as possible. Applicants who wait until the end of the application cycle risk submitting incomplete or ineligible applications if errors are found later during the open application cycle.

The "Edit" option is available in the applicant's account on the "Submitted" page, until the close of the application cycle. The ability to edit and resubmit an application will be disabled after the application deadline. Applications **not** resubmitted by this deadline will **not** be considered for an award. No exceptions will be made in cases where an applicant fails to resubmit an edited application.

Applicants may withdraw their application at any time prior to the contract being countersigned by the Secretary or their designee. To withdraw, applicants must log into their application account, and select the "Withdraw" option on the "Submitted" page.

The National Health Service Corps will **not** begin to review applications for funding until the application deadline (May 9, 2024, and 7:30 p.m. ET) has passed (see the [Funding Priorities](#) section).

If review of the electronic Employment Verification indicates that the applicant's position would be identified as a Private Practice Option (see the [Practice Agreement Types](#) section), the applicant will electronically certify a Private Practice Option Request, as required by law. In addition, the applicant will e-sign the *Private Practice Option Agreement*, also required by law, which sets forth the requirements and limitations for a Private Practice Option. If the individual is selected for an award and the National Health Service Corps determines that the practice

meets Private Practice Option requirements, the Secretary or their designee will countersign the *Private Practice Option Agreement*.

All participants must notify the National Health Service Corps of changes in personal information. Applicants and participants must provide the National Health Service Corps with notification of any changes to their contact information (e.g., name change, email, mailing address, or telephone number) prior to the change occurring, if possible, or immediately after the change occurs. Applicants can manage their contact information through their online application account on the “Account Settings” page. Once an applicant becomes a participant, they will be provided with information for logging into the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) to make any necessary updates to their information.

### **CONFIRMATION OF INTEREST**

The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program frequently corresponds with applicants by email. Applicants should check their email during the application process for correspondence from the National Health Service Corps office and disable spam blockers (or check their spam folder).

Applicants selected as finalists will receive a **Confirmation of Interest email** with instructions to sign and return the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract and to provide banking information to confirm their continued interest in the program and to facilitate the electronic transfer of the award funds, if their contract is countersigned by the Secretary (or designee) and funds are awarded.

Award finalists must log into their application account to confirm their continued interest in receiving an award by the given deadline. The applicant will sign the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract and must verify the following:

- They are currently employed by (i.e., are already working at) the National Health Service Corps-approved service site(s) they selected when they submitted their application. Applicants who are **not** employed at the site(s) verified by the National Health Service Corps, must check “NO” where asked.
- They are currently meeting and will, to the best of their knowledge, continue to meet the clinical practice requirements for their discipline and specialty, as outlined in this Application and Program Guidance, throughout the period of obligated service.
- The loans approved by the National Health Service Corps for repayment are correct.
- The loan and employment information provided to the National Health Service Corps on their application remains valid.
- They have read and understand the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract.

Finalists must also provide their direct deposit banking information for award funds in the event the Secretary (or designee) countersigns their National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract.

**This Confirmation of Interest is not a guarantee that the individual will receive an award, as awards are subject to the availability of funds.**

If an applicant does **not** complete the Confirmation of Interest process by the deadline, they may be withdrawn from consideration and (if interested in participating in the program) will be required to submit a new application during a future application cycle for first-time participants and compete with other providers based on program requirements in effect at that time.

If an individual selected for an award decides not to accept the award **prior to signing the contract**, they may decline the award by selecting the “decline” option on the Confirmation of Interest document. This process is without penalty and permits the award to be offered to an alternate. Once an applicant declines the offer of award, there will not be any opportunities to reclaim the award.

All participants will receive final notification of an award, including the service obligation dates, no later than September 30, 2024.

### **THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM CONTRACT**

Only the Secretary or their designee can grant a National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program award. Awards **cannot** be guaranteed or granted by the service site personnel, National Health Service Corps staff, a Primary Care Office, a Primary Care Association or any other person or entity.

The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract becomes effective and the participant’s National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program service obligation begins on the date the contract is countersigned by the Secretary or their designee, which is anticipated on or before **September 30, 2024**, although the contract can be countersigned at any time. An applicant’s signature alone on the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract document does **not** constitute a contractual agreement.

### **RECEIVING YOUR AWARD**

Once the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program contract becomes effective, the applicant (now participant) will be provided with information for logging into the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). This web-based system will allow each National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program participant to communicate with the National Health Service Corps and manage several customer service inquiries, such as contact information changes.

The award letter for the participant is located in the participant’s profile on the Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal. The award letter will note the beginning and projected end dates of the service obligation (see the [Completing an Application](#) section for details).

Award funds are disbursed in the form of a one-time lump sum payment and will be electronically issued to the bank account provided by the participant approximately 90 days after the contract start date. Where the award amount is less than the maximum amount set forth in this Guidance, the payment will be calculated to include interest accrued during the period between the contract start date and the disbursement of funds.

**NOTE:** Under the Treasury Offset Program, the Treasury Department is authorized to offset National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program payments for delinquent federal and state debts, including delinquent child support payments.

Once a contract is in place, the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program participant is required to participate in a New National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program Awardee webinar that will review program requirements. Participants will be notified by email of upcoming webinars and other training opportunities.

## **Additional Information**

### **PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENT**

The purpose of this information collection is to obtain information through the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program that is used to assess a Loan Repayment Program applicant's eligibility and qualifications for the Loan Repayment Program, or for National Health Service Corps Site Application and Recertification purposes. Clinicians interested in participating in the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program must submit an application to the National Health Service Corps. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this information collection is 0915-0127 and it is valid until 03/31/2026. This information collection is required to obtain or retain a benefit (Section 338B of the Public Health Service Act [42 U.S.C. § 254l-1]). Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 0.49 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to HRSA Reports Clearance Officer, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 14N136B, Rockville, Maryland, 20857.

## RESOURCES FOR APPLICANTS

### Glossary

See the Appendix for a glossary of terms, which contains the general definitions for Bureau of Health Workforce terms used throughout this Guidance.

### Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal

Once an applicant has been selected for an award, they will be provided with instructions for establishing a [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) account. The system allows National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program participants to access pertinent program materials and their participant profile, make service requests, and to communicate with the National Health Service Corps directly.

### Customer Care Center

Any individual with questions about National Health Service Corps programs may contact the Customer Care Center Monday through Friday (except federal holidays) from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

- 1-800-221-9393
- TTY: 1-877-897-9910

### Health Professional Shortage Area Find

All National Health Service Corps participants must serve at a National Health Service Corps-approved site in a Health Professional Shortage Area appropriate to their discipline, as noted above. You may find the locations of current Health Professional Shortage Areas by using the following tools:

- [Health Professional Shortage Area Find](#)
- [Find Shortage Areas by Address](#)

### [Health Workforce Connector](#)

A searchable database of open job opportunities and information, including National Health Service Corps-approved substance use disorder treatment facilities.

### National Health Service Corps Website and Social Media

Stay informed with National Health Service Corps updates via its website and email signup. (NOTE: You should send specific questions or issues regarding your service obligation to the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#).)

- [National Health Service Corps website](#)
- [National Health Service Corps Email Signup](#)

Like and follow us on social media:

- [National Health Service Corps Facebook](#)
- [National Health Service Corps X \(Twitter\)](#)
- [National Health Service Corps LinkedIn](#)

## **Appendix: Glossary**

[FY 2024 NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM APPLICATION AND PROGRAM GUIDANCE GLOSSARY](#)