



# National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program

## School Year 2011-2012 Application & Program Guidance

March 2011

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

**For Questions**, please call 1-800-221-9393 (TTY: 1-877-897-9910), or email [CallCenter@hrsa.gov](mailto:CallCenter@hrsa.gov), Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays) 9:00am to 5:30 pm EST.

Frequently Asked Questions are available online at <http://answers.hrsa.gov/>

*Authority: Title III, Section 338A of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254I), as amended  
Section 338C-H of the Public Health Service Act (254m-q), as amended  
Future changes in the governing statute, implementing regulations and Program Guidances may also be applicable to National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program participants.*

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## **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**

*Title III, Section 338A of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254I), as amended;  
Section 338C-H of the Public Health Service Act (254m-q), as amended*

### **Purposes and Uses**

The purpose of the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Scholarship Program (SP) is to provide scholarships to students pursuing primary care health professions training, in return for a commitment to provide primary health services in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) within the United States. The information applicants supply will be used to evaluate their eligibility, qualifications, and suitability for participating in the NHSC SP. In addition, information from other sources will be considered (e.g., credit bureau reports).

An individual's contract, application, required supplemental forms, supporting documentation, related correspondence and data are maintained in a system of records to be used within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to monitor NHSC SP-related activities. The information 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 General Accounting Office, and pursuant to court order and various routine uses (see <http://www.hrsa.gov/privacyact/sorn/09150037.htm>).

### **Effects of Nondisclosure**

Disclosure of the information sought is voluntary; however, if not submitted, except for the replies to questions related to Race/Ethnicity, an application may be considered incomplete and therefore may not be considered for funding under this announcement.

### **Paperwork Reduction Act Public Burden Statement**

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a current OMB control number. The current OMB control number for information collected through this application process is 0915-0146. Public reporting burden for this collection is estimated to average 3 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, 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 Office, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 10-33, Rockville, Maryland 20857.

### **Discrimination Prohibited**

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and its Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) implementing regulation, 45 Cod of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 80, provide that no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination, under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, and its HHS implementing regulation, 45 CFR Part 86, provide that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under, any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and its HHS implementing regulations, 45 CFR Part 84 and 85, provide that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or any program or activity conducted by HHS.

Title III of the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and its HHS implementing regulation, 45 CFR Part 90 and 91, provide the general rule that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of age, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

## INTRODUCTION

### **What is the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Scholarship Program (SP)?**

The NHSC SP is administered by the Bureau of Clinician Recruitment and Service (BCRS) in the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In return for a commitment to provide care in underserved communities, the NHSC SP awards scholarships to students pursuing primary care health professions training leading to a degree as an allopathic or osteopathic physician, a dentist, a nurse practitioner specializing in adult, family, geriatrics, pediatrics, psychiatric, or women's health, a nurse-midwife or a physician assistant.

The scholarship consists of payment for tuition, required fees, other reasonable educational costs, and a monthly support stipend. In return for each school year or partial school year of support received, students agree to provide full-time primary health care services for one year in an NHSC-approved site in the health professional shortage area (HPSA) of greatest need to which they are assigned by the Secretary. For each school year or partial school year of scholarship support received, there is a minimum 2-year service commitment with a maximum 4-year commitment.

NHSC scholarship recipients are required to fulfill their NHSC service commitment at NHSC-approved sites located in a HPSA. The HPSA locations may be anywhere in the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Territory of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Territory of American Samoa, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the Federated States of Micronesia.

A student's commitment to participate in the NHSC SP is serious, as is the need for primary care in the underserved communities across the Nation. Applicants will be evaluated with respect to their demonstrated interest in primary care, their qualifications to participate in the NHSC SP, and their commitment to serving the underserved. The NHSC SP is seeking well-prepared applicants who demonstrate geographic flexibility and a strong interest in providing primary health services to underserved populations nationally. Only those students who are committed to practicing primary care and are able to relocate based on the needs of the NHSC in these communities should consider becoming a participant in the NHSC SP.

### **What are the benefits of the NHSC SP?**

- (1) **Service.** Participants will join the thousands of NHSC clinicians across the country who provide primary health care service to communities in need and continue to practice in underserved communities beyond their commitment to the NHSC.
- (2) **Scholarship.** The NHSC SP provides funds to support tuition, fees, and other reasonable costs for full-time attendance at an eligible primary care health professions degree training program for up to 4 school years.
- (3) **Stipend.** Students who are awarded the NHSC scholarship will receive a monthly stipend.

**Tax Notice:** Only the **STIPEND PAYMENTS** made to scholars under the NHSC scholarship are taxable.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND FUNDING PREFERENCES

### **Am I eligible?**

To be eligible for a scholarship, all applicants must:

- (1) Be a U.S. Citizen (either U.S. born or naturalized) or U.S. National.
- (2) Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a full-time student.

To be considered for a scholarship award for the 2011-2012 academic year, classes must begin on or before September 30, 2011. Individuals planning to be on a leave of absence from school that will preclude full-time class attendance on or before September 30, 2011 should not submit an application this year but may apply later for the 2012-2013 academic year.

**Full-time.** A full-time student is defined as a student enrolled for a sufficient number of credit hours in any academic term to complete the course of study within the number of academic terms normally required at the school. **Please be advised that any courses that are not required or are unrelated to the qualifying degree program will not count towards the hours required for full-time status.**

(3) Be attending or accepted to attend one of the following fully accredited schools or programs located in a state:

Physician

- A school of allopathic medicine or osteopathic medicine, pursuing the M.D. or D.O. degree.
- Accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (sponsored by the American Medical Association and the Association of American Medical Colleges) or the American Osteopathic Association, Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation.

Dentist

- A school of dentistry, pursuing the D.D.S. or D.M.D. degree.
- Accredited by the American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Accreditation .

Nurse Practitioner

- A school or program of nurse practitioner education, pursuing a master's degree or post-master's certificate.
- Accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.
- Leading to national certification as a nurse practitioner specializing in adult, family, geriatrics, pediatrics, psychiatric, or women's health by either the American Nurses Credentialing Center or the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners.

Nurse-Midwife

- A school or program of nurse-midwifery education, pursuing a master's degree or post-master's certificate.
- Accredited by the American College of Nurse-Midwives, Division of Accreditation.
- Leading to national certification by the American Midwifery Certification Board.

Physician Assistant

- A school or program of primary care physician assistant education, pursuing an associate, bachelor's or master's degree from a physician assistant education program.
- Accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant AND the affiliated school must be accredited by a U.S. Department of Education nationally recognized regional or State institutional accrediting agency.
- Leading to national certification by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants.

**Fully Accredited.** The NHSC SP considers schools and programs to be fully accredited if students/graduates are eligible to take the national certification/licensure examinations (as set forth above and in the "What are the licensure/certification requirements?" section on page 19), which lead to licensure in the profession for which the applicant is applying for scholarship support.

**Located in a State.** The schools and educational programs for which scholarship support is requested must be in a State (includes the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Territory of Guam, the Territory of American Samoa, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia). **Students attending schools outside of these geographic areas are not eligible for NHSC scholarships, even though they may be citizens or nationals of the United States.**

(4) Be eligible for federal employment.

Most NHSC SP recipients should expect to serve their commitments as a salaried, non-Federal employee of public or private entities approved by BCRS. However, there may be vacancies that require Federal employment, including a security

clearance. In lieu 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 be eligible for a Federal civil service appointment.

- (5) Submit a complete application and signed contract.

Each applicant must submit a resume, two letters of reference, and a school transcript. In addition, each applicant is required to respond to several essay questions. These documents will be used to evaluate an applicant's suitability to participate in the NHSC SP.

The contract is for the 2011-2012 academic year with contract extensions for up to 3 subsequent academic years so as not to exceed a total of 4 academic years of NHSC scholarship support. The 2011-2012 contract, if countersigned by the Secretary or his/her designee, obligates the applicant to the minimum 2-year service commitment. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to sign the 2011-2012 contract as well as an optional contract for the 2012-2013 academic year if the applicant will need additional support for all or part of the 2012-2013 academic year. In order for the student to receive support up to the date of graduation, the contract(s) must be signed through to the student's date of graduation. Before an applicant decides not to request scholarship support through to his/her graduation date, the applicant should read the "Can I request additional years of scholarship support after I receive my award?" section on page 11.

- (6) Not have any judgment liens arising from Federal debt.

- (7) Not have an existing service obligation.

Applicants who are already obligated to a Federal, State or other entity for professional practice or service after academic training are not eligible for NHSC scholarship awards. Scholarship recipients who subsequently enter other service commitments and are not immediately available after completion of their degree to fulfill their NHSC scholarship service commitments will be subject to the breach-of-contract provisions described on page 21. (See below for exception for individuals of a Reserve component of the Armed Forces or National Guard.)

**EXCEPTION:** Individuals in a Reserve component of the Armed Forces or National Guard are **eligible** to participate in the NHSC SP. Reservists should understand the following:

- The placement opportunities for reservists may be more limited in order to minimize the negative impact that a deployment would have on continuity of patient care for the vulnerable populations served by the NHSC. For example, placement of a reservist as the sole provider at a clinic that would be forced to close if the reservist were deployed would not be approved.
- Military training or service performed by reservists will not satisfy the NHSC service commitment. If a participant's military training and/or service, in combination with the participant's other absences from the service site, will exceed 7 week (35 workdays) per service year, the participant should request a suspension. The NHSC SP service obligation end date will be extended to compensate for the break in NHSC service.
- If the approved NHSC community site where the reservist is serving at the time of his/her deployment is unable to reemploy that reservist, the NHSC will reassign the reservist to another NHSC-approved community site to complete his/her remaining NHSC service commitment. Because it is sometimes difficult to identify short-term assignments, a reservist may be asked by the community site to sign an employment contract that extends beyond the completion date of his/her NHSC service commitment.

- (8) Not currently excluded, debarred, suspended, or disqualified by a Federal agency.

Before entering into a scholarship contract, the applicant is required to report certain information, which is described in the “Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Disqualification and Related Matters” located in the online application. The applicant should sign the Certification that is applicable to his/her situation. As a condition of participating in the NHSC SP, a participant must agree to provide immediate written notice to BCRS if the applicant/participant learns that he/she failed to make a required disclosure or that a disclosure is now required due to changed circumstances.

- (9) Enrolled in a physician assistant (PA) program and are **not** specializing in areas other than primary health care. For example, PA programs with a surgical or emergency room focus.
- (10) Not in the pre-professional phase of their health professions education. For example, taking undergraduate pre-requisites for admission to a PA training program.

Applicants **will not** be selected if they are:

- (1) Enrolled in a nursing Bridge Program. For example, RN-MSN, BSN-MSN, Direct Entry, Graduate Pre-specialty or Entry to Practice programs;
- (2) Enrolled in a joint program that provides dual clinically-related degrees. For example, a joint program leading to a dual FNP/DNM degree; OR
- (3) Pursuing a doctoral degree in nursing.

Applicants **may not** be selected if they:

- (1) Have defaulted on any payment obligations. For example, Health Education Assistance Loans, Nursing Student Loans, FHA loans, Federal income tax liabilities, and court-ordered child support payments even if the applicant is currently considered to be in good standing by that creditor;
- (2) Have defaulted on a prior service obligation to the Federal, State or Local government or other entity, even if the applicant subsequently satisfied that obligation through service, monetary payment or other means; OR

Please be advised that the NHSC SP will conduct a credit check as part of the selection criteria of the application process.

- (3) Had any Federal debt written off as uncollectible or had any Federal service or payment obligation waived.

#### **How does the NHSC determine who will receive a scholarship?**

The following statutory priorities for funding will be applied to applicants who have been determined to be eligible and qualified:

##### First Priority

- (1) **Current NHSC SP Participants** who are seeking additional support for the 2011-2012 school year or through their date of graduation;
- (2) **Recipients of Federal Scholarship Program for Students of Exceptional Financial Need (EFN)**. Applicants who have received a scholarship for students of Exceptional Financial Need under former section 758 of the Public Health Service Act (formerly 42 U.S.C. 294z) qualify for a funding priority. Applicants claiming EFN status must provide written documentation from their school's financial aid official affirming former participation in the EFN program. The documentation must be postmarked by the June 1, 2011 application deadline. (*Medical and dental students only.*)

##### Second Priority

- (1) Applicants who are from “disadvantaged backgrounds” and who have characteristics that increase the probability that they will continue to serve in health professional shortage areas after their period of obligated service has been completed.

- (2) Applicants who wish to claim “disadvantaged backgrounds” should submit with their applications a written statement from the student financial aid administrator certifying their participation in, or eligibility for, participation in a qualifying Federal program. For example:
- For Medical and Dental Students:* Applicants’ schools must certify that the applicants participated in, or would have been eligible for participation in, Federal programs such as “Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students” or “Loans to Disadvantaged Students.”
  - For Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Midwifery, and Physician Assistant Students:* Applicants’ schools must certify that the applicants participated in, or would have been eligible for participation in, Federal programs such as “Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students” or the benefits of the “Nursing Workforce Diversity Grant Program.”

For information about programs for disadvantaged students, visit the website <http://www.bhpr.hrsa.gov/dsa/weblinks>.

The documentation of “disadvantaged background” must be postmarked by the June 1, 2011 application deadline.

### Third Priority

All other applicants who demonstrate that they have characteristics that increase the probability that they will continue to serve in a health professions shortage area after their period of obligated service has been completed.

**Please note:** New NHSC SP contract awards, including extensions of scholarship support (continuation awards) for current participants, depend on the availability of appropriated funds.

Applicants in their last year of schooling are strongly encouraged to sign the 2011-2012 contract AND the optional 2012-2013 contract if their graduation date is after June 30, 2012 to guarantee scholarship support through the date of graduation.

### TUITION, REQUIRED FEES, OTHER REASONABLE COSTS, AND STIPEND

**Scholarship awards are limited to four school years**, which includes any partial school year of funding received during the school year. For all students, the school year is defined as the 12-month period from July 1 through June 30 during which a participant is enrolled in a school as a full-time student. **The NHSC SP 2011-2012 school year begins July 1, 2011 and ends June 30, 2012.**

- Participation in the NHSC SP becomes effective when an NHSC SP contract has been signed by both the applicant **AND** the Secretary of Health and Human Services or his/her designee.
- Student **may not** receive full funding for each year of their program to the extent that their course work does not coincide with the NHSC SP’s definition of a school year. (For more information, see “Graduating Off-Cycle” in the “What other situations could impact the NHSC SP payment of tuition, ORC and/or stipend” section on page 13.)
- **The end of the scholarship support will be the date that the scholar completes the required classes for graduation or June 30 of the last school year for which the scholar has an executed contract, whichever comes first.** The NHSC SP **CANNOT** make payments to scholars when they are not enrolled or attending classes on a full-time basis or if they do not have a current contract.
- If repeated course work does not delay the participant’s graduation date, the scholarship payments will continue except for any additional costs relating to the repeated course work.

What costs are covered under the NHSC SP?

#### (1) Tuition and Required Fees

- Tuition and required fees will be paid **directly to the educational institution.**
- The NHSC SP does not pay tuition and fees for repeated coursework for which the Secretary has previously made payment



- Scholarship awards are based on the cost of **full-time attendance** at the **initial school or record**. A full-time student is defined as a student enrolled for a sufficient number of credit hours in any academic term to complete the course of study within the number of academic terms normally required at the school.
- Changes in schools are strongly discouraged once the applicant has been accepted into the NHSC SP. Changes in schools must be approved by BCRS in advance to ensure continued eligibility for funding. Funding will be based on the initial school of record for all school year contracts executed during Fiscal Year 2011. If the tuition at the new school is higher than at the initial school of record, then the student will be responsible for the difference in tuition. Changes in disciplines are not permitted.
- Payment for any increases in tuition or required fees that are reported by the school after the Data Collection Worksheet (obtained directly from the institution) for the 2011-2012 school year has been received is not guaranteed and will be subject to the availability of funds.
- For participants taking classes at more than one school, please be advised that the NHSC SP cannot make payments to more than one school.
- The NHSC SP will only pay tuition and required fees for pre-approved summer school sessions when summer school is an academic term normally required by the school for all students in the same program.

**SUMMER SESSION:** NHSC SP payment of tuition and required fees for pre-approved summer sessions that begin before July 1, 2011 and extend beyond July 1, 2011 will be prorated so that only the days after July 1 will be covered.

- The NHSC SP will pay for **ONLY** the courses that are required for graduation. Elective courses not required for graduation are not eligible for payment. The NHSC SP will not pay for tuition costs unrelated to the degree/program, penalty fees for over-extension of a distance learning program, membership dues for student societies/associations, loan processing fees, and other similar expenses.
- The educational institution is required to submit an invoice to the NHSC SP for payment of tuition and fees for each term.
  - Any fees on the invoice that are included in the Other Reasonable Costs (discussed below) will not be approved for payment to the educational institution and will be paid directly to the scholar.
  - If tuition and fees for the school year have been paid for by another source of financial aid (e.g. Pell Grant, Post-9/11 GI Bill, state grants or other scholarship) before a student receives a notice of an NHSC SP award, the school may return payments to the funding source and then submit an invoice to the NHSC SP for payment.
  - After a participant receives notice of his/her NHSC SP award, if sources of financial aid other than NHSC SP have been used to pay for tuition and fees, the school will be instructed not to submit an invoice to the NHSC SP for costs that have already been covered but to submit documentation stating that it will not be seeking payment for the term. However, if a balance remains, then the school may submit an invoice for the balance remaining.

(2) Other Reasonable Costs (ORC)

ORC payment for 2011-2012 is dependent on the scholar's discipline and school's costs. ORC is paid directly to the student and is provided to assist in the payment of required expenses such as the following:

- Books;
- Clinical supplies;
- Laboratory expenses;
- Instruments/equipments;
- Two sets of uniforms;
- Graduation fees (if applicable);
- Computer/PDA rental or purchase (**ONLY** if required of all students); and
- Travel expenses for one clinical rotation during school.

- For new awardees, the ORC will be paid with the first stipend payment no later than the first week of November.
- The ORC payment will be reduced proportionately for students planning to attend less than a full school year (e.g. December graduates).

(3) Stipend

During the 2011-2012 school year, the NHSC SP will pay students a monthly stipend amount of \$1,326.00 (before Federal taxes). The first payment of new awardees will be made no later than the first week of November and will include stipend payments retroactive from July 1, 2011 and the once a year payment for ORC. The stipend payments will be paid by direct deposit to the students monthly.

Receipt of the stipend payment does not mean that the student is employed by the Federal Government or is eligible to participate in any of the benefits available to Federal employees

**NHSC SP Tax Information**

- Only the stipend portion of the scholarship award is subject to Federal tax.
- Applicants chosen for an award will be requested to submit an IRS Form W-4.
- The information provided on the W-4 form will be used to determine withholding of Federal taxes on the stipend portion of the scholarship.
- Scholars who want additional funds deducted from the stipend amount should indicate the additional amount to be deducted on the appropriate line on the W-4 form.
- State and local income taxes will not be withheld. We advise students to consult their local tax authority regarding state or local taxes for which they may be liable.
- It is the responsibility of the scholarship recipient to arrange for the payment of any additional Federal, State, and local taxes that may be owed.
- Each year, students will receive a W-2 tax form for the amounts paid for the stipend.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

**What are the requirements for NHSC SP participants while in school?**

- (1) **Attend mandatory New Scholar Conference** – Individuals awarded an NHSC will be expected to attend the mandatory New Scholar Conference for Fall 2011 sponsored by BCRS (specific date and location will be determined at a later date). The NHSC will cover the cost of travel, lodging, and some meals during the Conference.
- (2) **Maintain enrollment** – Participants must maintain enrollment in the health profession program for which they were awarded a scholarship until that program is completed.
- (3) **Maintain good academic standing** – All scholarship recipients must remain in good academic standing, as defined by the institution's academic policies, while enrolled in the scholarship-support health profession program.

Please be advised that any non-required or unrelated courses **will not** count toward the required hours in determining full-time or part-time status for NHSC SP

- (4) **Notify NHSC SP of changes in personal or financial information** – Participants must immediately notify the Division of National Health Service Corps in writing of any changes in mailing address, e-mail address, name, or financial institution (bank) information to ensure an uninterrupted flow of scholarship payments (see the address below). In the case of a name change, please provide legal documentation for the change, such as a copy of a marriage certificate.

- (5) **Notify NHSC SP of any changes in enrollment statuses** – Participants are required to notify the Division of National Health Service Corps immediately by phone and in writing as soon as one of the following events is anticipated or has occurred:
- A repeat in course work;
  - A change in the applicant's graduation date;
  - A leave of absence approved by the school;
  - Withdrawal or dismissal from the school;
  - A change from full-time student status to a less than full-time student status;
  - Voluntary withdrawal from courses during an academic term; OR
  - A transfer to another school or program.

The Division of National Health Service Corps needs to know in advance when there has been a change in enrollment status so that timely action can be taken to discontinue payments and avoid overpayments (see "Discontinuation of Benefits" section on page 11). The recipient must also submit a letter from the school verifying that one of the events listed above has occurred.

Please be advised that if the NHSC SP has any questions concerning a participant's eligibility for continued support the payment of all benefits may be delayed pending clarification of the participant's eligibility status.

National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program  
Division of National Health Service Corps  
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 8-37  
Rockville, MD 20857  
DNHSC Phone Number:

#### REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL YEARS OF SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

##### **Can I request additional years of scholarship support after I receive my award?**

The NHSC SP award and contract is for the 2011-2012 school year and any additional school years (Optional Contracts) requested by the applicant and agreed to by the Secretary or his/her designee as indicated on the signed contracts. Support will be provided during the school years agreed to in the contracts (not to exceed 4 years), based on the cost of the initial school or record, or the school attended at the time the initial contract is executed. If a student signs a contract for only 1 year of support, the 2011-2012 school year, his/her scholarship support will end on June 30, 2012.

To request additional scholarship support for the 2012-2013 school year or any subsequent school years, the student must submit a report verifying that he/she is still in good academic standing and a signed contract for that school year. The student may also request optional contracts for subsequent school years through to graduation for a maximum of 4 school years of support. This submission must be sent to BCRS and be received by the date outlined in the correspondence received by the scholars.

The granting of continuation awards depends upon the availability of funds for the NHSC SP and is contingent upon the following. The participant must:

- (1) Be enrolled full-time in academic courses leading to the degree for which he/she was funded and must not be repeating course work;
- (2) Be in academic good standing; AND
- (3) Be in compliance with policies and procedures established by the NHSC SP for requesting continued support.

**If a continuation award is granted, the first payment may not be received until mid-November but will include stipends retroactive to July 1 and the annual ORC payment.**

## CHANGES IN SCHOLARSHIP PAYMENT

### **What happens if my enrollment status changes?**

#### **Discontinuation of Benefits**

The NHSC SP will discontinue the payment of all benefits under the following circumstances

- While a recipient is on a leave of absence for personal or medical reasons that has been approved by the school;
- While a recipient is repeating course work which delays a recipient's graduation date. The NHSC SP will pay tuition only for courses taken the first time. (This does not include courses taken prior to the receipt of the NHSC SP award.) If a student repeats a course that is taken in addition to a standard full-time course load and the repeat course work does not delay the participant's graduation date, then payment of the scholarship benefits will continue, but the NHSC SP will not pay for the course work being repeated;
- While a recipient is enrolled in school as a less than full-time student; AND
- If a recipient withdraws or is dismissed from school. Moreover, a recipient's withdrawal or dismissal from school is a breach of the scholarship contract and the recipient will be liable to repay the amount described in the "Failure to Complete Academic Training" section on page 21.

#### **Resumption of Benefits**

To resume benefits under existing scholarship contracts, the student must submit documentation from a school official confirming that the student is:

- (1) Enrolled as a full-time student in courses leading to the degree for which the scholarship was awarded, AND
- (2) Not repeating course work.

Requests for the resumption of scholarship benefits will be considered on a case-by-case basis by BCRS to determine the student's eligibility to receive continuing funds. For recipients who have not repaid overpayments received, the resumption of scholarship benefits will be subject to the administrative offset described below in the "Collection of Benefit Overpayments" section. For recipients whose benefits were discontinued due to their withdrawal or dismissal from school, benefits will not be resumed (see "Failure to Complete Academic Training" section on page 21). Benefits will not be resumed under scholarship contracts that have been terminated. See the section on "Can an NHSC SP Contract be terminated?" below.

#### **Collection of Benefit Overpayments**

Scholarship Program payment(s) received by a recipient, including payment(s) made to a school on the recipient's behalf, during periods while the recipient is on an approved leave of absence, during periods while the recipient is repeating course work or is enrolled as a less than full-time student, are overpayments. Overpayment may also occur due to administrative error. A participant receiving an overpayment should immediately telephone the Division of National Health Service Corps, NHSC Scholarship Branch and follow up in writing to make arrangements to promptly return the overpayment(s) to avoid interest accrual and debt collection procedures.

For recipients who receive subsequent funding under the NHSC SP, the overpayments may be collected through administrative offset. The NHSC SP may withhold scholarship funds payable to, or on behalf of, the recipient (including stipends, ORC, and if necessary, tuition/fees payments) until the overpayment is paid in full.

Debt collection procedures include sending delinquent overpayments to a debt collection agency, reporting the overpayments to credit reporting agencies, offsetting Federal and/or State payments due to the delinquent scholar (e.g., an IRS income tax refund) to collect the overpayments and referral of the overpayments to the Department of Justice for enforced collection.

Administrative offset is not a repayment option for scholars who wish to terminate a contract.

#### **Can an NHSC SP Contract be terminated?**

##### **How to Terminate a Contract**

The Secretary of Health and Human Services or his/her designee may terminate an NHSC SP contract for a school year if, **on or before June 1 of the school year**, the recipient does the following:

- (1) Submits a written request to terminate the contract for that school year to the Division of National Health Service Corps  
**AND**
- (2) Repays all amounts paid to or on behalf of the scholar for that school year.

If a scholarship recipient does not meet these requirements, he/she will incur a service commitment for the full or partial year of support received.

### **Benefits of Contract Termination**

A scholar who begins receiving support under a school year contract and subsequently has that support discontinued for the remainder of the same school year (due to a leave of absence, repeat course work, or less than full-time enrollment) may wish to submit a request to terminate that school year contract. The potential benefit of such a request is two-fold. First, the student would not incur a service obligation for that school year. Second, that school year would not count against the student's maximum of 4 school years of support.

#### **Example:**

A medical student signs contracts for 4 school years of scholarship support through her date of graduation. During the third school year, she goes on a leave of absence from October 1 through June 30. If by June 1 of the third school year the student submits a written request to terminate her third year contract AND repays all amounts paid to her or on her behalf under the third-year contract, the Secretary will terminate her third year contract, eliminating any service obligation for the third school year of support and making her eligible to receive scholarship support for 2 more school years subject to the availability of funds. If, however, she elects to retain the scholarship support received from July 1 through October 1, she would owe a year of service for the partial third year of support received and would be eligible to receive only one additional school year of scholarship support.

### **What other situations could impact the NHSC SP payment of tuition, ORC and/or stipend?**

#### **(1) Distance Learning Programs**

Individuals who are participating in distance learning programs are advised that they may not receive full funding for each year of their program to the extent that their course work does not coincide with the NHSC SP's definition of a school year, running from July 1 through June 30. Also, the NHSC SP **will not** pay for any penalty or additional distance learning fees that are incurred for not completing the course load in the required time frame.

#### **(2) Collection of Delinquent Debt**

Under the Treasury Offset Program the Treasury Department is authorized to offset a student's NHSC scholarship payments if the student is delinquent on a Federal debt. In addition, the Treasury Department is authorized to offset scholarship payments for application to the student's State debts and court-ordered child support payments. In keeping with Presidential Executive Orders concerning compliance with child support orders, the NHSC SP stresses the importance of honoring any child support obligations the student may have.

#### **(3) Graduating Off-Cycle**

All NHSC scholarship contracts are for a specific school year. Under the NHSC SP all school years run from July 1 through June 30. If, for example, a student is in a 24-month program that begins on August 3, 2011 and he/she signs contracts for 2 school years, the student will receive stipend, ORC and tuition payments through June 30, 2013. Funding for the extra months of the program beyond June 30, 2013 would require a request for a third year of scholarship funding and, if granted, obligates the recipient to 3 full years of service commitment. If a student is in a 24-month program that begins on May 3, 2011 and he/she signs contracts for 2 school years, the student will receive stipend, ORC and tuition payments from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013 or the month that the recipient completes the required classes for graduation, whichever comes first.

#### (4) Participation in Other Programs

**Receipt of an NHSC scholarship award does not automatically preclude a participant from receiving funds from other programs as long as no service commitment is involved.** However, many student assistance programs are based on the student's financial need or may be limited to the payment of expenses already paid by the NHSC SP. The list of NHSC SP recipients supplied to the schools will enable the school officials to reevaluate the financial need or eligibility of these individuals for funds under other aid programs. When continuation of financial assistance is not warranted, the school is required to reduce or terminate payments. Applicants should contact their financial aid officers to determine how the receipt of an NHSC scholarship may affect them. Tuition and fees already paid by another program should not be submitted to the NHSC SP for payment unless payment from the other source occurred before the student received notice of his/her NHSC SP award and reimbursement will be made to the funding source.

#### DEFERMENTS FOR POST-DEGREE TRAINING

##### **Will I be allowed to defer my service obligation to participate in a training program?**

For physicians (M.D. and D.O), the service commitment will begin upon completion of an accredited primary care medical residency in a BCRS-approved specialty. For dentists (D.D.S. and D.M.D.), the service commitment will begin upon graduation from the dental program or, if applicable, upon the completion of an accredited post-degree residency or advanced training approved by BCRS. For nurse midwives, nurse practitioners specializing in adult, family, geriatrics, pediatrics, psychiatric, or women's health, and physician assistants, the service commitment will begin upon the completion of the degree program supported by the NHSC SP.

During the final year of allopathic or osteopathic medical school or dental school, scholarship recipients will be sent a *Deferment Information Bulletin (DIB)* describing the policies and procedures for approving deferments and a *Deferment Request Form (DRF)* to enable them to request approval from the BCRS for their residency plans. The Division of NHSC will review the DRF and return a copy to the scholarship recipient if the DRF has been approved. BCRS will grant a deferment of service to complete post-degree advanced training (including an internship or residency) **if BCRS determines that the training is consistent with the needs of the NHSC to deliver primary health care services in HPSAs.** After graduation, the scholarship recipients with approved deferments will be expected to start their residency training on or about July 1.

Note: When selecting a residency program, it is the responsibility of the scholar to research the residency programs to assure that the program selected will provide adequate training to enable the scholarship recipient to sit for the appropriate boards.

Set forth below are current policies and procedures relating to deferment. To the extent that the *DIB* subsequently received by the scholarship recipient may be inconsistent with the Program Guidance, the *DIB* will take precedence.

##### **Conditions of Deferment**

The terms and conditions of deferment require participants to:

- (1) Pursue training which is approved for deferment by the BCRS and which does not incur a conflicting service commitment;
- (2) Complete and return the annual Deferment Request Form, or provide equivalent evidence of approvable training, by the deadline stated in the *DIB*;
- (3) Make no change in the type or period of training **without prior written approval** of the BCRS; AND
- (4) Notify the BCRS in writing within 30 days of their new mailing address and/or any changes that affect their training status.

Scholarship recipients who, after graduation, enter training that is not approved for deferment by BCRS or who otherwise fail to comply with the published terms and conditions of deferment will be subject to the damages provision described on page 22.

##### **Deferring Service for Postgraduate Medical Education (Residency)**

For allopathic and osteopathic medical students entering the NHSC SP in the 2011-2012 school year, the approved residencies for which training deferments will be granted are:

- Family practice (3 years);

- General internal medicine (3 years);
- General pediatrics (3 years);
- General psychiatry (4 years);
- Internal medicine/family practice (4 years);
- Internal medicine/pediatrics (4 years);
- Obstetrics-gynecology (4 years); AND
- Rotating internship with a request to complete a residency in one of the above specialties (D.O. only)

Allopathic and osteopathic medical students MUST complete one of the BCRS-approved residencies set forth above prior to commencing service or be subject to the damages provision described on page 21. Physicians are required to use their best efforts to enter an approvable residency program by July 1 of their graduation year either through the residency match process or outside the match process.

Allopathic and osteopathic medical students who are unsure about their future specialty interests or who are unable to commit themselves to complete specialty training in any of the approvable specialties specified above are advised not to apply for participation in the NHSC SP.

**Optional** fellowships. BCRS may approve on a case-by-case basis consistent with the needs of the NHSC requests submitted by physicians in their last year of residency training for a single year of additional training in three specific fellowships:

- A 1-year Child Psychiatry Fellowship which follows the completion of residency training in Psychiatry;
- A 1-year Obstetrics/Gynecology Fellowship which follows the completion of residency training in Family Practice; AND
- A 1 or 2-year Geriatrics Fellowship which follows the completion of residency training in Family Practice or General Internal Medicine.

#### **Deferring Service for Postgraduate Dental Education**

For dental students entering the NHSC SP in the 2011-2012 school year, the approved residencies for which training deferments may be granted are:

- Advanced Education in General Dentistry (1 year)
- General Dentistry Residency (up to 2 years)
- Pediatric Dentistry (2 years)
- Public Health Dentistry (2 years)

Dental students are encouraged but not required to complete one of the above-listed postgraduate clinical training programs approved by BCRS prior to commencing service. Dental students who wish to pursue specialty training other than the programs listed above are advised not to apply to participate in the NHSC SP.

Note: When selecting a residency program it is the responsibility of the scholar to research the residency programs to assure that the program selected will provide adequate training to enable the scholarship recipient to sit for the appropriate boards.

#### **Training for which Deferments Are Not Granted**

- Deferments **will not be approved** by BCRS for non-primary health care programs (e.g., emergency medicine, surgery, radiology, neurology, anesthesiology, ophthalmology, pathology, oral surgery, endodontics, etc) or programs which BCRS determines are not consistent with the needs of the NHSC to provide primary health services in HPSAs.
- Deferments **will not be approved** by BCRS for postgraduate health professions education conducted by a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States. Participants in such programs incur military service obligations that conflict with the service commitment required under the NHSC SP.
- Deferments **will not be approved** by the BCRS for transitional residency training.
- Deferments **will not be approved** by the BCRS for unaccredited residency training.

## No Scholarship Payments, Service Obligation or Service Credit

During residency and other advanced training, recipients **do not** receive NHSC SP financial support nor do they incur additional NHSC SP service commitments.

Periods of advanced training, including residencies, are not creditable toward satisfying the scholarship service commitment, even though the training may occur in a facility located in a HPSA.

### SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

#### What are the service requirements?

- (1) Upon graduation or, if applicable, completion of approved postgraduate training, NHSC SP recipients must provide 1 year of obligated service for each full or partial school year of support received. The minimum service commitment is 2 years; the maximum is 4 years.
- (2) Each recipient must provide full-time clinical primary health care services **at an approved site in a federally-designated HPSA of greatest need at the time of assignment**, as determined by the Secretary (or his/her designee).
- (3) Physicians and dentists will be sent information about the NHSC placement process approximately 6 months prior to their completion of approved postgraduate training or their graduation from school (as applicable). Nurse practitioners specializing in adult, family, geriatrics, pediatrics, psychiatric, or women's health, certified nurse midwives, and physician assistants will be sent information about the placement process approximately 4 months prior to their graduation date. The packet will include the Approved Practice List containing job vacancies for which scholars in each discipline and specialty can compete.
- (4) BCRS reserves the right to make final decisions on all placements in order to comply with statutory requirements for the placement of scholarship recipients. There is no guarantee that HPSAs or sites which are currently approved for NHSC scholar placements will still be available/approved at the time applicants are available to serve.
- (5) Recipients who fail to obtain a placement in one of the approved practices by the deadlines will be assigned to a service site identified by BCRS.

Recipients who for any reason fail to begin or complete service at their assigned service location are in breach of the NHSC SP contract and incur the damages described in the "Breaching the NHSC SP Contract" section on [page 21](#).

#### What sites are eligible?

NHSC SP recipients must fulfill their service commitments at NHSC-approved service sites in federally designated HPSAs of greatest need throughout the United States. These may include assignments to:

- Community and Migrant Health Centers;
- Rural Health Clinics;
- State or local health departments;
- Indian health Service medical facilities;
- Federal Bureau of Prisons medical facilities; OR
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement medical facilities.

NHSC scholarship recipients cannot fulfill their NHSC SP service commitments by serving in one of the Armed Forces of the United States or the Veterans Administration

#### Could I serve as a federal employee?

The scholarship recipient's NHSC service commitment will be fulfilled as a non-Federal employee, as a Commissioned Officer of the Regular Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS), or as a civilian employee of the U.S. Government. Approximately 92% of scholars fulfill their commitments as non-federal employees of public or private entities such as Community and Migrant Health Centers, State or local health departments, and other non-Federal entities. The remaining 8% of scholars serve as Federal employees



at sites served by the Indian Health Service, the Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Prisons, or the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

- **Non-Federal Placements**

**Private Practice Assignment (PPA)**

A PPA is an assignment to a public or private practice site that operates a community-based system of care where a scholar may serve his/her commitment. These entities may be supported by local communities or may be supported in part by Federal grant funds. Under the PPA, scholars are considered non-Federal members of the NHSC and are paid by and work under the personnel system (i.e., employment policies) of the site to which they are assigned. The income paid by the site must be at least equal to the income that the scholar would have received as a Federal civil service employee. Malpractice insurance should be agreed upon by the employer and the scholar and detailed in their written employment contract. BCRS requires that each site make provisions for malpractice insurance, including tail coverage, for scholars under the PPA. Employment contract negotiations are solely the responsibility of the scholar.

**Private Practice Option (PPO)**

Under the PPO, scholars are released from service as a member of the NHSC to serve in a full-time private clinical practice, including a salaried position at a public, private non-profit or for-profit site, in a HPSA selected by the Secretary. **By statute, scholars wishing to exercise the PPO must submit a written application to the BCRS and enter into a written PPO Agreement.**

**Under a PPO:**

- The NHSC scholar is self-employed, an independent contractor, or may be a salaried employee of a public or private entity;
- There is no minimum provider income. PPO providers must make arrangement to obtain their own malpractice and medical insurance.
- The practice must comply with the "Charges for Services" requirements set forth below on page 18; AND
- The participant must submit to the NHSC reports and documents, as required, relating to the conduct of the NHSC-approved practice.

**Note: Scholars may be approved to serve in solo private practice. PPO providers must make arrangements to obtain their own malpractice and medical insurance.**

- **Federal Placements**

The scholarship recipient's NHSC service commitment would be fulfilled as a Commissioned Officer of the Regular Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS), or as a civilian employee of the U.S. Government at one of the following agencies:

**Indian Health Service (IHS)**

This agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services offers a variety of placement opportunities at hospitals and other health care facilities serving Native American/Alaskan Native populations (usually on Indian reservations). An IHS placement may require a security clearance.

**Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP)**

This agency of the U.S. Department of Justice employs health professionals in Federal prison facilities ranging from infirmary-size units to 500-bed tertiary care hospitals throughout the United States. A BOP placement requires a security clearance.

**U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)**

This agency of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security provides primary health care for the detainees remanded to the custody of the ICE. Within each Service Processing Center throughout the country, there is a fully accredited outpatient clinic. An ICE placement requires a security clearance.

Work schedules at Federal facilities may be significantly different than community-based systems of care. Scholars who are interested in practice positions at Federal facilities need to discuss the details with these facilities directly.

- **Charges for Services**

NHSC-approved Federal and PPA service sites, as well as PPO providers, must not discriminate in the provision of services to an individual because that individual is unable to pay or because payment would be made under Medicare, Medicaid or a Children's Health Insurance Program. The entity/provider must:

- Utilize a schedule of discounts (including as appropriate waivers) of fees based on a patient's ability to pay;
- Accept assignment under Medicare; AND
- Enter into appropriate agreements with State agencies to participate in Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs.

### **When does service begin?**

Participants are required to begin service as soon as possible upon graduation from school or, if applicable, upon completion of an approved advanced training program for which a deferment was granted.

#### **Physicians**

Physicians must complete a primary care residency and are expected to begin service within 3 months of the completion of that residency (generally within 3 months of June 30).

#### **Dentists**

Dentists who elect to pursue a residency approved by BCRS are expected to begin service within 3 months of the completion of their approved residency (generally within 3 months of June 30). Dentists who do not receive a deferment to complete post-degree advanced training must secure necessary licensure and a job offer within 6 months of graduation and start work within 3 months of receipt of the job offer.

#### **Nurse Midwives, Nurse Practitioners, and Physician Assistants**

Nurse Midwives, Nurse Practitioners specializing in adult, family, geriatrics, pediatrics, psychiatric, or women's health and physician assistants must secure necessary licensure, certification and a job offer within 6 months of graduation and start work within 3 months of receipt of the job offer.

All scholarship recipients must comply with the applicable examination, certification and licensure requirements set forth in the "What are the Licensure/Certification Requirements?" section on page 19.

Credit for service toward the NHSC scholarship commitment does not begin until the scholar does the following:

- (1) passes required licensing or national certification exams;
- (2) Obtains a full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license to practice in the State where the NHSC service site is located (unless he/she has a license in another State and will work for a Federal entity);
- (3) Begins to provide full-time clinical services at the NHSC service site; AND
- (4) If applicable, has the appropriate agreement completed and signed by the scholar and the Secretary of Health and Human Services or his/her designee.

### **Delaying Start of Service**

Recipients with documented extreme circumstances that jeopardize the start of service may make a request to the Division of National Health Service Corps to suspend their service commitment for up to 1 year. Requests must be submitted in writing and include a detailed written explanation and supporting documentation. See the "Suspension, Waiver or Cancellation of the Commitment" section on page 22.

### **When does service end?**

The last day of the service commitment is determined in whole years from the start date. For example, the last day of service for a recipient with a 3-year service commitment who began service on July 15, 2011 would be July 14, 2014. Adjustments in the end date

will be made by BCRS if the scholar is away from the site for more than 35 workdays per service year. See “What is a full-time clinical practice?” section on page 20.

Note: Please be advised that NHSC scholarship recipients may be eligible for the NHSC Loan Repayment Program after they have completed their scholarship service commitment. While they are not given preference based on their scholar status, the NHSC Loan Repayment Program does give preference to clinicians working at NHSC-approved sites in the highest need HPSAs.

### **What are the licensure/certification requirements?**

Scholarship recipients **must be permanently licensed in their scholarship-supported profession prior to commencing service**. Credit towards fulfillment of the scholarship commitment will not be given in the absence of a current, full, permanent, unencumbered unrestricted health professional license.

Scholarship recipients who serve as non-federal employees are required to have a license in the State where the service site is located. Scholarship recipients who serve as Federal employees are required to be licensed in any State. Responsibility for obtaining the required State license prior to the service start date rests with the scholarship recipient. Given that scholars will be required to serve in the areas of greatest need throughout the country, each scholar is responsible for ensuring that his or her professional program will provide broad eligibility to obtain a license in multiple states. In addition, each scholar is responsible for meeting the applicable board and licensure/certification requirements outlined below.

#### **Physicians**

- (1) All physicians must have successfully completed Steps 1, 2 (clinical skills and clinical knowledge components) and 3 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) or Levels 1, 2, (cognitive evaluation and performance evaluation components), and 3 of the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX) by the time they complete their primary care residency training program.
- (2) To ensure that physician scholars are able to fulfill their commitment wherever the need is greatest upon completion of their primary care residency, BCRS expects all MD/DO scholars to take and pass:
  - Step 1 of the USMLE or Level 1 of the COMLEX by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of their MD/DO program.
  - Step 2 (both components) of the USMLE or Level 2 (both components) of the COMLEX by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> year of their MD/DO program.
  - Step 3 of the USMLE or Level 3 of the COMLEX by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of their post-graduate (residency) training program.

**MD/DO scholars unable to pass all parts of the licensing examination and obtain a license to practice medicine by the time the service is scheduled to begin may not be eligible to request a suspension of their service obligation and may be placed in default.**

#### **Dentists**

- (1) All dentists must have successfully completed the National Board Dental Examination Part 1 and 2 prior to beginning their NHSC SP service obligation. To assure that dentists will have licensure in states with the greatest dental needs, BCRS reserves the right to determine which Regional or State clinical licensing exam the dental scholar should take and pass.
- (2) Dental scholars are expected to take the appropriate exams at the earliest possible date. If the recipient is unsuccessful in passing the exams and obtaining a license, the recipient should immediately contact the Division of National Health Service Corps in writing to request a suspension. Please see the “Suspension, Waiver, or Cancellation of the Commitment” section on page 22.

#### **Nurse Midwives, Nurse Practitioners, and Physician Assistants**

- (1) All nurse midwives, nurse practitioners specializing in adult, family, geriatrics, pediatrics, psychiatric, or women's health, and physician assistants must have successfully passed a discipline-specific national certification exam prior to beginning their service commitments and are expected to take the appropriate certification exam at the earliest possible date.
- (2) If the recipient is unsuccessful in passing the national certification exam, the recipient should immediately contact the Division of National Health Service Corps in writing to request a suspension. Please see the "Suspension, Waiver, or Cancellation of the Commitment" section on page 22.

**Students uncertain of a commitment to primary health care practice in HPSAs throughout the United States or who are unable to relocate based on the needs of the NHSC are advised not to participate in this program. Students unsure about their future specialty interests are advised not to apply for an NHSC scholarship.**

#### **What is a full-time clinical practice?**

Every participant is required to engage in the full-time clinical practice of the profession for which he or she was awarded an NHSC Scholarship contract.

A **full-time clinical practice** is defined as a minimum of 40 hours per week. The 40 hours per week may be compressed into no less than 4 days per week, with no more than 12 hours of work to be performed in any 24-hour period. Time spent in "on-call" status will not count toward the 40-hour week. Participants do not receive any service credit for hours worked over the required 40 hours per week and excess hours cannot be applied to any other work week.

#### **For all health professional, except as noted below:**

- (1) At least 32 of the minimum 40 hours per week must be spent providing direct patient care in outpatient ambulatory care setting(s) at the approved practice site(s) during normally scheduled office hours.
- (2) The remaining 8 hours of the minimum 40 hours per week must be spent providing clinical service for patients in the approved practice site(s) or providing clinical services in alternative setting (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, shelters) as directed by the approved practice site(s), or performing practice-related administrative activities.
- (3) Practice-related administrative activities shall not exceed 8 hours per week.

#### **For OB/GYN physicians, family medicine physicians who practice obstetrics on a regular basis, certified nurse midwives, psychiatrists, pediatric dentists, and providers of geriatric services:**

- (1) At least 21 of the minimum 40 hours per week must be spent providing direct patient care (direct patient counseling for psychiatrists) in the outpatient ambulatory care setting(s) at the approved practice(s), during normally scheduled office hours.
- (2) The remaining 19 hours of the minimum 40 hours per week must be spent providing clinical services for patients in the approved practice site(s), or providing clinical services in alternatives settings (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, shelters) as directed by the approved practice site(s), or performing practice-related administrative activities.
- (3) Practice-related administrative activities shall not exceed 8 hours per week.

**Practice-related administrative activities**, which may not exceed 8 hours per week, include attending staff meetings, supervision of other clinicians, court appearances and other non-treatment related activities pertaining to the clinician's approved NHSC practice. Supervision of other clinicians is defined as an administrative activity if the clinician being supervised is treating the patient and billing for such treatment in his or her name. If the supervising clinician is treating the patient and billing for such treatment under his or her name, this activity would be counted as direct clinical services for the supervising clinician.

#### **Absences**

- No more than 7 week (35 workdays) per service year can be spent away from the practice for vacation, holidays, continuing professional education, illness, or any other reason.

- For absences of greater than 7 weeks in a service year, the participant must request a suspension of the service obligation. See “Suspension, Waiver or Cancellation of the Commitment” on page 22.
- A break in service will extend the service commitment end date.

### **What should I do if I want to change sites?**

The NHSC SP expects that participants will fulfill their service commitment at their initial NHSC-approved service site. Should a participant become unable to complete the obligation at the initial service site, the participant must submit a written request to the Division of National Health Service Corps for approval to transfer to another NHSC-approved site before leaving the current service site. DNHSC contact information is provided below.

**(1) Participants should not leave their service site(s) without the PRIOR WRITTEN APPROVAL of the DNHSC.**

If a participant is unable to complete his or her service obligation at the NHSC-approved practice site(s), the participant must notify DNHSC immediately in writing and specify the issues or concerns affecting his or her ability to maintain compliance with the NHSC service obligation. If the participant leaves the NHSC-approved community site(s) without prior written approval from the DNHSC, the participant may be placed in default.

**(2) Requests to transfer to another NHSC-approved site.**

Before approving a transfer, DNHSC will contact the current site(s) regarding the need for a transfer. Participants who are unable to complete service at their site(s) through no fault of their own (e.g., the site is closing) may be transferred to another NHSC site to complete their service obligation. A participant who does not accept a transfer assignment may be placed in default of his or her NHSC SP contract. *Note: Participants who voluntarily resigns from their sites without prior approval of the DNHSC or are terminated by their site(s) for cause, or who fail to fulfill the requirements of their Practice Agreement with the NHSC, may not receive a transfer to another site and may be placed in default.*

**(3) Unapproved Satellite Clinics**

If a site asks a participant to work at a satellite clinic that is not listed on his or her Practice Agreement, the participant should immediately notify DNHSC. Although a site may need to reassign staff to address needs within the organization, the site should not reassign NHSC clinicians to other satellite sites without prior approval from DNHSC. DNHSC must first determine that each new site is an NHSC-approved site.

National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program  
 Division of National Health Service Corps  
 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 8-37  
 Rockville, MD 20857  
 DNHSC Phone Number:

### **BREACHING THE NHSC SP CONTRACT**

The following applies to participants who breach their NHSC SP contract:

**(1) Failure to complete academic training**

Scholarship recipients who are dismissed from school for academic or disciplinary reasons or who voluntarily terminate academic training before graduation from the educational program for which the scholarship was awarded will be declared in breach of their scholarship commitment and held liable to the United States for repayment of **all NHSC SP funds paid to them and to the school on their behalf**. The amount owed must be paid in full within 3 years of the date of default. No interest will be charged on any part of this debt to the United States during the 3-year repayment period. However, if payment in full is not made within the 3-year period, interest will be assessed thereafter.

**(2) Failure to begin or complete the service commitment or failure to meet the terms and conditions of deferment**

Scholarship recipients who for any reason fail to comply with the terms and conditions of deferment (including physicians who fail to complete an approved residency in a BCRS-approved specialty) or who for any reason fail to begin or complete their service commitments after completion of training, will be in breach of their scholarship commitments. When

recipients default on their contracts for these reasons, the United States shall be entitled to recover damages equal to **three time the scholarship award plus interest** in accordance with the formula:

$$A = \frac{3\emptyset(t-s)}{t}$$

In which:

“**A**” = is the amount the United States is entitled to recover,

“**∅**” = is the sum of the amounts paid to, or on behalf of, the participant and the interest on such amounts which would be payable if, at the time the amounts were paid, they were loans bearing interest at the maximum legal prevailing rate, as determined by the Treasurer of the United States,

“**t**” = is the total number of months in the participant’s period of obligated service, and

“**s**” = is the number of months of the period of obligated service served by the participant.

The damages which the United States is entitled to recover shall be paid within **1 year of the date of default**.

**(3) Delinquent debt**

If the default debt is not repaid within 1 year or 3 years as applicable and subsequent collection efforts are unsuccessful, the case may be referred to the U.S. Department of Justice for enforced collection. The recipient will be liable for the debt incurred plus administrative costs and court costs associated with collection of the debt. All delinquent debts will be reported to a commercial credit reporting agency and to the Treasury Department for the Treasury Offset Program. Also, recovery through Administrative Wage Garnishment may be enforced to repay a delinquent default debt.

**(4) IRS tax refund offsets and Medicare/Medicaid exclusion**

Through the Treasury Offset Program, the government may offset Federal and/or State payments due to participants (e.g., an IRS income tax refund) and apply those payments to repay delinquent NHSC SP debts. In addition, delinquent defaulters who are unwilling to enter into or stay in compliance with an agreement to repay their default debt can be excluded from participation in Medicare, Medicaid, and other Federal health care programs. See section 1128 of the Social Security Act.

**(5) Licensure sanctions**

In several states, a health professional license can be suspended or revoked for non-payment of an NHSC scholarship debt.

SUSPENSION, WAIVER OR CANCELLATION OF THE COMMITMENT

The Secretary of Health and Human Services may suspend or waive in whole or in part an NHSC SP service or payment obligation. Requests for suspensions and waivers are submitted to DNHSC and are reviewed and processed by the Office of Legal and Compliance.

**Suspension – A suspension of the NHSC SP obligation may be granted if compliance with the obligation by the participant (1) is temporarily impossible or (2) would involve a temporary extreme hardship such that enforcement of the obligation 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.**

**(1) Suspension for medical and 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 that results in the participant’s temporary inability to perform the NHSC SP obligation. Upon receipt of the written suspension request, the Office of Legal and Compliance will mail the participant instructions for documenting that request.

**(2) Maternity/paternity suspension**

Participants must notify the DNHSC of pending maternity/paternity leave and provide documentation from the mother’s

attending physician. Maternity/paternity leave in excess of 12 weeks will require additional documentation of medical need.

(3) **Call to active duty in the Armed Forces**

Participants who are also military reservists and are called to active duty will be granted a suspension for up to one year beginning on the activation date described in the reservist's call to active duty order. In addition to the written request for a suspension, a copy of the order to active duty must be submitted to the DNHSC. The suspension will be extended if the applicable Armed Forces entity continues the period of active duty. The period of active military duty will not be credited toward the NHSC SP service obligation.

**Waiver**

A waiver may be granted if the recipient documents a permanent situation that makes compliance with the service or financial obligation impossible or an extreme hardship such that enforcement would be against equity and good conscience.

Scholarship recipients seeking a waiver or suspension of the service or payment obligation must submit a written request stating the underlying circumstances to the Bureau of Clinician Recruitment and Service, Division of National Health Service Corps, 5600 Fisher Lane, Room 8-15, Rockville, MD 20857. Upon receipt of the request, the Office of Legal and Compliance will mail the recipient instructions for additional documentation necessary to process the request.

**Cancellation**

In the unfortunate event of a scholarship recipient's death, any obligation to the NHSC SP is cancelled.

# HOW TO APPLY

## APPLICATION AND PROGRAM GUIDANCE

Please read the Application and Program Guidance (*Guidance*) in its entirety before proceeding with an application. The *Guidance* explains in detail the rights and obligations of individuals selected to participate in the NHSC SP. Be sure you have a complete understanding of the obligation to serve full-time for a minimum of 2 years (maximum of 4 years) at an NHSC-approved site and the **financial consequences of failing to perform that obligation.**

**Applicants may want to keep a copy of the application package for their records.**

## APPLICATION DEADLINE

The online application must be submitted by **5:00 PM ET on June 1, 2011**. All Supporting Documentation must be uploaded by 5:00 pm ET on May 31, 2011 or postmarked, if mailed, by **June 1, 2011**.

The Associate Administrator, BCRS, or his/her designee, may authorize an extension of published deadlines when justified by circumstances such as acts of nature (e.g., floods or hurricanes), widespread disruptions of mail service, or other disruptions, such as a prolonged blackout. The authorizing official will determine the affected geographical area(s) and the length of the extension granted.

## COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

The NHSC SP application consists of two parts:

1. An online application and,
2. Required supporting documentation

### 1. ONLINE APPLICATION

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

#### a. Eligibility Screening

If an individual does not pass the initial screening portion of the online application he/she will not be able to continue with the application.

Please refer to the [Eligibility](#) Requirements section of this *Guidance* for further details.

#### b. General Information

Answers to this section pertain to the applicant's name, social security number, mailing and email addresses, and other contact information.

#### c. Degree Information

Answers to this section should pertain only to the degree or certificate program for which applicants are applying for an NHSC Scholarship.

#### d. Background Information

Answers to this section pertain to the educational background, individual and family background, and emergency contact information.

#### e. Curriculum Vitae (CV) and Essays

Please do not mail in separate documentation for the CV and Essays. This information must be incorporated in the online application.



- i. **Curriculum Vitae (CV):** An Applicant's CV should outline relevant work/volunteer experience and should be no more than 5 pages long. CVs must be uploaded.
  
- ii. **Essays:** Applicants are required to respond to the following three essay questions. Each response should be limited to 2,500 characters or less (about a half of a page). It is suggested that applicants create essays in a Word document and cut and paste them into the box provided. Applicants may also type directly into the text box.
  - 1. How will you contribute to the mission of the National Health Service Corps in providing care to underserved communities?
  
  - 2. What experiences have you had or activities have you participated in that have prepared you to work with underserved populations?
  
  - 3. Please discuss your commitment to pursue a career in primary health care.

**f. Submit Application**

It is required that the information in the online application match the submitted supporting documentation. Application packages will be initially reviewed to determine their completeness. Application packages deemed incomplete (e.g., missing, illegible, or incomplete application materials) deadline will not be considered for funding.

NHSC SP will not accept requests for updates to a submitted application, nor the submission/resubmission of incomplete, rejected or otherwise delayed application materials after the deadline. In addition, the NHSC SP staff will not fill in any missing information or contact applicants regarding missing information.

No changes will be accepted to applicant's choice of school or discipline entered on the submitted application prior to award. Awardees' who elect to enter a different school and/or program after the application deadline should contact the NHSC SP immediately. .

**REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

It is the applicant's responsibility to upload, by **5:00 pm ET**, or postmark, if mailed, required supporting documents by **June 1, 2011**. Failure to submit a complete application package by the deadline will deem the applicant ineligible and he or she will not be considered for an NHSC SP award.

Each document must be submitted with the applicant's First Name, Last Name, Discipline and last 4 digits of social security number. **Do not upload a document online and then mail the same document. Do one or the other but not both.**

**Applicant can either mail or upload, by 5:00 pm ET June 1, 2011, the following documents:**

- i. Proof of Citizenship
  
- ii. Signed Copy of the Submitted Application
  
- iii. Authorization to Release Information Form

Please mail the documents to:

**HRSA Call Center  
C/O NHSC Scholarship Program Application**

12530 Parklawn Drive, Suite 350  
Rockville, MD 20852

**a. Proof of Status as a U.S. Citizen or U.S. National**

Proof of U.S. citizenship or U.S. national status may include a birth certificate issued by a city, county or state agency in the U.S, the ID page of a U.S. passport, or a certificate of citizenship or naturalization.

**b. A Signed Copy of the Submitted Application**

Upon submission of the online application, a PDF copy of the application will be made available on the Supporting Documentation page. Applicants can view this document by clicking on the Signed Copy of Submitted Application. Applicants must submit a signed copy. This is a required document for all applicants

**c. Authorization to Release Information Form**

Authorizes entities identified in the form to disclose information regarding applicants and participants.

**The following documents must be mailed:**

- i. Verification of Acceptance/Good Standing
- ii. Academic Letter or Recommendation
- iii. Non-Academic Letter of Recommendation
- iv. Transcript
- v. Tuition and Fee Schedule

**d. Verification of Acceptance/Good Standing Report**

No applicant will receive an award until he or she is enrolled or accepted for full-time enrollment in a fully accredited program during the 2011-2012 school year (applicant must begin classes by September 30, 2011). Each applicant is required to submit a report from the school verifying his or her acceptance or enrollment in good standing. The verification report must bear the training institution's raised seal or stamp. Faxes or photocopies are not acceptable. The school identified in the Verification of Acceptance/Good Standing Report will be the applicant's "initial school of record."

If this document states that there are conditions (not yet fulfilled) for acceptance into the school and/or program, other than standard contingencies that apply to all admitted applicants, applicants will not be eligible for consideration for an award for the 2011-2012 school year, unless all contingencies or conditions for acceptance are removed and documented in writing by the start of the school year.

**e. Academic Letter of Recommendation**

If the applicant is currently enrolled in the health professions training program, the letter should be from the Department Chair, faculty advisor or a faculty member of that academic program who is familiar with the student. If the applicant has not begun the training associated with the scholarship, the letter should be from the Department Chair, faculty advisor, or a faculty member of the applicant's most recent academic program who is familiar with the applicant. The letter should include the information described in the "Academic Official's Evaluation Letter - Instructions." (link)

**f. Non-Academic Letter of Recommendation**

The letter should be from an individual who is familiar with the applicant's professional, community, and/or civic activities, especially those related to underserved communities. The evaluator can be an employer or previous employer, community leader, colleague, or anyone who has knowledge of the applicant's interest and motivation to provide care to underserved communities. The letter should include the information described in the "Non-Academic Evaluation Letter - Instructions." (link)

**g. Transcript**

Each applicant must include a transcript from his/her current educational institution or, if not currently attending an educational institution, a transcript from the last educational institution he/she attended. **An unofficial transcript is acceptable.**

**h. Tuition and Fees Schedule**

A tuition and fees schedule for the 2011 - 2012 school year or, if not yet available, the most recent tuition and fees schedule published by the school in the school catalog or on its website.

**ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

Based on applicant's responses to the online application, the following documents will be required to be submitted. 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.

Each document must include the applicant's First Name, Last Name, Discipline and last 4 digits of social security number and be postmarked by **June 1, 2011**.

**These documents cannot be uploaded. Please mail the documents to:**

**HRSA Call Center  
C/O NHSC Scholarship Program Application  
12530 Parklawn Drive, Suite 350  
Rockville, MD 20852**

**a. Verification of Exceptional Financial Need (EFN) Status**

This document certifies that the applicant has participated in the EFN Program. This applies only to medical and dental students.

**b. 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," "Loans to Disadvantaged Students," or the "Nursing Workforce Diversity Grant Program."

**c. Power of Attorney**

This document is required if the application is completed on behalf of the applicant by someone else.

**APPLICANTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUBMITTING A COMPLETE APPLICATION**

It is required that the information in the online application match the submitted supporting documentation. Application packages will be initially reviewed to determine their completeness. Application packages deemed incomplete (e.g., missing, illegible, or incomplete application materials) as of the application deadline will not be considered for funding.

The NHSC SP will not accept requests for updates to a submitted online application (other than name, phone number, home and email address updates), or accept the submission/resubmission of incomplete, rejected or otherwise delayed application materials after the application deadline. In addition, the NHSC SP staff will not fill in any missing information or contact applicants regarding missing information.

No changes will be accepted to an applicant's choice of school or discipline entered on the submitted application prior to award. Applicants who elect to enter a different school and/or program after the application deadline should contact the NHSC SP immediately.

**APPLICATION STATUS**

**2. Online Application**

Applicants will receive a receipt of submission once the application has been successfully submitted online. Applicants can verify that sections of the application are complete when there is a checkmark by each on the status page.

### **3. Supporting Documents**

Please allow at least 30 business days for the NHSC SP to review your documentation and update the status of documents that are mailed. Once supporting documents have been processed the status of that document will be labeled "Received."

### **4. Application Review**

Application packages are ready for review when the online application has been submitted and each supporting document has a status of "Received". The application review process occurs over several months. We will be providing email updates, as applicable, as well as updates on the Status page of the online application. It is the responsibility of the applicants to ensure their contact information is correct and current.

## **AWARD RECIPIENTS**

### **NOTIFICATION**

#### **5. Selection for an NHSC SP Award**

- a. Individuals selected for awards will be notified by email/letter, no later than September 30, 2011.
  
- b. To accept the award, applicants must respond by the deadline in the notice of award email/letter. If the applicant does not respond to the NHSC SP by that deadline, the offer of award expires and the award will be offered to an alternate.
  
- c. Individuals selected for an award must be enrolled as a full-time student during the 2011-2012 school year and full-time class attendance must begin on or before September 30, 2011.
  
- d. Eligible individuals who do not receive a scholarship award will be notified no later than October 31, 2011.

#### **6. Declining Scholarship Support**

Applicants who will not begin classes on or before September 30, 2011, including applicants who will be on a leave of absence from school through September 30, 2011, must decline the award. All other applicants may decline awards. The declination of an award is without penalty, and permits the promotion of alternates to selectee status.

Once an applicant declines the offer of award, the award will be offered to an alternate. There will be no opportunity to reclaim the award. A decision to decline the scholarship award is final and cannot be changed under any circumstances.

## DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

**DEFERMENT** - is a delay in the start of a National Health Service Corps service commitment granted upon a scholar's request by the BCRS, for a specified period of time to enter and complete an approved post-degree advanced training program. For multi-year programs, requests for deferment are reviewed annually, and are granted in 1-year increments.

**FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT** - to be eligible to receive scholarship benefits, participants must be enrolled as full-time students. **Please be advised that any non-required or unrelated courses will not count toward the school's required hours in determining full-time status.**

**LEAVE-OF-ABSENCE** - is a period of approved absence from a course of study granted to a student by his or her training institution for medical, personal, or other reasons. The leave-of-absence is usually granted for a period of 1 year or less. When a leave-of-absence is expected, a scholar is required to notify the NHSC Scholarship Program immediately, in writing, and submit a letter from the school approving the leave-of-absence and indicating the start and end dates for the period of the absence. Payment of all benefits are discontinued when a scholar is on an approved leave-of-absence, and may be resumed when the student returns full-time to the course of study for which the scholarship was awarded.

**SUSPENSION** - is a **temporary** status. The basis for a suspension would be a medical condition or a personal situation that: 1) would make it temporarily impossible to continue the service commitment or pay the monetary debt, or 2) would temporarily involve an extreme hardship to the individual and enforcement of the service or payment commitment would be against equity and good conscience. All requests for a suspension must be submitted in writing and include full medical and financial documentation

**WAIVER** - is a **permanent** status. The basis for a waiver would be a permanent medical condition or personal situation that: 1) would make it impossible for the individual to serve the commitment or pay the debt, or 2) would involve an extreme hardship to the individual and enforcement of the service or payment commitment would be against equity and good conscience. All requests for a waiver must be submitted in writing and include full medical and financial documentation.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- (1) **What is the deadline to apply to the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program?**  
Applications for the 2011-2012 academic year are due June 1, 2010. Applicants will be notified on an ongoing basis as selections are made. Individuals selected to receive the scholarship will be notified by September 30, 2011.
- (2) **How do I find job opportunities that are approved for the National Health Service Corps Scholarship and Loan Repayment programs? What about opportunities in underserved areas for non-NHSC clinicians?**  
National Health Service Corps Job Opportunities at [nhscjob.hrsa.gov](http://nhscjob.hrsa.gov) lets you zero in on current job vacancies in NHSC-eligible facilities by location and health professions discipline, then shows you the sites on a map. The site lists thousands of vacancies for NHSC scholars and loan repayments. More than half of the vacancies are at HRSA-supported health centers. Search for vacancies then contact sites directly to learn more or apply.
- (3) **What is the ratio of the number of people who apply for the scholarship to the number of awards that are made?**  
The ratio is approximately 11:1. The NHSC SP receives approximately 11 applications for each scholarship awarded. The ratio will depend on how many applications are received.
- (4) **How does the National Health Service Corps know how much my tuition and fees are?**  
The NHSC SP requests information on in-state and out-of-state tuition and required fees from each school annually. The tuition and fees portion of each participant's award is based on cost information provided by the school in which the participant is enrolled.
- (5) **What if I change my mind about going into primary care after I have accepted the scholarship or while in residency?**  
Accepting an NHSC scholarship is a serious commitment. If after graduation you enter training that is not approved by the NHSC SP or you otherwise fail to comply with your contract, you will be liable for financial damages equal to three times the amount of your scholarship plus interest.
- (6) **When do the tuition and stipend payments start?**  
The NHSC SP notifies the schools of participating students. This notice, along with the award letter, authorizes the schools to bill the Scholarship Program directly for tuition and required fees for the academic period beginning July 1, or later. The stipend payments begin in October of that year and will be received by scholarship recipients no later than the 7<sup>th</sup> day of November of that year.
- (7) **I want to specialize in internal medicine but would also like to sub-specialize. If I am selected to receive the National Health Service Corps Scholarship will I be able to do this before serving my obligation to provide clinical primary care services at a NHSC-approved site?**  
No. National Health Service Corps Scholars must complete the NHSC service commitment as soon as they have completed required training. Allopathic and osteopathic medical students who are unsure about their future specialty interests or who are unable to commit to complete a primary health care specialty are advised not to apply to the NHSC SP.
- (8) **If I do not have my NHSC SP check by the start of school, how do I handle my tuition?**  
If your school requires payment of tuition and fees prior to receipt of your NHSC scholarship, you will have to obtain funding from another source. You will be reimbursed by the school after it has received payment from the NHSC.
- (9) **When can I expect to hear from the NHSC as to whether or not I have received a scholarship?**  
The NHSC SP expects to notify applicants selected to receive the scholarship award beginning in July and continuing through September. For detailed information on the application and selection process, see the Scholarship section of the NHSC website [NHSC.hrsa.gov/scholarship](http://NHSC.hrsa.gov/scholarship).
- (10) **Can I continue receiving NHSC scholarship financial assistance while I am serving a residency?**  
No, the NHSC does not provide financial assistance while participants serve their residencies. NHSC scholarship support is for health professions school only. While serving a residency, participants do not receive any additional financial support nor do they incur additional service commitments.

**(11) Is health insurance included in the fees paid by the NHSC scholarship?**

Yes if the school requires health insurance of all students, regardless of source of funding, the NHSC will include it in the payment of your fees.

**(12) Can I go from a NHSC Scholarship-supported PA/NP training program to medical school before serving my NHSC obligation?**

No. NHSC scholars' contractual agreement is to complete training leading to the degree for which you received support and to serve full-time in an approved site upon completion of that training.

**(13) What if the Government changes the rules after I have accepted the NHSC scholarship?**

The scholarship agreement between you and the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services remains binding.

**(14) Can I work part time to fulfill my NHSC scholarships service obligation?**

NHSC scholarship participants cannot fulfill their service obligation by working part time. Scholars are committed to full-time (a minimum of 40 hours per week) clinical primary health care service in the area of their assignment. No more than 7 weeks (35 days) per year can be spent away from the site.

**(15) Are the stipend and other reasonable costs payments provided by the NHSC scholarship taxable income? If so, how much tax is withheld?**

Only the monthly stipend payments made to NHSC scholarship participants are considered taxable income by the Internal Revenue Service (effective January 1, 2002). The tax withheld is determined by the W-4 tax withholdings form participants submit to the NHSC with their Scholarship applications.

**(16) If I do not receive payment from the NHSC SP before the start of the school year and have to borrow money to pay tuition and fees, will the money I receive from the scholarship be enough to pay the interest on my loan?**

No additional funds will be awarded to cover any interest charges on a loan.

**(17) Can NHSC scholars who have completed their first residency serve a second primary care residency before beginning to fulfill their service commitments?**

No. NHSC scholars must fulfill their service commitment after completing their required residency. HRSA may approve, however, on a case-by-case basis consistent with the needs of the NHSC requests submitted by clinicians in their last year of residency training for a single year of additional training in one of three specific fellowships:

- Child Psychiatry 1-year Fellowship, which may follow the completion of residency training in Psychiatry
- Obstetrics/Gynecology 1-year Fellowship, which may follow the completion of residency training in Family Practice
- Geriatrics 1-year Fellowship, which may follow the completion of residency training in Family Practice or General Internal Medicine.

**(18) What makes a site eligible for fulfillment of the NHSC service commitment?**

To become an approved NHSC service site, community-based health care providers must meet the eligibility requirements including:

- Located in a designated Health Professional Shortage Area (see [HPSAFind.hrsa.gov](http://HPSAFind.hrsa.gov))
- Provide a continuum of services, including comprehensive primary health care and appropriate referrals or arrangements for specialty and inpatient care.
- Treat all patients regardless of the method or ability of the patient to pay for services (i.e., accept Medicare/Medicaid assignments and have provisions for a sliding-fee scale)
- Apply to the NHSC for Recruitment and Retention Assistance (see the Sites/Communities section of the NHSC websites, [NHSC.hrsa.gov/communities](http://NHSC.hrsa.gov/communities))

**(19) Can I make changes to my banking information after it has been submitted?**

Only applicants being awarded NHSC scholarships will be requested to submit banking information. Only HRSA staff can enter any relevant changes to the online banking information once it has been submitted to the NHSC SP and a "Receipt of Submission" is received by the applicant.

You may request a change to your banking information by completing the Banking Update Form, [www.fms.treas.gov/eft/1199a.pdf](http://www.fms.treas.gov/eft/1199a.pdf) and mailing the completed form to

NHSC Scholarship Program  
Division of National Health Service Corps  
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 8-37  
Rockville, MD 20857