

Nurse Corps Evaluation: In-Depth Interview Guide

Respondent ID#:	Interviewer:
Respondent Title:	Note Taker:
Date & Time of Interview:	Recorded (Y/N):

Introduction and Oral Consent

Introduction

Hello, thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. My name is [NAME], and I also have [a/two] colleague(s) with me here, [NAME(S)]. They will just be observing in the background while we talk. We work for Westat, a private research company in Rockville, Maryland. We are working on a study for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW), which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to evaluate the Nurse Corps program. We are interested in your experiences and perspectives in participating in the Nurse Corps [Loan Repayment/Faculty Loan Repayment/Scholarship] Program.

We expect our interview to last no more than 45 minutes. This is a research study; your participation is voluntary and you can stop at any point and skip any question. Everything that we cover today is confidential. Outside of the study team, your comments will not be attributed to you or include identifying information that could be linked to you. Your name and organization will never be associated with anything written or reported. The final report will be de-identified and will highlight themes from our interviews across all participants. Finally, as a 'thank you' for your participation in this study, we will be sending you a check for \$75 after the interview is over.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have about this interview. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Westat's Human Subjects Protections office. Would you like that phone number? *(IF YES: Please call 1-888-920-7631 and leave a message with your full name, the name of this research study "Nurse Corps Evaluation", and a phone number beginning with the area code. Someone will return your call as soon as possible).*

If you agree, we would like to audio record our discussion. Unfortunately, Zoom will not allow us to record audio only, but we will delete the video recording right after our discussion. Feel free to turn off your camera, if you're more comfortable. We will use the audio recording for note-taking purposes and other team members may listen to the recording later, but we will store the recording files on a secure directory and delete them after preparing summaries of the interviews. Is this ok?

Do you have any questions for us before we begin?

[IF AGREES, TURN ON RECORDER]: It is [DATE/TIME]. Now that we are recording, I need to ask your permission again - Do you consent to have this conversation audio recorded? Okay. Let's begin.

[IF REFUSES]: That's fine. We'll rely on our notetaking. Okay. Let's begin.

General

I'm going to start with a couple of general questions about you and your site.

Ask all groups

1. Please tell us a little bit about you.

PROBE ALL

- a. What is your title/role?
 - b. How long have/did you work/worked at your site(s)/school of nursing or been in nursing school?
 - i. Define if needed: Site means the location where you are completing/completed your service obligation for the Nurse Corps program. You may have worked at more than one site while you were in the program.
2. If you can, describe the community that is/was served by your Nurse Corps program site(s) or school of nursing.

IF MORE THAN ONE SITE, ask about all sites.

PROBE ALL

- a. Is it a rural or medically underserved community?
 - b. Does the community include any vulnerable populations? What are they?
 - c. How would you describe the income level of the community?
 - d. What kinds of health issues do you think are most prevalent in the community?

Now I'm going to shift to some questions about your initial experiences and perceptions of the Nurse Corps program. [IF STATUS=ALUMNI] Our records show that you completed your service obligation from [YEAR – YEAR]. Is that correct? Most of our questions will relate to your experiences during that time period.

Learning About the Program

Ask all groups

3. Briefly describe how you first learned about the Nurse Corps program.

PROBE AS NEEDED

- a. How did you learn about the application process? For example, the requirements or deadlines for applying for the program.
 - b. Where did you get information about the program and application process (e.g., on the HRSA website, information webinars, social media, your employer, current or former program participants, etc.)?

2

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Applying to the Program

Ask all groups

4. Please explain what motivated you to apply for the Nurse Corps program.
5. [IF RESPONDENT APPLIED TO PROGRAM IN 2020 OR LATER] Did COVID-19 affect your decision to apply for the program? *IF YES:* How did it affect your decision?
6. What were your experiences with the program application process?
PROBE AS NEEDED
 - a. Did you need any assistance? [IF YES] What kind of assistance did you need?
 - i. Did you receive the assistance you needed with the application process?
 - ii. Did the sites provide adequate assistance during the application process?
 - iii. What types of assistance did you need that were not available?
 - b. What elements of the application process were challenging?
 - c. How satisfied were you with the application and approval process?
 - i. What did you think about the application and award timeline?

Experience with Nurse Corps Program during Scholarship or Service Obligation Period

Ask all groups

7. Do you believe the Nurse Corps program is/was administered in the same way for different types of people (meaning, in a way that doesn't discriminate against any groups)?
 - a. Why or why not?
8. Does the program allow you to balance your personal and family needs with your job responsibilities?
 - a. Why or why not?
9. What components of the Nurse Corps program experience did you find challenging?
PROBE AS NEEDED
 - a. Regular reporting requirements/paperwork
 - b. Getting technical assistance
10. What components of the Nurse Corps program experience did you find rewarding?
PROBE AS NEEDED
 - a. Providing care to underserved populations

3

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b. Helping to increase nurse staffing in a shortage area?

11. Would you recommend the program to others? Why or why not?

PROBE AS NEEDED

a. Would you participate in the program if you had the opportunity to do it again?

Retention (for Non-Faculty)

Alumni

12. Did you complete your service obligation for Nurse Corps?

a. [IF DID NOT COMPLETE COMMITMENT]: Why did you leave your site before completing your commitment?

13. Are you still employed as a nurse? Why or why not?

PROBE ALL IF YES

- a. Is that at a Nurse Corps site or other rural/underserved community or critical shortage facility?
 - i. What motivates you to stay in (or motivated you to leave) a rural/underserved facility/community?
- b. [If YES to 13a]: Have you been in a rural/medically underserved area since you completed the Nurse Corps program?
- c. [IF YES TO 13a]: How long do you plan to work in a rural/underserved facility/community?

14. Did COVID-19 affect your decision to work in (or not work in) a rural/underserved facility/community? Why or why not?

Current participants in service obligation

15. Do you plan to stay at a critical shortage facility or in a rural/underserved community after you complete your service obligation? Why or why not?

- a. [IF YES] How long do you plan to stay?

16. How has participating in the Nurse Corps program affected your plan to stay at (or leave) a critical shortage facility or rural/underserved community?

17. How did COVID-19 affect your plan to stay at (or leave) a critical shortage facility or rural/underserved community?

Experience with Clinical Service Obligation

For LRP Clinicians (current and alumni) and SP who are currently completing their service obligation and alumni. **DO NOT ASK THESE QUESTIONS TO SP PARTICIPANTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN NURSING SCHOOL**

18. What aspects of your Nurse Corps site work did you find satisfying?

PROBE AS NEEDED

- a. Peer support (e.g., helpful and friendly staff)
- b. Patients and families (e.g., making a difference, patient interactions)
- c. Ongoing learning (e.g., mentorship and training)
- d. Professional nursing role (e.g., challenging, benefits, fast paced)
- e. Positive work environment (e.g., good staffing ratios, available resources, great facility)

5

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19. What were some of the challenges you faced while working at your site?

PROBE AS NEEDED

- a. Issues with management (e.g., discrimination or equity issues, poor leadership)
- b. Scheduling problems (e.g., work/life balance, staff shortages, clinical training schedule)
- c. Limited opportunities (e.g., for training, to provide team-based care, to provide interprofessional and integrated care)
- d. Site location
- e. Lack of mentorship or support

Experience with Clinical Service Obligation: COVID-19

*For LRP Clinicians (current and alumni), LRP faculty, and SP who served clinical service obligations during COVID-19 and onward. **DO NOT ASK THESE QUESTIONS TO SP PARTICIPANTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN NURSING SCHOOL OR THOSE LRP OR SP PARTICIPANTS WHO SERVED THEIR CLINICAL SERVICE OBLIGATIONS PRIOR TO COVID-19***

20. [FOR FACULTY] During COVID-19, were you in clinical practice in addition to your faculty role, including as a preceptor?

[IF FACULTY IN CLINICAL PRACTICE, OR RESPONDENT IS IN SP OR LRP NON-FACULTY, CONTINUE. IF NOT, SKIP TO NEXT SECTION.]

21. How well did your site adapt to COVID-19?

PROBE

- a. Do you feel your site was prepared for COVID-19? Why or why not?

22. What did your site do to protect both you and your patients during the COVID-19 pandemic?

PROBE AS NEEDED WITH EXAMPLES

- a. Training for staff
- b. Needs assessment
- c. Telehealth (video and/or audio methods)
- d. Visitation policies
- e. Workforce and patients protections such as using PPE, restrictions on visitation, masking requirements

23. Were these measures effective at protecting staff and patients?

PROBE ALL

- a. What worked and what didn't?
- b. What would you have done differently at your site?

6

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24. What challenges did you experience during and after COVID-19?

PROBE AS NEEDED

- a. Did your site have enough staff?
- b. Did your site have enough PPE?
- c. Did you receive training on how to properly use PPE?

25. Where any changes made to the services offered at your site during or after COVID-19?

PROBE AS NEEDED

- a. Elective procedures delayed?
- b. Non-emergency visits cancelled?
- c. New service line with COVID-19 testing and treatment?

26. Did you use telehealth technology (audio only or audio and video) at your Nurse Corps site(s) during or after the pandemic? IF YES:

PROBE ALL

- a. What do you like the most about telehealth?
- b. What are the major challenges of providing services with telehealth technology?

27. Would you describe your Nurse Corps site(s) as “resilient” during the COVID-19 pandemic?

PROBE ALL

- a. Was your site able to make fast course-corrections as new information came in and new guidance was released?
- b. Did your site “bounce back” when conditions became very challenging? In your opinion, why was your site able to bounce back/not bounce back?
- c. What strategies did your site use to foster a resilient workforce? Put another way, what did your site do to help nurses cope with the stress and changes of the pandemic? Were they effective?

28. Do you feel that YOU were prepared for COVID-19? Why or why not?

PROBE ALL

- a. Do you feel prepared for future outbreaks?

Experience with School of Nursing (Faculty)

For LRP Faculty (current and alumni) **DO NOT ASK THESE QUESTIONS TO LRP NON-FACULTY OR SP**

29. Do you think today’s nursing curriculum prepares students for the reality of today’s practice environment? Why or why not?

PROBE AS NEEDED

- a. Is there sufficient attention to topics such as interprofessional and team-based practice?

7

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30. Do you think the nursing curriculum and clinical experiences adequately prepares nurses to work in rural or underserved facilities/communities? Why or why not?

PROBE AS NEEDED

- a. Are they prepared to work with:
 - i. diverse patient populations?
 - ii. rural populations?
 - iii. facilities with staffing shortages?

31. What are the biggest challenges that nurse faculty face today?

PROBE AS NEEDED

- a. Quality of applicants/students
- b. Limited resources
- c. Limited supply of faculty

32. What do/did you find most satisfying about serving as faculty in a nursing program?

PROBE AS NEEDED

- a. Working with young people
- b. Creating the next generation of nurses
- c. Teaching the art and science of nursing

33. How did COVID-19 affect the curriculum taught at your school of nursing?

PROBE AS NEEDED

- a. Can you say more about that?

34. What challenges did you experience during and after COVID-19 teaching in a nursing program?

PROBE AS NEEDED

- a. Teaching virtually
- b. Schedule disruptions

35. [FOR LRP FACULTY ALUMNI] Are you still working in nursing education? [IF NO, SKIP TO 37]

36. How long do you plan to continue working in nursing education?

37. How has participation in the Nurse Corps program affected your decision/plan to continue or leave a faculty position?

Experience with School of Nursing (Students and Clinicians)

8

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For non-faculty

38. How well is/did your nursing education preparing/prepare you for today's clinical practice?

PROBE ALL

- a. Do/did you feel prepared to provide:
 - i. telehealth services?
 - ii. integrated, interprofessional care?
- b. Do/did you feel prepared:
 - i. to deal with stressful practice environments?
 - ii. to deal with COVID-19 or other outbreaks?
 - iii. for the type of healthcare position you're seeking or currently in?

39. How well did your nursing program prepare you to work at a critical shortage facility?

PROBE AS NEEDED

- a. Do you feel prepared to work with:
 - i. diverse patient populations?
 - ii. rural populations?
 - iii. facilities with staffing shortages?

That's the last question! Is there anything you'd like to add that I didn't ask about today?

Thank you so much for your time today. I am now going to stop the recording so we can get your address information for the monetary thank you.

As I mentioned at the beginning of the interview, we'll be sending you a check for \$75 as a "thank you" for your contribution to the study. The check will be sent via FedEx within the next 4 weeks. Could I get an address where we could send the check?

Name:

Street Address [NOTE: FedEx will not deliver to a PO Box]:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Thank you so much!

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