



# National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program

## School Year 2024-2025 Application and Program Guidance

March 2024

**Application Submission Deadline: April 25, 2024, 7:30 p.m. ET**

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

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

*Authority: Section 331(i) of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254d(i)); Section 338A of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254I); Sections 338C-H of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254m-q). Future changes in the governing statute, implementing regulations and Program Guidance may also be applicable to National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program scholars.*

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## Executive Summary

The Health Resources and Services Administration is accepting applications for the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program from students pursuing primary care health professions training in eligible disciplines. In exchange for scholarship support, you must serve a minimum two years of service at a National Health Service Corps-approved site in a [Health Professional Shortage Area](#). The National Health Service Corps is a nationwide program. Only those students who are committed to practicing primary care and are able to relocate to Health Professional Shortage Areas based on the needs of the National Health Service Corps should consider becoming a National Health Service Corps scholar. For details on Health Professional Shortage Areas, see the [What Is Shortage Designation?](#) page on the Bureau of Health Workforce website.

<b>Eligible Applicants</b>	Students pursuing eligible primary care health professions training leading to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A degree in medicine (allopathic or osteopathic);</li> <li>b. A degree in dentistry; or</li> <li>c. A postgraduate degree or postgraduate certificate from a school or program in nurse midwifery education, physician assistant education, or nurse practitioner education</li> </ul>
<b>Funding</b>	The National Health Service Corps Scholarship award covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Tuition and eligible fees</li> <li>(2) A monthly stipend for living expenses</li> <li>(3) An annual payment to cover other reasonable costs.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Obligation</b>	National Health Service Corps scholars must provide a two-year minimum service commitment for a minimum 1-year of support. Scholars can receive a maximum of four years of scholarship support.
<b>Application Deadline</b>	April 25, 2024
<b>Tax Liability</b>	Only the stipend is taxable.



**A Letter from Luis Padilla, MD**

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your consideration and time in applying to the [National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program](#). For more than 50 years, the National Health Service Corps has fulfilled its mission to connect a highly qualified, diverse group of health care professionals to people with limited access to health care. As we move forward, we need students like you who are committed to serving in communities that need you most. In exchange, we will pay part and, in some cases, all of your health professional education expenses.

As a former National Health Service Corps scholar, I completed my service obligation at a large health center network in Washington, D.C., so I understand how busy you are. To that end, we have streamlined the application process to make it easier for you to apply to the Scholarship Program.

Again, thank you for taking time to read the Scholarship Program Application and Program Guidance and considering applying.

/Luis Padilla, MD/

[Luis Padilla, MD](#)

Associate Administrator for Health Workforce  
Director of the National Health Service Corps  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
United States Department of Health and Human Services

# Privacy Act Notification Statement

## General

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

## Statutory Authority

Section 331(i) of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254d(i)); Section 338A of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254l); and Sections 338C-H of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254m-q).

## Purposes and Uses

The purpose of the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program is to provide scholarships to students pursuing primary care health professions training in return for a commitment to provide primary health services in a Health Professional Shortage Area (see the Glossary in the [Appendix](#)). The information that applicants supply will be used to evaluate their eligibility, qualifications, and suitability for participating in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program. In addition, information from other sources will be considered (e.g., credit bureau reports).

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

## Effects of Nondisclosure

Disclosure of the information sought is voluntary; however, if the information is **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.

## Non-Discrimination Policy Statement

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

## National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program Overview

For more than five decades, the National Health Service Corps has matched dedicated health professionals with communities across the country with the greatest need for their services. The National Health Service Corps seeks primary care clinicians with demonstrated interest in serving the nation's medically underserved and offers scholarship support in return for clinical practice in communities located in a [Health Professional Shortage Area](#).

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program is administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program is a competitive federal program that awards scholarships to students pursuing eligible primary care health professions training leading to:

- (1) A degree in medicine (allopathic or osteopathic);
- (2) A degree in dentistry; or
- (3) A postgraduate degree or postgraduate certificate from a school or program in nurse midwifery education, physician assistant education, or nurse practitioner education specializing in adult medicine, family medicine, geriatrics, pediatrics, psychiatric-mental health, or women's health.

In return for scholarship awards, scholars commit to providing primary care health services to underserved communities.

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program pays for tuition and various other reasonable educational costs as well as provides a monthly stipend to assist with living expenses in exchange for a minimum of two (2) years of full-time service.

The service obligation must be completed at a National Health Service Corps-approved site in a Health Professional Shortage Area (see the Glossary in the [Appendix](#)). The total number of years of full-time service a scholar is obligated to serve will depend on the number of school years of National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program support received by the scholar, **not** to exceed four school years.

A commitment to participate in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program is significant, as is the need for primary care in the underserved communities across the United States and the United States' territories. Applicants will be evaluated with respect to their:

- Demonstrated interest in primary care
- Qualifications to participate in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program
- Commitment to caring for the underserved

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program seeks applicants focused on primary care who demonstrate geographic flexibility, as well as a strong interest in providing primary health services to underserved populations nationally.

## What to Look for in 2024

For Fiscal Year 2024, we expect to make approximately 180 new awards to health professionals committed to serving in underserved communities.

- (1) The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program has reduced the number of required supporting documents for the Fiscal Year 2024 application cycle:
  - a. Applicants will only be required to submit one essay response as opposed to the three essay responses that were required in prior years.
  - b. [National Health Service Corps Scholarship Glossary](#) defines some of the terms used in this Application and Program Guidance (Guidance). This Glossary replaces the Definitions section used in previous Guidance documents.

## Application and Program Guidance

Read this Guidance in its entirety before proceeding with an application. This Guidance explains the National Health Service Corps policies, and the rights and liabilities of individuals selected to participate in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program (including the financial liabilities and legal obligations of the individual) stated in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program statute and contract. A complete understanding of the commitment to serve at a National Health Service Corps-approved site and the financial, legal, and other consequences of failing to perform that commitment is critical to successful completion of the mandatory service obligation associated with any National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program award.

The National Health Service Corps is a nationwide program. Only those students who are committed to practicing primary care and are willing and able to relocate to Health Professional Shortage Areas based on the needs of the National Health Service Corps should consider becoming a National Health Service Corps scholar.

The benefits of the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program are:

- (1) **Service.** Scholars will join the thousands of current and former National Health Service Corps clinicians who provide primary health care services to communities in need.
- (2) **Payment of Educational Expenses.** The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program provides financial support for full-time enrollment in an eligible primary care health professions degree training program for up to four school years, including:
  - Payment of tuition and eligible fees;
  - An annual payment for other reasonable educational costs; and,
  - Monthly stipends to assist with living expenses while pursuing the health professions degree educational training program.

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program receives many qualified applications. Applicants are encouraged to submit their application as early as possible.

### KEY DATES

Key dates for National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program applicants:

- (1) **Application Submission Period Open:** March 12, 2024
- (2) **Application Submission Deadline:** April 25, 2024
- (3) **Notification of Award:** September 30, 2024
- (4) **First Day of Class Deadline:** September 30, 2024
- (5) **Terminate Contract Deadline:** June 1, 2025

**PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

To be eligible for the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program, applicants must be:

- A United States citizen (either United States born or naturalized) or United States national.
- Enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a full-time student.<sup>1</sup> To be considered for a scholarship award for the 2024-2025 school year, classes **must begin** on or before September 30, 2024.
  - Applicants planning to be on a [leave of absence](#) from school during the 2024-2025 academic year, should **not** submit an application this year, but may apply for the 2025-2026 academic year.
- Attending or accepted to attend one of the following accredited schools or programs:

<b>If you are a:</b>	<b>You must attend a...</b>	<b>That is accredited by the...</b>
<b>Medical student</b>	School of allopathic or osteopathic medicine, pursuing a medical degree or doctor of osteopathic medicine degree	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.
<b>Dental student</b>	School of dentistry, pursuing a doctor of dental surgery or doctor of medicine in dentistry degree	American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Accreditation.
<b>Nurse practitioner student</b>	School or program of nurse practitioner education, pursuing a postgraduate degree or postgraduate certificate	Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education; and leading to national certification as a nurse practitioner.
<b>Nurse midwife student</b>	School or program of nurse-midwifery education, pursuing a postgraduate degree or postgraduate certificate	American College of Nurse-Midwives, Division of Accreditation; and leading to national certification by the American Midwifery Certification Board.

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<sup>1</sup> See the Glossary in the [Appendix](#) for the definition of a full-time student



If you are a:	You must attend a...	That is accredited by the...
<b>Physician assistant student</b>	School or program of primary care physician assistant education, pursuing a postgraduate degree or postgraduate certificate	Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, AND the affiliated school must be accredited by the United States Department of Education nationally recognized regional or state institutional accrediting agency; and leading to national certification by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants.

- Attending an accredited school located in a state, the District of Columbia, or a United States territory. Eligible schools and educational programs for which scholarship support is provided must be in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the Federated States of Micronesia. Students attending schools outside of these geographic areas are not eligible for National Health Service Corps scholarships, even though they may be citizens or nationals of the United States.
- Eligible for federal employment. Most National Health Service Corps scholars should expect to serve their obligations as salaried, non-federal employee of public or private entities approved by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program. However, there may be vacancies that require federal employment. In light of the potential for federal employment, an applicant must be eligible to hold an appointment as a [Commissioned Officer of the United States Public Health Service](#) or be eligible for a [federal civil service appointment](#).
- Eligible to serve in the National Health Service Corps without any other 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 National Health Service Corps scholarship awards unless the entity which the obligation is owed provides a written statement satisfactory to the Secretary of Health and Human Services that (i) there is no potential conflict in fulfilling the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program obligation, the entity's obligation, and (ii) the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program obligation will be served first.

Scholars who subsequently incur other service obligations and are **not** immediately available after completion of their training to fulfill their National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program service obligation will be subject to the breach-of-contract provisions described in the ["Breaching the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program Contract"](#) section.

EXCEPTION: Individuals in a Reserve component of the Armed Forces including the National Guard are **eligible** to participate in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program. Reservists should understand the following:

- (1) Military training or service performed by reservists will not satisfy the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program service obligation. If a scholar's military training and/or service, in combination with the scholar's other absences from the site, will exceed 280 full-time working hours or 140 half-time working hours (which translates into seven (7) weeks or 35 workdays per service year (see [Worksite Absences](#)) the scholar must request a suspension (break in service) (see [Suspensions of the Service Obligation and Payment Obligation](#) section). When a suspension is granted the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program service obligation end date will be extended to compensate for the break in National Health Service Corps service.
  - (2) If the National Health Service Corps-approved site where the reservist is serving at the time of their deployment is unable to re-employ that reservist, the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will assist the reservist in finding another National Health Service Corps-approved site to complete their remaining service obligation.
- [Submit a complete application](#). Each applicant must complete an online application, including: two letters of recommendation, proof of citizenship, a report verifying acceptance or enrollment in good standing in an eligible health professions school, and school transcripts. Each applicant is also required to respond to one (1) essay question.

Applicants are **ineligible** if they are:

- (1) Pursuing a non-primary care specialty. (For example, enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a program with a surgical or emergency medicine focus.)
- (2) In the pre-professional phase of their health professions education. (For example, taking undergraduate pre-requisites for admission to a health professions training program.)

## HOW SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS ARE DETERMINED

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program expects the Fiscal Year 2024 application cycle to be very competitive. The program anticipates more applicants for scholarship awards than there are funds available. In the past, National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program funds have been sufficient to fund approximately 10 percent of the applications received for new awards.

### ***Selection Factors***

*Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria outlined above must also demonstrate the following:*

- (1) **History of honoring prior legal obligations** The National Health Service Corps will perform a [hard inquiry](#)<sup>2</sup> with the credit bureaus prior to making the award decision. National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program applicants who do **not** have a history of honoring prior legal obligations, as evidenced by one or more of the following factors, will not be selected as a scholar:

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<sup>2</sup> According to the United States Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, these inquiries "are typically inquiries by lenders after you apply for credit. These inquiries will impact your credit score because most credit scoring models look at how recently and how frequently you apply for credit." (Source: [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau: What's a credit inquiry?](#))

- Default on any federal payment obligations (e.g., Department of Education student loans, Health Education Assistance Loans, Nursing Student Loans, Federal Housing Administration Loans, federal income tax liabilities, federally guaranteed/insured loans (e.g., student or home mortgage loans)).
  - Default on any non-federal payment obligations (e.g., court-ordered child support payments or state tax liabilities).
  - Write-offs/charge-offs of any federal or non-federal debts as uncollectible, or waiver of any federal service or payment obligation.
  - Default on a prior service obligation to the federal government, a state or local government, or other entity, unless the obligation was subsequently satisfied.
  - Judgment liens arising from federal debt.
  - Failure/refusal to provide appropriate permission/consent for the National Health Service Corps to access the scholar's credit report and failure/refusal to unfreeze a frozen credit report.
- (2) **Academic performance.** Demonstrates the ability to excel and maintain good academic standing while in school.
- (3) **Commitment to a career in primary care and working in underserved communities.** Demonstrates a strong commitment to the field of primary care; motivation to provide care to underserved communities; willingness to be geographically flexible; and relevant experience (i.e., community service, research, and internships) that has prepared the applicant to work with underserved populations. This factor is reviewed through the following:
- **Essay Question.** An applicant's response to the essay question aids in the review process and helps gauge an applicant's interest in primary care and commitment to working in underserved communities.
  - **Two Recommendation Letters.** Recommenders provide a detailed description of the applicant's performance in school; education/work achievements; community/civic or other non-academic achievements; ability to work and communicate constructively with others from diverse backgrounds; and interest and motivation to serve underserved populations through work experience, coursework, special projects, research, etc.
- (4) **Not be currently excluded, debarred, suspended, or disqualified by a federal agency.** Before entering into a scholarship contract, an applicant must report if they are currently excluded, debarred, suspended or disqualified by a federal agency. (Please see the "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Disqualification and Related Matters" section in the online application.) The applicant must sign the Certification that is applicable to their situation.

As a condition of participating in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program, a scholar must agree to provide immediate written notice to the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program if they learn they failed to make a required disclosure or that a disclosure is now required due to changed circumstances.

## Funding Priorities

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will apply the following statutory priorities for funding to applicants who are determined to be eligible and qualified:

<b>First Priority</b>	<b>Current (or former) National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program participants</b> who are seeking, and are eligible for, additional support for the 2024-2025 school year or through their date of graduation.
<b>Second Priority</b>	<b>Characteristics Likely to Remain in a Health Professional Shortage Area.</b> Applicants who have characteristics that increase the probability that they will continue to serve in a Health Professional Shortage Area once the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program service obligation is completed. Demonstration of characteristics likely to remain in a Health Professional Shortage Area is evaluated through an external review process, which considers an applicant’s submitted essay response and letters of recommendation.
<b>Third Priority</b>	<p><b>Disadvantaged Background.</b> Applicants who qualify for a disadvantaged background must upload the Disadvantaged Background Form available for download in the online application. The Disadvantaged Background Form can be completed by the school’s financial aid official certifying their participation or their eligibility for participation in a qualifying federal program as outlined below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Medical and dental applicants’ school must certify that the applicant participated in, or would have been eligible for participation in, federal programs such as Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students, Loans for Disadvantaged Students, or the Health Careers Opportunity Program.</li> <li>(2) Nurse practitioner, nurse midwifery, and physician assistant applicants’ school must certify that the applicant 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.</li> </ol> <p>Applicants may also self-attest to having a disadvantaged background by uploading a document that validates that they meet the criteria included on the disadvantaged background form (e.g., Federal Student Aid Report, etc.).</p>

## UNDERSTANDING THE SCHOLARSHIP CONTRACT

Once an applicant is selected for an award, the applicant will use the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) to communicate with the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program and to manage several customer service inquiries, such as contact information changes.

### ***Initial Contract Period***

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program award and contract is for the 2024-2025 school year and any additional school years (Optional Contracts) requested by the applicant and agreed to by the Secretary of Health and Human Services or designee as indicated on the executed contracts. Support will be provided during the school years agreed to in the executed contracts (not to exceed a total of four school years of support, including any partial school year of funding received).

The National Health Service Corps defines the school year as all, or part, of the 12-month period - from July 1 through June 30 during which a scholar is enrolled in a school as a full-time student. **The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program 2024- 2025 school year begins July 1, 2024 and ends June 30, 2025.** If an applicant signs a contract for only one school year of support, in the 2024-2025 school year, the scholar's support will end on June 30, 2025. If an applicant is in a 24-month program that begins on August 1, 2024 and ends on August 2, 2026 and the applicant signs contracts for two school years, the scholar will receive scholarship support from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026.

Funding for the extra months of the program beyond June 30, 2026 would require a request for a third school year of scholarship funding for 2026-2027. If granted, the third school year of support obligates the recipient to perform three years of full-time service.

*The school year 2024-2025 National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract — if countersigned by the Secretary of Health and Human Services or designee — obligates the applicant to the minimum two-year full-time service obligation.* Therefore, applicants are required to sign the 2024-2025 school year contract, as well as an optional contract for the 2025- 2026 school year, if they need additional support beyond the 2024-2025 school year.

**For a scholar to receive support up to the date of graduation, the applicable school year contract(s) must be signed by the scholar and the Secretary of Health and Human Services that cover the period up to the scholar's date of graduation.**

### ***Maintaining Scholarship Eligibility in School***

The requirements for scholars in school are:

- (1) **Maintain enrollment.** Scholars must maintain **full-time** enrollment in the health professions training program for which they were awarded a scholarship until that program is completed.
- (2) **Maintain good academic standing.** All scholars must remain **full-time** students in good academic standing, as defined by the institution's academic policies, while enrolled in the scholarship-supported health professions training program.

- (3) **Notify the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program of changes in personal or financial information.** Scholars are required to maintain a current mailing address, e-mail address, name, and financial institution (bank) information in their [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) account to ensure an uninterrupted flow of scholarship payments. In the case of a name change, please upload legal documentation for the change, such as a copy of a marriage certificate or an official name change document.
- (4) **Notify the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program of any changes in enrollment status.** Scholars are required to notify the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program immediately through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) as soon as one of the following events is anticipated or has occurred:
- A repeat in any coursework;
  - A change in 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 any courses during a school year; or
  - A transfer to another school or program.

If the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program has any questions concerning a scholar's eligibility for support, the payment of all benefits may be delayed pending clarification of the scholar's eligibility status.

**IMPORTANT:** National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program applicants, to the greatest extent possible, should notify the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program as soon as they anticipate any change in enrollment status so that timely action can be taken to determine if the scholar is still eligible to receive scholarship support and to avoid an improper payment (see [Disruptions in Enrollment and Scholarship Payment](#)). The scholar must also submit a letter from the school verifying that a change in enrollment status has occurred.

***Additional Support after Receipt of Awards (Continuation Award)***

To request additional scholarship support for the 2025-2026 school year or any subsequent school years, the scholar must submit an electronic In-School Verification, verifying that they are still in good academic standing, and a signed contract for that school year. The scholar may request contracts for subsequent school years through graduation for a maximum of four (4) school years of support. The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will notify the scholar when this submission is due.

The granting of continuation awards depends upon the availability of appropriated funds for the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program. To qualify for a continuation award, the scholar must:

- (1) Be enrolled **full-time** in academic courses leading to the degree for which they were funded;
- (2) Have an existing National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract covering the

- school year in which the scholar is enrolled in a full-time course of study;
- (3) Be in academic good standing; AND
  - (4) Be in compliance with policies and procedures established by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program for requesting continued support.

**Note:** New National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contracts and continuation awards depend on the availability of appropriated funds. Participation in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program becomes effective when a National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract has been signed by both the applicant **AND** the Secretary of Health and Human Services or their designee. The scholar cannot request a continuation award after their existing contract has expired.

### ***The Service Obligation***

The minimum service obligation for an initial award of scholarship support is two (2) years of full-time service at a National Health Service Corps-approved site in a Health Professional Shortage Area, even if the initial award is less than two years of scholarship support. After the initial award of scholarship support, scholars agree to a one-year service commitment for each additional year (or partial year) of scholarship support received. See the Table regarding the Full or Partial Years of Scholarship Support.

At the scholar's request and with written concurrence of the National Health Service Corps-approved site, the Secretary of Health and Human Services may subsequently allow the scholar to convert to half-time service for double the period of the full-time service obligation, by entering into an addendum to their contract (see [Half-Time Clinical Practice](#) for more details).

## **TAX CONSIDERATIONS**

### ***Stipend***

The stipend payment portion of National Health Service Corps scholarship award is subject to federal income tax and the Federal Insurance Contributions Act tax. Applicants chosen for an award must submit an Internal Revenue Service Form W-4.

The information provided on the W-4 form will be used to determine withholding of federal income tax. Scholars who want additional funds deducted should indicate the additional amount on the appropriate line on the W-4 form.

### ***Tuition/Eligible fees and Other Reasonable Costs***

The tuition, eligible fees, and other reasonable costs portions of the scholarship award are **not** subject to federal taxes.

### ***Tax Withholding***

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will **not** withhold state and local income taxes. Scholars should consult their local tax authority regarding applicable state or local taxes for which they may be liable. **It is the responsibility of the scholar to arrange for the payment of any additional federal, state, and local taxes that may be owed.**

## ***W-2 Wage and Tax Statement***

Each January, scholars will receive an annual W-2 Wage and Tax Statement form for the taxable income received under the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program during the prior tax year. Scholars have two options for receipt of the W-2 form:

- (1) By mail to the address provided in the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) OR
- (2) Electronically posted in your [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) account.

If you choose to receive your W-2 by mail, ensure your address and contact information are up to date by November 30 of each year to avoid a delay. The National Health Service Corps generally mails W-2 forms by January 30 of each year.

## **SCHOLARSHIP AWARD AND IN-SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS**

The tuition, eligible fees, and other reasonable costs portion of each scholar's award is based on the information provided by the school where the scholar is enrolled. The entire award amount (tuition, eligible fees, other reasonable costs, and stipend) is then calculated based on the years of scholarship support requested by the scholar.

Scholarship awards are based on the cost of **full-time attendance** at the **initial school of record** (i.e., the school attended/enrolled in at the time the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program application is submitted as indicated on the Acceptance Report/Verification of Good Standing Form). The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program requests information on in-state and out-of-state tuition, eligible fees, and other reasonable costs from each school annually before an award is made.

### ***Payment of Tuition and Fees***

The National Health Service Corps scholarship award covers the following costs:

#### **Tuition and Eligible/Ineligible Expenses**

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will pay tuition and eligible fees directly to the educational institution. The educational institution must submit an invoice to the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program for payment of tuition and eligible fees for each term. Any eligible fees on the invoice that are included in other reasonable costs (discussed below) will **not** be approved for payment to the educational institution and will be paid directly to the scholar.

#### **Eligible Fees Include But Are Not Limited To:**

- Academic Support Services Fee
- Administrative Fee
- Computer Fee
- Disability and/or Health Insurance (For scholar only; must be required by the school for all students)
- Malpractice Insurance (If it is mandatory that it be purchased through the school by all students)
- Laboratory Fees



**Ineligible Fees Include But Are Not Limited To:**

- Accident Insurance
- Attorney Fee
- Educational Associations
- Late Charges/Penalty Fee
- Life Insurance
- Parking Fee

**Repeated Coursework**

If the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program has already paid for a course and the participant repeats the class, the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will **not** pay for the course a second time. Courses taken prior to the receipt of a National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program award that are taken again during a school year that is covered by the scholar's contract are eligible for payment.

If a scholar repeats a course that is taken in addition to a standard full-time course load and the repeated course work does **not** delay the scholar's graduation date, then payment of the scholarship benefits unrelated to the repeated course work will continue.

**Increases in Tuition or Eligible Fees**

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program does **not** guarantee payment for any increases in tuition or eligible fees that are reported by the school after the award has been made. Payment for any increases will be subject to the availability of funds.

**Attending More than One School**

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program can only make payments to **one** school — the initial school of record.

**Summer School Sessions**

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will pay tuition and eligible fees for summer school sessions when: (1) summer school is an academic term normally required by the school for all students in the same program, and (2) the summer session is in progress during a school year that is covered by the scholar's contract.

**Extra Coursework**

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will **ONLY** pay for the courses that are required for graduation from the degree program the scholarship was awarded.

**Other Ineligible Fees**

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will **not** pay for tuition costs unrelated to the

degree/program, penalty, or any additional fees for exceeding the maximum time allowed by the school to complete a distance learning course or program, membership dues for student societies/associations, loan processing fees, or other similar expenses.

### **Fees and Expenses After Graduation**

The National Health Service Corps does not provide financial support to scholars after graduation from their eligible degree programs. For example, if a scholar is required to take a board examination after their graduation, the National Health Service Corps will not pay for the fees associated with the board examination.

### **Transfers to Other Schools**

**Transfers to other academic institutions are strongly discouraged.** Transfers must be approved by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program in advance to ensure continued eligibility for funding and will be considered only for exceptional circumstances. Scholarship awards are based on the cost of attendance at the initial school of record for all school year contracts executed during this Fiscal Year 2024 application cycle. Transfer to another academic institution is strongly discouraged once the applicant has been accepted into the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program. If tuition at the new school is higher than at the initial school of record, payment for the difference in tuition is **not** guaranteed and will be subject to the availability of funds.

### **Changes in Disciplines**

Scholars must complete the degree program for which the scholarship was awarded (e.g., a scholar who receives a National Health Service Corps scholarship to become a nurse practitioner may **not** change disciplines to become a physician).

### **Additional Funding Provided by an Alternative Source**

- *Financial Aid Received Before Notice of Award*
  - (1) *Grants and Scholarships.* 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 the scholar received notice of the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program award, then the school may return payments to the funding source and submit an invoice to the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program for payment.
  - (2) *Loans.* If a new National Health Service Corps scholar has taken out a student loan to cover the cost of tuition and fees for their summer and/or fall semester(s) while waiting for notice of a National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program award, the school should supply an itemized invoice from the academic institution to the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program showing the amount of tuition and fees paid for with the student loan.

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will pay that amount to the

academic institution to cover the tuition costs covered by the loan. After the fall 2024 semester, the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will **not** pay tuition costs covered by any student loans.

- *Financial Aid Received After Notice of Award.* If sources of financial aid other than the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program have been used to pay for tuition and fees after a scholar has received notice of a National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program award, the school will be instructed **not** to submit an invoice to the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program for costs that have already been covered.

If the tuition was paid in full, the school should 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 remaining balance.

### ***Payment of Other Reasonable Educational Costs***

Other reasonable educational costs are an annual payment provided to each National Health Service Corps scholar and dependent on the scholar's discipline, year in school, and the school's costs that each school provides annually to the National Health Service Corps. Other reasonable educational costs are paid directly to the scholar to assist in the payment of the following education-related expenses not covered under tuition and eligible fees, including:

- Books
- Computer rental or purchase (only if required of all students)
- Instruments or clinical supplies
- Travel expenses for one clinical rotation during school
- Uniforms
- Insurance (disability or health for the scholar if not required by the school)

For new scholars, other reasonable educational costs will be paid with the first four months of stipend payment through direct deposit no later than the first week of November. There is no guarantee that all education-related other reasonable educational costs will be fully paid by the National Health Service Corps.

Scholars who opt out of their school's insurance plan will be required to provide additional supporting documents to receive health insurance cost coverage through the Other Reasonable Educational Costs payment from the National Health Service Corps.

### ***Stipend***

During the 2024-2025 school year, National Health Service Corps scholars will receive a monthly stipend (currently estimated at \$1,599 before federal taxes) to assist with living expenses. New scholars will receive stipend payments for July through October in their bank account in a lump-sum payment no later than the first week of November. (This lump-sum payment will also include the other reasonable educational costs payment.) After the lump-sum payment, stipend payments are issued at the end of each month directly to the scholar's bank account.

**Note:** Receipt of the stipend payment **does not** mean that the scholar is employed by the federal government or is eligible for any of the benefits available to federal employees.

The end of the scholarship support will be the date 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 National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program **CANNOT** make payments to scholars when they are **not** enrolled, are **not** attending classes on a **full-time** basis, or do **not** have a current contract in effect.

## **DISRUPTIONS IN ENROLLMENT AND SCHOLARSHIP PAYMENT**

### ***Discontinuation of Scholarship Benefits***

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will discontinue the payment of all benefits (i.e., tuition and eligible fees, other reasonable education costs, and stipend) under the following circumstances:

#### **Leave of Absence**

If you are considering or required to take a leave of absence for medical or personal reasons, please contact the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program **immediately**. A leave of absence, usually granted for no more than one year, will impact your award in the following ways:

- Discontinuation of award for the duration of the Leave of Absence. This includes:
  - Monthly stipend
  - Tuition and fee payment
- Other Reasonable Educational Costs Payment – If you have received other reasonable educational costs for the year, a pro-rated share for the duration of the Leave of Absence must be returned to the National Health Service Corps.
- If you have received funding during the contract year, before the Leave of Absence began, you will still have a service obligation for the full or partial year of support unless you terminate the contract or suspend the scholarship support and return the funds as explained in this Guidance.
- You may consider terminating the contract or suspending support for the contract year in which you take a leave of absence (Please see [Suspending National Health Service Corps Scholarship Support for a Contract Year](#)). Therefore, it is strongly recommended that you contact the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program in advance of seeking approval from your school to take a Leave of Absence.

#### **Changing to Part-time Student Status**

Scholars enrolled in school in a status that is less than full-time **will not** receive any support from the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program.

#### **Withdrawal or Dismissal from School**

A scholar's withdrawal or dismissal from school is a breach of the scholarship contract. The scholar will be liable to repay the amount described in "Failure to Complete Academic Training" under [Breaching the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program](#) section.

## Failure to Maintain Good Academic Standing

Scholars must maintain good academic standing (i.e., not be on academic probation) to remain eligible for support.

### **Termination**

The Secretary of Health and Human Services or their designee may terminate a National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract on or before June 1 of the school year to which the contract pertains, if the scholar does the following:

- Submits a written request to the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) to terminate the contract for that school year; AND
- Repays all amounts paid to, or on behalf of, the scholar for that school year.

School Year Contract	Deadline to Terminate National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program School Year Contract
School Year 2024-2025	On or Before June 1, 2025
School Year 2025-2026	On or Before June 1, 2026
School Year 2026-2027	On or Before June 1, 2027
School Year 2027-2028	On or Before June 1, 2028

If a scholar meets these requirements and the Secretary or their designee terminates the contract, no obligation will be incurred under the contract that was successfully terminated. If a scholar does not meet these requirements, they will still have a service obligation for the full or partial year of support received under the contract.

**EXAMPLE:** A medical student signs contracts for four school years of scholarship support through their date of graduation. During the third school year, the scholar decides to terminate their contract.

If by June 1 of the third school year, the scholar submits a written request to terminate their contract for that school year AND repays all amounts paid to them or on their behalf under the contract for that school year, the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will terminate their contract for that school year, eliminating any service obligation for the third school year of support.

If, however, the scholar does **not** submit a request to terminate the contract and instead elects to retain the scholarship support received from July 1 through September 30, they **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.

When a National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract covering a particular school year is

terminated, the service obligation incurred by the scholar under a prior contract (or contracts) remains binding. Prior school year contracts may **not** be terminated after June 1 of the school year to which the contract pertains.

### **Suspending National Health Service Corps Scholarship Support for a Contract Year**

A scholar may suspend National Health Service Corps support for a contract year if by June 1 of the contract year the scholar:

- (1) Submits a written request to the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) to suspend support for that school year; AND
- (2) Repays all amounts paid to, or on behalf of, the scholar for that school year.

If the scholar suspends a year of support, and repays any funds received for that school year, the Bureau of Health Workforce will amend their initial contract(s) to reflect the support for the new school year(s), **not** to exceed a total of four years of support.

EXAMPLE: A medical student signs contracts for four school years of scholarship support through her date of graduation (i.e., 2024-2025, 2025-2026, 2026-2027 and 2027-2028). During the third school year (2026-2027), the scholar goes on a leave of absence from October 1 through June 30.

If by June 1 of the third school year, the scholar submits a written request to suspend National Health Service Corps support for that school year AND repays all amounts paid to them or on their behalf under the contract for that school year, the scholar will **not** incur a service obligation for the third school year of support (2026-2027). The Bureau of Health Workforce would amend the contract to change the year of support stated in the contract from 2026-2027 to school year 2028-2029. Thus, the scholar would receive scholarship support for school years 2027-2028 and 2028-2029 after the suspension of support due to the leave of absence.

If, however, the scholar does **not** suspend the scholarship support for school year 2026-2027 and instead elects to retain the scholarship support received from July 1 through September 30, they would owe one year of service for the partial third year of support they received and would be eligible to receive only one additional school year of scholarship support.

**Note:** In either of the scenarios above, if the scholar accepts any portion of the scholarship support (stipend, tuition, or other reasonable cost payment) and does **not** submit a request to terminate or suspend support and repay the funds received, they will be required to perform **a full year of clinical service** under the terms and conditions of the contract.

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

Overpayments are scholarship payment(s) to a scholar or to a school on the scholar's behalf, to which the scholar was **not** entitled because they were on an approved leave of absence, enrolled as a less than full-time student, or no longer enrolled in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program-approved course of study.

Overpayments may also occur due to administrative error. A scholar receiving an overpayment must

immediately contact the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program, follow up in writing, and make arrangements to promptly return the overpayment(s) to avoid interest accrual and debt collection procedures. Stipend payments made in a prior tax year(s) will require the gross amount to be returned.

- (1) **Administrative offset.** For scholars who receive subsequent funding under the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program, the overpayments may be collected through administrative offset. The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program may withhold scholarship funds payable to, or on behalf of, the scholar (including stipends, other reasonable educational costs, and if necessary, tuition/fees payments) until the overpayment is repaid in full.
- (2) **Debt collection procedures.** 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., a federal income tax refund) and referral of the overpayments to the Department of Justice for enforced collection.

### ***Resumption of Scholarship Benefits***

To resume benefits under an existing scholarship contract, the scholar must submit documentation from a school official confirming that the scholar is:

- (1) Enrolled as a **full-time** student in courses leading to the degree for which the scholarship was awarded;
- (2) In good academic standing;
- (3) Not repeating coursework; and
- (4) Date the scholar will resume educational program study.

The scholar will also need to complete and return an updated In-School Verification for the term in which they will be returning.

Requests for the resumption of scholarship benefits will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program to determine the scholar's eligibility to receive continuing funds. For scholars who have **not** repaid overpayments received, the resumption of scholarship benefits will be subject to an administrative offset as a way to collect the overpayment. An administrative offset is described in the [Collection of Scholarship Benefit Overpayments](#).

Benefits will **not** be resumed for the school year of a scholarship contract that has been terminated (see [Termination](#)).

### ***Special Situations That Impact Scholarship Funding***

Certain situations might impact the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program payment of tuition, other reasonable educational costs and/or stipend.

### **Distance and/or Online Learning Programs**

Scholars who are participating in distance or online learning programs may **not** receive full funding for each year of their program to the extent that their course work does **not** coincide with the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program's definition of a school year, running from July 1 through June 30. Also, the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program **will not** pay for any penalty or additional distance learning fees that are incurred for **not** completing the course load or program in the required timeframe.

### **Collection of Delinquent Debt**

Under the Treasury Offset Program, the United States Department of the Treasury (Treasury) is authorized to offset a scholar's National Health Service Corps scholarship payments if the scholar is delinquent on a federal debt. In addition, the Treasury is authorized to offset scholarship payments for application to the scholar's state debts and court-ordered child support payments. In keeping with Presidential Executive Orders concerning compliance with child support orders, the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program stresses the importance of honoring any child support obligations the scholar may have.

### **Participation in Other Scholarship Programs**

Receipt of a National Health Service Corps scholarship award does **not** automatically preclude a scholar from receiving funds from other programs **as long as no service obligation 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 National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program.

Applicants should contact their school's financial aid office to determine how the receipt of a National Health Service Corps scholarship may affect them. Tuition and fees already paid by another program should **not** be submitted to the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program for payment unless payment from the other source occurred before the scholar received notice of their National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program award and reimbursement will be made to the funding source.

### **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS WHILE IN POSTGRADUATE TRAINING**

The National Health Service Corps will grant a maximum of five years for postgraduate training from the beginning of the initial postgraduate training to complete all required training specific to the participant's discipline and specialty. The training to be undertaken must be consistent with the needs of the National Health Service Corps.

**Physicians** are required to complete postgraduate training in an accredited primary care training program in a National Health Service Corps-approved specialty and must begin performance of their National Health Service Corps service obligation no later than six months after completion of their postgraduate training program. However, physicians may request to defer (i.e., postpone) their period of obligated service to complete advanced training (e.g., chief residency or fellowship) if it is consistent with the needs of the National Health Service Corps.



**Dentists, Advanced Practice Registered Nurses, and Physician Assistants** are **not** required but may request to defer (i.e., postpone) their period of obligated service to complete National Health Service Corps-approved postgraduate training. Scholars in these disciplines who choose not to complete postgraduate training must begin performance of their National Health Service Corps service obligation no later than six months after graduation from their health professions training program. Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants with a Psychiatric specialty must serve in a Mental Health, Health Professional Shortage Area.

***Scholar Requirements While in Postgraduate Training***

During the final year of health professions education, the National Health Service Corps will send scholars information on National Health Service Corps-approved postgraduate training programs and the process for getting approval of their postgraduate training plans. Scholars may defer (i.e., postpone) their period of obligated service while they complete postgraduate training (including residency, chief residency, or fellowship) if the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program determines that the training is consistent with the needs of the National Health Service Corps to deliver primary health care services in Health Professional Shortage Areas.

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program expects eligible scholars to start their postgraduate training after graduation on or around July 1. Scholars may pursue only the postgraduate training that the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program has officially approved and **may not** make any changes to the type or length of postgraduate training without prior approval from the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program.

**Note:** When selecting a postgraduate training program, it is the responsibility of the scholar to research the program. The program must provide adequate training to enable the scholar to sit for the appropriate boards, if applicable.

Scholars who enter training that is not approved by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will be in breach of their contract and subject to the damages provision described in [Breaching the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program Contract](#).

***Approved Postgraduate Training Programs***

**Postgraduate Training for Physicians**

Allopathic and osteopathic medical scholars **MUST** complete a primary care National Health Service Corps-approved residency prior to beginning service or be subject to the damages provision described in [Breaching the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program Contract](#). For allopathic and osteopathic medical scholars entering postgraduate training in 2024-2025, the approved residencies are accredited programs in:

<b>Postgraduate Training</b>	<b>Years</b>
Family Medicine	3 or 4 years
General Internal Medicine	3 years

<b>Postgraduate Training</b>	<b>Years</b>
General Pediatrics	3 years
Obstetrics-Gynecology	4 years
General Psychiatry (including Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists; Substance Use Disorder Psychiatrists)	4 years
Internal Medicine/Family Medicine	4 years
Internal Medicine/Pediatrics	4 years
Family Medicine/Psychiatry	5 years
Internal Medicine/Psychiatry	5 years
Rotating internship with a request to complete a residency in one of the above specialties (Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine only)	1 year

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program may approve, on a case-by-case basis, and consistent with the needs of the National Health Service Corps, additional postgraduate training not listed above.

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 unable to commit themselves to primary care postgraduate training in any of the above-listed approved residencies are advised not to apply for participation in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program.

#### **Physician Chief Residency (Optional)**

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program may approve, on a case-by-case basis, and consistent with the needs of the National Health Service Corps, requests submitted by scholars in their last year of residency training to complete a one-year chief residency program.

#### **Physician Fellowships (Optional)**

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program may approve, on a case-by-case basis and consistent with the needs of the National Health Service Corps, requests submitted by scholars in their last year of residency training to complete one of the following fellowships:

- (1)** A two-year child psychiatry fellowship that follows the completion of residency training in general psychiatry;
- (2)** A one- to two-year addiction medicine fellowship following the completion of residency training in family practice or general internal medicine or dual residency in internal medicine/family practice;
- (3)** A one-year obstetrics/gynecology fellowship that follows the completion of residency training in family medicine; or
- (4)** A one-year geriatrics fellowship that follows the completion of residency training in family medicine or general internal medicine.

### ***Postgraduate Training for Dentists (Optional)***

Dental students are **not** required to complete a postgraduate training program. For dental scholars who decide to enter postgraduate training in 2024-2025, the approved postgraduate training programs are accredited programs in:

<b>Postgraduate Training</b>	<b>Years</b>
General Practice Dentistry	1 year
Advanced Education in General Dentistry	1 year
Pediatric Dentistry	2 years
Public Health Dentistry	2 years
Geriatrics Dentistry Fellowship	2 years

Dental scholars are strongly encouraged to complete *one* of the above-listed postgraduate clinical training programs approved by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program prior to commencing service in underserved areas. Dental students who wish to pursue training other than the programs listed above are advised **not** to apply for participation in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program.

### ***Dental Fellowship (Optional)***

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program may approve, on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the needs of the National Health Service Corps, requests submitted by scholars in their last year of postgraduate training to complete a one-year Geriatric Dentistry fellowship.

### ***Postgraduate Training for Physician Assistants (Optional)***

For physician assistant scholars entering postgraduate training in 2024-2025, the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program approves a one-year residency in a primary care specialty.

### ***Postgraduate Training for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (Optional)***

For advanced practice registered nurse scholars entering postgraduate training in 2024-2025, the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program approves a one-year residency in a primary care specialty.

### ***Ineligible Postgraduate Training Programs***

Postgraduate training programs that are **not approved** include the following:

- (1) Non-primary health care programs (e.g., emergency medicine, surgery, radiology, neurology, anesthesiology, ophthalmology, pathology, oral surgery, endodontics, sports medicine, global health, cardiology) or other programs that the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program determines are **not** consistent with the needs of the National Health Service Corps to provide primary health care services in Health Professional Shortage Areas;
- (2) Postgraduate health professions education conducted by a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States. Scholars in such programs incur military service obligations that conflict with the service obligation required under the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program; and

(3) Transitional residency training (except as specified for Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine).

Scholars **do not** receive National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program financial support while participating in postgraduate training. For example, the National Health Service Corps **will not** pay for Step 3 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination or Level 3 of the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination taken in the first year of postgraduate training.

Additionally, scholars **do not** incur an additional period of obligated service for participating in any type of postgraduate training. Moreover, periods of postgraduate training **are not** credited toward satisfying the scholarship service obligation, even though the training may occur in a facility located in a Health Professional Shortage Area.

## **TRANSITIONING FROM TRAINING TO SERVICE**

### ***Licensure/Certification Requirements***

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

Scholars who intend to practice as (1) federal employees, (2) federal contractors, or (3) employees of a tribal health program (see the Glossary in the [Appendix](#) in a state in which the tribal health program provides services described in its contract/compact, must have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license, certificate or registration (whichever is applicable) in a state.

All other applicants must have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license in the state where their National Health Service Corps-approved site is located. Responsibility for obtaining the required state license prior to the service start date rests with the scholar. Because scholars serve in Health Professional Shortage Areas throughout the country, each scholar must ensure that their professional training program will provide broad eligibility to obtain a license in multiple states. In addition, each scholar must meet the applicable board and licensure/certification requirements.

### **Physicians**

To ensure that physician scholars are able to fulfill their service obligation upon completion of their primary care postgraduate training, all physicians must successfully complete Steps 1, 2 (clinical skills and clinical knowledge components), and 3 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination or Levels 1, 2 (cognitive evaluation and performance evaluation components), and 3 of the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination by the time they complete their primary care residency training program. Specifically, the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program expects **all** allopathic and osteopathic physician scholars to **take and pass**:

- Step 1 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination or Level 1 of the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of their allopathic/osteopathic health professions degree program.
- Step 2 (both components) of the United States Medical Licensing Examination or Level 2 (both

components) of the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> year of their allopathic/osteopathic health professions degree program.

- Step 3 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination or Level 3 of the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of their postgraduate (residency) training program.

Allopathic/osteopathic physician scholars unable to pass all parts of the licensing examination and obtain a license to practice medicine by the time their service is scheduled to begin should immediately contact the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program in writing to request a suspension. See [Suspensions of the Service Obligation](#).

### **Dentists**

All dentists must successfully complete the National Board Dental Examination Parts 1 and 2 prior to beginning their National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program service obligation. To assure that dentists will be able to obtain a license to practice in states with the greatest dental needs, the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program reserves the right to determine which regional or state clinical licensing exam the dental scholar should take and pass. Dental scholars are expected to take the appropriate exams at the earliest possible date.

If the scholar is unsuccessful in passing the exams and obtaining a license, the scholar should immediately contact the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program in writing to request a suspension. See [Suspensions of the Service Obligation](#).

### **Advanced Practice Registered Nurses and Physician Assistants**

All nurse midwives, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants must successfully pass a discipline-specific and, if applicable, a specialty-specific, national certification exam prior to beginning their service obligation and are expected to take the appropriate certification exam at the earliest possible date.

If the scholar is unsuccessful in passing the national certification exam and obtaining a license, the scholar should immediately contact the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program in writing to request a suspension. See [Suspensions of the Service Obligation](#).

### ***Finding an Eligible National Health Service Corps-Approved Site***

All scholars will be contacted by a National Health Service Corps representative at the beginning of their last year of school or prior to the completion of their approved postgraduate training through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) (to assist scholars in successfully finding a National Health Service Corps-approved site).

Scholars will receive [resources to guide their National Health Service Corps employment and site search process](#), which includes referral to the [Health Workforce Connector](#) website containing job vacancies for which scholars in each discipline and specialty can compete to fulfill their service obligation. Scholars may also wish to participate in [Health Resources and Services Administration Virtual Job Fairs](#).

Each year, the National Health Service Corps utilizes Health Professional Shortage Area scores to determine which Health Professional Shortage Areas are of greatest shortage for priority assignment of National Health Service Corps scholars. Scholars will be subject to the Health Professional Shortage Area score in effect at the time they begin their service commitment, which may be upon graduation or on completion of postgraduate training.

The Health Workforce Connector contains a free searchable database of vacant positions at National Health Service Corps-approved sites. Scholars are eligible to compete for all scholarship vacancies in their discipline/specialty. If interested in a position listed on the Health Workforce Connector, scholars must contact the site directly to apply. The National Health Service Corps also provides dedicated staff to assist scholars in successfully finding a practice site.

Scholars are contractually obligated to practice at a National Health Service Corps-approved site located in a Health Professional Shortage Area. To review current year [Health Professional Shortage Area requirements](#) please visit the National Health Service Corps website's scholars pages. The minimum Health Professional Shortage Area score threshold is published each year for scholars who are in their final year of health professions training. The National Health Service Corps reserves the right to make final decisions on all sites to comply with statutory requirements.

There is no guarantee that Health Professional Shortage Areas or sites that are approved at the time of application for National Health Service Corps scholars will still be available/approved at the time scholars begin their service. National Health Service Corps offers extensive employment assistance to all scholars. If employment assistance is required beyond the six-month timeframe for finding employment, scholars will be recommended for default.

**Students uncertain of a commitment to primary health care practice in [Health Professional Shortage Areas](#) throughout the United States or who are unable to relocate based on the National Health Service Corps program requirements are advised not to apply for the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program.**

National Health Service Corps-approved sites are health care facilities that provide outpatient comprehensive primary health services to populations residing in Health Professional Shortage Areas.

### **Eligible Site Types**

The following types of sites may be eligible to become a National Health Service Corps-approved site.

#### **Auto-Approved Sites**

- a. Federally Qualified Health Centers
- b. Federally Qualified Health Center Look-Alikes
- c. Indian Health Service Facilities
- d. Tribally Operated 638 Health Programs, Dual-Funded (Tribal Health Clinic and Federally Qualified Health Center 330 Funded), Urban Indian Health Programs and Indian Health Hospitals
- e. Federal Prisons

- f. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Health Service Corps Facilities

#### Other Eligible Sites

- a. State Prisons
- b. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Certified Rural Health Clinics
- c. Critical Access Hospitals
- d. Community Mental Health Centers
- e. State or Local Health Departments
- f. Community Outpatient Facilities
- g. Private Practices
- h. School-Based Clinics (that are not affiliated with a Federally Qualified Health Center or Look-Alike)
- i. Mobile Units (that are not affiliated with a Federally Qualified Health Center or Look-Alike)
- j. Free Clinics
- k. Substance Use Disorder Treatment Facilities

#### Ineligible Site Types

The following are **not** eligible National Health Service Corps sites, even if they are located in a Health Professional Shortage Area:

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

#### **Practice Agreement Types**

There are three types of National Health Service Corps practice types: Federal Assignment, Private Practice Assignment, and Private Practice Option.

Generally, National Health Service Corps scholars will serve either as federal employees (United States Public Health Service Commissioned Officers or Civil Servants) or as Private Practice Assignment assignees who are employees of a public or private entity, receiving an income at least equal to what they would have received as a civilian employee of the United States Government, including malpractice insurance with tail coverage (either commercial or through the Federal Tort Claims Act).

In some circumstances, a National Health Service Corps scholar is **not** subject to the personnel system of the

site to which they are assigned, does **not** receive a salary equivalent to a civilian employee of the United States Government, and/or is **not** provided malpractice insurance (including tail coverage) by the site. In these cases, the clinician can request to fulfill their obligation through the Private Practice Option.

Under the Private Practice Option, a National Health Service Corps scholar may be:

1. self-employed (i.e., a solo practitioner or co-owner);
2. part of a group practice;
3. an independent contractor; or
4. a salaried employee of an eligible National Health Service Corps-approved site who is **not** receiving a salary and malpractice coverage at least equal to what they would receive as a federal civil servant.

The Private Practice Option is open only to full-time scholars, and service under the Private Practice Option must be at a National Health Service Corps-approved site.

In order to serve under the Private Practice Option, a National Health Service Corps scholar must apply for a Private Practice Option Contract Addendum, which is a written agreement that stipulates the special requirements that apply to those serving under the Private Practice Option. Once the Private Practice Option Contract Addendum is countersigned by the Secretary or their designee, the Addendum will go into immediate effect.

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

If you are...	and your salary and malpractice/tail coverage are...	you will serve under a:
A federal civil service employee or an active member of the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps	provided by a federal government entity	Federal Assignment
NOT a federal employee but you are an employee of an eligible National Health Service Corps-approved site	<i>at least equal to</i> what you would earn as a civilian employee of the United States Government; site provides malpractice insurance with tail coverage (either commercial or through the Federal Tort Claims Act).	Private Practice Assignment
NOT a federal employee but you are an employee of an eligible National Health Service Corps-approved site	<i>less than</i> what you would earn as a civilian employee of the United States Government; site does <b>not</b> provide malpractice	Private Practice Option



If you are...	and your salary and malpractice/tail coverage are...	you will serve under a:
	insurance (including tail coverage) by the site.	
NOT a federal employee but an independent contractor to a National Health Service Corps-approved site, or a member or co-owner of a group practice in a National Health Service Corps-approved site, or a solo practitioner in a National Health Service Corps-approved site	whatever income you earn or generate; whatever malpractice coverage you purchase or receive	Private Practice Option

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR SERVICE OBLIGATION

Every scholar is required to engage in the clinical practice of the profession for which they applied and were awarded a National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract at one or more National Health Service Corps-approved site(s). All National Health Service Corps scholars must provide clinical primary health care services **at an approved site in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area at the time-of-service assignment**, as determined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services or their designee. The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program allows one (1) National Health Service Corps scholar per discipline to serve at a given National Health Service Corps-approved site within a yearly placement cycle. The National Health Service Corps will consider requests from National Health Service Corps-approved sites for up to one (1) additional scholar placement per discipline per placement cycle on an exceptional/case-by-case basis.

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

The National Health Service Corps eligible primary care providers include health professionals trained and licensed in the disciplines listed below. Every participant is required to engage in the full-time or half-time (as applicable) clinical practice of the profession for which they applied and were awarded a National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract, at their National Health Service Corps-approved site(s). Scholarship Program awards are linked to full-time or half-time status. For more information on serving half-time, see [Changes and Disruptions to your Service Obligation](#).

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

### Health Professional Shortage Area: Primary Care

Disciplines	Specialty	Clinical Practice Requirements for Primary Care
<b>Physicians:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Allopathic</b></li> <li>• <b>Osteopathic</b></li> </ul>	Family medicine, general internal medicine general pediatrics, geriatrics	<b>Full-Time (40 hours/week)</b> <b>Direct Clinical Care at National Health Service Corps-approved site:</b> At least 36 hours/week <sup>1</sup> <b>Teaching<sup>2</sup>:</b> Up to 8 hours/week <sup>3</sup> <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week  <b>Half-Time (20 hours/week)</b> <b>Direct Clinical Care at National Health Service Corps-approved site:</b> At least 18 hours/week <sup>1</sup> <b>Teaching:</b> Up to 4 hours/week <sup>3</sup> <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week
<b>Physician assistants and nurse practitioners</b>	Adult, family, pediatric women's health, geriatrics	

### Health Professional Shortage Area: Dental Health

Disciplines	Specialty	Clinical Practice Requirements for Dental Health
<b>Dentists:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Doctor of dental surgery</b></li> <li>• <b>Doctor of medical dentistry</b></li> </ul>	General dentistry, pediatric dentistry	<b>Full-Time (40 hours/week)</b> <b>Direct Clinical Care at National Health Service Corps-approved site:</b> At least 36 hours/week <sup>1</sup> <b>Teaching<sup>2</sup>:</b> Up to 8 hours/week <sup>3</sup> <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week  <b>Half-Time (20 hours/week)</b> <b>Direct Clinical Care at National Health Service Corps-approved site:</b> At least 16 hours/week <sup>1</sup> <b>Teaching:</b> Up to 4 hours/week <sup>3</sup> <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week
<b>Dental hygienists</b>	N/A	

### Health Professional Shortage Area: Mental Health

Disciplines	Specialty	Clinical Practice Requirements for Mental Health
<b>Physicians:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Allopathic</b></li> <li>• <b>Osteopathic</b></li> </ul>	Psychiatry (both general child and adolescent psychiatrists are eligible)	<b>Full-Time (40 hours/week)</b> <b>Direct Clinical Care at National Health Service Corps-approved site:</b> At least 20 hours/week <sup>1</sup> <b>Teaching<sup>2</sup>:</b> Up to 8 hours/week <sup>3</sup> <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week  <b>Half-Time (20 hours/week)</b> <b>Direct Clinical Care at National Health Service Corps-approved site:</b> At least 10 hours/week <sup>1</sup> <b>Teaching:</b> Up to 4 hours/week <sup>3</sup> <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week

Disciplines	Specialty	Clinical Practice Requirements for Mental Health
Nurse practitioners and physician assistants	Mental health & psychiatry	<p><b>Full-Time (40 hours/week)</b>  <b>Direct Clinical Care at National Health Service Corps-approved site:</b> At least 20 hours/week<sup>1</sup>  <b>Teaching<sup>2</sup>:</b> Up to 8 hours/week<sup>3</sup>  <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 4 hours/week</p> <p><b>Half-Time (20 hours/week)</b>  <b>Direct Clinical Care at National Health Service Corps-approved site:</b> At least 10 hours/week<sup>1</sup>  <b>Teaching:</b> Up to 4 hours/week<sup>3</sup>  <b>Administrative Duties:</b> Up to 2 hours/week</p>

<sup>1</sup>Remaining hours to be met through combination of administrative duties and/or direct clinical care at approved site(s) and/or approved alternative settings to address continuity of care (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, shelters, or other community-based settings).

<sup>2</sup>If a participant is serving full-time under a Federal Assignment or Private Practice Assignment and participating in a National Health Service Corps approved site that is also a Health Resource and Services Administration-funded Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program awardee as authorized under 42.U.S.C. § 256h, they are allowed to count teaching activities up to 20 hours/week; the remaining 20 hours must be spent providing patient care at approved site(s), of which 8 hours/week may be spent providing patient care in an approved alternative setting to address continuity of care (e.g., hospital, nursing home, or shelter) or performing administrative duties up to 4 hours/week.

<sup>3</sup>Teaching hours count towards minimum Direct Clinical Care hours.

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

All school-based clinics must be National Health Service Corps-approved sites. Scholars serving at school-based clinics as their primary site(s) must provide required documentation (e.g., In-Service Verification Forms) that demonstrates they are meeting National Health Service Corps service requirements at their facility. The National Health Service Corps understands that the school-based clinic may **not** be open year-round. In order to meet the National Health Service Corps' clinical practice requirements, scholars who are working at school-based clinics that are **not** open for a minimum of 45 weeks per service year have the option to work at an additional National Health Service Corps-approved site (or sites). However, the additional National Health Service Corps-approved site (or sites) must satisfy the Health Professional Shortage Area requirements identified in the scholar's initial National Health Service Corps Scholarship contract. If the scholar's school is closed for a portion of the year, and the scholar does **not** have an alternate National Health Service Corps-approved site that will enable the scholar to fulfill the National Health Service Corps' annual clinical practice requirements, the scholar's service obligation will be extended.

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

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

Applicants must list in their application both the Indian Health Service Hospital and its affiliated outpatient clinic or both the Critical Access Hospital and its affiliated outpatient clinic. The following requirements apply:

**Clinical Practice Service Requirement: Indian Health Service Hospital or Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services-Approved Critical Access Hospital**

Hourly Schedule	Minimum Hours	Minimum hours providing patient care in the affiliated Outpatient Clinic <sup>4</sup>	Remaining hours may be spent in TEACHING	Remaining hours may be spent in ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES	Remaining hours may be spent in OTHER SERVICES <sup>5</sup>
Full-time	40 hours/week	At least 24 hours/week	Up to 8 hours/week	Up to 4 hours/week	Up to 16 hours/week
Half-time	20 hours/week	At least 11 hours/week	Up to 4 hours/week	Up to 2 hours/week	Up to 8 hours/week

<sup>4</sup>Except that half-time obstetricians/gynecologists, family medicine physicians who practice obstetrics on a regular basis, and certified nurse midwives must spend at least 11 hours providing patient care in the hospital-affiliated outpatient clinic.

<sup>5</sup>Remaining hours spent providing patient care at the hospital or the affiliated outpatient clinic.

**Definitions of Teaching, and Administrative Duties**

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

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

Note that if the National Health Service Corps scholar is actually furnishing clinical service (that does **not** otherwise qualify as “clinical administrative, management or other activities” while a student/resident observes, such service should be counted as time spent providing patient care, **not**

teaching, as the National Health Service Corps scholar is treating the patient.

### ***Telehealth and Home Health Policies***

**Telehealth.** Read the following section carefully, as the requirements for telehealth have changed. Telehealth delivered services **cannot** exceed more than 75 percent of the minimum weekly hours required to provide direct patient care, under the National Health Service Corps service contract. National Health Service Corps participants must comply with all applicable telemedicine policies of their site as well as all-applicable federal and state rules and policies regarding telemedicine services.

National Health Service Corps scholars who are performing telehealth are encouraged to utilize the Health Resources and Services Administration's [Telehealth Resource Centers](#). These centers provide free telehealth technical assistance and training for providers using telehealth.

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

- (1) Scholars must practice in accordance with applicable licensure and professional standards.
- (2) Scholars must be available to provide in-person care at each telehealth site, regardless of whether such sites are distant or originating.
- (3) Sites may direct telehealth to be conducted to or from an approved **alternative setting**, in compliance with program guidelines. Approved alternative settings such as hospitals, nursing homes, and shelters, must be in a Health Professional Shortage Area and must provide services that are appropriate for the discipline and specialty of the clinician and the services provided. Services at alternative sites must be an **extension** of the comprehensive primary care provided at the National Health Service Corps-approved site.
- (4) Self-employed clinicians are **not** eligible to earn National Health Service Corps service credit for telehealth services.
- (5) [Telehealth](#) services must use an interactive telecommunications system. Telephone and email systems do **not** meet the telehealth requirements.

If telehealth services are provided to patients in another state, the clinician must be licensed to practice (including compacts) in both the state where the clinician is located (i.e., the distant site) and the state where the patient is physically located (i.e., the originating site).

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

## PROGRAM COMPLIANCE

### ***Service Obligation Start Date***

Scholars are required to begin service as soon as possible upon graduation from school or, if applicable, upon completion of a National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program-approved postgraduate training program, but no later than six months after completion of their training.

Credit toward satisfying the period of obligated service under the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract does not begin until the scholar does the following:

- (1) Passes required licensing and national certification exams;
- (2) Obtains a full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted health professional license to practice in the state where the National Health Service Corps-approved site is located (unless they have a license in another state and will work for a federal entity); **and**
- (3) Begins to provide primary health services in a clinical practice at the National Health Service Corps-approved site(s).

Scholars who, for any reason, fail to begin or complete service at their assigned site(s) are in breach of the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract and incur the damages described in [Breaching the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program Contract](#).

### **Physicians**

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

### **Dentists**

Dentists who elect to pursue a residency approved by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program are expected to begin service within six months of their approved residency completion (generally within six months of June 30). Dentists who do **not** complete postgraduate training must secure the necessary licensure and begin service at a National Health Service Corps-approved site within six months of graduation from school. Please note that once a dentist begins their service obligation, the dentist will **not** be able to pursue a residency program.

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

Nurse practitioners and physician assistants who elect to pursue a residency approved by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program are expected to begin service within six months of their approved residency completion (generally within six months of June 30). Nurse midwives, nurse practitioners specializing in adult medicine, family medicine, geriatrics, primary care pediatrics, psychiatrics-mental health, or women's health, and physician assistants who do **not** complete optional postgraduate training must secure the necessary licensure and certification and begin service at a National Health Service Corps-approved site within six months of graduation from school. Please note that once a nurse practitioner or

physician assistant begins their service obligation, he or she will **not** be able to pursue a residency program. Nurse practitioners and physician assistants who elect to pursue a residency approved by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program are expected to begin service within six months of their approved residency completion.

### ***Last Day of Service***

The last day of the service obligation is determined in whole years from the start date. For example, the last day of service for a scholar with a three-year service obligation who began service on July 15, 2026, would be July 14, 2029. The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program may adjust the end date if the scholar is away from the site for more than 280 full-time working hours or 140 half-time working hours (which translates into seven (7) weeks or 35 workdays per service year - see [Worksite Absences](#)).

### ***Employment Status***

The scholar's service contract with the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program is separate and independent from any employment contract they sign with an approved site.

National Health Service Corps scholars are required to work a specified minimum number of hours (defined in [Requirements for Full-Time and Half-Time Clinical Practice](#)). If your **employment** contract stipulates fewer hours (and your salary is based on those hours), your employment will not satisfy the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program service obligation requirements. Additionally, the site administrator must verify your compliance with the applicable clinical practice requirements every six months during your period of obligated service.

### ***Worksite Absences***

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

- (1) Full-time participants are allowed to spend no more than seven (7) weeks (35 full-time workdays or 280 full-time working hours) per service year away from the National Health Service Corps-approved site for vacation, holidays, continuing professional education, illness, or any other reason.
- (2) Half-time participants are allowed to spend no more than seven (7) weeks (35 half-time workdays or 140 half-time working hours) per service year away from the National Health Service Corps-approved site for vacation, holidays, continuing professional education, illness, or any other reason.

If a participant works more than the minimum number of hours per week (40 for full-time participants, 20 for half-time participants), the only time spent away from the site that will need to be reported (see [Service Verification](#)) and deducted from the allowed absences per service year (as set forth this section) are the hours of absence that cause a participant's work hours to fall below the National Health Service Corps' required minimum number of hours per week. For example, a half-time participant who works 32 hours a

week would **not** need to report 12 hours of sick leave because the participant has still met the National Health Service Corps' minimum service requirement of 20 hours a week. Absences over 280 full-time working hours or 140 half-time working hours (which translates into seven (7) weeks or 35 workdays) will result in the extension of the participant's service obligation. Participants who have a medical or personal emergency that will result in an extended period of absence *will need to request a suspension* of the National Health Service Corps service obligation and provide supporting documentation. The National Health Service Corps **cannot** guarantee that a suspension request will be approved. If a suspension is requested and approved, the participant's service obligation end date will be extended accordingly (see [Suspensions of the Service Obligation](#)).

**Note:** Absences that exceed 35 workdays (280 full-time working hours or 140 half-time working hours) will extend the scholar's obligation end date. If a scholar's obligation end date is extended, any additional absences during the period of extension will result in further extension of the scholar's obligation end date.

It is important to emphasize that a scholar's National Health Service Corps obligation end date, which is provided at the beginning of the scholar's obligation, is only an estimate of when a National Health Service Corps scholar should complete his or her service obligation. The scholar's National Health Service Corps obligation end date is contingent on the scholar's attendance at their National Health Service Corps-approved site and/or consistency with National Health Service Corps clinical practice requirements. Therefore, a scholar's obligation end date will be extended should they exceed the maximum allowed 280 full-time working hours or 140 half-time working hours (which translates into seven (7) weeks or 35 workdays) away from their approved site per service year.

### ***In-Service Verification***

Every National Health Service Corps scholar who has completed their training and is practicing at a National Health Service Corps-approved site must submit In-Service Verification documentation for each six months of service. The In-Service Verification is available through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) and must be completed and electronically signed by the scholar and verified by the site point of contact. The In-Service Verification will also record the time spent away from the site (e.g., the total number of days during the six-month period that the scholar fell below the minimum service requirement).

Scholars who fail to complete and submit their In-Service Verifications on time may jeopardize receiving service credit and may also be recommended for default. While the National Health Service Corps will take steps to alert both the scholar and the site point of contact to the due date for an In-Service Verification submission, it is the scholar's responsibility to ensure that their National Health Service Corps-approved site completes the verification in a timely manner.



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

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

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

Scholars who intend to transfer to another National Health Service Corps-approved site must complete their National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program obligation at their current National Health Service Corps-approved site prior to submitting a Loan Repayment Program application. When completing the two-year National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program application, scholar applicants who intend to transfer to a new site will need to submit the new site for the two-year National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program so that the Health Resources and Services Administration can verify future employment.

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

#### **Delaying the Start of Service**

If scholars encounter an extreme circumstance that might delay the start of their service obligation, they can request a suspension. Please note that a request for a suspension does not guarantee that it will be granted.

Requests must be submitted through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) and include a detailed written explanation and appropriate supporting documentation (see [Suspensions of the Service Obligation and Payment Obligation](#)).

#### **Requirements for Full-Time and Half-Time Clinical Practice**

Upon graduation (or, if applicable, completion of approved postgraduate training), scholars must engage in one year of full-time clinical practice at one or more National Health Service Corps-approved sites for each full or partial school year of support received, except that the minimum service obligation for full-time scholars is two years. The maximum service obligation for full-time scholars is four years.

**Full-Time Clinical Practice.** Full-time clinical practice is defined, for the purposes of the National Health Service Corps, as a minimum of 40 hours per week, for a minimum of 45 weeks each service year. The 40 hours per week may be compressed into no less than four days per week, with no more

than 12 hours of work to be performed in any 24-hour period.

Scholars do **not** receive service credit for hours worked over the required 40 hours per week and excess hours **cannot** be applied to any other work week. *Also, time spent “on call” will **not** be counted towards the service commitment, except to the extent the provider is providing patient care during that period.*

Additional rules apply based on discipline and practice location. For these rules, please see [Eligible Primary Care Providers and Clinical Practice Requirements](#).

**Half-Time Clinical Practice.** When scholars sign the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract, they agree to serve full-time. However, the Secretary of Health and Human Services may allow a scholar to complete the service obligation through half-time service, under the following conditions:

- (1) Your National Health Service Corps-approved site agrees, in writing, that you may serve in a half-time clinical practice (as defined by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program);
- (2) You are a federal employee (Federal Assignee) or a Private Practice Assignee (see [Practice Agreement Types](#)). **The half-time service option is not authorized for Private Practice Option practitioners;** and
- (3) You agree in writing (by signing an addendum to amend your National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program full-time contract) to complete your remaining service obligation through half-time clinical practice for twice as long as your full-time obligation.

If you are approved to serve half-time, your service obligation end date and your allowable leave will be adjusted accordingly.

Half-time clinical practice is defined, for the purposes of the National Health Service Corps, as 20-39 hours per week, for a minimum of 45 weeks each service year. The minimum 20 hours per week may be compressed into no less than two days per week, with no more than 12 hours of work to be performed in any 24-hour period.

Scholars do **not** receive service credit for hours worked over the required 20 hours per week and excess hours **cannot** be applied to any other work week. *Also, time spent “on call” will **not** be counted towards the service commitment, except to the extent the provider is providing patient care during that period.*

Additional rules apply based on discipline and practice location. For these rules, see [Eligible Primary Care Providers and Clinical Practice Requirements](#).

Full or Partial Years of Scholarship Support	Years of Service Obligation
1 School Year (2024-2025)	2 Years Full-Time 4 Years Half-Time
2 School Years (2025-2026)	2 Years Full-Time 4 Years Half-Time
3 School Years (2026-2027)	3 Years Full-Time 6 Years Half-Time
4 School Years (2027-2028)	4 Years Full-Time 8 Years Half-Time

Scholars who are allowed to serve half-time will receive half-time service credit for the rest of their service obligation and will not be allowed to receive full-time service credit during such period of obligated service even if the scholar resumes or begins a full-time work schedule.

**Leaving a National Health Service Corps-Approved Site Prior to Completion of Service**

The National Health Service Corps expects that a scholar will fulfill their obligation at the National Health Service Corps-approved site(s) identified in the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). However, the National Health Service Corps understands that circumstances may arise that require a scholar to leave the initial site and complete service at another National Health Service Corps-approved site. If a scholar believes they can no longer continue working at the approved site, the scholar should discuss the situation and/or concerns with management at the National Health Service Corps-approved site and contact the National Health Service Corps immediately through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#).

If the scholar leaves their National Health Service Corps-approved site(s) without prior written approval of the National Health Service Corps, they may be placed in default as of the date the scholar left the National Health Service Corps-approved site and become liable for the monetary damages specified in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract (see [Breaching the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program Contract](#)). In addition, scholars who leave their initial site and accept employment at a site **not** approved by the National Health Service Corps may be placed in default.

**Transfer Requests to Another National Health Service Corps-Approved Site**

A scholar may only transfer to a site that meets the scholar’s placement Health Professional Shortage Area score. If a scholar needs to transfer to another National Health Service Corps-approved location to complete their National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program obligation, the scholar should: (1) first notify the National Health Service Corps through the Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal, and then (2) locate a new National Health Service Corps-approved site by visiting the [Health Workforce Connector](#). A scholar must request to transfer to another National Health Service Corps-approved site, and the transfer must be approved prior to the start date at the requested National Health Service Corps-approved site.

Approval of all transfer requests are at the National Health Service Corps’ discretion and may depend on the

circumstances of the scholar's resignation or termination from the current National Health Service Corps-approved site.

**Transfer requests must be approved and processed by the National Health Service Corps prior to the scholar beginning work at the transfer site.** If a scholar transfers to another site prior to obtaining National Health Service Corps approval, they *may lose* service credit for the time period between their last day providing patient care at the prior site and resumption of service at the transfer site following National Health Service Corps approval. If the scholar transfers sites and the proposed transfer site is disapproved and the scholar refuses assignment to another National Health Service Corps-approved site, they will be placed in default.

If a scholar wishes to transfer to a site that currently does **not** have National Health Service Corps approval and the site is interested in becoming a National Health Service Corps-approved site, the site will need to: (1) submit a Site Application, and (2) receive National Health Service Corps site approval before the scholar is eligible to apply for a transfer to that particular site.

Scholars who voluntarily resign from their National Health Service Corps-approved site(s) without prior approval from the National Health Service Corps or who are terminated by their site(s) for cause may be denied a transfer to another site and may be placed in default.

### **Unemployment During Service Obligation**

The National Health Service Corps recognizes that circumstances may arise that prevent scholars from completing their service obligation at their initial National Health Service Corps-approved site. **Scholars who resign or who are terminated from their National Health Service Corps-approved site(s) must contact the National Health Service Corps immediately through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#).** In these situations, and assuming the scholar remains eligible for service, scholars are required to transfer to another National Health Service Corps-approved site that meets their program requirements.

The National Health Service Corps will work with scholars to assist them, to the extent possible, to avoid a breach of contract and fulfill the service obligation after they have become unemployed. If the National Health Service Corps determines that the scholar is eligible to continue the scholar's obligated service, the National Health Service Corps will give the scholar a specific time frame in which to obtain and accept an employment offer at a National Health Service Corps-approved site identified by the National Health Service Corps or at another suitable National Health Service Corps-approved site identified by the scholar.

Although the National Health Service Corps may assist unemployed scholars with identifying suitable positions at National Health Service Corps-approved sites (referred to as "site assistance"), **it is the scholar's responsibility to obtain suitable employment at a National Health Service Corps-approved site.** During the site assistance process, the National Health Service Corps will attempt to locate suitable National Health Service Corps-approved sites in the same geographic area as the scholar's last known home address (as reflected in the Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal) or otherwise in accordance with their geographical preferences. However, this may **not** always be possible, and the scholar may be provided with site assignments that are outside of their preferred geographic area(s). The National Health Service Corps

Scholarship Program contract is **not** limited to service in a particular geographic area, and there may **not** be transfer opportunities in the scholar's preferred area. The National Health Service Corps provides support to underserved communities nationwide, and in accepting National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program funds, the scholar agrees to serve in a Health Professional Shortage Area selected by the Secretary without geographic limitation. **Unemployed scholars may be expected to relocate nationwide** to fulfill their National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program obligation.

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

If a site asks a scholar to work at a satellite clinic that is **not** listed on the scholar's profile on the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#), the scholar should immediately notify the National Health Service Corps through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). Generally, time spent at unapproved satellite clinics will **not** count towards the service obligation.

## Breaching the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program Contract

Failure to complete service for any reason is a breach of the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract. The National Health Service Corps will work with scholars to assist them, to the extent possible, to avoid a breach and fulfill the service obligation. A scholar should immediately contact the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program if a situation arises in which they are potentially unable to fulfill their service obligation.

Scholars who breach their National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract are subject to monetary damages as follows:

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

Scholars 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 in breach of their scholarship obligation and will be liable to the United States for repayment of **all** National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program **funds paid to them and to the school on their behalf**. The amount owed must be paid in full within three (3) years of the date of default. No interest will be charged on any part of this debt to the United States during the three-year repayment period. However, if payment is **not** made in full within the three-year period, interest will be assessed thereafter.

**(2) Failure to begin or complete the service obligation or failure to meet the terms and conditions of deferment or postponing the service obligation for postgraduate training**

Scholars who for any reason fail to comply with the terms and conditions of deferring or postponing the service obligation for postgraduate training (including physicians who fail to complete an approved residency in a National Health Service Corps-approved specialty) or who for any reason fail to begin or complete their service obligation after completion of training, will be in breach of their scholarship contract. **When scholars default for these reasons, the United States shall be entitled to recover damages equal to three times the scholarship award plus interest in accordance with the formula:**

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

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 scholar 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 scholar’s period of obligated service, and

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

The damages which the United States is entitled to recover shall be paid within one **(1) year of the date of the breach of the contract**.

**Note:** For scholars who received a waiver to serve half-time, the period of obligated service (“t”) and service performed (“s”) will be converted into their full-time equivalents.

(3) **Delinquent debt**

If the debt is **not** repaid within one (1) year or three (3) years, as applicable, and subsequent collection efforts are unsuccessful, the case may be referred to the United States Department of Justice for enforced collection. All delinquent debts will be reported to credit reporting agencies and to the Treasury Department for the Treasury Offset Program. Also, recovery through Administrative Wage Garnishment may be enforced to repay a delinquent debt.

(4) **Internal Revenue Service tax refund offsets and Medicare/Medicaid exclusion**

Through the Treasury Offset Program, the government may offset federal and/or state payments due to scholars (e.g., an Internal Revenue Service income tax refund) and apply those payments to repay delinquent National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program debts. In addition, delinquent defaulters who are unwilling to enter into, or stay in compliance with, an agreement to repay their National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program debt can be excluded from participation in Medicare, Medicaid, and all other federal health care programs. See section 1128 of the Social Security Act.

(5) **Licensure sanctions**

In more than 20 states, a health professional license can be suspended or revoked for non-payment of a National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program debt.

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

If a scholar plans to be away from their site for maternity/paternity/adoption leave, the scholar is required to inform the National Health Service Corps before taking the leave. The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will allow scholars to be away from their site for maternity, paternity or adoption leave within the time frames established by either the Family Medical Leave Act (up to 12 weeks) or the scholar’s state of residence; however, the scholar must also adhere to the leave policies of their National Health Service Corps-approved site.

If a scholar needs to take additional leave, the scholar is required to request a suspension of the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program service obligation (see [Suspensions of the Service Obligation](#)), which **may or may not be approved** by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program. Requests should be submitted through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#).

### **Suspensions of the Service Obligation and Payment Obligation**

Scholars are allowed 280 full-time working hours or 140 half-time working hours (which translates into seven weeks or 35 workdays) of leave per service year; however, there are some circumstances that may require a scholar to be absent in excess of this limitation. In these cases, the Secretary of Health and Human Services may, under certain circumstances, temporarily suspend (put “on hold”) the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program service or payment obligation.

**Suspension.** A suspension of a National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program obligation may be granted for up to one (1) year if compliance with the service obligation by the scholar: (i) is temporarily impossible or (ii) would involve a temporary extreme hardship and enforcement of the obligation would be unconscionable. Periods of approved suspension of service will extend the scholar's service commitment end date. Under appropriate circumstances, renewal of a suspension may also be granted. The major categories of suspension are set forth below. Suspension requests are submitted through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#).

- a. **Leave of Absence for Medical or Personal Reasons.** A suspension may be granted for up to one (1) year, if the scholar provides independent medical documentation of a physical or mental health disability, or personal circumstances, including a terminal illness of an immediate family member (e.g., child or spouse), which results in the scholar's temporary inability to perform the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program obligation.
- b. **Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave.** Scholars must notify the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program of pending maternity/paternity/adoption leave and provide appropriate documentation. Maternity/paternity/adoption leave of 12 weeks or less will be automatically approved, if properly documented. If the scholar's maternity/paternity/adoption leave will exceed 12 weeks during that service year, a suspension may be granted by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program based on documented medical need.
- c. **Call to Active Duty in the Armed Forces.** Scholars 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 active duty order must be submitted to the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program. 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 National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program service obligation.

**Waiver.** A waiver permanently relieves the scholar of all or part of the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program obligation. A waiver may be granted only if the scholar demonstrates that compliance with their obligation is permanently impossible or would involve an extreme hardship and enforcement of the obligation would be unconscionable. Agency regulations discussing the waiver and suspension standards are provided under 42 CFR § 62.12.

A waiver request must be submitted by uploading a signed request letter, including the reason(s) the waiver is being sought, as an inquiry through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). The scholar will be contacted by the Health Resources and Services Administration regarding the medical and financial documentation necessary to complete the waiver request. All documents can be submitted through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). **Note: waivers are not routinely granted and require evidence of compelling circumstances.**

Please note that requesting a suspension or a waiver is not a guarantee that it will be granted. The conditions for a suspension or waiver of an obligation are described in the authorizing legislation, 42 USC



254o(d)(2), and in federal regulations (42 CFR 62.12).

**Bankruptcy.** Any obligation of an individual under the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program for payment of damages may be released by a discharge in bankruptcy under title 11 of the United States Code only if such discharge is granted after the expiration of the seven (7) year period beginning on the first date that payment of such damages is required, and only if the bankruptcy court finds that non-discharge of the obligation would be unconscionable.

### **Cancellation of National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program Obligation**

In the unfortunate event of a scholar's death, any obligation to the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program is cancelled in its entirety. No liability will be transferred to the scholar's heirs.

## **Application Information**

### **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

The online application and all supporting documentation must be submitted **by 7:30 p.m. ET on April 25, 2024**. Upload all supporting documentation to the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) before this deadline.

### **COMPLETING AN APPLICATION**

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program application consists of:

- (1) Online application;
- (2) Required supporting documentation, and
- (3) Additional supporting documentation (if applicable).

Applicants should keep a copy of the application package for their records. 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 National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will **not** accept requests to update a submitted application or permit the submission/resubmission of incomplete, rejected, or otherwise delayed application materials after the deadline. In addition, National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program 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 wish to enter a different school and/or program should contact the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program immediately.

## **Online Application**

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, they will **not** be able to continue with the application. Please refer to [Eligibility Requirements](#) 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 a National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program award.
- d. **Background Information.** Answers to this section pertain to the educational background, individual and family background, and emergency contact information.
- e. **Letters of Recommendation.** Applicants are required to submit two letters of recommendation, one academic and one non-academic. All recommendations must be completed online through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#).

Recommendations should include a description of the recommender's relationship to the applicant, and a discussion of the applicant's education/work achievements; ability to work and communicate constructively; and an assessment of the applicant's characteristics, interest, and motivation to serve populations in Health Professional Shortage Areas. This assessment should include knowledge of the applicant's work experiences, pertinent course work, special projects, research, or other activities that demonstrate an interest in and commitment to serving underserved populations.

*Academic Letter of Recommendation:* If the applicant is currently enrolled in the health professions training program, the recommendation letter should be from the department chair, faculty advisor, or a faculty member of that academic program who can attest to the applicant's qualifications. 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. The letter must have:

- (1) a handwritten or digital signature; and
- (2) include the institutional phone number and email address of school representative or be on the institution's letterhead complete with phone number and email address.

If the requirements are not met the applicant will be deemed ineligible.

*Non-Academic Letter of Recommendation:* The recommendation 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 recommender 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 recommender must not be a family member. The letter must have:

- (1) a handwritten or digital signature; and
- (2) include the phone number and email address of recommender.

If the requirements are not met the applicant will be deemed ineligible.

- f. **Self-Certification.** Applicants are required to certify to the accuracy, truthfulness, and completeness of their application and information entered in the online application.

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

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure all required supporting documents have been uploaded by **7:30 p.m. ET on Thursday, April 25, 2024**. Failure to submit a complete application package by the deadline **will deem the applicant ineligible**, and they will **not** be considered for a National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program award. Applicants must upload all supporting documents at the time of the online application submission.

- (1) **Proof of Status as a United States Citizen or United States National.** Proof of United States citizenship or United States national status may include a copy of a birth certificate issued by a city, county, or state agency in the United States, the identification page of a valid United States passport, or a certificate of citizenship or naturalization.
  - a. Documents Not Accepted as Proof of U.S. Citizen Status - A permanent resident card, driver's license, marriage certificate, or Social Security card are not acceptable as proof of United States citizenship.
- (2) **Authorization to Release Information Form.** This form authorizes entities identified in the form to disclose information regarding applicants who have been selected and accept the scholarship award. The form **must be** signed and dated by the applicant. Electronic signatures will be accepted.
- (3) **National Health Service Corps Acceptance Report/Verification of Good Standing Form.** Applicants must be enrolled or accepted for **full-time** enrollment in a fully accredited program during the 2024-2025 school year (applicant must **begin classes by September 30, 2024**) to receive an award. Each applicant is required to submit the National Health Service Corps Acceptance Report/Verification of Good Standing Form, which has been reviewed by their school verifying acceptance or enrollment in good standing. This form must be completed and signed by the school official. Please note all information will be verified for accuracy. The school identified in the Acceptance Report/Verification of Good Standing 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 2024-2025 school year, unless all contingencies or conditions for acceptance are removed and documented in writing by June 30, 2024.

- (4) **Essay.** Applicants are required to respond to an essay question. The essay response should be limited to a 500-word count or less (about a half of an 8.5 x 11 page with single spacing).
  - a. **Essay Question:** The mission of the National Health Service Corps is to build healthy

communities by supporting qualified health care providers dedicated to working in areas of the United States with limited access to care. With this mission, we know that patients often need health care providers to better understand them as a whole person. This is particularly important among underserved populations receiving care. Please describe an experience in which you have contributed to the well-being of an underserved community and the impact/result of your contribution.

- (5) **Transcript.** Each applicant must submit transcript(s) from the last degree earned and the current degree program. **An unofficial transcript is acceptable and must display the applicant's name, school name, and grade point average. Applicants should enter the cumulative grade point average for their last degree earned to the application.**
- (6) **Current Tuition and Fees Schedule.** Each applicant must provide a tuition and fees schedule for the 2024-2025 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 (if applicable)***

Based on the applicant's responses to the online application, the following additional documents may be required for submission. Only applicants who have these documents listed on their Supporting Documents page of the online application should submit them. These documents will be added to their Supporting Documents list once the online application has been submitted.

#### **(1) 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."

**Note:** Applicants may also self-attest to having a disadvantaged background by uploading a document that validates that they meet the criteria included on the disadvantaged background form (Federal Student Aid Report, etc.).

#### **(2) Statement Regarding Existing Service Obligation**

A written statement (satisfactory to the Secretary of Health and Human Services) must be provided by the entity to which the applicant owes an existing service obligation (see "Eligibility Requirements") indicating that: i) there is no potential conflict in fulfilling the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program obligation and the entity's obligation and ii) the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program obligation will be served first.

## Application Review and Award Process

Applicants will receive a receipt of submission once the application has been successfully submitted online through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). Applicants will be able to view the overall status of their application, as well as a copy (.pdf) of their submitted application and uploaded supporting documents. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the entirety of the application and supporting documents are accurately submitted.

Once the online application has been submitted, applicants will have an opportunity to make edits to their online application and resubmit their application by the application deadline Thursday, **April 25, 2024, by 7:30 p.m. ET**. The "edit" option will be available in the applicant's account on the "Submitted" page. The ability to edit and resubmit an application will be disabled after the application deadline. Applications **not** resubmitted by this deadline will **not** be considered for an award. No exceptions will be made in cases where an applicant fails to resubmit an edited application.

Applicants who are no longer interested in receiving a 2024 National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program award may withdraw their application at any time prior to the contract being countersigned by the Secretary of Health and Human Services or designee. To do so, applicants should log into their application account in the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#), and select the "Withdraw" option on the "Submitted" page.

The application review process occurs over several months. The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will provide email updates, as applicable, as well as updates on the "Status" page of the online application. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure their contact information is correct. If updates in contact information are necessary, applicants can make changes on the "Account Settings" page.

### NOTIFICATION OF AN AWARD

Individuals selected for an award will be **notified no later than September 30, 2024**. To accept the award, an applicant must respond by the deadline in the notice of award email/letter. If the applicant does **not** respond to the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program by that deadline, the offer of award expires and will be offered to an alternate. Applicants who respond by the deadline will be asked to sign the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract, complete the online banking form for direct deposit, and complete the W-4 form.

Individuals selected for an award must be enrolled as a full-time student during the 2024-2025 school year and full-time class attendance **must begin on or before September 30, 2024**.

Applicants who will **not** begin classes on or before September 30, 2024, including applicants who will be on a leave of absence from school through September 30, 2024, **must** decline the award.

Individuals selected for an award who decide **not** to accept the award may decline the scholarship award without penalty, which allows another applicant to be awarded. Once an applicant declines the offer of award, there will **not** be any opportunity to reclaim it. A decision to decline the scholarship award is final

and **cannot** be changed under any circumstances. An applicant who declines an award may apply in the next application cycle and compete with other eligible applicants. Applicants who do **not** receive a scholarship award will be notified no later than September 30, 2024. Individuals who accept the award **cannot** defer the award to a future year.

## **Additional Information**

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

The purpose of this information collection is to obtain information through the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program, which is used to assess an applicant’s eligibility and qualifications for the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget control number. The Office of Management and Budget control number for this information collection is 0915-0146 and it is valid until 07/31/2026. This information collection is required to obtain or retain a benefit (National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program: Section 338A of the Public Health Service Act and Section 338C-H of Public Health Service Act.). Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average one (1) hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Health Resources and Services Administration Reports Clearance Officer, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 14N136B, Rockville, Maryland 20857.

### **RESOURCES FOR APPLICANTS**

#### ***Definitions***

The [Appendix](#) contains a Glossary with the general definitions for Bureau of Health Workforce terms used throughout this Guidance.

#### ***Health Workforce Connector***

The [Health Workforce Connector](#) contains a free searchable database for all National Health Service Corps-approved sites, including those with current job openings. Clinicians may also create profiles that allow employers to search for them using discipline, preferred geographical location, and more.

#### ***HPSA Find***

All National Health Service Corps scholars must serve in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area. To locate current Health Professional Shortage Areas, visit.

- [Use HPSA Find](#)
- [Find Shortage Areas by Address](#)

### ***Customer Care Center***

Any individual with questions about the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program may contact the Customer Care Center at 1-800-221- 9393 (TTY – 1-877-897-9910) Monday through Friday (except federal holidays) from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET.

### ***Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal***

Once an applicant has been selected for an award, they will be provided with instructions for establishing a participant account on the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#). This web-based system allows National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program scholars to communicate with the National Health Service Corps, to make certain requests (e.g., In-School Verification, suspensions, transfers, waivers), and to access the In-Service Verification due every six (6) months.

### ***National Health Service Corps Website and Social Media***

Find more information about the NHSC and Scholarship Program at:

- [National Health Service Corps Homepage](#)
- [National Health Service Corps Scholarship Page](#)

Follow and like the NHSC at:

- [National Health Service Corps Facebook](#)
- [National Health Service Corps X](#) (formerly known as Twitter)
- [National Health Service Corps LinkedIn](#)

**Appendix:**

**FY 2024 NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM APPLICATION AND PROGRAM GUIDANCE GLOSSARY**