

Choosing an NHSC Site

When you selected a health professions school several years ago, you likely had to weigh what was most important to you in a training program. Choosing an NHSC-approved site and a community where you'll be practicing and living for at least two years is similar. As you search for a practice site and begin to interview, consider your priorities. These questions may help you as you begin to weigh your options. Decide what your two or three "must haves" are in a site and community, and then begin to rank the "nice to haves" as you explore these questions.

Site Location

- In which three to five states would I like to live?
- Do I want to work in an urban, rural, or frontier area?
- Would I like to be a certain distance from the city, mountains, or beach?
- Do I want to be near a family member or close to where I studied?
- Am I willing to accept a long work commute, and what kind of transportation options are available?

Site Size and Patient Population

- Will I thrive in a large, mid-size, or small environment?
- Do I want a site that has satellite locations or mobile vans that are also NHSC-approved where I can spend some of my time?
- What population groups (e.g., homeless, migrants) would I like the opportunity to work with more?
- Do I have additional language skills that I want to use?
- What disease areas are of particular interest to me (e.g., diabetes, HIV/AIDS)?

Organizational Support

- Does the site's mission and goals align with mine?
- Do I want a site that already has a health information technology system or one that is just beginning to transition to an electronic system?
- Is having on-site ancillary services such as laboratory, pharmacy, and x-ray important to me?
- What kinds of resources are most important to me—certain clinical support or administrative staff?
- Are there opportunities to support my continued medical education training?
- What are the opportunities for growth?

Work Schedule

- What type of on-call schedule can I manage?
- Does it matter if I work Monday through Friday, or would I prefer a non-traditional schedule?
- What kind of flexibility do I need so I can fulfill my personal responsibilities and needs?

Family Considerations

- What kind of community amenities are a priority for my family (e.g., places of worship, housing, schools, day care, leisure and cultural activities, special medical needs)?
- Are there employment opportunities for my spouse or partner?

