



National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program

School Year 2023-2024 Application & Program Guidance

March 2023

Application Submission Deadline: Thursday, April 27, 2023, 7:30 p.m. ET

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

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

Authority: Section 331(i) of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254d(i)), as amended; Section 338A of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254I), as amended; Sections 338C-H of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254m-q), as amended. 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 National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program. Students pursuing primary care health professions training in eligible disciplines can receive scholarship support through the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program. 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. Only those students who are committed to practicing primary care and are able to relocate to underserved communities based on the needs of the National Health Service Corps should consider becoming a National Health Service Corps scholar.

Eligible Applicants:

Students pursuing eligible primary care health professions training leading to:

- A degree in medicine (allopathic or osteopathic);
- A degree in dentistry; or
- A postgraduate degree or postgraduate certificate from a school or program in nurse midwifery education, physician assistant education, or nurse practitioner education

Funding:

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship award covers:

- Tuition and Eligible Fees
- A monthly stipend for living expenses
- An annual other reasonable costs payment

Service Obligation:

National Health Service Corps Scholarship awardees will provide a one-year service commitment for each year of scholarship support received. There is a two-year minimum service commitment and awardees can receive a maximum of four years of scholarship support

Application Deadline:

April 27, 2023



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Health Resources and Services
Administration

Rockville, MD 20857
Bureau of Health Workforce

A Letter from Luis Padilla, MD

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your consideration and time in applying to a [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 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 consider applying.

Sincerely,

/Luis Padilla, MD/

[Luis Padilla, MD](#)

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

Privacy Act Notification Statement

General

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

Statutory Authority

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

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 "[Definitions](#)"). 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). An individual's contract, application, required supplemental forms, supporting documentation, related correspondence and data are maintained in a system of records to be used within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to monitor National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program related activities. The information may also be disclosed outside the Department, as permitted by the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act, to the Congress, the National Archives, the Government Accountability Office, and pursuant to court order and various routine uses (see [System of Record Notice 09-15-0037](#)).

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

National Health Service Corps Program Overview

For more than five decades, the National Health Service Corps has been working to match 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 identified as Health Professional Shortage Areas.

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:

- A degree in medicine (allopathic or osteopathic);
- A degree in dentistry; or
- 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.

Note: Please see "[Program Requirements While in Postgraduate Training](#)" for requirements and information during postgraduate training.

In return for scholarship awards, scholars commit to providing primary care health services to underserved communities. The program provides support to students who seek financial assistance to complete primary care health professions education.

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program pays for tuition and various other reasonable educational costs and also 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 service site in a [Health Professional Shortage Area](#) (see "[Definitions](#)"). 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 (4) 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 U.S. territories. Applicants will be evaluated with respect to their demonstrated interest in primary care, their qualifications to participate in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program, and their commitment to serving the underserved. The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program is seeking applicants focused on primary care who demonstrate geographic flexibility, as well as a strong interest in providing primary health services to underserved populations nationally.

Application and Program Guidance

Please read the Application and Program Guidance (Guidance) in its entirety before proceeding with an application. The Guidance explains in detail the obligations of individuals selected to participate in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program. A complete understanding of the commitment to serve at a National Health Service Corps approved service 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.

Only those students who are committed to practicing primary care and are able to relocate to underserved communities 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.** National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program provides the following financial support for full-time enrollment in an eligible primary care health professions degree training program for up to four (4) school years:
 - a. Payment of tuition and eligible fees;
 - b. An annual payment for other reasonable educational costs; and,
 - c. Monthly stipends to assist with living expenses while pursuing the health professions degree educational training program.

The National Health Service Corps receives many qualified applications. To ensure a complete review, applicants are encouraged to submit their application as early as possible.

What's New for 2023:

- For Fiscal Year 2023, we expect to make approximately 150 new awards to health professionals committed to serving in underserved communities.
- The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program has reduced the number of required supporting documents for the Fiscal Year 2023 application cycle. Applicants will only be required to submit one essay response as opposed to the three essay responses that have been required in prior years. Additionally, applicants will no longer be required to submit a resume/CV.

Key Application Dates:

Key dates for National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program applicants:

- **Application Submission Period Open:** March 14, 2023
- **Application Submission Deadline:** April 27, 2023
- **Notification of Award:** September 30, 2023

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND AWARD PROCESS

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for a scholarship, applicants must:

- (1) Be a United States (U.S.) citizen (either U.S. born or naturalized) or U.S. national.** To be eligible for a National Health Service Corps scholarship, applicants must present proof of U.S. citizenship or status as a U.S. national. This 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 U.S. passport, or a certificate of citizenship or naturalization. A permanent resident card, driver's license, marriage certificate, or social security card is **not** acceptable proof of U.S. citizenship or status as a U.S. national.
- (2) Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a full-time student.** To be considered for a scholarship award for the 2023-2024 school year, classes **must begin** on or before September 30, 2023.

Note: Applicants planning to be on a [leave of absence](#) from school during the 2023-2024 academic year, should not submit an application this year, but may apply for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Full-time Student. A full-time student is defined as a student enrolled for a sufficient number of credit hours in any academic term to complete the course of study within the number of academic terms normally required at the school. Any courses that are not required to complete the qualifying degree program will not count toward the hours required for full-time status and will not be supported by National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program.

- (3) Be attending or accepted to attend one of the following accredited schools or programs:**
 - a. Physician**
 - i. A school of allopathic or osteopathic medicine, pursuing an M.D. or D.O. degree; and
 - ii. Accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (sponsored by the American Medical Association and the Association of American Medical Colleges) or the American Osteopathic Association, Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation.
 - b. Dentist**
 - i. A school of dentistry, pursuing a D.D.S. or D.M.D. degree; and
 - ii. Accredited by the American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Accreditation.
 - c. Nurse Practitioner**
 - i. A school or program of nurse practitioner education, pursuing a postgraduate degree or postgraduate certificate;
 - ii. Accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education; and
 - iii. Leading to national certification as a nurse practitioner
 - d. Nurse Midwife**
 - i. A school or program of nurse midwifery education, pursuing a postgraduate degree or postgraduate certificate;

- ii. Accredited by the American College of Nurse-Midwives, Division of Accreditation; and
- iii. Leading to national certification by the American Midwifery Certification Board.

e. Physician Assistant

- i. A school or program of primary care physician assistant education, pursuing a postgraduate degree or postgraduate certificate;
- ii. Accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant AND the affiliated school must be accredited by a U.S. Department of Education nationally recognized regional or state institutional accrediting agency; and
- iii. Leading to national certification by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants.

(4) Attend a school located in a state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory. Eligible schools and educational programs for which scholarship support is provided must be in a state (includes the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia). **Students attending schools outside of these geographic areas are not eligible for National Health Service Corps scholarships, even though they may be citizens or nationals of the U.S.**

(5) Be eligible for federal employment. Most National Health Service Corps scholars should expect to serve their obligations as a 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 U.S. Public Health Service](#) or be eligible for a [federal civil service appointment](#).

(6) Not have an existing service obligation. Applicants who are already obligated to a federal, state, or other entity for professional practice or service after academic training are not eligible for National Health Service Corps scholarship awards unless the entity to 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 and the entity's obligation, and (ii) the National Health Service Corps 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 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:

- 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 service 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 should request a suspension (break in service) (see "[Suspensions and Waivers](#)"). 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.
- If the approved National Health Service Corps 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 service site to complete their remaining service obligation.

(7) Submit a complete application. Each applicant must complete an online application, which includes 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.

These documents will be used to evaluate an applicant's qualifications to participate in the NHSC SP. If selected, individuals will be required to review and submit a signed contract indicating they agree to provide primary care in a Health Professional Shortage Area in exchange for a scholarship. Please refer to "[Completing an Application](#)" for further details regarding application requirements.

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.)

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](#)¹ 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, may be prohibited from selection as a scholar:

- a. Default on any federal payment obligations (e.g., Department of Education student loans, Health Education Assistance Loans, Nursing Student Loans, Federal Housing Administration Loans, federal income tax liabilities, federally guaranteed/insured loans (e.g., student or home mortgage loans)).
- b. Any non-federal payment obligations (e.g., court-ordered child support payments or state tax liabilities)
- c. Write-offs/charge-offs of any federal or non-federal debts as uncollectible, or waiver of any federal service or payment obligation.
- d. Default on a prior service obligation. Applicants who have defaulted on a prior service obligation to the Federal Government, a state or local government, or other entity, unless the obligation was subsequently satisfied.
- e. Judgment liens arising from federal debt.
- f. 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. Transcripts will be used in assessing applicants' academic performance.

(3) **Commitment to a Career in Primary Care & Working in Underserved Communities.** Demonstrates a strong commitment to the field of primary care; interest/motivation to provide care to underserved communities; willingness to be geographically flexible; and relevant work experience and/or activities (i.e., community service, research, and internships) that have prepared the applicant to work with underserved populations. This factor is reviewed through the following:

- a. **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.
- b. **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, course work, special projects, research, etc.

(4) **Not have any judgment liens arising from a federal debt.**

¹ According to the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, these inquiries "are typically inquiries by lenders after you apply for credit. These inquiries will impact your credit score because most credit scoring models look at how recently and how frequently you apply for credit."
(Source: [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau: What's a credit inquiry?](#))

- (5) **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” located in the online application.) The applicant should 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 that 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:

- (1) **First Priority - Current (or former) National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program scholars** who are seeking, and are eligible for, additional support for the 2023-2024 school year or through their date of graduation.
- (2) **Second Priority- Characteristics Likely to Remain in Health Professional Shortage Areas.** 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.
- (3) **Third Priority - Disadvantaged Background** (see [“Definitions”](#)). 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:
 - a. *For Medical and Dental Students:* Applicant’s 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.”
 - b. *For Nurse Practitioner, Nurse-Midwifery, and Physician Assistant Students:* Applicant’s 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.”

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.)

Note: The number of years of scholarship support requested is not taken into consideration when determining which applicants will receive a scholarship award.

Anticipated Awards

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program expects the fiscal year 2023 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% of the applications received for new awards.

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.

Scholarship Program Application Deadlines: School Year 2023-2024		
Date	Activity	Responsibility of:
April 27, 2023	Application Submission Deadline	Applicant (All)
September 30, 2023	First Day of Class Deadline	Applicant (All)
September 30, 2023	Notification of Award Deadline	NHSC
September 30, 2023	Notification of Denial Deadline	NHSC
November 7, 2023	First Other Reasonable Costs Payment *New Scholars*	NHSC
November 7, 2023	First Stipend Payment *New Scholars*	NHSC
June 1, 2024	Terminate Contract Deadline	Applicant (All)

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTRACT AND SERVICE OBLIGATION

Contract Period

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program award and contract is for the 2023-2024 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 (4) school years of support, including any partial school year of funding

received).

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 2023- 2024 school year begins July 1, 2023 and ends June 30, 2024.** If an applicant signs a contract for only one school year of support, in the 2023-2024 school year, the scholar’s support will end on June 30, 2024. If an applicant is in a 24-month program that begins on August 1, 2023 and ends on August 2, 2025 and the applicant signs contracts for two school years, the scholar will receive scholarship support from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025.

Funding for the extra months of the program beyond June 30, 2025 would require a request for a third school year of scholarship funding for 2025-2026. If granted, the third school year of support obligates the recipient to perform three years of full-time service.

The school year 2023-2024 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 2023-2024 school year contract, as well as an optional contract for the 2024- 2025 school year, if they need additional support beyond the 2023-2024 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.

Additional Support after Receipt of Awards (Continuation Award)

To request additional scholarship support for the 2024-2025 school year or any subsequent school years, the scholar must submit an 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 designee. The scholar cannot request a continuation award after their existing contract has expired.

Service Obligation

The minimum service obligation for an initial award is two (2) years of full-time service in exchange for a full or partial year of scholarship support. For each full or partial school year of support thereafter, scholars agree to provide full-time primary health care services for one year at a National Health Service Corps approved site in a Health Professional Shortage Area.

At the scholar’s request and with written concurrence of the National Health Service Corps approved service 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 “[Serving Half-Time Instead of Full-Time](#)” for more details).

Full or Partial Years of Scholarship Support	Years of Service Obligation
1 School Year (2023-2024)	2 Years Full-Time 4 Years Half-Time
2 School Years (2023-2025)	2 Years Full-Time 4 Years Half-Time
3 School Years (2023-2026)	3 Years Full-Time 6 Years Half-Time
4 School Years (2023-2027)	4 Years Full-Time 8 Years Half-Time

Contract Options

- (1) Termination - The Secretary of Health and Human Services or 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:
 - a. 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
 - b. 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 2023-2024	On or Before June 1, 2024

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

If a scholar meets these requirements and the Secretary or 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.

(2) 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:

- a. 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
- b. 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. 2022-2023, 2023-2024, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026). During the third school year (2024-2025), 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 (2024-2025). The Bureau of Health Workforce would amend the contract to change the year of support stated in the contract from 2024-2025 to school year 2026-2027. Thus, the scholar would receive scholarship support for school years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 after the suspension of support due to the leave of absence.

If, however, the scholar does not suspend the scholarship support for school year 2024-2025 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 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.

TAX IMPLICATIONS OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

- (1) Stipend. The stipend payment portion of National Health Service Corps scholarship awards 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.

- (2) Tuition/Eligible fees and Other Reasonable Cost. The tuition, eligible fees, and other reasonable costs portions of the scholarship award are NOT subject to federal taxes.

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.**

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) The National Health Service Corps will mail your W-2 to the address you provide in the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) OR
- (2) You may sign up to have the W-2 form posted in your [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) account.

If you choose mailing, please ensure your address and contact information is up to date by November 30 of each year to avoid a delay. NHSC generally mails W-2s by January 30 of each year.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS WHILE 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.

Please be advised that any courses that are not required or are unrelated to the health professions degree for which the award is made **will not** count toward the required credit hours in determining full-time enrollment status for the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program.

- (2) **Maintain good academic standing.** All scholars must remain as a **full-time** student 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. A repeat in any course work;
 - b. A change in graduation date;
 - c. A leave of absence approved by the school;
 - d. Withdrawal or dismissal from the school;
 - e. A change from full-time student status to a less than full-time student status;

- f. Voluntary withdrawal from any courses during a school year; or
- g. A transfer to another school or program.

Please be advised that 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 [“Changes in Scholarship Payment”](#)). The scholar must also submit a letter from the school verifying that a change in enrollment status has occurred.

Scholarship Award

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.

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

(1) Tuition and Eligible Fees

- a. **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 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.

Please see examples of eligible and ineligible fees below.

Eligible Fees Include But Are Not Limited To:	Ineligible Fees Include But Are Not Limited To:
Academic Support Services Fee	Accident Insurance
Administrative Fee	Attorney Fee
Computer Fee	Educational Associations

Eligible Fees Include But Are Not Limited To:	Ineligible Fees Include But Are Not Limited To:
Disability and/or Health Insurance (For scholar only; must be required by the school for all students)	Late Charges/Penalty Fee
Malpractice Insurance (If it is mandatory that it be purchased through the school by all students)	Life Insurance
Laboratory Fees	Parking Fee

- b. **Repeated course work.** If the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program has already paid for a course and that course is subsequently repeated, 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.

- c. **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.
- d. **Attending more than one school.** For scholars taking classes at more than one school, please be advised that the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program can only make payments to **one** school — the initial school of record.
- e. **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.
- f. **National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will ONLY pay for the courses that are required for graduation.** The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will not pay for additional courses beyond those required for graduation from the degree program for which the scholarship was awarded.

Also, 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.

- g. **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 2023 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.

- h. **Changes in disciplines are not permitted.** 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).

(2) Other Reasonable Educational Costs

Other Reasonable Educational Costs is an annual payment provided to each National Health Service Corps scholar and is 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 is paid directly to the scholar and is provided to **assist** in the payment of the following education-related expenses not covered under tuition and eligible fees, including:

- a. **Books**
- b. **Instruments or clinical supplies**
- c. **Uniforms**
- d. **Computer rental or purchase (only if required of all students)**
- e. **Travel expenses for one clinical rotation during school**
- f. **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 a health insurance payment through the Other Reasonable Educational Costs.

(3) Stipend

During the 2023-2024 school year, National Health Service Corps scholars will receive a monthly stipend (currently estimated at \$1,527 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.

Additional Funding Provided by an Alternative Source

(1) Financial Aid Received Before Notice of Award

- a. *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.
- b. *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 2023 semester, the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program will not pay tuition costs covered by any student loans.

- (2) 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.

Changes in 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:

- (1) **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:

- a. Discontinuation of award for the duration of the Leave of Absence. This includes:
 - i. Monthly stipend
 - ii. Tuition and fee payment
 - iii. Other Reasonable Educational Costs Payment – If you have received your 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.
 - b. 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 decline the award and return the funds as explained in this Guidance.
 - c. You may consider terminating the contract or declining support for the contract year in which you take a leave of absence (Please see [“Declining National Health Service Corps 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 an Leave of Absence.
- (2) **Part-time student status.** Scholars enrolled in less than full-time status **will not** receive any support from the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program. To receive support a scholar **must be** enrolled in school as a **full-time** student. A full-time student is defined as a student enrolled for a sufficient number of credit hours in any academic term to complete the course of study within the number of academic terms normally required at the school. Any courses that are not required to complete the qualifying degree program will not count toward the hours required for full-time status and will not be supported by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program.
- (3) **Scholar’s 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 Contract”](#) section.
- (4) **Failure to maintain good academic standing.** Scholars must maintain good academic standing to remain eligible for support (i.e., not be on academic probation).
- (5) **Repeating course work.** The National Health Service Corps will only pay for a course once.

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 course work; 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 below in the "[Collection of Scholarship Benefit Overpayments](#)."

For scholars whose benefits were discontinued due to their withdrawal or dismissal from school, benefits will not be resumed and scholars will be liable for repayment of all National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program funds paid to them or on their behalf (see "Failure to Complete Academic Training" under the "[Breaching the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program Contract](#)" section).

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

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, was enrolled as a less than full-time student, or was 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.

Situations that Could Impact the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program Payment of Tuition, Other Reasonable Educational Costs and/or Stipend

- (1) **Distance and/or Online Learning Programs.** Scholars who are participating in distance or online learning programs are advised that they may not receive full funding for each year of their program to the extent that their course work does not coincide with the 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 time-frame.

- (2) **Collection of Delinquent Debt.** Under the Treasury Offset Program, the U.S. 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.
- (3) **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 an NHSC 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.

Please note: 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.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS WHILE IN POSTGRADUATE TRAINING

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 (6) 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 (6) months after graduation from the health professions training program.

Scholar Requirements While in Postgraduate Training

During the final year of health professions education scholars will be sent information on National Health Service Corps approved postgraduate training programs and how they should obtain approval from the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program for 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”](#) section.

Approved Postgraduate Training Programs

(1) Postgraduate Training for Physicians

For allopathic and osteopathic medical scholars entering postgraduate training in 2023-2024, the approved residencies are accredited programs in:

Postgraduate Training	Years
Family Medicine	3 or 4 years
General Internal Medicine	3 years
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.

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 the [“Breaching the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program Contract”](#) section.

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.

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.

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:

- a. A two-year child psychiatry fellowship that follows the completion of residency training in general psychiatry;
- b. 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;
- c. A one-year obstetrics/gynecology fellowship that follows the completion of residency training in family medicine; or
- d. A one-year geriatrics fellowship that follows the completion of residency training in family medicine or general internal medicine.

(2) Postgraduate Training for Dentists

For dental scholars entering postgraduate training in 2023-2024, the approved postgraduate training programs are accredited programs in:

Postgraduate Training	Years
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. Please note dental students are not required to complete a postgraduate training program.

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.

(3) Postgraduate Training for Physician Assistants

For physician assistant scholars entering postgraduate training in 2023-2024, the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program approves a one-year residency in a primary care specialty.

(4) Postgraduate Training for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses

For advanced practice registered nurse scholars entering postgraduate training in 2023- 2024 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 National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program determines are not consistent with the needs of the National Health Service Corps to provide primary health 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 above 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 (i) federal employees, (ii) federal contractors, or (iii) employees of a tribal health program (see "[Definitions](#)" section) 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 service 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 outlined below.

(1) 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**:

- a. Step 1 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination or Level 1 of the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination by the end of the 2nd year of their allopathic/osteopathic health professions degree program.
- b. 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 4th year of their allopathic/osteopathic health professions degree program.
- c. Step 3 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination or Level 3 of the

Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination by the end of the 1st 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. Please see the "[Suspensions and Waivers](#)" section.

(2) 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 obtain a license to practice in states with the greatest dental needs, 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. Please see the "[Suspensions and Waivers](#)" section.

(3) 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.

Please see the "[Suspensions and Waivers](#)" section.

Finding an Eligible National Health Service Corps Approved Service 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 (as applicable to assist scholars in successfully finding a National Health Service Corps approved service site).

Scholars will be given information about the 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](#).

Scholars are contractually obligated to practice at a National Health Service Corps approved service 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 provides 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 scholars must fulfill their service obligations at National Health Service Corps approved service sites (see "[Definitions](#)" section) in federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas. National Health Service Corps approved service sites are healthcare facilities that provide outpatient primary health services to populations residing in Health Professional Shortage Areas. Examples include, but are not limited to, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Rural Health Clinics, federal Indian Health Service, Tribal, or Urban Indian Health Clinics, public health departments, hospital-affiliated outpatient primary care practices, and Critical Access Hospitals.

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 following are **not** eligible National Health Service Corps service sites, even if they are located in a Health Professional Shortage Area: county/local prisons, inpatient hospitals (except for Critical Access Hospitals and Indian Health Service hospitals), and other inpatient facilities. Clinics that limit care to veterans, members of the Armed Forces, and active-duty military personnel (e.g. The Veterans Health Administration or TRICARE) are not eligible.

The [Health Workforce Connector](#) contains a free searchable database of vacant positions at National Health Service Corps approved service sites. Scholars are eligible to compete for all scholarship vacancies in their discipline/specialty. If interested in a position 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.

National Health Service Corps Practice 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 federal employees (U.S. 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 U.S. 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 who 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 U.S. 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 (a) self-employed (i.e., a solo practitioner or co-owner); (b) part of a group practice; (c) an independent contractor; or (d) a salaried employee of an eligible National Health Service Corps-approved service site who is not receiving 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 service site.**

In order to serve under the Private Practice Option, the 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. Scholars may apply for a Private Practice Option Contract Addendum by initiating a Site Status Change Request in the Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal, and then request a Private Practice Option Contract Addendum. The National Health Service Corps will then review the application to determine if the scholar meets the Private Practice Option requirements. If the scholar qualifies for a Private Practice Option Contract Addendum, the scholar will be directed to electronically certify that they remain interested in serving under the Private Practice Option and e-sign the Private Practice Option Contract Addendum. The electronic signature has the effect of a handwritten signature, and 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 service site to accept Medicare assignment, enter into the appropriate agreements under Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program, and utilize a schedule of discounts (including, as appropriate, waivers) of fees based on a patient’s ability to pay (see the definition of “National Health Service Corps approved Service Site” in the [“Definitions”](#) section). 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 U.S. 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 service site	<i>at least equal to</i> what you would earn as a civilian employee of the U.S. Government	Private Practice Assignment
NOT a federal employee but you are an employee of an eligible National Health Service Corps approved service site	<i>less than</i> what you would earn as a civilian employee of the U.S. Government	Private Practice Option
NOT a federal employee but an independent contractor to a National Health Service Corps approved service 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 was awarded a National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract at one or more National Health Service Corps approved service 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 service site within a yearly placement cycle. The National Health Service Corps will consider requests from National Health Service Corps approved service sites for up to one (1) additional scholar placement per discipline per placement cycle on an exceptional/case-by-case basis.

Service Obligation Life Cycle

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.

(1) 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).

(2) 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 service 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.

(3) Nurse Midwives, Nurse Practitioners, and Physician Assistants

Nurse midwives, nurse practitioners specializing in adult medicine, family medicine, geriatrics, primary care pediatrics, psychiatrics-mental health, or women's health, and physician assistants 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. 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.

Scholars who, for any reason, fail to begin or complete service at their assigned service 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](#)" section.

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 service 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 service site(s).

Delaying the Start of Service

Only scholars with documented extreme circumstances that delay the start of service may make a request to suspend their service obligation. The Health Resources and Services Administration may grant a suspension for up to one year.

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 and Waivers](#)” section).

National Health Service Corps scholars may be eligible for the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program after they have completed their scholarship service obligation. Currently, the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program considers applications from scholars serving at a site with a Health Professional Shortage Area score of 14 or above on a non-competitive basis.

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, 2023, would be July 14, 2026. Adjustments in the end date may be made by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program 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 of 35 workdays per service year - see “[Worksite Absences](#)” section).

Serving Half-Time Instead of Full-Time

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 service 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 “[NHSC Practice Types](#)” section). **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. **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.**

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 service sites for each full or partial school year of support received. The minimum service obligation for full-time scholars is two years, and the maximum service obligation for full-time scholars is four years.

As per 42 USC 254d(i), the Secretary of Health and Human Services may grant a waiver of the full-time service obligation to authorize half-time service. Scholars who are authorized to serve half-time must agree to fulfill all of the remainder of the service obligation under the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract through half-time clinical practice (defined below) at one or more National Health Service Corps approved service sites for double the period of obligated full-time service not completed under the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract as of the waiver effective date. The minimum service period for half-time scholars is four (4) years, and the maximum service period for half-time scholars is eight (8) years, if they commence half-time service directly upon completion of training.

It is important to remember that your service contract with the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program is separate and independent from any employment contract you sign with an approved service site.

Please note that National Health Service Corps scholars are required to work a specified minimum number of hours (defined below). If your **employment** contract stipulates fewer hours (and your salary is based on those hours), you are still required to meet the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program service obligation requirements. Additionally, the service site administrator must verify your compliance with the applicable clinical practice requirements every six months during your period of obligated service.

- (1) **Full-Time Clinical Practice.** Full-time clinical practice is defined, for the purposes of the National Health Service Corps, as a minimum of 40 hours per week, for a minimum of 45 weeks each service year. The 40 hours per week may be compressed into no less than 4 days per week, with no more than 12 hours of work to be performed in any 24-hour period. Of the 40 hours per week, a minimum of 36 hours must be spent providing patient care.

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 "[Full-Time Clinical Practice Requirements, by Discipline](#)" section.

- (2) **Half-Time Clinical Practice.** Half-time clinical practice is defined, for the purposes of the National Health Service Corps, as 20-39 hours per week, for a minimum of 45 weeks each service year. The minimum 20 hours per week may be compressed into no less than 2 days per week, with no more than 12 hours of work to be performed in any 24-hour period. Of the minimum 20 hours per week, a minimum of 18 hours must be spent providing patient care.

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, please see [“Half-Time Clinical Practice Requirements, by Discipline.”](#)

As previously noted, inpatient hospital settings (except Critical Access Hospitals and Indian Health Service hospitals) are not permitted as National Health Service Corps approved service sites. Thus, scholars are limited in the number of hours they can spend providing patient care in an inpatient setting, as indicated below in the full-time, and half-time, clinical practice requirements, by discipline.

Full-Time Clinical Practice Requirements, by Discipline

Please note, these rules apply to the “full-time clinical practice” definitions below:

- Of the overall minimum 40 hours/week, clinical-related administrative activities shall not exceed a total of 4 hours per week. For more information, please see the definition for “Clinical administrative, management or other activities” in the [“Definitions”](#) section.
- Of the minimum 36 hours/week for patient care, teaching shall not exceed a total of 8 hours/week. If the teaching takes place in a Health Resources and Services Administration funded Teaching Health Center (see [“Definitions”](#)), teaching activities shall not exceed 20 hours/week.

(1) Medical Providers

- a. **For providers of primary medical care services, including pediatricians and geriatricians:** Clinicians must work a minimum of 40 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks/service year. At least 36 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved service site(s). Of the minimum 36 hours spent providing patient care, no more than 8 hours per week may be spent in a teaching capacity. The remaining 4 hours/week may be spent providing patient care for patients at the approved site(s), providing patient care in alternative settings to address continuity of care (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, shelters, or other community-based settings) as directed by the approved site(s), or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 4 hours/week).
- b. **For providers of obstetrics/gynecology (including family medicine physicians who practice obstetrics on a regular basis and certified nurse midwives) or geriatric services:** Clinicians must work a minimum of 40 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks/service year. At least 21 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved service site(s). Of the minimum 21 hours/week spent providing patient care, no more than 8 hours/week may be spent in a teaching capacity. The remaining 19 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved site(s), patient care in alternative settings (e.g., hospitals or shelters) as directed by the approved site(s), or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 4 hours/week).

For all medical providers under this section, if working in a Health Resources and Services Administration funded Teaching Health Center, teaching activities shall not exceed 20 hours/week. The remaining 20 hours/week must be spent providing patient care at the

approved site(s), 4 hours/week of which may be providing patient care in alternative settings to address continuity of care (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, or shelters) as directed by the approved site(s) or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 4 hours/week). For more information, please see the definition of Teaching Health Center in the "[Definitions](#)" section.

If working in a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services certified Critical Access Hospital or an Indian Health Service hospital, at least 24 hours/week must be spent providing patient care in the hospital-affiliated outpatient clinic. Of the minimum 24 hours spent providing patient care, no more than 8 hours/week may be spent in a teaching capacity. The remaining 16 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the Critical Access Hospital or Indian Health Service hospital or the hospital-affiliated outpatient clinic, providing patient care at the hospital-affiliated skilled nursing facility or swing bed unit, or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 4 hours/week). For more information, please see the definitions for Critical Access Hospital and Indian Health Service hospital in "[Definitions.](#)"

(2) Dental Providers

- a. **For dentists, excluding pediatric dentists:** Clinician must work a minimum of 40 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks/service year. At least 36 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved service site(s). Of the minimum 36 hours/week spent providing patient care, no more than 8 hours/week may be spent in a teaching capacity. The remaining 4 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved site(s), providing patient care in alternative settings to address continuity of care (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, or shelters) as directed by the approved site(s), or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 4 hours/week).
- b. **For pediatric dentists:** Clinician must work a minimum of 40 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks/service year. At least 21 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved service site(s). Of the minimum 21 hours/week spent providing patient care, no more than 8 hours/week may be spent in a teaching capacity. The remaining 19 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved site(s), providing patient care in alternative settings (e.g., hospitals or shelters) as directed by the approved site(s), or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 4 hours/week).

For all dental health providers under this section, if working in a Health Resources and Services Administration funded Teaching Health Center, teaching activities shall not exceed 20 hours/week. The remaining 20 hours/week must be spent providing patient care at the approved site(s), 4 hours/week of which may be providing patient care in alternative settings (e.g., hospitals or shelters) as directed by the approved site(s) or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 4 hours/week). For more information, please see the definition of Teaching Health Center in the "[Definitions](#)" section.

(3) Behavioral/Mental Health Providers

For behavioral and mental health providers: Clinician must work a minimum of 40 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks/service year. At least 36 hours/week are spent providing patient care. Of the minimum 36 hours/week spent providing patient care, no more than 8 hours/week may be spent in a teaching capacity. The 36 hours of patient care may be provided entirely at the approved site; up to 20 hours/week may be performed as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings when directed by the approved site(s). The remaining 4 hours/week may be spent providing patient care at the approved service site(s), providing patient care in alternative settings to address continuity of care (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, or shelters) as directed by the approved site(s), and as an extension of care at the approved site, or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 4 hours/week).

If working in a Health Resources and Services Administration funded Teaching Health Center, teaching activities shall not exceed 20 hours/week. The remaining 20 hours/week must be spent providing patient care at the approved site(s), 4 hours/week of which may be providing patient care in alternative settings to address continuity of care (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, or shelters) as directed by the approved site(s), and as an extension of care at the approved site or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 4 hours/week). For more information, please see the definition of Teaching Health Center in the "[Definitions](#)" section.

If working in a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services certified Critical Access Hospital or an Indian Health Service hospital (*only applies to psychiatrists or physician assistants and nurse practitioners with specialized training in behavioral/mental health*), at least 24 hours/week must be spent providing patient care in the hospital- affiliated outpatient clinic. Of the minimum 24 hours spent providing patient care, no more than 8 hours per week may be spent in a teaching capacity. The remaining 16 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the Critical Access Hospital or Indian Health Service hospital or the hospital-affiliated outpatient clinic, providing patient care at the hospital-affiliated skilled nursing facility or swing bed unit, or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 4 hours/week).

For more information, please see the definitions for Critical Access Hospital and Indian Health Service hospital in the "[Definitions](#)" section.

Note: Primary care behavioral/mental health scholars are required to practice in a community-based setting that provides access to comprehensive behavioral/mental health services. Scholars who are providing services in a **private practice** (either solo or group practice) will only be allowed to fulfill their National Health Service Corps service obligation if it can be demonstrated that the practice is formally affiliated with a comprehensive community-based facility.

Half-Time Clinical Practice Requirements, by Discipline

Time spent doing clinical-related administrative activities shall not exceed a total of 2 hours/week as specified below. For more information, please see definition for “Clinical administrative, management or other activities” in the [“Definitions”](#) section.

(1) Medical Providers

- a. **For providers of primary medical care services, including pediatricians and geriatricians:** Clinician must work a minimum of 20 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks/service year. At least 18 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved service site(s). Of the minimum 18 hours/week spent providing patient care, no more than 4 hours/week may be spent in a teaching capacity. The remaining 2 hours/week are spent providing patient care or teaching at the approved site(s), providing patient care in alternative settings to address continuity of care (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, shelters, or other community-based settings) as directed by the approved site(s), or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 2 hours/week).
- b. **For providers of obstetrics/gynecology (including family medicine physicians who practice obstetrics on a regular basis and certified nurse midwives) or geriatric services:** Clinician must work a minimum of 20 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks/service year. At least 11 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved service site(s). Of the minimum 11 hours/week spent providing patient care, no more than 4 hours/week may be spent in a teaching capacity. The remaining 9 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved site(s), providing patient care in alternative settings to address continuity of care (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, shelters) as directed by the approved site(s), or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 2 hours/week).

If working in a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services certified Critical Access Hospital or an Indian Health Service hospital, at least 12 hours/week must be spent providing patient care in the hospital-affiliated outpatient clinic. Of the minimum 12 hours/week spent providing patient care, no more than 4 hours/week may be spent in a teaching capacity. The remaining 8 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the Critical Access Hospital or Indian Health Service hospital or the hospital-affiliated outpatient clinic, providing patient care at the hospital-affiliated skilled nursing facility or swing bed unit, or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 2 hours/week).

(2) Dental Providers

- a. **For dentists, excluding pediatric dentists:** Clinician must work a minimum of 20 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks/service year. At least 18 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved service site(s). Of the minimum 18 hours/week spent providing patient care, no more than 4 hours/week may be spent in a teaching capacity. The remaining 2 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved site(s), providing patient care in alternative settings to address continuity of care (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, shelters) as directed by the approved site(s), or performing

clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 2 hours/week).

- b. **For pediatric dentists:** Clinician must work a minimum of 20 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks/service year. At least 11 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved service site(s). Of the minimum 11 hours spent providing patient care, no more than 4 hours per week may be spent in a teaching capacity. The remaining 9 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved site(s), providing patient care in alternative settings (e.g., hospitals or shelters) as directed by the approved site(s), or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 2 hours/week).

(3) Behavioral/Mental Health Providers

Clinicians must work a minimum of 20 hours/week, for a minimum of 45 weeks/service year. At least 10 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved service site(s). Of the minimum 10 hours spent providing patient care, no more than 2 hours per week may be spent in a teaching capacity, performing clinical-related administrative activities, or in an alternative settings to address continuity of care (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, or shelters), as directed by the approved site(s). The remaining 10 hours/week may be spent providing patient care at the approved service site(s) or performing service as a behavioral or mental health professional in schools or other community-based settings when directed by the approved site(s).

If working in an Indian Health Service hospital or Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services certified Critical Access Hospital (*only applies to psychiatrists or physician assistants and nurse practitioners with specialized training in mental health*), at least 12 hours/week must be spent providing patient care in the hospital-affiliated outpatient clinic. Of the minimum 12 hours spent providing patient care, no more than 4 hours per week may be spent in a teaching capacity. The remaining 8 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the Indian Health Service hospital or Critical Access Hospital or the Indian Health Service or Critical Access Hospital affiliated outpatient clinic, providing patient care at the hospital-affiliated skilled nursing facility or swing bed unit or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 2 hours/week).

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

“Clinical administrative, management or other activities”—please see the [“Definitions”](#) section for more information.

Teaching activities are not necessarily considered to be administrative. *For teaching activities* to qualify as clinical practice, National Health Service Corps scholars must provide clinical education to students and residents in their area of expertise at the National Health Service Corps approved service site(s). All teaching must be conducted at the National Health Service Corps approved service site(s). 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 a formal program, such as 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” as defined in the “[Definitions](#)” section) 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.

School-Based Clinics

All school-based clinics must be National Health Service Corps approved service sites. Scholars serving at school-based clinics as their primary service site(s) must provide required documentation (e.g., In-Service Verification Forms) that demonstrates they are meeting 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 service site (or sites). However, the additional National Health Service Corps approved service 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 service 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.

Telehealth and Home Health Policies

- (1) **Telehealth.** Please read the following section carefully, as the requirements for telehealth have changed. Telehealth delivered services cannot exceed more than 75% 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.
 - a. National Health Service Corps clinicians must be available, at the discretion of the National Health Service Corps approved service site, to provide in-person care at the direction of each telehealth site on the application regardless of whether such sites are distant or originating.
 - b. Telehealth may be conducted to or from an alternative setting as directed by the scholar's National Health Service Corps approved service site. All service completed in an

alternative setting are restricted to the program guidelines.

- c. Self-employed clinicians are not eligible for National Health Service Corps service credit for telehealth services.
- d. 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).
- e. Telehealth services must be furnished using an interactive telecommunications system, defined as multimedia communications equipment that includes, at a minimum, audio and video equipment permitting two-way, real-time interactive communication between the patient at the originating site and the National Health Service Corps clinician at the distant site. Telephones, facsimile machines, and electronic mail systems do not meet the definition of an interactive telecommunications system.

- (2) **Home Health.** The National Health Service Corps does not currently 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 the [“Full-Time Clinical Practice Requirements, by Discipline”](#) section and the [“Half-Time Clinical Practice Requirements, by Discipline”](#) section).

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE

Worksite Absences

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

Full-time **AND** half-time scholars are allowed to spend no more than 280 full-time working hours or 140 half-time working hours (which translates into 7 weeks or 35 workdays) per service year away from the NHSC-approved service site for vacation, holidays, continuing professional education, illness, site closures, military service, or any other reason.

If a scholar works more than the minimum number of hours per week (40 for full-time service, 20 for half-time service), the only time spent away from the site that will need to be reported (see the below [“Service Verification”](#) section) and deducted from the allowed absences per service year are the hours of absence that cause a scholar’s work hours to fall below the required minimum number of hours per week. For example, a scholar serving half-time whose work schedule is 32 hours per week would not need to report 12 hours of sick leave taken because the scholar has still met the requirement of serving a minimum of 20 hours per week. For more information on maternity/paternity/adoption leave, please see the [“Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave”](#) section.

If a scholar has circumstances due to a medical or personal emergency that will result in an extended period of absence beyond 280 full-time working hours or 140 half-time working hours (i.e., 35 workdays) per service year, they must request a suspension of the National Health Service Corps service obligation. The National Health Service Corps cannot guarantee that a suspension request will be approved. If a suspension is requested and approved, the scholar's service obligation end date will be extended accordingly (see the "[Suspensions and Waivers](#)" section).

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/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 service 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.

Service Verification

Every National Health Service Corps scholar who has completed their training and is practicing at a National Health Service Corps approved service site must submit 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. Once completed by the scholar, it will be forwarded to an appropriate official at the scholar's National Health Service Corps approved service site for electronic verification. By signing, the appropriate site official will be certifying the scholar's compliance or noncompliance with the applicable clinical practice requirement during the prior six-month period. The In-Service Verification will also record the time spent away from the service 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 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 service site completes the verification in a timely manner.

Leaving a National Health Service Corps Approved Service 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 service 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 service site and complete service at another National Health Service Corps approved service site. If a scholar believes they can no longer continue working at the approved service site, the scholar should discuss the situation and/or concerns with management at the National Health Service Corps approved service 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 service 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 service site and become liable for the monetary damages specified in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program contract (see the “[Breaching the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program Contract](#)” section). 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 Service 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 service site by visiting the [Health Workforce Connector](#). A scholar must request to transfer to another National Health Service Corps approved service site, and the transfer must be approved prior to the start date at the requested National Health Service Corps approved service 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 service 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 service 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 service 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 service 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 service 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 service site. **Scholars who resign or who are terminated from their National Health Service Corps approved service site(s) must contact the National Health Service Corps immediately through the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#).** In these situations, and assuming the scholar remains eligible for service, scholars are required to transfer to another National Health Service Corps approved service 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 service site identified by the National Health Service Corps or at another suitable National Health Service Corps approved service 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 service site.** During the site assistance process, the National Health Service Corps will attempt to locate suitable National Health Service Corps approved service 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 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 **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 1 year or 3 years, as applicable, and subsequent collection efforts are unsuccessful, the case may be referred to the U.S. Department of Justice for enforced collection. All delinquent debts will be reported to credit reporting agencies and to the Treasury Department for the Treasury Offset Program (see below). 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 service 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 and Waivers](#)" below), 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 and Waivers

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, suspend (put "on hold") or waive (excuse) the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program service or payment obligation.

- (1) **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.
- (2) **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.

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.*

- (3) **Bankruptcy.** Any obligation of an individual under the 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 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

Please read the Application and Program Guidance (Guidance) in its entirety before proceeding with an application. The *Guidance* explains in detail the rights and obligations of individuals selected to participate in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program. A complete understanding of the commitment to serve at a National Health Service Corps approved service 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.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

The online application and all supporting documentation must be submitted **by 7:30 p.m. ET on Thursday, April 27, 2023**. Upload all supporting documentation to the [Bureau of Health Workforce Customer Service Portal](#) before this deadline.

COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

Application Information

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program application consists of (1) an 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.

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.

(1) 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 the Eligibility Requirements section of this *Guidance* for further details.

- b. **General Information.** Answers to this section pertain to the applicant's name, social security number, mailing and email addresses, and other contact information.
- c. **Degree Information.** Answers to this section should pertain only to the degree or certificate program for which applicants are applying for a National Health Service Corps Scholarship.
- 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 (2) letters of recommendation, one academic and one non-academic. All recommendations must be completed online through the online application 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 areas 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 institutional phone number and email address of recommender 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.**

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

(2) 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 27, 2023**. 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.

Required Supporting Documentation
a. Proof of Citizenship
b. Authorization to Release Information Form
c. Acceptance Report/Verification of Good Standing
d. Letter of Recommendation (2)
e. Essay
f. Transcript
g. Current Tuition and Fee Schedule

- a. **Proof of Status as a U.S. Citizen or U.S. National.** Proof of U.S. citizenship or U.S. national status may include a copy of a birth certificate issued by a city, county, or state agency in the United States, the identification page of a valid U.S. passport, or a certificate of citizenship or naturalization.
 - Not Accepted - A permanent resident card, driver’s license, marriage certificate, or social security card are not acceptable as proof of U.S. citizenship.
- b. **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 are accepted.
- c. **National Health Service Corps Acceptance Report/Verification of Good Standing.** Applicants must be enrolled or accepted for **full-time** enrollment in a fully accredited program during the 2023-2024 school year (applicant must **begin classes by September 30, 2023**) 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 2023- 2024 school year, unless all contingencies or conditions for acceptance are removed and documented in writing by June 30, 2023.

- 50 d. **Essay.** Applicants are required to respond to the following 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 spacing).

- **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.
- e. **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.**
- f. **Current Tuition and Fees Schedule.** Each applicant must provide a tuition and fees schedule for the 2023-2024 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.

(3) ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION (if applicable)

Based on the applicant's responses to the online application, the following additional documents will 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.

a. 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.)

b. 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 27, 2023 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 2023 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. 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, 2023**. 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 2023-2024 school year and full-time class attendance **must begin on or before September 30, 2023**.

Applicants who will not begin classes on or before September 30, 2023, including applicants who will be on a leave of absence from school through September 30, 2023, **must** decline the award.

Individuals selected for an award who decide not to accept the award may decline the scholarship support without penalty, which permits the promotion of alternates to selectee status. Once an applicant declines the offer of award, the award will be offered to an alternate. There will not be any opportunities to reclaim the award. 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. Applicants who do not receive a scholarship award will be notified no later than September 30, 2023. 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 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 07/31/2023. 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 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

Health Workforce Connector

The [Health Workforce Connector](#) contains a free searchable database for all National Health Service Corps approved service 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 NHSC scholars must serve in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area. The websites below provide an understanding of where Health Professional Shortage Areas are currently located.

- [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 6-month In-Service Verification.

National Health Service Corps Website and Social Media

- [NHSC Homepage](#)
- [NHSC Scholarship Page](#)
- [NHSC Facebook](#)
- [NHSC Twitter](#)
- [NHSC LinkedIn](#)

DEFINITIONS

CLINICAL ADMINISTRATIVE, MANAGEMENT OR OTHER ACTIVITIES. Clinical administrative, management or other activities may include charting, administrative care coordination activities, training, laboratory follow-up, patient correspondence, attending staff meetings, activities related to maintaining professional licensure and other non-treatment related activities pertaining to the scholar'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 considered primarily administrative, and National Health Service Corps scholars serving in such a capacity should keep in mind that they cannot count more than 4 hours per week of administrative and/or management time (2 hours in the case of half-time) toward the total required 40 hours per week (or 20 hours in the case of half-time).

CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITAL. A facility certified by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services under section 1820 of the Social Security Act. A [Critical Access Hospital](#) (PDF – 847 KB) must be located in a rural area in a state that has a Rural Hospital Flexibility Program, have no more than 25 inpatient beds, an average annual length of stay of 96 hours or less, and be located either more than a 35-mile drive from the nearest hospital or Critical Access Hospital, or more than a 15-mile drive in areas with mountainous terrain or only secondary roads.

DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUND. Refers to individuals who have been identified by their schools as having come from a “disadvantaged background” based on environmental and/or economic factors. “Environmental factors” means an individual comes from an environment that has inhibited the individual from obtaining the knowledge, skill, and abilities required to enroll in and graduate from a school. “Economic factors” means an individual comes from a family with an annual income below a level based on low-income thresholds according to family size published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, adjusted annually for changes in the Consumer Price Index, and adjusted by the Secretary of HHS for adaptation to this program.

FAMILY/FAMILY MEMBER. As used in this *Guidance* and for the purposes of the National Health Service Corps, “family member” includes spouses, as well as unmarried partners (both same-sex and opposite-sex).

FULL, PERMANENT, UNENCUMBERED, UNRESTRICTED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL LICENSE. An unencumbered license means a license that is not revoked, suspended, or made probationary or conditional by the state licensing or registering authority as the result of disciplinary action.

FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT or FULL-TIME STUDENT. A full-time student is defined as a student enrolled for a sufficient number of credit hours in any academic term to complete the course of study within the number of academic terms normally required at the school. For a more detailed explanation of the full-time enrollment requirement, please see “Eligibility Requirements” for more information.

FULL-TIME CLINICAL PRACTICE. Working a minimum of 40 hours per week in a clinical practice, for a minimum of 45 weeks per service year, in a National Health Service Corps approved service site. For a more detailed explanation of the full-time clinical practice requirement, please see “Understanding your Service Obligation”.

HALF-TIME CLINICAL PRACTICE. Working a minimum of 20 hours per week in a clinical practice, not to exceed 39 hours per week, for a minimum of 45 weeks per service year, in an NHSC- approved service site. For a more detailed explanation of the half-time clinical practice requirement, please see “Understanding your Service Obligation”.

HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREA. A geographic area, population group, public or nonprofit private medical facility or other public facility for the delivery of health service (including a federal or state correctional institution), which has been determined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services to have a shortage of health professionals, or a facility automatically designated as a [Health Professional Shortage Area](#) by statute or regulation. Information considered when designating a primary care Health Professional Shortage Area include health provider-to-population ratios, rates of poverty, and access to available primary health services. Health Professional Shortage Areas are designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration pursuant to Section 332 of the Public Health Service Act (Title 42, U.S. Code, and Section 254e) and implementing regulations (Title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 5).

INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE HOSPITALS. A collective term that includes hospitals that are both Indian Health Service owned and Indian Health Service operated, or Indian Health Service owned and tribally operated (i.e., a federal facility operated by a tribe or tribal organization contracting with the Indian Health Service pursuant to the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act), which provide both inpatient and outpatient clinical treatment services to eligible American Indians and Alaska Natives. This term does not include hospitals that are both tribally owned and tribally operated.

INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE, TRIBAL OR URBAN INDIAN HEALTH CLINIC. A healthcare facility (whether operated directly by the Indian Health Service; or by a tribe or tribal organization contracting with the Indian Health Service pursuant to the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, codified at 25 U.S.C. 450 et seq.; or by an urban Indian organization receiving funds under Subchapter IV of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, codified at 25 U.S.C. 1651 et seq.) Which provides clinical treatment services to eligible American Indians and Alaska Natives on an outpatient basis. For more information, please see:

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS APPROVED SERVICE SITE. Each health care site must submit a National Health Service Corps New Site Application to become a [National Health Service Corps approved service site](#). For a site to be eligible for National Health Service Corps approval, it must:

- Be located in and providing service to a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area;
- Provide comprehensive primary medical care, behavioral/mental health, and/or dental services;
- Provide ambulatory care services (no inpatient sites, except Critical Access Hospitals or Indian Health Service hospitals);
- Ensure access to ancillary, inpatient, and specialty referrals;
- Charge fees for services consistent with prevailing rates in the area;
- Discount or waive fees for individuals at or below 200% of the federal poverty level;
- Accept assignment for Medicare beneficiaries;
- Enter into agreements with Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, as applicable;
- Not discriminate in the provision of services based on an individual's inability to pay for services or the source of payment (Medicare/Medicaid/Children's Health Insurance Program);
- Prominently post signage that no one will be denied access to services due to inability to pay;
- Agree not to reduce clinician's salary due to National Health Service Corps support;
- Provide sound fiscal management; and
- Maintain a recruitment and retention plan, as well as a credentialing process, for clinicians.

If the Site Application is approved, the community site becomes a National Health Service Corps approved service site. All National Health Service Corps approved service sites must continuously meet the above requirements to remain in good standing.

OVERPAYMENT. Overpayments are scholarship payment(s) to a scholar or to a school on the scholar's behalf, while the scholar is on an approved leave of absence, enrolled as a less than full-time student, or is no longer enrolled in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program approved course of study. Overpayment 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.

POSTGRADUATE TRAINING. Refers to additional training that a health professions student may participate in after they graduate from a health professions education program (e.g., internships, residencies, chief residency, or fellowships).

PRIMARY HEALTH SERVICES. Health services regarding family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, geriatrics, dentistry, or behavioral/mental health that are provided by physicians or other health professionals.

SCHOOL YEAR. For all scholars, the school year is defined 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 2023-2024 school year begins July 1, 2023 and ends June 30, 2024.

SPOUSE and MARRIAGE. As used in this Guidance and for the purposes of the National Health Service Corps, “spouse” includes same-sex married couples as well as opposite-sex married couples. In accordance with the Supreme Court decisions in *United States v. Windsor* and in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the Department of Health and Human Services will treat as valid marriages of same-sex couples. The term “spouse” does not include individuals in registered domestic partnerships, civil unions or similar formal relationships recognized under state law as something other than a marriage.

TEACHING HEALTH CENTER. An entity that: (1) is a community based, ambulatory patient care center, and (2) operates a primary care residency program (i.e., an approved graduate medical residency training program in family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine-pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, psychiatry, general dentistry, pediatric dentistry, or geriatrics) under section 340H of the Public Health Service Act. [Find currently funded Teaching Health Centers.](#)

TRIBAL HEALTH PROGRAM. An Indian tribe or tribal organization that operates any health program, service, function, activity, or facility funded, in whole or part, by the Indian Health Service through, or provided for in, a contract or compact with the I under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450 et seq.).