



Nurse Corps Scholarship Program

**School Year 2019-2020
Application & Program Guidance
April 2019**

Application Submission Deadline: May 21, 2019 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, you can [fill out our contact form](#) or call 1-800-221-9393 (TTY: 1-877-897-9910), Monday through Friday (except federal holidays) 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

Authority: Section 846(d) of the Public Health Service Act (42 United States Code 297n (d)), as amended.

CFDA Number 93.303

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Privacy Act Notification Statement

General

We provide this information 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 846(d) of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act (42 USC 297n (d)), as amended.

Purposes and Uses

The Nurse Corps Scholarship Program (Nurse Corps SP) provides scholarships to nursing students in exchange for a minimum two-year full-time service commitment (or part-time equivalent), at an eligible health care facility with a critical shortage of nurses.

We use the information that applicants supply to evaluate their eligibility, qualifications and to assess their continued compliance with the applicable standards for participation in the Nurse Corps SP. In addition, information from other sources is 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 (HHS) in connection with Nurse Corps SP activities.

The information may also be disclosed outside the Department, as permitted by the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), to the Congress, the National Archives, the General Accountability Office, and pursuant to court order and various routine uses as described in the [System of Record Notice 09-15-0037](#).

Effects of Nondisclosure

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

Paperwork Reduction Act Public Burden Statement

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a current OMB control number. The current OMB control number for information collected through this application process is 0915-0301 and the expiration date is 05/31/2021.

Public reporting burden for this collection is estimated to average 0.8 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to HRSA Reports Clearance Office, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 14N39, Rockville, Maryland 20857.

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.

Program Overview

Please read this Application and Program Guidance (APG) in its entirety before proceeding with an application. The APG explains in detail the incurred tax burden¹, as well as the rights and obligations of individuals selected to participate in the Nurse Corps SP Program.

This APG provides information regarding the commitment to serve at an eligible health care facility with a critical shortage of nurses and the financial, legal, and other consequences of failing to perform that commitment.

INTRODUCTION

The Nurse Corps SP is a competitive program administered by HHS' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). HRSA improves the health of underserved and vulnerable populations by strengthening the health workforce and connecting skilled professionals to communities in need. The Nurse Corps SP carries out this mission by growing the workforce in underserved communities. The Nurse Corps SP strives to select recipients who are more likely to remain at their service sites and continue serving those in need even after they fulfill the service commitment.

With this as HRSA's guiding principle, the Nurse Corps SP's purpose is to provide scholarships to nursing students in exchange for a minimum two-year full-time service commitment (or part-time equivalent), at an eligible health care facility with a critical shortage of nurses.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to explore the types of nursing opportunities that exist in eligible critical shortage facilities before applying to the Nurse Corps SP. Upon graduation and licensing, all participants must fulfill their service obligation at an eligible health care facility and in the discipline (Registered Nurse (RN) or Nurse Practitioner (NP)) for which they were funded. (See [Service Requirements](#) section.)

There is a lack of behavioral health training for advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs).² To address this need, Nurse Corps SP supports NPs, who have a broader scope of practice and the capacity to increase access to behavioral health services. HRSA reserves up to 50 percent of the Nurse Corps SP funds for the education of NPs, with up to 20 percent of total program funding targeting NPs specializing in Psychiatric-Mental Health. Through this approach, the Nurse Corps aims to support providers who are well positioned to combat the opioid epidemic.

¹ This explanation is not a substitute for tax advice from the IRS. Applicants/participants for this APG should seek advice from the IRS or a tax advisor.

² American Hospital Association. "[The State of Behavioral Health Workforce](#)" (2016)

The benefits of the Nurse Corps SP are:

1. **Service.** Nurse Corps SP participants have the opportunity to increase access to care by delivering nursing services in eligible health care facilities with a critical shortage of nurses.
2. **Scholarship.** Nurse Corps SP provides the following:
 - a. Funds to support nursing school tuition and eligible fees;
 - b. An annual payment for other reasonable costs (ORC) to cover expenses for books, clinical supplies, and instruments; and
 - c. Monthly stipends to cover living expenses.

AWARD INFORMATION

The Nurse Corps SP provides a scholarship to students that covers various costs, but also has some limitations:

Tuition and Required Fees (Permissible and Impermissible Uses)

- a. **Tuition and eligible required fees paid directly to the nursing school.** The nursing school or the school's authorized financial office must submit an itemized invoice to include course name and course number to the Nurse Corps SP for payment of tuition and fees for each term. Any fees on the invoice that are already included in the ORC (discussed below) will not be approved for payment to the nursing school.
- b. **Summer sessions.** The Nurse Corps SP will only pay tuition and fees for required courses in summer school sessions when: (1) summer session 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 participants' contract period.
- c. **Repeated coursework.** The Nurse Corps SP will not pay tuition and fees for repeated coursework for which the Nurse Corps SP has previously made a payment (e.g., cost of the repeated course, overload fees). If the repeated course work does not delay participants' graduation date, the scholarship payments for other tuition and fees may continue. The decision to continue scholarship payments while participants are repeating coursework is made at the discretion of the Nurse Corps SP. Participants who must repeat coursework should immediately contact the Nurse Corps SP via the [Bureau of Health Workforce \(BHW\) Customer Service Portal](#) as failure to do so could result in the cessation of monthly stipend payments or other actions from the Nurse Corps SP.
- d. **Increases in tuition or required fees.** Payments for any increases in tuition or required fees that are reported by the school after the award has been made are not guaranteed and are subject to the availability of funds.
- e. **Attending more than one school.** For participants enrolled in programs that require taking classes at more than one school/campus, please be advised that payments will only be made to other institutions that have degree program agreements with the nursing

institution named in the Nurse Corps SP application, and only for courses required as part of the degree program.

- f. **Required courses.** The Nurse Corps SP will not pay for additional courses beyond those required for graduation. In addition, the Nurse Corps SP will not pay for tuition costs or fees unrelated to the degree/program, such as loan processing fees, penalty or late fees, and other similar expenses.
- g. **Transfers to other academic institutions are strongly discouraged.** Transfers to other academic institutions are strongly discouraged once the applicant has been accepted into the Nurse Corps SP. Transfers are considered on a case-by-case basis and *only* for exceptional circumstances. Transfer requests must include a completed Verification of Acceptance (VOA) and or Enrollment Verification Form (EVF) as appropriate, by the school to which the requested transfer is being made, and be approved by the Nurse Corps SP in advance to ensure continued eligibility for funding. The Nurse Corps SP award is based on the cost of attendance at the initial school of record for all school year contracts executed during the Fiscal Year 2019 application cycle. If a transfer is approved, the Nurse Corps SP will not cover any increase in tuition and/or fees for the new institution. Participants are responsible for the difference. Changes in the **type** of nursing program **will not** be approved.

Other Reasonable Costs (ORC)

- a. The ORC is a single annual payment provided directly to each Nurse Corps SP participant to assist in covering the cost of books, clinical supplies/instruments, and uniforms. The payment is based on information obtained directly from the institution regarding the approximate cost of these items and is determined independently for participants. ORC payments are determined prior to the disbursement of the scholarship award, cannot be adjusted or changed even if additional expenses arise, and will vary from student to student depending on the student's program and graduation date. The ORC payment **is reduced proportionately** for students who plan to attend less than a full school year (e.g., December graduates) and for part-time students.

Stipend Payment

For the 2019-2020 academic year, the Nurse Corps SP will pay each full-time student a monthly stipend of \$1,383 (which is reduced after federal income and federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes are deducted). A part-time student will receive a proportionately reduced stipend amount. The final stipend payment may be reduced by a minimum amount of \$0.01 due to rounding on the withholding calculation.

- a. For the 2019-2020 academic year, the Nurse Corps SP will pay each full-time student a monthly stipend of \$1,383 (which is reduced after federal income and federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes are deducted). A part-time student will receive a proportionately reduced stipend amount.

- b. Stipend payments may be delayed or placed on hold if documents requested by the Nurse Corps SP (e.g., invoices, EVFs, transcripts, etc.) have not been received. Stipend payments may also be stopped if a student is repeating coursework that has already been paid for by the Nurse Corps SP or if the repeated coursework results in a change in registration status (Full Time/Part Time).
- c. Stipend payments will stop the month the nursing coursework is completed, upon graduation, or when the Nurse Corps SP contract terminates for any reason, whichever comes first.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND AWARD PROCESS

To be eligible for a Nurse Corps SP award, all applicants must:

1. Be a U.S. citizen (either U.S. born or naturalized), U.S. National, or lawful permanent resident. Applicants must present proof of U.S. citizenship or status as a U.S. national, which 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.

Please note: A driver's license, marriage certificate, or social security card is **not** acceptable as proof of U.S. Citizenship, U.S. National or Lawful Permanent Resident status. Failure to provide the appropriate documentation will result in an ineligible application.

Find documentation requirements in the Required Supporting Documentation Section.

2. Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a full-time or part-time student in an accredited nursing degree program at one of the following:
 - **AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE SCHOOL OF NURSING:** A department, division, or other administrative unit in a junior college, community college, college, or university which provides primarily or exclusively a two-year program of education in professional nursing and allied subjects leading to an associate degree in nursing or to an equivalent degree.
 - **A COLLEGIATE SCHOOL OF NURSING:** A department, division, or the administrative unit in a college or university that primarily or exclusively provides a program of education in professional nursing and related subjects leading to a degree of bachelor of arts, bachelor of science, bachelor of science in nursing (BSN), graduate degree in nursing, or to an equivalent degree, and includes advanced training related to such program of education provided by such school.
 - **A DIPLOMA SCHOOL OF NURSING:** A school affiliated with a hospital or university, or an independent school, which provides primarily or exclusively a

program of education in professional nursing and allied subjects leading to a diploma or to an equivalent evidence of completion.

- **RN-to-Baccalaureate (Bridge Program) BSN:**

Nursing program for RNs who already have an Associate of Science in Nursing or Associate Degree in Nursing or Diploma degree in nursing and receive a baccalaureate nursing degree (BSN). The curriculum maybe designed to accelerate the RN to Baccalaureate completion usually through a combination of “Bridge” transition and core courses.

- **Direct/Entry Level Degree Master’s Program:**

Admits students with baccalaureate degrees in other disciplines and “No” previous nursing education. Program prepares graduates for entry into the nursing profession and awards a master’s degree in nursing (MSN).

Eligible: Graduate Entry into Nursing Program, which confers to degrees (BSN, then a MSN). If applicant has completed the BSN portion of the program, is accepted/enrolled in the MSN/NP portion, and applied for MSN/NP funding.

Not Eligible: If applicant is in the BSN portion of the program, but they applied for MSN/NP funding, therefore they are not eligible to receive funding because they are not enrolled in the MSN/NP program.

Applicants may be enrolled in an on-line program as long as they are NOT self-paced programs, the curriculum requires in-person clinical rotations, and all other programmatic guidelines are met. Students enrolled in Licensed Practical Nurse programs, combined degree, and dual degree programs are not eligible for the Nurse Corps SP.

3. Be enrolled in or accepted for enrollment in a school of nursing (as outlined above) located in a state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory (See [DEFINITIONS](#)). A student attending a school outside of these areas is not eligible for the Nurse Corps SP, even if the student is a citizen/national/lawful permanent resident of the United States.
4. Begin taking classes on or before September 30, 2019, in an accredited nursing degree program for which you are applying to use Nurse Corps SP funds for academic term 2019-2020.
5. Submit a complete application.

An applicant is deemed **ineligible**, even with a completed application and signed contract, if they:

- a. **Has any current or past judgment liens** against his or her property arising from a debt owed to the United States;
- b. **Defaulted on a prior service obligation** to the federal government, a State or local government, or other entity, even if the applicant subsequently satisfied that obligation through service, monetary payment, or other means.

- c. **Is excluded, debarred, suspended, or disqualified** by a federal agency; or
- d. **Has an existing service obligation.** An applicant who is already obligated to a federal, state, or other entity for professional practice or service after academic training is generally not eligible for a Nurse Corps SP award. An exception may be made if the entity to which the obligation is owed provides documentation that there is no conflict in fulfilling the service commitment to the Nurse Corps SP and that the Nurse Corps SP service commitment will be served first. A Nurse Corps SP participant who subsequently enters into another service commitment and is not immediately available after completion of their degree to fulfill their Nurse Corps SP service commitment is subject to the breach-of-contract provisions described in the [Non Compliance Penalties](#) section of the APG. Participation in a program with a previous service commitment that has been met will not bar participants from applying to the Nurse Corps SP

Among eligible applicants, the Nurse Corps SP determines scholarship awardees using selection factors and a funding preference.

Selection Factors

The following selection factors are considered when determining scholarship awardees:

1. **A history of not honoring a prior legal obligation.** A Nurse Corps SP applicant who has a history of not honoring a prior legal obligation, including a service payment obligation, as evidenced by one or more of the following factors, **may not** be selected for an award:
 - a. Default on any federal payment obligations (e.g., student loans, student service obligation, federal income tax liabilities, mortgages) or non-federal payment obligations (e.g., court-ordered child support payments); or
 - b. Write-off of any federal or non-federal debt as uncollectible.

***Please note:** Nurse Corp SP will conduct an employment credit check and will check the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) for medical malpractice, adverse licensure privileges actions, judgments or convictions prior to making an award.*

2. **Academic performance.** Applicant must meet all academic requirements as required by his or her school/program. An applicant's prior successful academic performance as demonstrated by his or her transcript and /or grade point average (GPA) is also factored into the award selection process. Applicants with the highest GPA will be most competitive.
3. **Response to essay questions.** Demonstrates a thorough commitment to a career in nursing; interest/motivation in providing care to underserved communities and vulnerable populations; and relevant work experience and/or activities (e.g., community service, research, and internships) that have prepared the applicant to work with underserved populations.
4. **Resume/Curriculum Vitae.** Summarizes educational qualifications, work experience, and volunteer/community service in chronological order.

5. **Recommendation letters.** Provide a detailed description of the applicant's interest and motivation to serve underserved populations through work experience, coursework, special projects and research. The recommenders should consider the applicant's completion of any federal pipeline program; performance in school; education/work achievements; community/civic or other non-academic achievements; and demonstration of ability to work and communicate constructively with others.

Funding Preference

There is a funding preference for applicants with the greatest financial need. An applicant's financial need is determined based on the applicant's Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which is provided on the official Student Aid Report (SAR) generated through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Applicants with an EFC between \$0 and \$5,576 are considered to have the greatest financial need. The FAFSA's SAR is calculated by the Department of Education **not** by the Nurse Corps SP.

Among qualified applicants with the greatest financial need (i.e., applicants with an EFC between \$0 and \$5,576), awards are made based on the following tiers:

1. Applicants enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an accredited diploma, undergraduate, and graduate nursing program or accredited graduate level nurse practitioner program, including nurse practitioners specializing in Psychiatric-Mental Health, registered as full-time students for every consecutive term.
2. Applicants enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an accredited graduate nursing program for Doctor of Nursing Practice programs, programs for certified nurse midwives, certified registered nurse anesthetists or clinical nurse specialists as full-time students for consecutive terms.
3. Applicants enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an accredited diploma, undergraduate or graduate nursing program as part-time students, as determined by school's registrar.

Anticipated Awards

For the 2019-2020 academic year, the Nurse Corps SP is expected to be highly competitive. The Program anticipates more applicants for scholarship awards than there are funds available. It is expected that approximately 204 new and continuation awards will be made for the 2019-2020 academic year. In the past, Nurse Corps SP funds have been sufficient to reach only applicants in the first Tier.

Once an applicant has been selected for an award, the applicant is provided with information for logging into the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). This web-based system will allow Nurse Corps SP participants to communicate with the Nurse Corps SP staff and to manage several customer service inquiries, such as updating contact information.

Note: Nurse Corps SP participants may be subject to changes in the statute and/or policies of the

Nurse Corps SP that occur after receipt of award.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTRACT AND SERVICE OBLIGATION

Contract Period

The Nurse Corps SP award and contract is for the 2019-2020 academic year (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020). Any funding provided after June 30, 2020, is considered another contract year. Any additional school years (Optional Contracts) requested by the applicant and agreed to by the Secretary of HHS (HHS Secretary) or his/her designee are indicated in the executed contracts. Support is provided during the academic years agreed to in the executed contracts (not to exceed four (4) years), beginning with the 2019-2020 academic year and is based on the cost of the initial school of record (i.e., the school attended at the time the initial contract is executed). Scholarship funding may not be deferred. Awards are for consecutive academic terms.

Additional Support after Receipt of Awards (Continuation Award)

Additional scholarship support will only be provided for the same nursing degree, program and specialty for which the Nurse Corps SP participants' original contract was funded. To request additional scholarship support for the 2020-2021 academic year or any subsequent academic years, each Nurse Corps SP participant must submit a signed contract for that academic year and a report verifying that they are still in an acceptable level of academic standing. Participants will not need to reapply for scholarship support under the APG. Participants may also request optional contracts for subsequent academic years through graduation up to a maximum of four (4) academic years of support. The Nurse Corps SP will notify participants when requests for additional support are due.

The granting of continuation awards depends upon the availability of funds for the Nurse Corps SP and is contingent upon the participants':

1. Continued eligibility to participate in the Nurse Corps SP (e.g., acceptable level of academic standing, not repeating coursework). Please be advised that an employment credit check will be conducted to verify that the applicant meets the financial eligibility requirements. The credit check is conducted as part of the eligibility process;
2. Compliance with policies and procedures established by the Nurse Corps SP for requesting continued support; and
3. Past compliance with program policies and requirements.

Participants requesting continued support must be able to support themselves financially until the scholarship benefit payment schedule can be reinstated. If a continuation award is granted, the first payment may not be received until mid-November, but it will include stipend payments retroactive to July 1 and the annual ORC payment.

Service Obligation

All participants incur, at a minimum, a two-year full-time service obligation (or part-time equivalent) and may have a longer service obligation, as set forth below. Service obligations must

be served under the degree for which participants were funded and in an eligible facility as defined below. Participants are encouraged to begin searching and applying for open positions as soon as possible. Participants have up to nine (9) months from the date of graduation to obtain an unencumbered permanent nursing license, accept an offer of employment from a Nurse Corps SP-approved Critical Shortage Facility (CSF) and commence full-time (or, if approved, part-time) work providing clinical services at the CSF.

Participants who sign “Full-Time Student” contracts incur an obligation to provide one year of full-time service for each full or partial school year of support received beyond two years as set forth in the table below. If a participant receives support for one year or less, there is **still** an obligation to serve two years. For example, a student who receives a full year of support (12 months) the first school year, a partial year of support (6 months) the second school year, and a full year of support the third school year will owe the equivalent of three years of full-time clinical service

Years of Scholarship Support	Years of Service Obligation
Up to 1 Full-Time School Year (2019-2020)	2 Years Full-Time
Up to 2 Full-Time School Years (2019-2021)	2 Years Full-Time
Up to 3 Full-Time School Years (2019-2022)	3 Years Full-Time
Up to 4 Full-Time School Years (2019-2023)	4 Years Full-Time

Participants who sign “Part-Time Student” contracts will have their part-time school enrollment aggregated to the full-time equivalent. For example, two semesters as a part-time student is equivalent to one semester as a full time student.

Contract Termination

The HHS Secretary or his/her designee may terminate a Nurse Corps SP contract for an academic year if, on or before June 1 of the school year, the participant:

1. submits a written request to terminate their contract for that academic year through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#); and
2. repays all amounts paid to, or on behalf of, the participant (pre-tax tuition, stipends and ORC) for that academic year.

If a participant meets these requirements and the contract is successfully terminated, they will no longer have a service obligation **for that school year**. Please note, however, that if a participant received Nurse Corps SP support for one or more prior school years, they will still owe service in return for those prior years of support. Additionally, if a Nurse Corps SP participant does not meet the requirements to terminate, and the contract remains in effect, they will incur a service commitment for the full or partial year of support received, as set forth in the “Program Requirements” Section of this APG. The requirements above apply to requests for terminating the initial/first contract as well as any optional contract(s).

Taxes and Financial Implications

Please Note: the ENTIRE Nurse Corps SP award is taxable, including tuition, fees, ORC, and monthly stipend payments.

Under Section 117 of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Code, scholarship amounts received as payment for services required as a condition of the scholarship **are** taxable income. HHS will withhold federal income tax and the “employee” share of FICA tax from ALL components of the award. HRSA’s withholding of income and employee FICA tax from tuition payments means that a participant’s award may be reduced accordingly. If the amount withheld does not cover a participant’s tax obligations, they are responsible for paying the remainder to the IRS. We suggest participants and potential participants speak with a financial aid advisor at their nursing school for the financial options that may assist with covering any unpaid costs.

For questions related to the tax withholdings, we suggest that participants speak with a professional tax advisor, visit www.irs.gov, use the [IRS Withholding Calculator](#), or contact the IRS Tax Help Line at (800) 829-1040.

All of the Nurse Corps SP funds disbursed to participants, *or to their school on their behalf*, is reported to the IRS on a Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement. **Please note that State and/or local taxes are not withheld from any of the Nurse Corps Scholarship payments.**

Participants who want additional funds withheld from their award should indicate the additional amount to be deducted on the appropriate line on the Form W-4, Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS WHILE IN SCHOOL

Nurse Corps SP participants must maintain enrollment in the nursing program until the program is complete. Nurse Corps SP participants must verify their enrollment status through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) for each term (e.g., semester, quarter) through an Employment Verification Form (EVF). Additionally, a designated school official must certify the participants full-time (part-time, if approved) enrollment and each participant must submit a transcript after the add/drop date at the beginning of each term of the courses and credit hours for which the Nurse Corps SP will receive an invoice. Participants must also upload an unofficial or official transcript at the end of every semester. Participants who fail to complete and submit their enrollment verification through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) each academic term may not receive their scholarship and stipend payments.

Participants not in compliance with the enrollment requirements may be recommended for default. School invoices cannot be processed without these documents. Participants who fail to complete and submit these documents through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) each academic term could jeopardize their scholarship and stipend. Participants not in compliance with the enrollment requirements may be recommended for default.

1. **Maintain an Acceptable Level of Academic Standing.** Nurse Corps SP participants must be in an acceptable level of academic standing. When participants are on academic probation, they are not considered to be in an acceptable level of academic standing by the Nurse Corps SP. All other determinations of an acceptable level of academic standing are made by each school. Please note that participants who do not meet the acceptable level of academic standing requirements are recommended for default.
2. **Notify Nurse Corps SP of Any Changes in Enrollment Status.** Participants are required to notify the Nurse Corps SP through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) as soon as one of the following events is anticipated:
 - a. A repeat of any coursework;
 - b. A change in graduation date;
 - c. A leave of absence approved by the school;
 - d. Withdrawal or dismissal from school;
 - e. Placement on academic probation;
 - f. A change from full-time student status as determined by the school's registrar, to a less than full-time status for participants who sign "Full-Time" Contracts.
 - g. Voluntary withdrawal from courses during an academic term; or
 - h. A transfer to another school or program;

These events could have an adverse impact on a participant's receipt of Nurse Corps SP payments. A participant may be placed in default and may have to repay the support they received if they fail to notify HRSA of any change in status.

Additional Funding Provided by an Alternative Source

Receipt of the Nurse Corps SP award does not automatically preclude an applicant from receiving funds from other programs, as long as the other program does not impose a *service obligation*. Applicants should contact their financial aid officer to determine how the receipt of a Nurse Corps SP award may affect the receipt of other sources of funding.

1. Financial Aid Received Before Notice of Award

Grants and Scholarships

If tuition and eligible fees for the academic year have been paid by another source of financial aid (e.g., Pell Grant, state grants or tuition-based scholarships) before the student receives notice of the Nurse Corps SP award, then the school may:

- a. Return payments to the funding source and submit an invoice to the Nurse Corps SP for payment.
- b. Submit an invoice itemizing all additional sources of funding if the participant wishes to keep these grants and/or scholarships applied to tuition. The Nurse Corps SP will pay the difference between the total tuition and the grant/scholarship funds.

Loans

If a Nurse Corps SP participant has taken out a student loan to cover the cost of tuition and fees for their summer and/or fall 2019 semester(s), while waiting for notice of the Nurse Corps SP award, the participant's academic institution should provide an itemized invoice to the Nurse Corps SP showing the amount of tuition and eligible fees paid with the student loans. The Nurse Corps SP will pay the academic institution the amount to cover the tuition/fees covered by the loan.

2. Financial Aid Received After Notice of Award

Please note this section only relates to financial aid/loans that are solely allocated for tuition. If a student receives financial aid to pay tuition and fees from sources other than the Nurse Corps SP after they received notice of the Nurse Corps SP award, the school is instructed not to submit an invoice to the Nurse Corps SP for costs that have already been covered by the other source of financial aid, including grants and scholarships. If the other source of financial aid covers the full cost of tuition and fees, the school should submit documentation stating that it will not be seeking payment for the term. If a balance remains, then the school may submit an invoice for the balance remaining. The amount of the student's Nurse Corps SP award is not affected if the student accepts financial aid/loans for non-tuition expenses such as cost of living expenses. Financial aid that is not solely allocated for tuition do not need to be listed on the invoice.

Circumstances that may affect Scholarship Payments

The following situations may result in a change or cessation of the Nurse Corps SP's payment of tuition and/or stipend:

1. **Changes in Enrollment Status.** A change in enrollment status may result in a discontinuation of tuition and stipend payments. Participants must promptly notify the Nurse Corps SP, through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#), if one of the events listed below is anticipated or occurs. If a change in enrollment status has already occurred, participants must submit a letter from the school verifying the status change through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).
 - a. Repeat course work for which the Nurse Corps SP has already made payments. The Nurse Corps SP may continue payments for stipends and all other non-repeated course work, provided that participants continue to meet all other Nurse Corps SP requirements;
 - b. A change in the participant's graduation date. This may affect funding and contract end date;
 - c. A leave of absence approved by the school. All payments are discontinued during the approved leave of absence and may be terminated if the student does not return to school;
 - d. A withdrawal or dismissal from school. All payments are discontinued and the participant will be placed in default;
 - e. A change from full-time student status to a less than full-time student status for a

participant who signs a “Full-Time Student” Contract. All tuition and stipend payments may be discontinued. An exception may be made for summer terms and if a participant is in their final academic term.

- f. A voluntary withdrawal from course(s) during an academic term. All payments is discontinued; or
 - g. A transfer to another school or nursing program (See below).
2. **Changes in Schools/Programs.** Changes in schools or nursing programs are strongly discouraged once the applicant has been accepted into the Nurse Corps SP. Changes in schools/programs must be approved in advance by the Nurse Corps SP to ensure continued eligibility for funding and is 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 the Fiscal Year of the application cycle for which the award was made. If a transfer is approved, the Nurse Corps SP will not cover any increase in tuition and/or fees for the new institution; the participant is responsible for the difference. Changes in **type** of nursing program and type of degree program **will not** be approved. **Participants must perform their Service Obligation in the nursing capacity (degree program) for which their scholarship was funded even if they change schools or programs.**
3. **Delinquent Federal and State Debt.** Under the Treasury Offset Program, the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury) is authorized to offset a student’s Nurse Corps SP payments if the student is delinquent on a federal debt. In addition, the Treasury is authorized to offset the Nurse Corps SP payment in response to a student’s State debts, including delinquent child support payments.
4. **Nurse Corps SP Program Overpayments.** Nurse Corps SP payments received by a participant, including payments made to a school on a participant’s behalf, during periods in which a participant is on an approved leave of absence, is repeating coursework, or is otherwise ineligible to receive payments are considered overpayments. Overpayments may also occur due to administrative error. Any participant receiving an overpayment should immediately contact the Nurse Corps SP through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) to make arrangements to promptly return all overpayments, as such, overpayments are viewed as a debt owed to HHS which will trigger HHS’ debt collection procedures, as required by 45 CFR Part 30.

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 a participant (e.g., federal income tax refund) to collect the overpayments, recovery through Administrative Wage Garnishment, and/or referral of the overpayments to the Department of Justice for enforced collection. For participants who receive subsequent funding under the Nurse Corps SP and who previously received any overpayments that have not been repaid, the overpayments are collected through administrative offset. The Nurse Corps SP will withhold scholarship funds payable to, or on behalf of, a participant (including stipends, ORC payments, and, if necessary, tuition

payments) until the overpayment owed is paid in full. Administrative offset is not a repayment option for Nurse Corps SP participants who wish to terminate their contract.

An overpayment not recoverable through an offset as described above is subject to repayment within 30 days of notification. If the debt is not repaid within 30 days, interest will accrue from the date of notification on the unpaid balance at the maximum legal prevailing rate of interest per annum in the effect on the date of this notice until the debt is paid in full. Additionally, a 6 percent per annum late charge may be applied to any part of a debt more than 90 days past due. An administrative cost charge may be applied to any debt not paid by the due date. If debt is not paid in full or a repayment agreement is not established by the due date, your debt may be reported to the credit bureaus as delinquent; referred to a collection agency, and/or the Department of Treasury for administrative offset/salary offset/income tax refund offset, and/or the Department of Justice (DOJ) for enforced collection (such as wage garnishment, asset seizure or judgments) in accordance to the HHS claims collections regulation 45 CFR part 30

5. **Resumption of Benefits.** To resume tuition and stipend payments discontinued under existing scholarship contracts, Nurse Corps SP participants must submit documentation from their school official confirming that they are now eligible to receive scholarship support (e.g., not repeating coursework, returned from a leave of absence, resumed full-time student status). Requests for the resumption of scholarship benefits must be sent to the Nurse Corps SP via the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). They are considered on a case-by-case basis by the Nurse Corps SP to determine if a participant is eligible to receive additional funding going forward. For participants who have not repaid overpayments determined to be debts owed to HHS, the resumption of scholarship payments is subject to the administrative offset described in the *Nurse Corps SP Overpayments* subsection above. For participants whose tuition and stipend payments were discontinued due to their withdrawal or dismissal from school or due to their transfer to an ineligible program or school, Nurse Corps SP payments will not be resumed.

6. **Veteran Benefits.** Educational benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs generally continue along with Nurse Corps SP funds. Scholarship benefits may be reduced to reflect funding received under the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill. Questions or concerns regarding changes in scholarship payments should be directed to the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).

Please be advised that if the Nurse Corps SP has any questions concerning a participant's eligibility for continued support, the Nurse Corps SP reserves the right to delay any award payments pending clarification of the participant's continuing eligibility and status.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS WHILE IN POSTGRADUATE RESIDENCY/TRAINING

Postgraduate Training Eligibility

RN and NP participants may request a deferment (i.e., postponement) of their Nurse Corps SP

service obligation in order to complete a postgraduate residency/training program approved by the Nurse Corps SP. Participants will have the option to complete a residency program for an approved specialty that must be consistent with the specialty for which the Nurse Corps SP awarded funding. The postgraduate training program **cannot** exceed one year in length.

In order to remain in compliance with the Nurse Corps SP during postgraduate residency/training, eligible participants must: 1) obtain their license and 2) start their postgraduate residency/training no later than six months after graduation. After completing postgraduate residency/training, participants will have three months to commence employment before being considered non-compliant with contract terms and being at risk of default.

Participants may pursue only the postgraduate training that the Nurse Corps SP has officially approved and may not make any changes to the type or length of postgraduate training without prior approval from the Nurse Corps SP, as failure to do so may result in breach of contract and a recommendation for default. Participants who have not requested or have not been granted service deferment to complete a postgraduate nursing residency program are required to begin their Nurse Corps SP service obligation upon degree completion as outlined in the [Service Requirement](#) Section.

To gain approval from the Nurse Corps SP to enter a postgraduate residency/training program, participants must submit a written request for deferment of their service obligation and a copy of their acceptance letter to the postgraduate residency/training program through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). Residency requests cannot be approved until participants complete the nursing program for which they were awarded. The written request MUST include, or provide as an attachment, a detailed description of the Residency Program. The Nurse Corps SP will review the Postgraduate Training Deferment Request and either approve or disapprove the request.

Participants will not receive Nurse Corps SP financial support during their approved postgraduate residency/training, nor will they incur any additional Nurse Corps SP service obligation because of the service deferment. Additionally, HRSA will not credit any periods of postgraduate residency/training toward satisfying participants' service obligation even if the training occurred at an eligible CSF located in a Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA).

Participants Requirements While in Postgraduate Training

In order to remain in compliance with program requirements, participants must pursue only the postgraduate training that the Nurse Corps SP has officially approved and may not make any changes to the type or length of postgraduate training without prior approval from the Nurse Corps SP. Participants are required to notify the Nurse Corps SP in writing, within 30 days, of their new mailing address and/or any changes that affect their training status. After graduation, participants who enter into a residency-training program that is not preapproved is out of compliance with the Nurse Corps SP requirements, and is subject to the actions described in [Non Compliance Penalties](#) section of this APG.

Participants who withdraw or are terminated from the Nurse Corps SP approved postgraduate

residency/training program are required to notify the Nurse Corps SP immediately through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#), and begin service as required in the Service Obligation section. Failure to take these steps will lead to default, and participants who default on their Nurse Corps SP service obligation incur the damages described in the [Breaching the Contract](#) section of this APG.

SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

By accepting the Nurse Corps SP award, participants are entering into a contract with the federal government, and are required to practice at an eligible CSF located in, designated as, or serving a mental health or primary care HPSA with a score of 14 or higher, the score must be 14 or higher at the time an offer. Participants must refer to a CSF's **most recent** HPSA score when selecting a service site, and refer to the APG for the year of scholarship award to be sure they select a CSF that meets the minimum HPSA requirement for their service. Participants are provided with information about the Nurse Corps SP CSF site search process during the program.

The Nurse Corps SP must approve the site where participants wish to complete their service prior to the commencement of employment in order to receive service credit. There is no guarantee that CSFs that are eligible during participants' training will still be eligible at the time participants are available to start their service obligation.

1. Obtain a license

Within nine (9) months of graduation as an RN or, if appropriate, as an advanced practice nurse, and prior to commencing service at a CSF, Nurse Corps SP participants must be permanently licensed to practice in the State where they will complete their service obligation serving. In addition, advanced practice nurses are required to pass a national certification examination for their specialty (that is administered by a nationally recognized certifying body) prior to commencing service.

- a. Credit towards fulfillment of the service commitment will not be given in the absence of a current, unencumbered permanent license in the State of service. A participant whose license becomes encumbered must notify HRSA immediately through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).
- b. Service credit will NOT be given until the Nurse Corps SP has received documentation that all licensure and certification requirements have been met. Documents should be uploaded in [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).
- c. Responsibility for obtaining the required State license (and national certification exam, if applicable) prior to the service start date rests with Nurse Corps SP participants.
- d. Nurse Corps SP participants are expected to take the appropriate licensure/certification exams at the earliest possible date.

- e. If a participant is unsuccessful in obtaining a license or passing the certification exam(s) within nine (9) months of their graduation date, they should immediately contact the Nurse Corps SP through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) to request a suspension.

2. Obtain a Position at a Critical Shortage Facility

In order to receive service credit, Nurse Corps SP participants will have up to nine (9) months from their date of graduation to (1) accept an offer of employment and (2) commence full-time (or approved part-time) employment in the nursing capacity for which their scholarship was funded, with a Nurse Corps SP-approved CSF (see boxed section under the list of *Critical Shortage Facilities*).

Participants may complete their service obligation at multiple sites provided the sites are under a single employer or within the same network under dependent satellite facilities. All sites must meet the Nurse Corps SP CSF eligibility requirements as described in this APG. There may be multiple Points of Contact (POCs) in this scenario, but ONE POC is responsible for completing/verifying an Employment Verification Form (EVF) for all sites at which Nurse Corps SP participants are employed.

Participants must contact the Nurse Corps SP prior to accepting employment to ensure the facility and position are eligible. The Nurse Corps SP reserves the right to grant approval of all service locations to ensure each participants compliance with all requirements related to their service obligation.

3. Perform Full-Time or Part-Time Clinical Service

Participants may satisfy their service obligations either on a full-time or, with written approval from the HHS Secretary or his/her designee, a part-time basis.

- a. Full-Time clinical practice is defined as a minimum of 32 hours per week. At least 26 hours per week must be spent providing clinical services or direct patient care at the approved site. The remaining 6 hours may be spent on administrative or other non-clinical activities.
- b. Part-Time clinical practice is defined as a minimum of 16 hours per week and up to a maximum of 31 hours per week. Participants wishing to serve part-time **must first** obtain approval from Nurse Corps SP and must extend their service obligation so that the aggregate amount of service performed will equal the amount of a full-time service obligation. At least 80 percent of the hours each week must be spent providing clinical services, or direct patient care, to patients. For example, a nurse scheduled to work 20 hours per week must spend at least 16 hours per week providing clinical services. Please note, part-time participants must provide at least 16 hours per week of patient care/clinical service.
- c. Absences. Under the Nurse Corps SP, participants are not permitted to take more than 35 workdays per service year of leave from the approved service site for any

reason, including for vacation, holidays, continuing professional education, or illness. If a participant has a medical or personal emergency that will result in an extended period of absence, they must request a suspension of the Nurse Corps SP service commitment. The Nurse Corps SP will consider all requests, but cannot guarantee that a suspension request will be approved. If a suspension is requested and approved, the participant's service commitment end date will be extended accordingly.

Note: The information provided above pertains to compliance with the Nurse Corps SP service obligation only. Nurse Corps SP-approved CSF sites are private entities, and participants are responsible for confirming leave/absence policies with their specific employer.

4. Verify Initial and Ongoing Employment During Service Obligation

Nurse Corps SP participants who have completed school and are entering into their service obligation by providing clinical nursing services must have their initial employment verified through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) before being placed on duty and then every six (6) months until their service obligation has been fulfilled. To verify employment, an authorized official or Point of Contact (POC) at the Nurse Corps SP-approved CSF must certify the initial terms of employment and the site type where each participant will work. In addition, the site official must verify the participant's compliance through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) with the full-time or part-time service requirement during each 6-month period, and indicate whether the participant is non-compliant with any requirement. The service verification process is also the mechanism to record participants' approved leave from the CSF.

Participants may be recommended for default of their service obligation for failure to:

- 1. obtain an unencumbered license;**
- 2. accept an offer of employment from a Nurse Corps SP-approved CSF site;**
- 3. commence full-time (or approved part-time) clinical services at the facility within nine months of their date of graduation; or**
- 4. verify their employment.**

Participants who default on their Nurse Corps SP service obligation incur the damages described in the *Breaching the Contract* section of this APG.

Critical Shortage Facilities

Nurse Corps SP participants must provide full-time (or if approved, part-time) clinical service in an eligible CSF. For the purpose of the Nurse Corps SP, CSF is a health care facility located in, designated as, or serving a primary care or mental health HPSA.

CSF Types include:

Hospitals

- **Critical Access Hospital (CAH)** – A facility certified by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) under section 1820 of the Social Security Act. In general, a CAH must be located in a rural area in a state that has a Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program; maintain no more than 25 inpatient beds and an average annual length of stay is 96 hours or less; furnish 24-hour emergency care services 7 days a week; and be located either more than a 35-mile drive from the nearest hospital or CAH, or more than a 15-mile drive in areas with mountainous terrain or only secondary roads.
- **Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH)** – A hospital that has a disproportionately large share of low-income patients and receives an augmented payment from the state under Medicaid or a payment adjustment from Medicare. Hospital-based outpatient clinics are included under this definition.
- **Indian Health Service (IHS) Hospitals** – A collective term that includes hospitals that are both IHS-owned and IHS-operated, or IHS-owned and tribally operated (i.e., a federal facility operated by a tribe or tribal organization contracting with the IHS 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.
- **Public Hospital** – Any hospital that is owned by a government (federal, state, or local), receives government funding, and is primarily engaged in providing the following care, by or under the supervision of physicians, to inpatients: (a) diagnostic and therapeutic services for medical diagnosis, treatment, and care of injured, disabled, or sick persons; or (b) rehabilitation of injured, disabled, or sick persons. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals and military treatment facility hospitals are also included under this definition. State psychiatric hospitals must use facility Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) to determine site eligibility - population and geographic HPSAs cannot be used.
- **Private Non-Profit Hospital** – A hospital in a state that is a private non-profit entity and is primarily engaged in providing the following care, by or under the supervision of physicians, to inpatients: (a) diagnostic and therapeutic services for medical diagnosis, treatment, and care of injured, disabled, or sick persons, or (b) rehabilitation of injured, disabled, or sick persons.

Community-based Settings

- **Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)** – FQHCs, as defined in section 1861(aa)(4) of the Social Security Act, include: (1) nonprofit entities or public agencies that receive a grant under section 330 of the Public Health Service Act or funding from such a grant under a contract with the recipient of such a grant and meets the requirements to receive such a grant; (2) entities designated as “Look-Alikes” by the HHS Secretary (or designee) as meeting the requirements for receiving a grant under section 330 of the Public Health Service Act; and (3) outpatient health programs or facilities operated by a tribe or tribal organization under the Indian Self-Determination Act or by an urban Indian organization receiving funds under Title V of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act. FQHCs include Community Health Centers, Migrant

Health Centers, Health Care for the Homeless Health Centers, and Public Housing Primary Care Health Centers.

- [Indian Health Service, Tribal or Urban Indian Health Clinic \(ITU\)](#) – A health care facility (whether operated directly by the IHS; or by a tribe or tribal organization contracting with the IHS 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: [Urban Indian Health Program Fact Sheet](#) or [IHS Profile](#).
- [Native Hawaiian Health Center](#) – An entity as defined in 42 U.S.C. § 11711(4)(a) that is organized under the laws of the State of Hawaii; (b) which provides or arranges for health care services through practitioners licensed by the State of Hawaii, where licensure requirements are applicable; (c) which is a public or nonprofit private entity; and, (d) in which Native Hawaiian health practitioners significantly participate in the planning, management, monitoring, and evaluation of health services. For more information, see the [Native Hawaiian Health Care Act of 1992](#), as amended.
- [Rural Health Clinic](#) – An entity that CMS has certified as a rural health clinic under section 1861(aa)(2) of the Social Security Act. A rural health clinic provides outpatient services to a non-urban area with an insufficient number of health care practitioners.
- **State or Local Health Department** – The state, county, parish, or district entity that is responsible for providing healthcare services, which include health promotion, disease prevention, and intervention services, in clinics or other health care facilities that are funded and operated by the state or local Public Health, Health, or Human Services Departments.
- **Nurse Managed Health Clinic/Center** – An entity as defined in 42 U.S.C. § 254c-1a(a)(2) which is a nurse-practice arrangement, managed by advanced practice nurses, that provides primary care or wellness services to underserved or vulnerable populations and that is associated with a school, college, university or department of nursing, FQHC, or independent nonprofit health or social services agency. These clinics must serve the general public.
- **Urgent Care Center** – Urgent Care centers provide acute episodic care on a walk-in basis to assist patients with an illness or injury that does not appear to be limb or life-threatening and is either beyond the scope or availability of the typical primary care practice.
- **Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC)** – A clinic that is certified as a CCBHC by a state in accordance with criteria published by the HHS Secretary and with the requirements of the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014. The criteria include requirements for staffing, availability and accessibility of services, care coordination, scope of services, quality and other reporting, and organizational authority. Certified Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) would also fall under this category. A CMHC is an entity that meets applicable licensing or certification requirements for CMHCs in the state in which it is located and provides (1) outpatient services, including specialized outpatient services for children, the elderly, individuals who are chronically mentally ill, and residents of its mental health service area who are discharged from inpatient treatment at a mental health facility; (2) 24-hour-a-day emergency care services; (3) day treatment, or other partial hospitalization services, or psychosocial rehabilitation services; and (4) screening for patients being considered for

admission to State mental health facilities to determine the appropriateness of such admission.

- **Free and Charitable Clinics** – Free and Charitable Clinics are safety-net health care organizations that utilize a volunteer/staff model to provide a range of medical, dental, pharmacy, vision and/or behavioral health services to economically disadvantaged individuals. Such clinics are 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations, or operate as a program component or affiliate of a 501(c)(3) organization.
- **End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Dialysis Centers** – An ESRD facility is an entity that provides outpatient maintenance dialysis services, or home dialysis training and support services, or both. ESRD facilities are described under section 1881 of the Social Security Act and 42 CFR 413.174 as being either hospital-based or independent facilities.
- **Ambulatory Surgical Center** – An entity that operates exclusively for the purpose of furnishing surgical services to patients who do not require hospitalization and in which the expected duration of services does not exceed 24 hours following admission.
- **Residential Nursing Home** – An institution that is primarily engaged in providing, on a regular basis, health related care and service to individuals who because of their mental or physical condition require care and service (above the level of room and board) that can be made available to them only through institutional facilities. This category includes a “skilled nursing facility,” which is an institution (or distinct part of an institution), certified under section 1819(a) of the Social Security Act, that is primarily engaged in providing skilled nursing care and related services to residents requiring medical, rehabilitation, or nursing care and is not primarily for the care and treatment of mental diseases; transitional facilities; assisted living; and group homes.
- **Home Health Agency** – An agency or organization, certified under section 1861(o) of the Social Security Act, which is primarily engaged in providing skilled nursing care and other therapeutic services at a patient’s home. For more information, visit this link: [Home Health Agency](#).
- **Hospice Program** – An Agency or organization, certified under section 1861(dd)(2) of the Social Security Act, that provides 24-hour care and treatment services (as needed) to terminally ill individuals and bereavement counseling for their immediate family members. Care is provided in individuals’ homes, on an outpatient basis, and on a short-term inpatient basis, directly or under arrangements made by the agency or organization.

Note: The health care facilities listed above are examples of the types of entities that may constitute a CSF. However, an entity will only be designated as a CSF if it is **located in, designated as, or serving a primary care or mental health HPSA.**

Ineligible facilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Private practice offices
- Clinics in prisons and correctional facilities
- A site of a compliant entity that is not located in a HPSA
- Nurse Staffing Agencies
- Travel Nurse Agencies

Note: The Nurse Corps SP does *NOT* accept nurse staffing agencies, travel nurse agencies, per diem RNs and Pool Nurses to satisfy the required service obligation.

If a participant is not sure whether a facility fits into one of the categories above, they should contact the facility's business office or human resources department. Applicants are strongly encouraged to research the types of nursing opportunities that exist in CSFs before applying to or accepting a Nurse Corps SP award. Please note: The health care facilities that employ Nurse Corps SP participants are responsible for paying participants' salaries. Nurse Corps SP participants negotiate their own salary and benefits packages with the CSF where they are employed after graduation. Additionally, all participants are required to fulfill the service obligation at a CSF in the discipline (RN or NP) under which they were funded.

Participants are required to serve in a CSF located in, designated as, or serving primary care or mental health HSPAs with a score of 14 or higher (See [Definitions](#) and [Resources for Applicants](#)). Nurse Corps SP participants who must relocate to accept a position in a different geographic area will not receive a relocation incentive or reimbursement.

Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA)

HPSAs are designated by HRSA as having shortages of primary care, mental health, or dental health providers and may be geographic, population, or institutional (facility). The Nurse Corps SP will only use primary care and mental health HPSA designations and scores in determining whether a site qualifies as a CSF. The Nurse Corps SP does NOT use dental health HPSA scores in determining the eligibility of a site.

The categories of HPSAs used for the Nurse Corps SP are based on health discipline, specifically primary care and mental health. For each discipline category, there are three different types of HPSA designations: 1) geographic (a county or service area); 2) population group (e.g. low-income population, migratory agricultural workers); and 3) facility (e.g. rural health clinic, CHC). Please note, serving uninsured, Medicare and/or Medicaid populations, in and of itself does not qualify an area, population or facility as a HPSA.

Participants should consult the HPSA websites listed below:

- [Find Shortages by Address](#): Enter the CSF's address to see if the facility is located in a HPSA. The facility **MUST** be located in a primary care or mental health HPSA. More specifically, "Yes" must appear beside "In a Primary Care (or Mental Health) HPSA." The primary care/mental health HPSA score(s) will appear beneath the respective designation(s).
- [HPSA Find](#): Find HPSAs by State, county, and discipline (select only primary care or mental health).

HPSA scores are ONLY used to determine the eligibility of the facility and do not imply or infer the capacity in which a nurse must work. You are required to fulfill the service obligation in the discipline for which you were funded, but may work in any Nurse Corps SP-approved CSF site.

A HPSA score or HPSA designation status may change on the HPSA website over time. A facility may have one HPSA score at the time Nurse Corps SP participants begin nursing school but have a different HPSA score or no longer be a HPSA by the time participants completes nursing school. Site eligibility is based on the HPSA score in effect at the time the Nurse Corps SP approve participants to serve at the site.

SERVICE COMPLIANCE

Worksite Absences

Participants are required to serve a minimum of 45 weeks per service year and are allowed to be on leave from the Nurse Corps SP-approved CSF site for no more than 35 workdays per service year; therefore, a participant's service obligation end date is extended for each day of absence over the allowable 35 missed workdays.

Service Verification

To comply with program requirements, participants must use the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) to identify an authorized point of contact for the approved service site, complete and submit the initial EVF, and continue to submit In-Service Verifications (ISVs).

Participants who cannot provide ISVs online should contact the Nurse Corps SP immediately through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#), our [contact form](#), or by phone (1-800-221-9393).

Participants who fail to complete and submit their 6-month ISV through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) on time may not receive service credit and may be recommended for default.

Transfer Requests

The Nurse Corps SP expects that participants will fulfill their service obligation at the Nurse Corps SP-approved CSF; however, the Nurse Corps SP understands that circumstances may arise that require a participant to leave the initial facility and complete their service at another Nurse Corps SP-approved CSF. If a participant feels they can no longer continue working at their approved facility, they should contact the Nurse Corps SP immediately. The Nurse Corps SP must approve all transfers. A transfer request should be submitted through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) before any participant leaves their site. Participants must transfer to a Nurse Corps SP-approved CSF site with a HPSA of 14 in either primary care or mental health (whichever is higher). Leaving the assigned site without prior written approval by Nurse Corps SP may result in a default recommendation.

Unemployment During Service Obligation

If a participant becomes unemployed for any reason during their service obligation, the Nurse Corps SP will give them a specific timeframe in which to return to service at an eligible CSF or risk being recommended for default. Although the Nurse Corps SP will work with all participants to the extent possible to return to service, each participant is responsible for obtaining employment at an eligible CSF and must request a suspension via the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) prior to the effective leave date.

Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave

If a participant plans to be away from their site for maternity/paternity/adoption leave, they are required to inform the Nurse Corps SP before taking the leave. The Nurse Corps SP allows participants to be away from their site within the timeframes established by either the Family Medical Leave Act (up to 12 weeks) or the participant's state of residence; however, participants must adhere to the leave policies of their Nurse Corps SP-approved CSF site.

Request for Suspension

Participants are required to request a suspension for an extended workplace absence, which may or may not be approved by the Nurse Corps SP. Requests should be submitted through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) prior to the period of leave. Remember, participants are required to serve a minimum of 45 weeks per service year and are allowed to be away from the Nurse Corps SP-approved CSF site for no more than 35 workdays per service year; therefore, a participant's obligation end date is extended for each day of absence over the allowable 35 missed workdays.

NON-COMPLIANCE PENALTIES

Breaching the Contract

A participant is in breach of the Nurse Corps SP contract if they:

1. Fail to maintain an acceptable level of academic standing in the nursing program (as indicated by the nursing program in accordance with requirements of the NCSP);
2. Are dismissed from the nursing program for disciplinary reasons; or
3. Voluntarily terminate the nursing program; or
4. Fail to begin or complete the service obligation as specified in their Nurse Corps SP contract.

If the Nurse Corps SP contract is breached, the participant is placed in default and liable to the federal government to repay all funds paid to the participant, or on the participant's behalf, under the Nurse Corps SP and pay interest on such amounts at the maximum legal prevailing rate from the date of default.

The amount owed, including interest, must be repaid within three (3) years of the date of the participant's default. Please note that participants who default on their Nurse Corps SP contract are ineligible to participate in federal loan repayment programs, including the Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program.

Failure to repay the Nurse Corps SP debt within three (3) years will result in delinquency and have the following consequences:

1. **The debt is reported to credit reporting agencies as delinquent.** During the three-year repayment period, the debt is reported to credit reporting agencies as "current." If the debt becomes past due, it is reported as "delinquent."

2. **The debt is referred to a debt collection agency and the DOJ.** Any Nurse Corps SP debt past due for 45 days may be referred to a debt collection agency. If the debt collection agency is unsuccessful in receiving payment in full, the debt may be referred to the DOJ for enforced collection.
3. **Administrative offset.** Federal and/or state payments due to participants (e.g., an income tax refund) may be offset by the Treasury to repay a delinquent Nurse Corps SP debt. In addition, recovery through Administrative Wage Garnishment may be enforced to repay a delinquent Nurse Corps SP debt.

Medicare/Medicaid Exclusion

Delinquent defaulters who are unwilling to enter into, or stay in compliance with, an agreement to repay their scholarship debt can be excluded from participation in Medicare, Medicaid and other federal healthcare programs.

Suspension & Waiver

The HHS Secretary may, under certain circumstances, suspend (put “on hold”) or waive (excuse) the Nurse Corps SP service or payment obligation. A request for a suspension or waiver must be submitted through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) and be supported by full medical or financial information. Additional supporting documentation is required following submission of the request.

1. **Suspension.** This mechanism provides temporary relief to a Nurse Corps SP participant if they have short-term (not permanent) circumstances that currently makes compliance with the obligation impossible or would involve an extreme hardship such that enforcement of the obligation would be unconscionable. Periods of approved suspension will extend the participant’s Nurse Corps SP service obligation end date.

The major categories of service suspensions are set forth below.

- a. **Medical or Personal Hardship.** A suspension may be granted for up to one year, if a participant provides independent medical documentation of a physical or mental health disability, or personal hardship, including a terminal illness of an immediate family member (e.g., child or spouse), which results in their temporary inability to perform the Nurse Corps SP service obligation. Upon receipt of the suspension request, the Nurse Corps SP will notify the participant of instructions for submitting supporting documentation.
- b. **Parental (Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave).** A participant must notify the Nurse Corps SP of pending parental leave and provide appropriate documentation as soon as possible. Parental leave of 16 weeks or less is automatically approved, once proper documentation is submitted. Upon receipt of the request, the Nurse Corps SP will notify the participant of instructions for submitting the appropriate documentation. If the participant’s parental leave will exceed 16 weeks during that service year, the suspension may be extended by the Nurse Corps SP based on

documented medical need or if additional parental leave time is permitted under State law.

- c. **Call to Active Duty in the Armed Forces.** Participants who are also military reservists and are called to active duty are granted a suspension, for up to one year, beginning on the activation date described in the reservist's call to active duty order. In addition to the written request for a suspension, a copy of the order to active duty must be submitted to Nurse Corps SP. The suspension is 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 Nurse Corps SP service obligation.
2. **Waiver.** A waiver permanently relieves a participant of all or part of the Nurse Corps SP service or payment obligation. We only grant waivers if a participant demonstrates that compliance with their obligation:
 - is permanently impossible; or
 - would involve an extreme hardship such that enforcement of the obligation would be unconscionable.

Submit a waiver request by uploading a signed request letter, including the reason(s) you are seeking a waiver, as an inquiry to HRSA through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).

The HRSA/Bureau of Health Workforce Legal and Compliance Branch will contact you regarding any medical and financial documentation necessary to process the waiver request. We rarely grant waivers and require a demonstration of compelling circumstances.

Cancellation of the Nurse Corps SP Service Obligation

We cancel a participant's obligation only in the unfortunate event of their death. No liability is transferred to heirs of participants.

Application Information

As previously stated, applicants are encouraged to read this APG in its entirety before proceeding with an application. The APG explains in detail the rights and obligations of individuals selected to participate in the Nurse Corps SP.

Applicants should ensure they have a complete understanding of (1) the commitment to complete a nursing education program and serve at an eligible CSF for a minimum of two years and (2) the financial, legal, and other consequences of failing to meet those obligations.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to research nursing opportunities that exist in various CSFs before applying to the program. All participants are required to fulfill the service obligation in the discipline for which they were funded.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

The online application and all supporting documents must be submitted to the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) by **7:30 p.m. ET on May 21, 2019**. Applicants are **strongly encouraged** to upload all supporting documents in PDF format to expedite processing of their application.

COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

The Nurse Corps SP application consists of (1) an online application, (2) required supporting documentation, and (3) additional supporting documentation (as applicable). Applicants should keep a copy of the application package for their records.

Applicants are responsible for submitting a complete application. The information submitted in the online application must match the information submitted in the supporting documentation. Application packages are initially reviewed to determine their completeness and consistency with underlying supporting documents. Application packages deemed incomplete (e.g., missing, illegible, or incomplete application materials) as of the application deadline will not be considered for funding.

The Nurse Corps SP 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, Nurse Corps SP staff will not fill in any missing information or contact applicants regarding missing information. No changes are accepted to an applicant's school or discipline previously entered on the submitted application prior to award.**

Awardees who wish to attend a different school and/or program from the one included on their application should contact the Nurse Corps SP immediately upon notification of award. Requests to attend a different school are discouraged, approval is not automatic, and Nurse Corps will review the request for consistency with program requirements.

1. ONLINE APPLICATION

Applicants are required to complete each of the sections below in their online application submissions.

- a. **Eligibility Screening.** If an individual does not meet the eligibility requirements in the online application, they will not be able to continue with the application. Please refer to the Eligibility Requirements section of this APG for further details.
- b. **Application Type.** Answers to this section identify the applicant's status as a Full or Part Time nursing student.
- c. **General Information.** Answers to this section pertain to the applicant's name, social security number, mailing and email addresses, and other contact information.
- d. **Background Information.** Answers to this section pertain to the educational background, individual and family background, and emergency contact information.
- e. **Degree Information.** Answers to this section should pertain only to the degree or certificate program for which the applicant is applying for a Nurse Corps Scholarship.
- f. **Recommendation Letters:** The Applicant must arrange for two (2) letters of recommendation – one academic and one non-academic, as described more specifically below. For both, the applicant should contact their desired recommenders and provide them with a link to the online recommender portal. Once the letters of recommendation have been received (uploaded into) by the portal, the application can be submitted for processing.

Note: It is the applicant's responsibility to check the portal to verify that the recommenders have uploaded the letters of recommendation and to submit the application once completed. If the original recommender cannot provide a recommendation letter, the applicant must cancel the original recommendation request and submit the name of another official selected to complete the letter of recommendation before the application deadline. An application will not be complete until the recommender has uploaded a signed (either electronically or by hand) letter of recommendation.

The applicant *will not be notified* if the recommender does not complete or upload the letter. The applicant is only notified if/when the recommender uploads a letter. The burden is on the student to submit a completed application through the portal.

1. **Completed Academic Recommendation Letter.** If the applicant is currently enrolled in the nursing program for which the scholarship award application is intended, the signed recommendation letter should be from a 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 signed letter should be from the Department Chair, faculty advisor, or a faculty member of the applicant's most recent academic program.

The academic official's recommendation letter must describe his/her relationship and length of time acquainted with the applicant. The recommendation letter must be on institution letterhead and contain the applicant's name, application ID number, the recommender's name, title, organization and address. The completed recommendation must then be signed and uploaded into the online recommender portal. The recommendation letter should address the three discussion points described in the instructions of the recommender online portal.

Note: A second non-academic letter of recommendation may be submitted in place of an academic letter of recommendation if the applicant has been out of school for an extended period; however, the same components must be addressed.

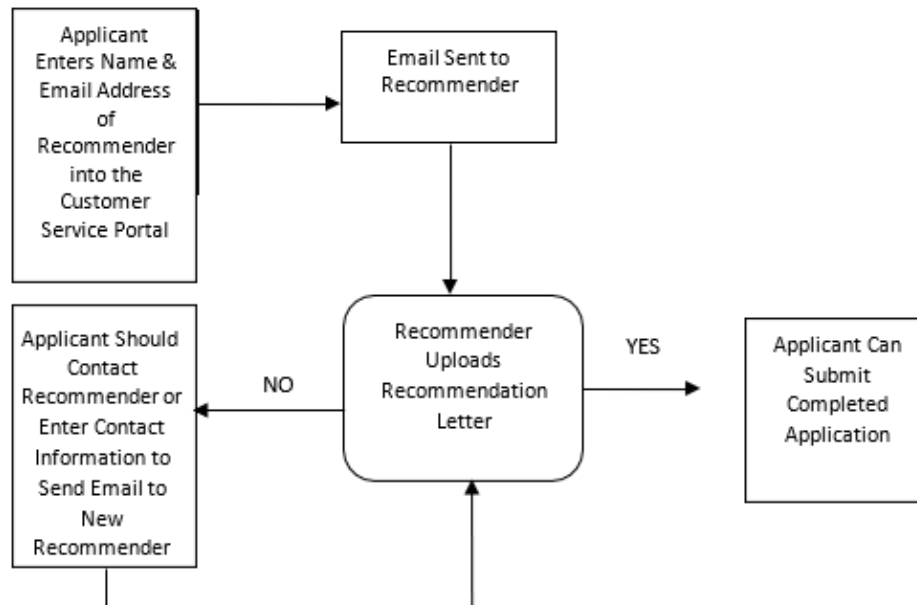
- 2. Completed Non-Academic Recommendation Letter.** The second recommendation letter should be from an individual who is familiar with the applicant's professional, community, and/or civic activities, especially those related to underserved communities and, if applicable, federal pipeline program experience.

The recommender can be a current or former employer, community leader, colleague, or anyone who has knowledge of the applicant's demonstrated work and/or interest and motivation to provide care to underserved communities.

Applicants may want to encourage recommenders to consider documenting any experience in high priority service areas (i.e. Indian Health, Rural, Tribal, FQHC, and CHC) or federal pipeline programs. The recommender must describe his or her relationship to and length of time acquainted with the applicant. The non-academic recommendation letter must have the applicant's name, application ID number, the recommender's name, title, organization and address.

The completed recommendation must be signed and uploaded to the online recommender portal. The recommendation letter should address the discussion points described in the instructions to the recommender. The evaluator cannot be a relative of the applicant, or be the same individual who completed the Academic Recommendation letter

Recommendation Letter Steps to Completion



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

2. Required Supporting Documentation

- a. It is the applicant's responsibility to upload required supporting documents by **7:30 p.m. ET on May 21, 2019**. Failure to submit a complete application package by the deadline **will result in the application being deemed ineligible**, and they will not be considered for a Nurse Corps SP award. Applicants must upload all supporting documents at the time of the online application submission. Each document submitted must include the applicant's First Name, Last Name, and Application Number.
- 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 dated and have the applicant's handwritten signature.
- c. **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.** A permanent resident card, driver's license, marriage certificate, or social security card are NOT acceptable as proof of U.S. Citizenship.
- d. **Completed Verification of Acceptance/Enrollment Verification Form (EVF).** The Nurse Corps SP uses the Verification of Acceptance and EVFs to confirm the student's

enrollment and status, program start date of no later than September 30, 2019 for the 2019-2020 academic year, expected date of graduation, grade point average, institution's name and address, and the official contact person for the school of nursing.

- e. **Official Student Aid Report (SAR).** Applicants must provide a **complete** copy, either electronically or on paper, of their Official SAR with no missing pages, which summarizes all the information provided on the FAFSA.

SARs received from institutions other than the Department of Education will NOT be accepted, and failure to provide an Official SAR will render an application ineligible. The SAR will contain the applicant's EFC, the number used in determining eligibility for federal student aid. The EFC should appear in the upper portion of a paper or electronic SAR in addition to a SAR 'expiration' or 'valid through' date. The Nurse Corps SP will deem partial or expired SAR submissions as incomplete and the application will be rejected.

The Nurse Corps SP only accepts official SARs; any other type of document will deem the applicant ineligible. Applicants can request updates on, or copies of, their official SAR from the Department of Education by calling 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) or emailing FederalStudentAidCustomerService@ed.gov.

- f. **Current Tuition and Fee Schedule.** Each applicant must provide a tuition and fees schedule for the 2019-2020 academic 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.
- g. **Completed Essay Questions.** The applicant must provide typed responses to the **three** essay questions listed below. Each response is limited to a 500-word count or less (about a full page with spacing) in Times New Roman 12 point font. The applicant must include the Applicant ID number generated by the application at the top of each document.
 1. **Essay 1:** How will you contribute to the mission of the Nurse Corps SP in providing care to underserved communities?
 2. **Essay 2:** What personal experiences have prepared you to work with underserved populations, such as participation in a federal pipeline program (see [Definitions](#)), community service, internships, or experience in rural, frontier or tribal populations? If you have successfully completed participation in any federal pipeline programs, please highlight your experiences in the essay responses and consider having a reference from one of these programs write one of your Letters of Recommendation.
 3. **Essay 3:** Please discuss your commitment to pursue a career in nursing.

- h. **Resume/Curriculum Vitae (CV).** Applicants must provide a resume/CV that summarizes their educational qualifications, work experiences, and volunteer/community service in chronological order. The resume/CV must also include the location (city/state) where the experience took place.
 - i. **Academic Transcript.** Applicants that have not completed one full academic term in the program for which they are seeking Nurse Corps SP funding must submit an official or unofficial transcript from the most recently completed undergraduate or graduate academic program attended (or high school, if applicable). The uploaded transcript must be legible and include the applicant's school name, courses taken, grades received for each course, and cumulative Grade Point Average.
3. **DOCUMENTATION REGARDING EXISTING SERVICE OBLIGATION** (if applicable)
- a. If an applicant's responses indicate that they may have an outstanding service obligation to another program, additional documentation must be submitted. Specifically, the applicant must submit a Statement Regarding Existing Service Obligation which is a written statement (satisfactory to the Secretary of HHS) 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 NCSP obligation and the entity's obligation and ii) the NCSP service obligation will be served first. 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.

Application Review and Award Process

The deadline for submitting an online application and supporting documentation is **May 21, 2019 at 7:30 p.m. ET**. Applicants will receive a confirmation of submission once the application has been successfully submitted online via portal "application submitted successfully" message.

The application review process will take approximately three to four months. Applicants selected for a Nurse Corps SP award are notified by email. Applicants may opt to accept or decline the Nurse Corps SP award. In order for Nurse Corps SP staff to make an award to the selected applicant, the applicant offered the award must:

1. Sign and upload the Nurse Corps SP contract;
2. Complete and upload the online banking form for direct deposit;
3. Complete and upload the EVF for Fall term and, if applicable, Summer;
4. Have Completed essays and letters of recommendations with application; and
5. Complete and upload the W-4 form.

Awards are subject to the availability of funds. All applicants, those selected for an award and those not selected for an award, are notified no later than September 30, 2019.

NOTIFICATION OF AWARD

Individuals eligible for awards will receive a Confirmation of Interest (COI) email no later than September 30, 2019. To confirm continued interest in accepting the award, an applicant must respond by the deadline indicated in the COI email/letter. If the applicant does not respond to the Nurse Corps SP by the deadline, the applicant is no longer eligible. The COI is not a guarantee that the individual will receive an award, as funding depends on appropriations by Congress. Applicants who respond by the deadline are asked to:

- a. Sign the Nurse Corps SP contract;
- b. Complete the online banking form for direct deposit;
- c. Complete the EVF; and
- d. Complete the W-4 form.

A credit check will also be performed on each applicant's behalf. Awards are subject to the availability of funds. Applicant award notifications begin in late August and continue through September 2019.

Individuals selected for an award must be enrolled as a **full-time** student (unless awarded as a funding preference 3 – part-time student) during the 2019-2020 academic year and full-time class attendance **must begin on or before September 30, 2019**. Applicants are requested to submit your nursing program plan of study (i.e., a list of classes each term). Applicants who will not begin classes on or before September 30, 2019, including applicants who are on a leave of absence from school through September 30, 2019, **must** decline the award.

An individual selected for an award, who decides not to accept the award, may decline the scholarship support without penalty. However, once a decision to decline has been made, 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. Please subscribe to [HRSA email list](#) to receive an email notification of when the next application cycle will open.

Additional Information

RESOURCES FOR APPLICANTS

Health Workforce Connector

[Health Workforce Connector](#) (formerly NHSC Jobs Center) contains a searchable database for several, but not all, Nurse Corps SP approved service sites, including many with current job openings.

HPSA Find

All Nurse Corps SP participants must serve in a federally designated HPSA. The websites below provide an understanding of where HPSAs are currently located.

- [HPSA Find](#)
- [Find Shortages by Address](#)

Customer Care Center

Any individual with questions about the Nurse Corps SP may contact the Customer Care Center Monday through Friday (except federal holidays), 8:00 am to 8:00 pm ET.

- 1-800-221-9393 (TTY – 1-877-897-9910)

Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW) Customer Service Portal

Once an applicant has been selected for an award, they are provided with instructions for establishing an account on the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). This web-based system will allow Nurse Corps SP participants to communicate with the program staff, to make certain requests (e.g., suspensions, transfers, waivers), and to access the 6-month In-Service Verification Form.

Social Media

- [Nurse Corps Facebook](#)
- [Nurse Corps LinkedIn](#)

DEFINITIONS

ACADEMIC YEAR. All Nurse Corps SP contracts are for a defined academic term. Under the Nurse Corps SP, all academic years run from July 1 through June 30 of the following year. If, for example, a student is in a full-time 24-month program that begins on August 2, 2019, and they sign a contract for two academic years, the student will receive stipend, ORC and tuition payments from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021. Funding for the extra months of the program beyond June 30, 2021, would require the student to request a third year of scholarship funding, and if granted, obligates the participant to 3 years of full-time service. If a participant is in a 24-month program that begins on May 2, 2019, and they sign a contract for 2 school years, they will receive stipend, ORC and tuition payments from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2021, or the month they complete the required classes for graduation, whichever comes first. In this second example, the participant is only obligated for two years of service since the graduation or program end date is on or before the contract period end date of June 30, 2021.

ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF ACADEMIC STANDING. The level at which a student retains eligibility to continue attending the nursing program for which they were awarded under the school's standards and practices as determined by the nursing program.

ACCREDITED PROGRAM. A program accredited by a national or regional nurse education accrediting agency or state approval agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. Please visit the [U.S. Department of Education Database](#) for a complete list of nursing accreditation agencies recognized by the Secretary of Education.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET. For scholars who receive funding under the Nurse Corps SP, overpayments of scholarship benefits may be collected through administrative offset from future award payments. The Nurse Corps SP may withhold scholarship funds payable to, or on behalf of, participants (including stipends, ORC, and if necessary, tuition/fees payments) until the overpayment is paid in full. Administrative offset is not a repayment option for participants who wish to terminate a contract.

CONTRACT. A written contract, as authorized by Section 846(d) of the PHS Act, for an academic year pursuant to which (1) the federal government agrees to provide the individual with a scholarship, for attendance at a school of nursing during that academic year, and (2) the individual agrees to serve as a nurse for a period of not less than two years at a health care facility with a critical shortage of nurses after graduation.

CRITICAL SHORTAGE FACILITY. A health care facility located in, designated as, or serving a primary care or mental health HPSA.

DEFAULT OF SERVICE OBLIGATION. Failure for any reason to begin or complete the Nurse Corps SP service obligation, including failure to comply with the terms and conditions of delaying the service obligation for approved postgraduate training.

DEFERMENT. A delay in the start of service obligation granted by the Nurse Corps SP upon a student's request, for a specified period of time to enter and complete an approved postgraduate nursing residency program.

ELIGIBLE REQUIRED AND INELIGIBLE FEES. Fees that may be covered by Nurse Corps SP if required by participants' school may include but are not limited to:

- Academic Support Services
- Administrative
- Background Check
- Building/Campus
- Capstone Course (Must be required of all students regardless of source of funding)
- Career Resource
- Computer Use
- Counseling
- Curriculum
- Disability Insurance (Must be required of all students regardless of source of funding)
- Drug Testing Fee
- Education Fee
- Graduation (last year of program)
- Health Insurance (Must be required of all students regardless of source of funding)
- Health Services and Immunizations
- ID Card (if required, Initiation)
- Laboratory
- Library
- Malpractice (Must be required of all nursing students)
- Matriculation
- NCLEX Review(if a required part of the curriculum)
- Online Course
- Processing
- Recreation
- Registration
- Student Activities
- Student Association/Union
- Student Initiated Fees (Must be required of all students regardless of source of funding)
- Student Services
- Technology
- Testing
- Transcript
- Transportation (if required for campus-wide system)
- University Fees

Several fees are NOT eligible for reimbursement or payment. These fees include, but are not limited to:

- Accident Insurance
- Attorney
- Automobile (including insurance and maintenance)
- Books
- Certification Board
- Class Dues
- Computer/Devices
- Dental Insurance
- Education Associations
- Financial Aid Trust Fund
- ID maintenance
- Late Charges
- Life Insurance
- NCLEX Review (unless part of curriculum)
- Parking
- Penalty Fees
- Personal Transportation
- Post Office Box Rental
- Refundable Property Deposits
- Study Abroad

ENROLLED OR ACCEPTED FOR ENROLLMENT. Accepted for enrollment is defined as having been officially granted entrance without contingency to an RN or NP program at an accredited school of nursing. Wait-listed and alternate selection candidates do not meet this criterion. A Letter of Acceptance is typically provided by the school for confirmation. Enrolled is defined as having been formally admitted to an RN or NP Program at an accredited School of Nursing, having committed to attend the program and have scheduled or are eligible to schedule classes which have or begin no later than September 30 of the year for which the award was made.

EXPECTED FAMILY CONTRIBUTION (EFC). The amount of money the student’s family is expected to contribute to their college education for one year, as determined by the U.S. Department of Education in their Official SAR.

FAMILY/FAMILY MEMBER. As used in the guidance and for the purposes of the Nurse Corps, “family member” includes spouses, as well as unmarried partners (both same-sex and opposite-sex).

FEDERAL PIPELINE PROGRAMS. Federal pipeline programs are designed to enhance educational opportunities and increase the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds to progress from elementary through post-undergraduate levels. These programs offer an array of academic enrichment activities and services to better prepare disadvantaged students to successfully graduate from a health professions school. If you have successfully completed participation in any federal pipeline programs, please highlight your experiences in the essay responses and consider having a reference write one of your Letters of Recommendation.

- a. U.S. Department of Education (ED)
 - i. [Federal TRIO Programs](#)
 - ii. [Promising Neighborhoods Program](#)
 - iii. [Student Support Services](#)
 - iv. [Educational Opportunity Centers](#)
 - v. [Talent Search](#)
 - vi. [Upward Bound](#)
 - vii. [Upward Bound Math-Science](#)
 - viii. [Veterans Upward Bound](#)
 - ix. [Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs \(GEAR UP\)](#)

- b. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
 - i. [Health Careers Opportunity Program \(The National HCOP Academies\)](#)
 - ii. [Centers of Excellence \(COE\) Program](#)
 - iii. [Area Health Education Centers Program \(AHEC\)](#)
 - iv. [Health Profession Opportunity Grant \(HPOG\)](#) Grant (HPOG)
 - v. [National Workforce Diversity Pipeline Program \(NWDP\)](#)
 - vi. [Community Health Worker Health Disparities Initiative](#)
- c. National Science Foundation
 - i. [Tribal Colleges and Universities Program \(TCUP\)](#)
 - ii. [Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate \(AGEP\)](#)
 - iii. [Historically Black Colleges and Universities - Undergraduate Program \(HBCU-UP\)](#)

FULL-TIME CLINICAL PRACTICE. The provision of nursing services for a minimum of 32 hours per week. At least 26 hours per week, of the minimum 32 hours per week, must be spent providing clinical services or direct patient care to patients.

FULL-TIME STUDENT. A student enrolled in a school for the number of credit hours or courses in any academic term that is considered by the school to be full-time. Any courses that are not required or are unrelated to the qualifying degree program, as well as repeat courses the Nurse Corps SP has already paid for, will not count toward the hours required for full-time status.

GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAM. Any department, division, or other administrative unit in a college or university that provides primarily or exclusively a program of education in professional nursing and related subjects leading to a graduate degree in nursing, (i.e., where students will receive a Master degree), or to an equivalent degree. This includes advanced training related to such program of education provided by such school, but only if such program, or such unit, college or university is accredited. As well as entry to nursing masters programs where graduates are authorized to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination-Registered Nurse (NCLEX-RN). The educational programs in the school of nursing must be accredited by a national nursing accrediting agency or state approval agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

INITIAL SCHOOL OF RECORD. The school indicated on the Nurse Corps SP application and attended at the time the initial contract is executed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE. A period of approved absence from a course of study granted to a student by his or her nursing school for medical, personal, or other reasons. The leave of absence is usually granted for a period of 1 year or less. When a leave of absence is expected, a participant is required to notify the Nurse Corps SP immediately through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) and submit a letter from the school approving the leave of absence and indicating the start and end dates for the period of the absence. Payment of all benefits is discontinued while a participant is on an approved leave of absence, and may be resumed when the student returns to the course of study for which the scholarship was awarded.

STATE, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, OR A TERRITORY. A State within the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, 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 Nurse Corps SP awards, even though they may be citizens or nationals of the United States.

OTHER REASONABLE COSTS. An additional, annual payment provided directly to each Nurse Corps SP participant to assist in the payment of books, clinical supplies/instruments, and uniforms.

PART-TIME CLINICAL PRACTICE. The provision of nursing services for a minimum of 16 hours per week (up to a maximum of 31 hours per week). At least 80 percent of the hours each week must be spent providing clinical services or direct patient care to patients.

PART-TIME STUDENT. A student is considered part-time if enrolled on at least a half-time basis (i.e., the student is not taking a sufficient number of credit hours to meet or exceed 50 percent of the credit hours required by the nursing school program to be a full-time student).

POSTGRADUATE TRAINING. Types of postgraduate training that include residencies and fellowships. Nurse Corps SP participants have the option to complete up to one year of a Nursing Residency. No credit towards Nurse Corps SP service obligation is given during postgraduate training.

- A. RN Nurse Residency/RN Resident Nurse Program as defined as a mandatory new hire program meant to help new nurse graduates transition into clinical practice and is a condition of an employment contract may use hours worked towards their Nurse Corps Scholarship service obligation if the CSF meet's the scholar's Nurse Corps Scholarship Program SP service requirements defined in their Nurse Corps SP APG. Otherwise, registered nurse scholars may request up to a one year (12-month) deferment for commencement (i.e., postpone) of their service obligation to complete a program-approved postgraduate residency/training program.

Residency for NP. NP Fellowship & Residency Programs are competitive non-mandatory programs defined as a stage in clinical education where an NP provides patient care under the supervision of either a physician or another NP while being paid a salary. Nurse Corps SP participants may request up to a one year (12- month) deferment for commencement of their service obligation (i.e., postpone) to complete a program-approved postgraduate residency/training program. Participants' programs must be consistent with the specialty for which the Nurse Corps SP awarded funding.

Residency for RN. *RN Nurse Residency/ RN Resident Nurse Program* as defined as a mandatory new hire program designed to help new nurse graduates transition into clinical practice and is a condition of an employment contract may use hours worked towards their Nurse Corps SP service obligation if the CSF meet's the participants' Nurse Corps SP service requirements

defined in their Nurse Corps SP APG. Participants may request up to a one year (12- month) deferment for commencement of their service obligation (i.e., postpone) to complete a program-approved postgraduate residency/training program.

SPOUSE. For the purposes of the Nurse Corps SP, “spouse” includes same-sex married couples as well as opposite-sex married 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.

SUSPENSION. A temporary status. A suspension of the service or payment obligation may be granted at the discretion of HRSA if compliance with the obligation by participants (1) are temporarily impossible or (2) would involve a temporary extreme hardship such that enforcement of the obligation would be unconscionable. All requests for a suspension must be submitted, in writing via the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) and be supported by full medical and/or financial documentation.

UNDERGRADUATE NURSING PROGRAM. Any school of nursing program where graduates are authorized to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination-Registered Nurse (NCLEX-RN) (i.e., where students will receive a Diploma, Associate, or Baccalaureate degree). The educational programs in the school of nursing must be accredited by a national nursing accrediting agency or state approval agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

UNENCUMBERED LICENSE. An unencumbered license means one that is not revoked, suspended, or made probationary or conditional by a licensing or registering authority in the applicable jurisdiction.

SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT. A website maintained by the General Services Administration for the purpose of disseminating information on parties that are excluded from receiving federal contracts, subcontracts, and federal financial and non-financial assistance and benefits, pursuant to E.O. 12549, E.O. 12689, and implementing regulations.

WAIVER. A permanent release of participants’ Nurse Corps SP service or payment obligation. A waiver will only be granted if compliance with the obligation by participants (1) are permanently impossible or (2) would involve a permanent extreme hardship such that enforcement of the obligation would be unconscionable.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Nurse Corps Scholarship Tax Withholdings Questions

HHS withholds federal income tax owed on all components of the Nurse Corps Scholarship Program award, including payment for tuition and fees, and will withhold the "employee" share of FICA tax. All of the Nurse Corps SP funds disbursed to you, or to your school on your behalf, are reported to the IRS on a Form W-2 Wage and Tax Statement.

- 1. Is this a new HRSA policy?** No. HRSA is implementing a determination from the IRS that under Section 117(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code, the entire Nurse Corps SP award is taxable because it represents payment for services by the student required as a condition for receiving the qualified scholarship.
- 2. National Health Service Corps (NHSC) scholarships have a service obligation attached, so why aren't they taxable?** Congress specifically exempted NHSC scholarships from federal income tax in Section 117(c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code. The statute does not similarly exempt Nurse Corps scholarships.
- 3. What part of my Nurse Corps scholarship is taxable?** All components of the Nurse Corps SP award are taxable, including your tuition, fees, ORC, and monthly stipend payments. Withholding income and employee FICA taxes from your tuition payments means that portions of your award may be reduced as a result. If the amount withheld does not cover your tax obligations, you are responsible for paying the remainder to the IRS.
- 4. What is FICA and why is it being taken out of my award?** FICA taxes are composed of Social Security and Medicare taxes paid by individuals and employers. While receipt of an Nurse Corps SP award does not make the recipient an employee of HRSA, the IRS considers the scholarship funds to be "wages" and HRSA as the "employer" because HRSA controls the payment of the funds. Thus, employment tax (FICA) applies to the entire award – tuition, fees, stipend and ORC. The agency must pay the employer share of FICA tax (currently 7.65 percent) and withhold the employee share of FICA (currently 7.65 percent) from your Nurse Corps SP award.
- 5. Do I have to file a tax return with the IRS?** We suggest that you speak with a professional tax advisor, visit www.irs.gov, use the [IRS Withholding Calculator](#), or contact the IRS Tax Help Line at (800) 829-1040 to determine whether you need to file a tax return. Please note that you are not excused from having to file a tax return with the IRS by virtue of HRSA's reporting your Nurse Corps Scholarship Program award "income" to the IRS or withholding federal income and FICA tax from your Nurse Corps Scholarship Program award.
- 6. Is there any way to calculate my projected award amount after taxes?** The Nurse Corps SP award after-tax calculation is an individual assessment, which includes many factors that are specific to the individual taxpayer. For example, the amount of your Nurse Corps SP award, your marital status, and the number of allowances you claim on your W-4 will

affect the amount of federal income tax that is withheld from your award. Thus, HRSA is not able to project the amount of federal income tax Nurse Corps participants will owe.

However, all participants' FICA tax withholding is the same: the "employee" share equals 7.65 percent of the total Nurse Corps Scholarship Program award (6.2 percent for Social Security and 1.45 percent for Medicare). We recommend that you seek professional tax advice to help you consider your individual tax situation and the net effect that the withholding and reporting changes may have on your award and tax liability.

- 7. If my tuition payment is reduced, will I be able to take out a loan to pay the difference?** We suggest you speak with the financial advisor at your nursing school for the financial options that may assist you with paying for your education expenses.
- 8. Can I apply for another government program for additional funds?** In accordance with the 2019 Nurse Corps SP APG, you may seek other sources of funding as long as you do not incur another service obligation.
- 9. Is tax advice or assistance available to me from the Nurse Corps SP?** The Nurse Corps SP does not provide tax advice. We suggest you speak with a tax professional or contact the IRS through their TAX HELP LINE at (800) 829-1040.
- 10. Can I decline the award or return the money and get out of my contract now that I have a better understanding about the impact of withholding taxes on my scholarship?** You can decline the scholarship at any time before the agency countersigns your Nurse Corps SP Contract. Once you have signed the Nurse Corps SP contract and HRSA has countersigned it, the contract is in effect. HRSA can terminate the contract only if, on or before June 1 of the school year to which the contract pertains, you:
 - a. submit a written request to terminate your contract for that academic year; and
 - b. repay all amounts that were paid to you, or on your behalf, for that school year (tuition, fees, stipends and ORC).

If you meet these requirements and the contract is successfully terminated, you no longer have a service obligation **for that school year**. Please note, however, that if you received Nurse Corps SP support for one or more prior school years, you will still owe service in return for those prior years of support.

Nurse Corps SP General Questions

- 1. What if an awardee changes his/her mind about going into nursing after he/she has accepted the Nurse Corps SP Award?** Accepting a Nurse Corps SP award is a serious commitment to serve as a RN or NP in a facility with a critical shortage of nurses. Individuals who accept the scholarship and change their mind about nursing before completing nursing school or the service commitment, have breached their contract with the U.S. Government and must pay back all monies paid directly to them and to the school on their behalf, with interest. The amount owed, including interest, must be paid within 3

years of the date of the default, which is the date that a participant is no longer in compliance with their NURSE Corps SP contract. Please note that participants who default on their Nurse Corps SP contract become ineligible to participate in any federal loan repayment programs, including the Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program. The HHS Secretary or his/her designee may terminate a Nurse Corps SP contract for an academic year if, on or before June 1 of the school year, a participant:

- a. submits a written request to terminate their contract for that academic year; and
- b. repays all amounts paid to, or on behalf of, them (tuition, stipends and ORC) for that academic year.

If you meet these requirements and the contract is successfully terminated, you no longer have a service obligation **for that school year**. Please note, however, that if you received Nurse Corps SP support for one or more prior school years, you will still owe service in return for those prior years of support. For more information, see [Service Compliance](#) section of this APG.

- 2. What if a Nurse Corps SP participant changes his/her mind about the type of nursing program he/she wants to complete?** Participants cannot change degrees once the Nurse Corps SP contract has been signed. The degree indicated on the application is the **ONLY** degree that the Nurse Corps SP will support. Service commitment must be consistent with the area of nursing for which the award was made. For example, if you were awarded as an NP, you must provide service as an NP, and not as an RN.
- 3. Can Nurse Corps SP participants defer their scholarship start date?** No, scholarship start dates cannot be deferred. The scholarship will start at the beginning of the 2019-2020 academic year.
- 4. What is an eligible health facility where Nurse Corps SP participants can fulfill the service obligation?** Nurse Corps SP participants are required to serve in a CSF in a HPSA with a primary care or mental health HPSA Score of 14 or above. Nurse Corps SP participants are responsible for finding their own employment site and confirming its eligibility with the Program before accepting an employment offer. The Nurse Corps SP reserves the right of final approval to ensure participants' compliance with all requirements related to the service obligation and Nurse Corps SP contract. The Nurse Corps SP does NOT accept nurse staffing agencies, travel nurse agencies, "as needed" (Per Diem RNs, Pool Nurses, or other RNs or NPs who are not scheduled in a **full-time capacity**, as defined by the Nurse Corps SP) as employment that is eligible to satisfy the required service obligation. For more information, see [Service Requirements](#) section of this APG.
- 5. How many hours must a Nurse Corps SP participants work at a CSF to be considered full-time?** Full-time employment is considered no less than 32 hours of nursing services per week. At least 26 hours of the minimum 32 hours per week must be spent providing clinical services or direct patient care to patients. Participants wishing to serve part-time must obtain prior approval from the Nurse Corps SP and must extend the service

obligation to equal the full-time commitment. For more information, see [Understanding the Contract and Service Obligation](#) section.

- 6. When does the Nurse Corps SP service obligation begin?** Nursing participants have up to 9 months from the date of graduation to (1) obtain a nursing license; (2) accept an offer of employment from a Nurse Corps SP-approved facility; and commence full-time (or if approved, part-time) clinical services at a CSF. For more information, see [Service Requirements](#) section.
- 7. Once participants are selected to receive a Nurse Corps SP award, when will they receive tuition payment?** Payment of tuition and fees are made directly to the school on behalf of each participant. The Notice of Award Letter issued by the Nurse Corps SP to participants serves as authorization to the school to bill the Nurse Corps SP directly for tuition and required fees. It is the responsibility of participants to take the Notice of Award Letter to the appropriate school official and explain to them what the school official's role and responsibilities are while participants are under contract with the Nurse Corps SP (e.g., invoice payment, EVF submission each term; and other inquiries as needed). It takes approximately 6 weeks from date of receipt of the invoice by the Nurse Corps SP for the school to receive payment.
- 8. Once participants are selected to receive a Nurse Corps SP award, will the program cover tuition and fees if his/her program started prior to July 1, 2019?** Yes, the Nurse Corps SP will only pay tuition and required fees for required courses in 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 the contract period of participants (i.e., through July 1, 2019.)
- 9. How are Nurse Corps SP stipend and other reasonable cost payments issued?** Nurse Corps SP stipend and other reasonable cost payments are transferred electronically participants' financial institution through mandatory direct deposit.
- 10. Does the Nurse Corps SP cover additional books or materials, participants are required to purchase during the school year?** During the fall of each contracted academic year, the Nurse Corps SP makes a single ORC payment to each participant. This payment is to assist with covering expenses for required materials such as books, clinical supplies/instruments, and uniforms during that school year. If additional expenses for books and other materials arise, the Nurse Corps SP will not cover those expenses. Participants are responsible for paying those expenses. The "other reasonable cost" payment is established in the initial award year and cannot be adjusted.
- 11. Is health insurance coverage included in the fees paid for by the Nurse Corps SP?** If health insurance is required and purchase through the school is mandatory, the cost can be included in the fees paid by the Nurse Corps SP to the school. Insurance for family members is not covered. If the required insurance is purchased through any other source, then the school will not be allowed to submit the costs for the insurance fee.

12. What happens if a Nurse Corps SP participant takes a leave of absence and/or repeats course work while attending the nursing program? The Nurse Corps SP will discontinue the payment of all benefits during a leave of absence approved by the school. If a participant is repeating course work for which the Nurse Corps SP has already paid, the Nurse Corps SP will not pay for that repeated course work but may maintain payments for stipends and all other non-repeated course work provided that the participant continues to meet the Nurse Corps SP requirements. For more information, see [Service Compliance](#) section.

13. What happens if the Nurse Corps SP is not funded for a specific year or is discontinued? When a scholarship is awarded, funds are obligated (set aside) for the number of school years of support requested by participants and agreed to by the HHS Secretary, as indicated by the signed contract(s). If a participant has not signed a contract through the date of graduation, he/she is given priority for continued funding when the existing scholarship support ends. Continuation funding is always subject to the availability of funding and the continued existence of the Nurse Corps SP. For more information, see [Understanding the Contract and Service Obligation](#) section.

14. Who pays the salary of Nurse Corps SP participants fulfilling the service commitment? The health care facility that employs Nurse Corps SP participants pays their salary. Nurse Corps SP participants negotiate their own salary and benefits packages with the CSF where he/she is employed after graduation. There is no "typical" salary. Salaries vary by employing facility and location.

15. What does the Nurse Corps SP mean when it says participants must make "at least a two-year service commitment"? Individuals who receive the Nurse Corps SP award are required to serve, at a minimum, a two- year full-time service obligation (or its part-time equivalent). Nurse Corps SP participants who receive less than 2 years of scholarship support will still owe the equivalent of 2 years of full-time service. The service obligation is extended by one year for each full-time year of Nurse Corps SP support received beyond two years. For more information, see [Understanding the Contract and Service Obligation](#) section.

16. Where do I send my Nurse Corps SP supporting documentation? Please upload your Nurse Corps SP supporting documents to the Nurse Corps SP Online Application: Applicants are **strongly encouraged** to upload all supporting documents in PDF format to expedite processing of their application. Any materials uploaded and found illegible or unable to open will cause the application to be deemed ineligible. Materials must be received by the application deadline (May 21, 2019 at 7:30 p.m. ET).

17. How may I check the status of my Nurse Corps SP Application? Applicants will receive a receipt of submission notice once the application has been successfully submitted online. Status and confirmation of receipt is provided for uploaded documents via the

[Customer Service Portal](#). Individuals are notified by e-mail no later than September 30, 2019, as to whether or not they have been selected for a Nurse Corps SP award.

18. Can Nurse Corps SP participants make changes to banking information after it has been submitted? Yes, once the scholarship award has been accepted and participants have electronically signed his/her application, he/she is asked to enter banking information including a bank account and routing number along with the EVFs and W-4. Participants can make any additional changes to their banking information by using the online [Customer Service Portal](#). Click on the banking information link and follow the prompts as directed.