



# Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program

## Fiscal Year 2023 Continuation Contract Application and Program Guidance September 2022

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

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

*Authority:* Section 846 of the Public Health Service Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 297n).

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## PRIVACY ACT NOTIFICATION STATEMENT

### General

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

### Statutory Authority

Section 846 of the Public Health Service Act (PHSA), (42 U.S.C. 297n), as amended.

### Purposes and Uses

The purpose of the Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program (Nurse Corps LRP) is to assist in the recruitment and retention of professional registered nurses (RNs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) dedicated to working in health care facilities with a critical shortage of nurses or working as nurse faculty in eligible schools of nursing by decreasing the economic barriers associated with pursuing careers at such Critical Shortage Facilities (CSFs) or in academic nursing. In return, participants commit to work at eligible health care facilities with a critical shortage of nurses, or serve as nurse faculty in eligible schools of nursing. The information applicants provide is used to evaluate their eligibility, qualifications, and suitability for the Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program Continuation Contract. In addition, information from other sources is considered (e.g., credit bureau reports and National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) 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) to monitor Nurse Corps LRP-related activities. The information may also be disclosed outside the HHS, as permitted by the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), to the Congress, the National Archives, the Government Accountability Office, and pursuant to court order and various routine uses as described in the [System of Record Notice 09-15-0037](#).

The name of a Nurse Corps LRP participant and/or their discipline, specialty, business address, business telephone number, and service obligation completion date may be provided in response to requests made under the FOIA.

### 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

The purpose of the Nurse Corps LRP Program is to assist in the recruitment and retention of professional registered nurses RNs and APRNs dedicated to working in health care facilities with a critical shortage of nurses or working as nurse faculty in eligible schools of nursing by decreasing the economic barriers associated with pursuing careers at such Critical Shortage Facilities (CSFs) or in

academic nursing. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this information collection is 0915-0140 and it is valid until 3/31/2023. This information collection is required to obtain or retain a benefit (Section 846 of the Public Health Service Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 297n). Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 0.7 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to HRSA Information Collection Clearance Officer, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 14N136B, Rockville, Maryland, 20857.

**Non-Discrimination Policy Statement**

In accordance with applicable federal laws and HHS 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.

## Important Preliminary Notices

**Please read the Nurse Corps LRP FY 2023 Application and Program Guidance (Guidance) in its entirety before proceeding with an application.** The Guidance explains in detail the rights and obligations of individuals selected to participate in the Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract. A complete understanding of the commitment to serve at a CSF or eligible school of nursing and the financial, legal, and other consequences of failing to perform the commitment, is critical to successful completion of the mandatory service obligation associated with a Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract.

### Important Dates

Nurse Corps LRP participants should be aware of the following key dates:

- **Application Submission Dates:**

<b>Contract End Dates Between:</b>	<b>Application Cycle Start and End Dates:</b>
October 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023	September 6, 2022 – October 20, 2022
April 1, 2023 and September 30, 2023	February 21, 2023 – April 6, 2023

- Notification of Award: Award notifications will be sent on a rolling basis (depending upon the application cycle start and end dates outlined above) and will be completed no later than September 30, 2023.
- An applicant may withdraw an application at any time prior to the Secretary of HHS or designee signing the Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract. Individuals who are uncertain whether they are able to fulfill the one-year service commitment should not apply.
- Once a participant is awarded a Continuation Contract for a particular service commitment, either as an RN/APRN at a CSF or nurse faculty at an eligible school of nursing, the individual cannot switch to the other type of service commitment.

Refer to the [DEFINITIONS](#) provided in the “Additional Information” section of this Guidance for further explanation of terms used throughout this document.

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the Nurse Corps LRP is to assist in the recruitment and retention of professional registered nurses (RNs) and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), dedicated to working in health care facilities with a critical shortage of nurses or working as nurse faculty in eligible schools of nursing by decreasing the economic barriers associated with pursuing careers at such CSF or in academic nursing. The Nurse Corps LRP provides awards to nurses in exchange for a service commitment at a CSF or nurse faculty serving at eligible schools of nursing.

The Nurse Corps LRP is administered by the Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW) in the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) within HHS. The Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract extends the initial Nurse Corps LRP obligation for one additional year of full-time service at an eligible CSF or eligible school of nursing. It offers current Nurse Corps LRP participants who have successfully completed their initial two-year service obligation the option to reduce their approved original qualifying educational loan balances by an additional 25 percent by providing a third year of service. All potential Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract awards are subject to the availability of funds.

### **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND AWARD PROCESS**

#### **Eligibility and Service Requirements**

To be eligible for a Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract, an applicant must:

- (1) Be a current Nurse Corps LRP participant serving full-time at an eligible CSF or eligible school of nursing, as approved by the Nurse Corps LRP under the initial two-year contract;
  - a. Applicants are required to review and verify their current service site's name and address and initiate an electronic Employment Verification Form (EVF). The EVF must be completed by an appropriate official/point of contact (POC) at the approved CSF or eligible school of nursing. The POC may be the applicant's immediate supervisor or an employer or Nurse Corps LRP pre-existing authorized agent in the human resources department at the service site; and
  - b. If the POC does not submit a completed EVF, or the EVF is not completed by the POC, the application is considered incomplete and the applicant will not be able to submit the application. If the applicant's authorized POC is not listed or is incorrect in the pre-populated information regarding the applicant's service site, or has changed, the applicant may enter the correct POC's email address in the "Other POC email" section of the application.
- (2) Have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted license to practice as an RN or an APRN in the state in which they are employed or they must be authorized to practice pursuant to the Enhanced Nursing Licensure Compact. All Nurse Corps LRP participants must retain an unrestricted RN or APRN license during the one-year Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract service obligation period.

**Puerto Rico applicants only:** National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN) Exception-Nurses practicing in Puerto Rico must have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted license to practice as an RN or an APRN in the territory of Puerto Rico and must upload a copy of their current unrestricted nursing license and certificate with the application. Applicants from Puerto Rico are not required to pass the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN) exam, unless they plan to work in one of the 50 states.

- (3) Have applied all the Nurse Corps LRP payments received after federal tax withholding under the initial two-year contract to reduce the original qualifying educational loan balances;
  - a. Applicants must submit the most recent account statement for each loan showing the current balance with principal and interest, lender's name, account number, and applicant's name (call or visit the lender's website for additional information);
  - b. Applicants must submit a Disbursement Report that shows the approved educational loans listed on the Participant Award Worksheet (PAW). Each loan must have its original loan amount, the original loan date, type of loan, and the consolidation dates, if applicable. For federal loans, the Aid Summary Report on the National Student Loan Data System website can be provided instead of the Disbursement Report; and
  - c. Applicants must submit a Payment History Report detailing all payments made to reduce the original qualifying educational loan balances.
- (4) Have no current federal service obligation other than the Nurse Corps LRP. The only exception is for members of a reserve component of the Armed Forces or the National Guard:
  - a. Reservists should note the following: Military training or service performed by reservists will not satisfy the Nurse Corps LRP obligation unless otherwise indicated by HRSA. If a participant's combined military training and service, or other absences from the CSF or school of nursing that will exceed seven weeks (regardless of how many days per week they serve) per service year, the participant should request a suspension. Payments will be stopped during periods of active duty/suspension and will resume when the reservist returns to full-time service. The service obligation end date will be extended by the length of the suspension to compensate for the break in service; and
  - b. If the approved CSF or school of nursing is unable to re-employ the reservist after deployment, the individual is expected to complete the Nurse Corps Continuation Contract at another approved CSF or school of nursing. The reservist must contact the Nurse Corps LRP to request a transfer and receive approval in accordance with the program's transfer policy.
- (5) Have a history of honoring prior legal obligations. A credit check will be performed as part of the application review process. Applicants having one or more of the following factors may not be selected:
  - a. Defaulted on any federal payment obligations (e.g., Department of Education student loans, Health Education Assistance Loans, Nursing Student Loans, federal income tax liabilities, etc.);
  - b. Defaulted on any non-federal payment obligation (e.g., court-ordered child support payments); and

- c. Been debarred, suspended, or disqualified by a federal agency from financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under federal programs and activities.
- (6) Have met all program eligibility requirements listed in number one through six of this section, be in full compliance with the existing Nurse Corps LRP service obligation, and agree to work full-time for the duration of the Continuation Contract at the CSF or eligible school of nursing that was approved by the Nurse Corps LRP under the initial two-year contract.

### **Additional Requirement for Nurse Faculty**

Nurse faculty must provide full-time service as faculty for a full academic year beginning on the day following completion of service under the initial two-year contract. Service must occur at the Nurse Corps LRP-approved school of nursing identified in the individual's Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract application.

### **Funding Preferences**

If sufficient funds are not appropriated to fully fund all eligible continuation applications, HRSA will apply the statutory preference in the PHS Act Section 846(e) for qualified applicants with the greatest financial need based on their debt-to-salary ratio.

### **Nurse Corps LRP Participant Serving as Nurse Faculty**

A participant who is a nurse faculty member is required to provide full-time service by teaching pre-licensure students, including RNs or APRNs, at an eligible school of nursing. The Nurse Corps LRP considers a school of nursing to be eligible if it is accredited by a national nursing accrediting agency or by a state agency recognized by the Secretary of Education. The Nurse Corps LRP considers institutions eligible if graduates are authorized to sit for the NCLEX-RN. Review [the list of agencies recognized by the Secretary of Education](#) for purposes of accrediting nurse education programs.

### **Nurse Corps LRP Participant Serving as an RN or an APRN**

A participant who is serving as an RN or APRN is required to provide full-time service at a CSF. The CSF must be in a health care facility located in, designated as, or serving a primary medical care or mental health, Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA). Examples of eligible health care facility types are listed below and further explained in the "[Definitions](#)" section.

### **Eligible Health Care Facility Types**

#### **Hospitals**

- Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH)
- Private Hospital
- Public Hospital
- Small Rural Hospital<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Critical Access Hospitals are eligible under the Small Rural Hospital category.



### **Community-Based Settings**

- Ambulatory Surgical Center
- American Indian Health Facility
- Community Mental Health Center<sup>2</sup>
- End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Dialysis Center
- Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)
- Free and Charitable Clinic
- Home Health Agency
- Hospice Program
- Native Hawaiian Health Center
- Nurse Managed Health Clinic/Center
- Residential Nursing Home
- Rural Health Clinic
- School Based Clinic
- State or Local Health Department
- Urgent Care Center

### **Multiple Sites**

Applicants can work at multiple sites under a single employer or within the same network under dependent satellite facilities. Each CSF must meet all eligibility requirements. The Points of Contact (POCs) for each site will be responsible for completing the EVFs. Applicants are restricted from receiving service credit for work at other facilities outside of the network of the single employer.

### **Requirements for School-Based CSF**

The Nurse Corps LRP requires RNs and APRNs to be employed full-time at least 32 hours per week throughout the year, including those employed by a school-based CSF. If the CSF is not open year-round, the participant must transfer to an approved CSF during months the school-based CSF is closed (refer to [Eligible Health Care Facility Types](#) section).

### **Telehealth**

Participants will receive service credit when providing telehealth services in a manner consistent with their service site's telehealth policy.

### **Qualifying and Non-Qualifying Educational Loans**

Participants will receive funds equal to 25 percent of their original total qualifying educational loan balances that were approved at the time they entered into the initial Nurse Corps LRP Contract.

### **Award Process**

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<sup>2</sup> Community Behavioral Health Clinics are eligible under the Community Mental Health Center category.

Once a participant has submitted a complete application (which includes a signed Continuation Contract), HRSA will review the application and supporting documentation to determine if the applicant meets all of the eligibility requirements for a continuation award. If a participant is selected for a Nurse Corps LRP Continuation award, the individual's signed contract will be countersigned by the Secretary of HHS or designee. The one-year service obligation under the Continuation Contract begins the day following the last day of the participant's service obligation under the initial two-year contract.

Award payments will be made monthly over 12 months through an electronic funds transfer to the participant's checking or savings account as identified on the banking information they submitted. The participant will receive the first direct deposit within 60 days of the start of the Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract service obligation. Participants must keep all banking information provided to the Nurse Corps LRP updated and current. Personal information such as banking information can be updated directly through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).

Participants must use all Nurse Corps LRP payments received under the Continuation Contract to pay the lenders or holders of their qualifying educational loans. The Nurse Corps LRP may contact the participant's lenders or holders to verify that award payments have been applied to reduce the Nurse Corps LRP-approved loans.

If a participant does not receive a scheduled payment by the end of the month, the participant should contact the Nurse Corps LRP through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) or Customer Care Center at 1-800-221-9393. If the Nurse Corps LRP has any questions concerning a participant's eligibility for continued payments, the Nurse Corps LRP will delay payments pending the verification of the participant's compliance with the service obligation. It is important that participants immediately notify the Nurse Corps LRP of any changes in their service site or employment status.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE CONTRACT AND SERVICE OBLIGATION**

### **Service Obligation**

The Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract award service obligation is for one additional year.

### **Taxes and Financial Information**

Nurse Corps LRP payments are subject to federal taxes. The Nurse Corps LRP will withhold federal income tax and Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) tax (for Social Security and Medicare) from a participant's award. These taxes are paid directly to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on the participant's behalf. All Nurse Corps LRP payments and federal taxes withheld are reported to the participant and the IRS on a Form W-2 after the end of the tax year. Loan repayments may also be subject to state and local income taxes.

Participants who want additional funds withheld to cover the income tax on their awards should indicate the amount to be deducted on an Employee's Withholding Certificate (Form W-4). Participants must complete and upload the IRS Form W-4, Employee's Withholding Certificate. Participants should consult the IRS regarding any additional tax obligations. All tax questions should be directed to a tax professional or the IRS at <https://www.irs.gov> or through the TAX HELPLINE at 1-800-829-1040. The IRS Tax [Withholding Estimator](#) is available to perform a quick "paycheck checkup." The Nurse Corps LRP is unable to provide an individual with an after-tax calculation or any tax advice or information.

Each January, participants will receive a W-2 Wage and Tax Statement for the taxable income received under the Nurse Corps LRP during the prior tax year. Participants may sign up to have their W-2 form posted in their [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) account. W-2 forms are posted no later than January 30 of each year. If the W-2 form is not available by that date, the participant should submit an inquiry via the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). Participants may also choose to have their W-2 form mailed to the address provided in the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). Participants must ensure their name, mailing and email addresses, and banking information are up-to-date.

Under the Treasury Offset Program, the Treasury Department is authorized to offset the Nurse Corps LRP payments for delinquent federal and state debts, including delinquent child support. Participant Nurse Corps LRP payments may be garnished to satisfy related debts.

## **SERVICE REQUIREMENTS**

### **General Requirements for All Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract Participants**

- To receive service credit during the one-year service obligation under the Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract, participants must retain a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted license to practice as an RN, or an APRN if applicable, in the state in which they intend to practice, or be authorized to practice in that state pursuant to the Enhanced Nursing Licensure Compact (eNLC); or if working in a federal facility, retain a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted license as a RN, or an APRN if applicable, in a state;
- Participants must continue to work under the employer's verified scope of practice as an RN, APRN, or nurse faculty member for the duration of the one-year contract to receive service credit under the Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract;
- If an individual fails to commence full-time service on the effective date of the Continuation Contract at the CSF or eligible school of nursing identified in the application, the individual may be placed in default;
- Once an individual applies and is awarded a Continuation Contract for a particular service option at a CSF or faculty at a school of nursing, the individual cannot switch to the other type of service option (from clinician to faculty) during the one-year service period.

### **Service Obligation Life Cycle**

Participants must provide full-time service for a period of one year. For this purpose, "full-time" at an eligible CSF means at least 32 hours per week for a minimum of 45 weeks per service year or at an eligible school of nursing, full-time as defined by the employer for a minimum of 9 months per service

year as approved under the initial two-year contract. Participants cannot complete the service obligation through part-time service.

## **PROGRAM COMPLIANCE**

### **Worksite Absence**

No more than 7 weeks (regardless of how many days per week they serve) per service year under the contract may be spent away from the CSF or eligible school of nursing. Any leave/absences totaling greater than 7 weeks in a service year will extend the contract end date. Participants who anticipate an absence from their site for more than 7 weeks must request a suspension of their service obligation (see the "[Suspension](#)" section).

### **Service Verification**

The Nurse Corps LRP verifies every six months that participants are in compliance with the service obligation. [In-Service Verifications \(ISV\)](#) must be completed by the authorized POC at the approved CSF or eligible school of nursing and submitted through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). An overdue ISV while serving under the initial two-year contract may affect a participant's eligibility for a Continuation Contract. By completing and signing the ISV, the participant and the POC are certifying the participant's compliance with the full-time service requirements during the identified period. For participants working at multiple sites, an ISV for each site is required every six months. The ISV records the total number of full-time workdays that a participant was absent, for any reason, from the CSF or school of nursing during the reporting period. An ISV differs from the EVF that is submitted with the application; however, both forms must be completed by the official POC and submitted via the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).

Participants and their service site POCs must complete the ISV within 30 days of notification that the service verification is due and submit it through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). An overdue ISV may prevent a participant from receiving service credit, delay or stop monthly payments, or lead to a recommendation for default.

### **Professional Group/Group Practice ISV Requirements**

All RNs and APRNs employed by a professional group must have the ISV completed by the POC at the CSF where they are physically present and working, and not by an employee of the Professional Group.

### **Ineligible Employment**

RNs and APRNs working for staffing or employment agencies that hire out employees for temporary work do not meet the Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract service requirements. RNs and APRNs working in temporary nursing positions, like PRN, per diem, and nurses employed by travel nurse agencies, do not meet the service requirements for the Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract.

### **Leaving an Approved Service Site prior to Completion of Service Obligation**

If a participant stops working at the approved CSF without prior written approval of the Nurse Corps LRP, the individual may be placed in default of the Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract, and all

payments will be suspended until a request to resume service at an eligible CSF is approved. If a participant's employment is terminated for cause, they may be recommended for default.

## **TRANSFERS**

### **Transfer Request to Another Approved Service Site**

The Nurse Corps LRP expects that participants will fulfill their service obligation at the CSF or eligible school of nursing included in their application. However, the Nurse Corps LRP understands that circumstances may arise that result in a participant's need to leave the initial CSF or eligible school of nursing, and complete the service obligation at another approved site. If a participant can no longer continue working at the initial CSF or eligible school of nursing, the participant must immediately contact the Nurse Corps LRP through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) or Customer Care Center.

Detailed instructions on how to complete a "Change My Site Request" are provided in the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). To request a transfer to another site via the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#), go to the "Activities" section, then to "Change My Site Request." The request must include the reason for the transfer and an initiation of an EVF for the prospective site to determine whether it is an eligible CSF or eligible school of nursing. The prospective site must be an eligible CSF or school of nursing in the same or higher funding preference tier as the one in which the individual's Nurse Corps LRP contract was awarded, [see Selection Factors in FY 2022 APG](#). All transfers require prior approval.

The participant will be notified via the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) of the decision regarding the transfer request. If approved, the participant can resume full-time service at the approved transfer CSF or school of nursing.

### **Additional Transfer Requirements**

If there is a 30-day or less break in service between the stop work date at the initial/former service site and the start date at the approved transfer site, Nurse Corps LRP payments will not be interrupted. However, if the participant fails to resume service within 30 days of the stop work date at the initial/former CSF or school of nursing, the Nurse Corps LRP will stop all payments. Once the participant begins full-time service at another approved CSF or eligible school of nursing, the Nurse Corps LRP service end date will be extended, and the Nurse Corps LRP payments will resume.

## **UNEMPLOYMENT DURING THE SERVICE OBLIGATION**

Nurse Corps LRP participants who resign or are terminated from their initial CSF or eligible school of nursing must contact the Nurse Corps LRP immediately through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). Nurse Corps LRP participants who are not working at an eligible CSF or school of nursing will face an immediate suspension of monthly payments until they return to service at an eligible CSF or school of nursing. The Nurse Corps LRP will provide the participant a specific period of time to obtain an offer and accept a position at an approved CSF or school of nursing. An extension may be granted, with permission from the Nurse Corps LRP upon written request. It is the participant's responsibility to obtain employment at an eligible CSF or school of nursing. Participants who do not secure

employment at an eligible CSF or school of nursing within the allotted time will be recommended for default.

## **BREACHING THE CONTINUATION CONTRACT**

Participants are encouraged to immediately contact the Nurse Corps LRP if a situation arises in which they are potentially unable to fulfill their service obligation. A participant who enters into a one-year Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract, but fails to begin or complete the service obligation, is liable to repay all Nurse Corps LRP Continuation payments received. This includes the amounts withheld for federal taxes plus interest at the maximum legal prevailing rate from the date of the breach of the Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract. Breach of the contract may permanently disqualify an individual from receiving future awards under the Nurse Corps LRP and other HRSA and federal programs.

Any indebtedness owed to the Federal Government under the Nurse Corps LRP is due within three years of the participant's breach of the contract. The debt amount is subject to interest at the maximum legal prevailing rate from the date of breach until paid in full. Other charges and penalties for delinquent or past due debts may be assessed.

### **Suspensions and Waivers**

The Secretary of HHS or designee may, under certain circumstances, suspend or waive the Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract service or payment obligation. A written request for a suspension or waiver must be submitted through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). Additional supporting documentation that demonstrates a compelling circumstance is required in order to process such a request.

A **Suspension** is a mechanism that provides temporary relief to a Nurse Corps LRP participant who has a short-term (not permanent) circumstance that temporarily makes compliance with the service obligation impossible or would involve an extreme personal hardship to the participant such that enforcement of the obligation would be unconscionable. Participants who anticipate an absence from their site for more than 7 weeks must request a suspension of their service obligation. Periods of approved suspension will extend a participant's Nurse Corps LRP service obligation end date.

Examples of service suspensions include:

- a. **Medical or Personal Reasons** - A suspension may be granted for up to one year if the participant provides independent medical documentation of a physical or mental health disability or personal circumstances such as a terminal or debilitating illness of an immediate family member, which results in the participant's temporary inability to perform the Nurse Corps LRP obligation. Upon receipt of the written suspension request, the Nurse Corps LRP will notify the participant of the instructions for submitting further supporting documentation.
- b. **Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave** - Maternity/paternity/adoption suspension will be approved by the Nurse Corps LRP upon request if adequately documented in the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). If participants plan to be away from their approved

service site for maternity/paternity/adoption leave, participants are required to submit their Suspension request through the BHW Customer Service Portal before taking the leave. The Nurse Corps LRP will allow participants to be away from their service site within the timeframes established by either the Family Medical Leave Act (up to 12 weeks) or for a longer period as permitted under state law where the participant resides, consistent with the leave policies of the employer. If participants plan to take leave beyond the allowed maternity/paternity/adoption leave period, participants are required to contact the Nurse Corps LRP for guidance.

Remember that a participant may be away from the Nurse Corps LRP-approved service site for no more than 7 weeks per service year; therefore, after a suspension, a participant's obligation end date will be extended for each day of a Nurse Corps LRP-approved absence over the allowable 7 weeks.

- c. **Call to Active Duty in the Armed Forces** - A participant who is also a military reservist when called to active duty will be granted a suspension for up to one year, which may be extended, 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 the Nurse Corps LRP. Upon receipt of the written request, the suspension will be extended if the Armed Forces entity continues the period of active duty. The period of active military duty service will not be credited towards the Nurse Corps LRP service obligation unless otherwise indicated by HRSA.

A **Waiver** is a mechanism that permanently relieves the participant of all or part of the Nurse Corps LRP service obligation. Waivers are not routinely granted and require a demonstration of compelling circumstances. A waiver will be granted only if the participant demonstrates that compliance with the obligation is impossible or would involve extreme hardship to the individual and enforcement of the agreement with respect to the individual would be unconscionable. The request must be submitted in writing to the Nurse Corps LRP and must specify the reason(s) the waiver is being sought. The participant will be contacted directly by the Nurse Corps LRP regarding the medical and financial documentation necessary to process the waiver request.

#### **Cancellation of a Nurse Corps LRP Obligation**

A participant's Nurse Corps LRP obligation will be canceled in its entirety in the unfortunate event of the participant's death. No liability is transferred to the participant's heirs.

## **APPLICATION INFORMATION**

### **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

The complete Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract online application with all required supporting documents must be uploaded and submitted by the application deadline (see [Application Submission Dates](#)). The Nurse Corps LRP will not accept documentation by fax, email, or mail. Applicants must use the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).

Multi-Page Documents: Applicants are strongly encouraged to upload all supporting documents in PDF format to expedite processing of the application. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the information uploaded is accurate and viewable; PDF format allows applicants to view documents prior to submission. When uploading documents to the online application, be sure that the documents do not exceed 5MB, as the system restricts larger documents to maintain storage. Multi-paged documents can be consolidated by scanning and saving into one document, and then uploaded.

### **COMPLETING AN APPLICATION**

The Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract application package consists of:

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

Applicants are advised to keep a copy of the complete application package for their records. The information in the online application must match the submitted supporting documentation. After the applicant submits the application, the individual will receive a notification stating, "Overall application status is submitted" and an "Application ID number" for their reference.

### **Missing and Incomplete Documents**

Applications will be considered incomplete and deemed ineligible if there are missing or illegible documents or incomplete application materials.

### **Online Application**

Applicants are required to complete each of the sections listed below:

- (1) Employment
- (2) Employment Verification
- (3) Loan Information
- (4) Self Certification
- (5) Sign Contract



## Required Supporting Documentation

Each document submitted must include the applicant's first and last name. It is the applicant's responsibility to upload the required supporting documents and to submit the application by the application due date and time.

- (1) **Payment History** - Applicants must account for all funds received under the initial two-year contract by submitting a history of payments made to the lenders or holders for all approved loans listed on the PAW in your [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) account. The history of payments must be equal to or greater than the actual funds received from the Nurse Corps LRP from the service obligation start date to the date of the submission of the Continuation Contract application. The payment history must include the lender's/holder's name and the applicant's name and account number. The payment history may typically be obtained online from the applicant's loan servicer or lender. Applicants should call the lender or loan servicer if they are having difficulty downloading the information from the lender's website.
- (2) **Account Statements** - Applicants must submit a current account statement that shows the principal and interest of their current loan balances. The account statement must include the lender's name, applicant's name and account number, and the current balance with the principal and interest.
- (3) **Disbursement Report** - Applicants may submit a Disbursement Report that shows all the loans that have been obtained. Each loan document must have the applicant's name, the original loan amount, original loan date, type of loan, and consolidation dates, if applicable.
- (4) **Employment Verification Form** - Applicants are required to review and verify the name and address of the current CSF or eligible school of nursing and initiate an electronic EVF. The EVF must be completed by an appropriate official or authorized POC at the CSF or school of nursing. The POC should be the applicant's immediate supervisor or an authorized agent of the human resources department at the service site. If the POC does not submit a completed EVF or if it is not completed by the appropriate official, the application will be considered incomplete, and the applicant will not be able to submit the application.

## Additional Supporting Documentation (if applicable)

Based on the applicant's responses to the online application, additional clarifying documents may be required for submission. Examples of additional documentation that may be required include: (1) name changes since the initial contract was signed, which require the submission of a marriage license, divorce decree, or official court document; and (2) a Call to Active Military Obligation document, which would be required to verify an existing active duty service obligation for applicants who are members of a reserve component of the armed forces, including the National Guard.

## Application Review

Once a participant has submitted a complete application (which includes a signed Continuation Contract), HRSA will review the application and supporting documentation to determine if the applicant meets all of the eligibility requirements for an award. If a participant is selected for a Nurse Corps LRP Continuation award, the individual's signed contract will be countersigned by the Secretary of HHS or designee. The Continuation Contract's one-year service obligation begins the day following the last day of the participant's service obligation under the initial two-year contract.

Applicants will receive a receipt of submission once the application has been successfully submitted online. Applicants can verify that sections of the application are complete on the status page. Applicants will not be able to edit submitted applications. If an applicant needs to edit an application after submission but before the deadline (see [Application Submission Dates](#)), the applicant should contact Nurse Corps LRP staff via the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) or the Customer Care Center 1-800-221-9393; in this case, please allow 5 to 10 business days for the Nurse Corps LRP to update your submitted documents.

The National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) will be queried as part of the application review process if the employing CSF indicates on the EVF any of the following:

- An NPDB report has never been obtained by the employing CSF for the applicant;
- It has been more than 18 months since the NPDB was queried by the employed CSF for the applicant; or
- An NPDB report regarding the applicant on file with the employing CSF contains adverse information.

An applicant may withdraw their application via the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) at any time prior to the Secretary or Secretary's designee counter-signing the Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract. Once the contract is counter-signed by the Secretary or Secretary's designee, the applicant is obligated to provide one year of full-time service at the CSF or eligible school of nursing identified in the application immediately following completion of the service obligation under the initial two-year contract. If an applicant fails to commence service on the effective date of the contract, the applicant will be in breach of the contract and may be placed in default and become permanently disqualified from receiving future awards under the Nurse Corps LRP and other federal programs.

### **Termination of Signed Contract**

If an individual selected for an award decides not to accept the Continuation Contract **after signing it**, the individual should notify the Nurse Corps LRP immediately through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#):

- (1) **If the Secretary or designee has not yet countersigned the contract**, the individual will not incur a service obligation or any penalty for terminating the contract.
- (2) **If the Secretary or designee has already signed the contract**, the individual has a binding contract to complete the service obligation. Withdrawing from the program after the start of the Continuation Contract is not an option and may result in the participant being placed in default. The Continuation Contract one-year service obligation begins the day following the last day of the participant's service obligation under the initial two-year contract.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### RESOURCES FOR APPLICANTS

#### Health Workforce Connector

[The Health Workforce Connector](#) (HWC), contains a searchable database for all Nurse Corps LRP approved service sites, including those with current job openings. Participants should contact the Nurse Corps LRP if they are interested in transferring to a site listed on the HWC to determine its eligibility.

#### HPSA Find

All Nurse Corps LRP Corps participants must serve in a federally designated primary care or mental health HPSA. The websites below allow applicants to find shortage areas by address. You cannot use P.O. Box addresses.

- [HPSA FIND](#)
- [Shortage Areas By Address](#)

#### Customer Care Center

Any individual with questions about the Nurse Corps LRP 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)

#### BHW Customer Service Portal

The [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) is a web-based system that allows Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract participants to make inquiries, requests (e.g., transfers, suspensions and waivers) and to access the 6-month In-Service Verification (ISV) and Employment Verification (EV) forms.

#### Nurse Corps LRP Social Media

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

NOTE: The announcements and information posted by Nurse Corps LRP on social media sites are informal and unofficial communications. Official program policies and requirements are set forth in this APG, the applicable contract, on the Nurse Corps LRP website, and through other communications provided to the participant via the BHW Customer Service Portal.

## DEFINITIONS

**Ambulatory Surgical Center** - An entity that operates exclusively for the purpose of furnishing surgical services to patients who do not require hospitalization and for which the expected duration of services does not exceed 24 hours following admission.

**American Indian Health Facilities** - A health care facility (whether operated directly by the Indian Health Service (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. Visit: [Urban Indian Health Program](#) for more information.

**Community Mental Health Center (CMHC)** - Behavioral and mental health facilities must be located in or serve in a HPSA and must offer comprehensive primary behavioral health services to all residents of the defined HPSA. The site must offer comprehensive primary behavioral health care services including, but not limited to:

**Core Comprehensive Behavioral Health Service Elements:**

- 1) Screening and assessment
- 2) Treatment plans
- 3) Care coordination

**Non-Core Behavioral Health Service Elements:**

- 1) Diagnosis
- 2) Therapeutic services (including psychiatric medication prescribing and management, chronic disease management, and substance use disorder treatment)
- 3) Crisis/emergency services (including 24-hour crisis call access)
- 4) Consultative services
- 5) Case management

**Continuation Contract** - A Continuation Contract is an optional written contract pursuant to Section 846(a) of the PHS Act, as amended, under which: (1) the participant agrees to engage in a period of continuous full-time service for a third consecutive year as an RN or APRN at an eligible CSF or nurse faculty in an accredited eligible school of nurse after completion of their initial two-year service obligation under their initial two-year contract, and (2) the Secretary agrees to repay, in consideration of such service, 25 percent of their original total qualifying educational loan balances that were approved at the time they entered into the initial Nurse Corps LRP Contract..

**Default of Service Obligation** - Failure to begin or complete a contractual service commitment.

**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. Visit: [Disproportionate Share Hospital \(DSH\)](#) for more information.

**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.

**Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)** - FQHCs include: (1) private 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 Secretary of HHS (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.

**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. Note: free clinic volunteer staff are not eligible for Nurse Corps LRP Continuation awards. Entities that otherwise meet the above definition, but charge a nominal/sliding fee to patients, may still be considered Free and Charitable Clinics provided that essential services are delivered regardless of the patient's ability to pay. Free and Charitable Clinics restrict eligibility for their services to individuals who are uninsured, underinsured and/or have limited or no access to primary, specialty or prescription health care.

**Health Workforce Connector** - A searchable database of open job opportunities and information on approved sites.

**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. Visit: [Home Health Agency \(HHA\) Center](#) for more information.

**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. Visit: [Hospice Center](#) for more information.

**Initial Two-year Contract** - A written contract pursuant to Section 846(a) of the PHS Act, as amended, under which: (1) the participant agrees to engage in a period of continuous full-time service for two consecutive years as an RN or APRN at an eligible CSF or as nurse faculty in an accredited eligible school of nursing, and (2) the Secretary agrees to repay, in consideration of

such service, a percentage of the amount which is outstanding on the participant's qualifying educational loans on the effective date of the initial two-year contract.

**In-Service Verification (ISV)** - The Nurse Corps LRP verifies every six months that participants are in compliance with the service obligation. By completing and signing the ISV, the participant and the POC are certifying the participant's compliance with the full-time service requirements during the identified period. For participants working at multiple sites, an ISV from each site is required every six months. The ISV records the total number of full-time workdays that a participant was absent, for any reason, from the CSF or school of nursing during the reporting period.

**Multiple Sites** - Applicants may work at multiple sites under a single employer or within the same network under dependent satellite facilities. Each CSF must meet all eligibility requirements.

**Native Hawaiian Health Center** - An entity (1) which is organized under the laws of the state of Hawaii; (2) which provides or arranges for health care services through practitioners licensed by the state of Hawaii, where licensure requirements are applicable; (3) which is a public or private nonprofit entity; and (4) 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.

**Nurse-Managed Health Clinic/Center** - An entity 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 health or social services agency. These clinics must serve the general public.

**Participant Award Worksheet** - A detailed payment disbursement report reflecting all the participant's eligible loans that qualify for repayment under the Nurse Corps LRP Continuation award. Nurse Corps LRP Continuation award monthly payments can only be applied to the loans listed on the PAW.

**Private Hospital** - Hospitals or affiliated outpatient clinics in a state that are private entities and are 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. Hospital-based outpatient clinics are included under this definition.

**Public Hospital** - Any hospital or hospital-based outpatient clinics that are owned by a government (federal, state, or local), receives government funding, and are 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 HPSAs to determine site eligibility—population and geographic HPSAs cannot be used.

**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.

**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.

**School-Based Clinic (SBC)** - A health clinic that is located in or near a school facility of a school district or board or of an Indian tribe or tribal organization.

**School-Based CSF** - Is a critical shortage facility at a school that must be open year-round. If the school-based CSF is not open year-round, participants will have the option to transfer to one or more approved CSFs during months the school-based CSF is closed.

**Small Rural Hospital** - (i) A non-federal, short-term general acute care hospital that is located in a rural area (as defined for purposes of section 1886(d)); and (ii) has less than 50 beds. Critical Access Hospitals are included as eligible within this Critical Shortage Facility.

**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.

**Telehealth** - Participants will receive service credit when providing telehealth services in a manner consistent with their service site’s telehealth policy.

**Transfer** - Upon a written request and written approval, participants may transfer to another eligible CSF or school of nursing that falls in the same funding preference tier that the individual was initially awarded in, or higher.

**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. Urgent care centers primarily treat injuries or illnesses requiring immediate care but not serious enough to require an emergency room visit.

**For additional definitions, refer to the Guidance corresponding to the year of your initial 2-year Nurse Corps LRP Contract.**