



# Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program

## Fiscal Year 2021 Application and Program Guidance

January 2021

Application Submission Deadline: February 25, 2021, 7:30 p.m. ET

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

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

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

CFDA Number: 93.908

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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 (PHS), (42 USC 297n), as amended.

### **Purposes and Uses**

The purpose of the Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program (Nurse Corps LRP) is to provide loan repayment assistance to registered nurses (RNs), including advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), in return for a commitment 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 participating in the Nurse Corps LRP. 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 or Department) to monitor Nurse Corps LRP-related activities. The information may also be disclosed outside 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 a 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**

The purpose of this information collection is to obtain information through the Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program (Nurse Corps LRP), which is used to assess applicant's eligibility and qualifications for the Nurse Corps LRP. 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 Reports Clearance Officer, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 14N136B, Rockville, Maryland, 20857 or [paperwork@hrsa.gov](mailto:paperwork@hrsa.gov).

**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**

**Note: Please read the FY 2021 Application and Program Guidance (Guidance) in its entirety before proceeding with the application.** The Guidance explains in detail the rights and obligations of individuals selected to participate in the Nurse Corps LRP. A complete understanding of the commitment to serve at a Critical Shortage Facility (CSF) 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 contract.

An applicant may withdraw an application at any time prior to the Secretary of HHS or designee signs the Nurse Corps LRP contract to remain eligible to re-apply in the future. After the Secretary or designee signs the contract, the application cannot be withdrawn. Individuals who are uncertain whether they are able to fulfill a two-year service commitment should not apply.

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

## Program Overview

### INTRODUCTION

Many communities across the country have a shortage of health care providers, including nurses.<sup>1</sup> There are many factors that impact the supply of and demand for nurses, such as population growth, an aging population, overall economic conditions, and the aging of the nursing workforce. The Nurse Corps LRP program helps address the needs for health care in these underserved communities and supports the development of the nursing workforce for the future.

The Nurse Corps LRP is authorized by Section 846 of the Public Health Service Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 297n) and it is administered by the Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW) in the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the HHS. The Nurse Corps LRP offers RNs and APRNs substantial financial assistance to repay a portion of their qualifying educational loans in exchange for full-time service either at a CSF or an eligible school of nursing.

### **Funding Allocations**

Funds for the Nurse Corps LRP are used to make awards to qualified applicants, which include RNs and APRNs working either in CSFs or as nurse faculty in an accredited school of nursing. APRNs include Nurse Practitioners (NPs), Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs), Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs), and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs).

For the FY 2021 application cycle, up to \$5 million will be available to support Women's Health for applicants working in one of the following capacities: Women's Health NP, CNM, or Certified OB/GYN RN. After \$5 million has been allocated to women's health, up to 50 percent of the remaining available funds will be used to make awards to NPs and up to 10 percent will be used to make awards to nurse faculty. Of the 50 percent allocated for NPs, up to 20 percent is available for Psychiatric (Psych) NPs; the other 30 percent is available to all other NPs. The purpose of these allocations is to expand the integration of mental health, substance use disorders, and other behavioral health services into primary care across the nation.

The remaining 40 percent is available for applicants who are RNs or APRNs (excluding NPs and nurse faculty). These applicants are placed in funding allocation groups based on their CSF type (e.g., "Disproportionate Share Hospitals (DSHs)/Public Hospitals" or "All Other CSFs"). Specifically, up to 15 percent is used to make awards to qualified applicants working at DSHs or public hospitals, and up to 25 percent is used to make awards to qualified applicants working at all other types of CSFs.

Applicants are placed within their respective funding categories; awards are made in order of decreasing debt-to-salary ratio until all funds are expended. Women's Health awards are made to qualified applicants until all funds are expended from that funding set-aside. Once the

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, National Center for Health Workforce Analysis, 2017. National and Regional Supply and Demand Projections of the Nursing Workforce: 2014-2030. Rockville, Maryland.

funding for Women’s Health has been expended, the remaining funding allocations as described in the table below will be expended in each category with awards made in order of decreasing debt-to-salary ratio. All Nurse Corps LRP Contracts are subject to the availability of funds.

Category	Sub-category
APRNs with certifications in Women’s Health (WHNPs and CNMs) and certified OB/GYN RNs working in OB/GYN settings in eligible CSF – up to an \$5 million initial set-aside	
Nurse Practitioners – up to 50% of the remaining funding	Psychiatric (Psych) NPs – up to 20% of the total
	Other NPs – up to 30% of the total
Registered Nurses and other Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (excluding NPs) – up to 40% of the remaining funding	Disproportionate Share Hospital – up to 15% of the total
	Other Critical Shortage Facilities – up to 25% of the total
Nurse Faculty – up to 10% of the remaining funding	

**Service Options**

The Guidance describes two different contract service options:

- 1) A contract for a Nurse Corps LRP participant serving as an RN or an APRN at a CSF; or
- 2) A contract for a Nurse Corps LRP participant serving as nurse faculty at an eligible school of nursing.

Applicants may only choose one of the above service options. Applicants must be certain of their service option as they will not be able to switch to another service option at any time. Should they receive a Nurse Corps LRP award, participants must continue to provide service in the same capacity as agreed upon in the initial two-year contract and during any service obligation associated with a continuation contract, unless the Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program Continuation Contract Application and Program Guidance for the applicable service year permits applicants to do so.

**Benefits of the Nurse Corps LRP**

1. **Service** – Participants will join thousands of Nurse Corps LRP members across the nation to meet the health care needs of underserved communities and ensure a strong and sustainable nursing workforce for the future.
2. **Loan Repayment** – Nurse Corps LRP will provide funds to participants to repay a portion of their outstanding qualifying educational loans.
  - a. **60 Percent of Total Qualifying Nursing Educational Loan Balance** – For an initial two-year service commitment, the Nurse Corps LRP will award participants a total of

60 percent (30 percent for each year) of their total outstanding qualifying education loan balance. The time period in which the qualifying education loans were incurred must coincide with the time period of the applicant's qualifying nursing education. All qualifying loans must have been incurred prior to the application submission deadline.

- b. **Optional Additional 25 Percent of Total Qualifying Nursing Educational Loan Balance** – For an optional third year of service (Continuation Contract), the Nurse Corps LRP will award participants an additional 25 percent of their original total qualifying educational loan balance as of the effective date of their initial two-year contract. The Continuation Contract is subject to the availability of funds.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### **Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible for a Nurse Corps LRP Contract, all applicants must:

- 1) Be a U.S. Citizen (either U.S. born or naturalized), U.S. National, or Lawful Permanent Resident, and provide acceptable documentation of their status. Acceptable documents include a **U.S. Birth Certificate, an unexpired U.S. Passport ID page or U.S. Passport Card, a Certificate of Citizenship, a Naturalization Certificate, a state Enhanced Driver's License, or a Permanent Resident Card (Green Card)**. Note that a state Driver's License, Nursing License, Social Security Card, or valid state ID are not acceptable proof of U.S. citizenship or permanent residency;
- 2) Have earned a baccalaureate or associate degree in nursing (or equivalent degree), a diploma in nursing, or graduate or doctorate degree in nursing in addition to the following specific requirements:
  - a. Psych NPs must have a master's degree or higher degree in nursing from a program accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education with a specialization in psychiatric-mental health and have obtained a certification from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) to practice as an APRN in a behavioral or mental health capacity.
  - b. Women's Health NPs must have a master's degree or higher degree in nursing from a program accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education with a specialization in Women's Health; and obtain Women's Health Care Nurse Practitioner certification from the National Certification Corporation (NCC).
  - c. RNs who are certified in OB/GYN must have earned a baccalaureate or associate degree in nursing (or equivalent degree), have obtained RN licensure, and have obtained certification from the National Certification Corporation and American Nurse Credentialing Center in OB/GYN related specialties.

- 3) Have employment as a scheduled full-time<sup>2</sup> RN or APRN working at least 32 hours per week at a public or private CSF or be employed as a full-time nurse faculty member at a public or private eligible school of nursing. Hours worked in a PRN, *per diem* or on-call status do not qualify as part of the 32 hours per week;
- 4) Have outstanding qualifying educational loans (defined below) incurred while seeking a diploma or degree in nursing;
- 5) Have completed a nursing degree program for which the loan balance applies;
- 6) Have 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).
- 7) Applicants who intend to practice as federal employees, or employees of a **tribal health program** in a state in which the tribal health program provides services described in its contract/compact under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA), 25 U.S.C. 450 et seq. (e.g., Indian Health Service (IHS) health center), need only have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted license to practice as an RN, or an APRN, in a state.

**For 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 do not need to pass the NCLEX RN exam.

**Applicants are deemed ineligible if they:**

- 1) Have any judgment liens arising from a federal debt;
- 2) Have defaulted on any federal payment obligations (e.g., Health Education Assistance Loans, Nursing Student Loans, federal income tax liabilities, etc.) or non-federal payment obligations (e.g., court-ordered child support payments). HRSA will verify that the applicant has not defaulted on any federal payment obligations by running a credit report that will be recorded as a hard inquiry<sup>3</sup>, which is a formal review of the applicant’s credit history;
- 3) Had any federal or non-federal debt written off as uncollectible or had any federal service or payment obligation waived;
- 4) Have an existing service obligation that was not satisfied prior to the application submission deadline (e.g., under the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment or Scholarship Programs, the Nurse Corps Scholarship Program, the State Loan Repayment Program, the Nurse Faculty Loan Program, the Faculty Loan Repayment Program, any

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<sup>2</sup> See [Definition section](#) for the definition of full-time service.

<sup>3</sup> According to the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, these inquiries “are typically inquiries by lenders after you apply for credit. These inquiries will impact your credit score because most credit scoring models look at how recently and how frequently you apply for credit. Please find additional information at [What's a credit inquiry?](#)”



state-sponsored loan repayment/forgiveness programs, any employer-sponsored scholarship or loan repayment programs, or active duty military obligation).

**Exception – Individuals in a reserve component of the armed forces, including the National Guard, are eligible to participate in the Nurse Corps LRP.<sup>4</sup>**

- 5) Have previously participated in the Nurse Corps LRP, incurring a two-year service obligation and receiving an award to repay 60 percent of the participant’s total qualifying nursing educational loan balance, and if applicable, an optional third year continuation contract to repay an additional 25 percent of the participant’s total qualifying nursing educational loan balance. Previous Nurse Corps LRP participants can apply to the program again only for loans that relate to a new nursing degree.
- 6) Have defaulted on a prior service obligation to the federal, state, or local government, even if the applicant subsequently satisfies that obligation through service, monetary payment, or by other means;
- 7) Are currently excluded, debarred, suspended, or disqualified by a federal agency from financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under federal programs and activities;
- 8) Are employed by nurse staffing agencies or travel nurse agencies;
- 9) Work on an “as needed” basis even if working 32 or more hours in a week (this includes PRNs, Pool Nurses, or RNs who are not **scheduled in a full-time capacity**, as defined by Nurse Corps LRP);
- 10) Have a temporary, restricted, or inactive RN license;
- 11) Are licensed practical or vocational nurses;
- 12) Are self-employed;
- 13) Work at a school of nursing that is not accredited by a national nursing accrediting agency or state agency; or
- 14) Transfer to another eligible CSF or eligible school of nursing after submitting the application but prior to receiving an award. Participants must be working at the CSF or school of nursing identified in their application.

A National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) report review will be part of the application process for all applicants if the employing CSF or school of nursing indicates any of the following on the Employment Verification Form (EVF):

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<sup>4</sup> Reservists should note the following:

- a. Military training or service performed by reservists will not satisfy the Nurse Corps LRP obligation. If a participant has combined military training and service, or other absences from the CSF or school of nursing that will exceed seven weeks (35 workdays) per service year, the participant should request a suspension. Payments are stopped during periods of active duty and will resume when the reservist returns to full-time service. The service obligation end date will be extended to compensate for the break in service.
- 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 LRP Contract at another approved CSF or eligible 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.

- A NPDB report has never been obtained by the employing CSF for the applicant;
- It has been more than 18 months since an NPDB report was obtained by the employing CSF for the applicant; or
- The applicant’s NPDB report on file with the employing CSF contains adverse information.

## **Eligible Health Care Facility Types**

### **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, RNs or APRNs, at an **eligible public or private 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 the 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 an RN or APRN is required to provide full-time service at a CSF. The CSF must be a public or private health care facility located in, designated as, or serving a primary medical care or mental health, Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA). Eligible health care facility types are listed below.

## **Eligible Hospitals and Community Based Settings**

### **Hospitals**

- Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH)
- Private Hospital
- Public Hospital

### **Community-Based Settings**

- Ambulatory Surgical Center
- American Indian Health Facilities
- Community Mental Health Center<sup>5</sup>
- End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Dialysis Centers
- Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)
- Free and Charitable Clinics
- Home Health Agency
- Hospice Program
- Native Hawaiian Health Center
- Nurse Managed Health Clinic/Center
- Residential Nursing Home
- Rural Health Clinic

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<sup>5</sup> Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics are eligible under Community Mental Health Center.

- Small Rural Hospital<sup>6</sup>
- 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 Multiple Sites under the [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.

### **Ineligible Employment Agencies and Facilities**

- Clinics in prisons and correctional facilities; or
- Nurse Staffing Agency/Travel Nurse Agency

If an applicant is unsure whether a health care facility fits into one of the CSF categories listed above, they may contact the health care facility's business office or human resources. Nurse Corps LRP makes the final determination whether a facility qualifies as a CSF.<sup>7</sup>

### **Selection Factors**

Among eligible applicants, the Nurse Corps LRP determines awardees based on the following selection factors:

- 1) Funding preference is given to applicants with the greatest financial need defined as those qualified applicants whose debt-to-salary ratio (i.e., total qualifying educational loan balance divided by base annual salary) is 100 percent or greater.

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<sup>6</sup> Critical Access Hospitals are eligible under Small Rural Hospital.

<sup>7</sup> Applicants may access the [HPSA find](#) or call the HRSA Customer Care Center at 1-800-221-9393 to determine site eligibility.

<b>Funding Preference Tier For RNs, NPs and APRNs</b>	<b>Debt-to-Salary Ratio</b>	<b>CSF Primary Care or Mental Health HPSA Score</b>
Tier 1	≥100%	25-14
Tier 2	<100%	25-14
Tier 3	≥100%	13-0
Tier 4	<100%	13-0

- 2) For nurse faculty applicants working at schools of nursing qualified applicants are grouped into one of the funding priority tiers based on the factors described in the table below:

<b>Funding Preference Tiers</b>	<b>Debt-to-Salary Ratio</b>	<b>Schools of Nursing (SON)</b>
Tier 1	≥100%	SON with at least 50% of students from a disadvantaged background
Tier 2		All other SON
Tier 3	<100%	SON with at least 50% of students from a disadvantaged background
Tier 4		All other SON

Nurse faculty applicants teaching at schools of nursing with at least 50 percent of the student body from a disadvantaged background (DAB) will receive a funding priority.

See the [DEFINITIONS](#) section to determine whether nursing students are from a disadvantaged background. The nurse faculty applicant is responsible for assuring that the POC at the school of nursing submits the signed and completed Certification of Disadvantaged Background form.

### **Anticipated Awards**

For FY 2021, the Nurse Corps LRP continues to be highly competitive. Historically, the number of qualified applicants has exceeded the available funding, and the program anticipates the same for this year.

In 2020, 465 eligible applicants were awarded Nurse Corps LRP contracts. In the past, Nurse Corps LRP funds have been sufficient to fund applicants only in Tier 1 for NPs, RNs, and APRNs and into Tier 3 for nurse faculty. Below is a table of the award history for previous years.

### Award History

Fiscal Year	# of Applications Received	# of Initial Awards Made	# of Continuations Made
2020	6,223	465	291
2019	7,933	556	292
2018	7,455	544	279

After an applicant is selected for an award, Nurse Corps program staff provides the applicant with information for logging into the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). This web-based system will allow Nurse Corps LRP applicants to communicate with Nurse Corps program staff and manage customer service inquiries, such as contact information changes.

### Qualifying and Non-Qualifying Educational Loans

**Qualifying Educational Loans** - Include government and private (commercial) loans for actual costs paid for tuition and reasonable educational and living expenses incurred:

- 1) While attending a school of nursing where the applicant obtained a nursing education;
- 2) While taking prerequisite courses at schools other than the school(s) of nursing where the applicant received academic credit for those courses, and but did not obtain a non-nursing degree. If a non-nursing degree was obtained, all loans for prerequisite courses are ineligible for funding; and
- 3) Participants will only receive repayment of outstanding qualifying educational loans that have a current balance.

**Non-Qualifying Loans** - Include but are not limited to:

- 1) Loans for which the applicant incurred a service obligation that will not be satisfied by the Nurse Corps LRP application deadline.
- 2) Loans obtained for training in vocational or practical nursing.
- 3) Loans obtained from family members, from private institutions, lenders, or other entities that are not subject to federal or state examination and supervision as lenders.
- 4) If an applicant's qualifying educational loan is consolidated/refinanced with ineligible non-qualifying debt (such as loans obtained for non-nursing degrees) or loans of another individual, the entire consolidated/refinanced loan is ineligible.
- 5) Parent PLUS loans (and **ALL** loans made to parents).
- 6) Credit card debt or personal lines of credit.
- 7) Perkins Loans (unless the applicant can provide documentation as indicated in the instructions for supporting documents that such loans are not subject to cancellation).
- 8) Nursing Student Loans and Nurse Faculty Loan Program loans that are subject to cancellation.
- 9) Loans obtained for non-nursing degrees. If an applicant takes courses and subsequently obtains a non-nursing degree, for example, a degree in psychology, all loans for those courses leading up to the non-nursing degree will be ineligible for repayment.
- 10) Loans that are paid in full.

### **Consolidated Educational Loans**

An applicant may consolidate or refinance loans before the application deadline provided the individual submits the loan documentation for the consolidated or refinanced loans as part of the online application. If the loan documentation is not included with the application by the deadline, the consolidated or refinanced loan(s) **will not** be considered for loan repayment. The original loan dates for the consolidated or refinanced loans must coincide with the time period of the applicant's qualifying nursing education. The consolidated/refinanced loans must be from a government (federal, state, or local) or private commercial lender and must include **only** the qualifying educational loans of the applicant.

### AWARD PROCESS

#### **Confirmation of Interest (COI)**

Award finalists are notified by a Confirmation of Interest (COI) email to log into their application account in the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) to confirm their continued interest in receiving an award and to confirm whether the loan and employment information provided to HRSA on their Nurse Corps LRP Application remains valid. The COI will also include instructions to sign and return the Nurse Corps LRP contract and to provide banking information in order to facilitate the electronic transfer of the award funds in the event that their contract is approved by the Secretary of HHS (or designee) and funds are awarded.

The electronic signature on the contract has the effect of a handwritten signature, and once countersigned by the Secretary of HHS or designee, obligates the applicant to a Nurse Corps LRP service commitment. If the applicant does not respond to the COI email by the deadline, the applicant is no longer considered for participation in the Nurse Corps LRP and their application is closed. Applicants who no longer wish to receive a Nurse Corps LRP award can log into their [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) account and check the "decline" box on the COI. Once an applicant fails to respond by the deadline or declines the COI through the Portal, the award will be offered to another applicant. A decision to decline the award is final and cannot be revoked under any circumstances. The COI is not a guarantee that the individual will receive an award, as funding depends on appropriations by Congress.

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

- ***If the Secretary's designee has not yet countersigned the contract***, the individual will not incur a service obligation or any penalty for withdrawing.
- ***If the Secretary's designee has already signed the contract***, the individual has a binding contract to complete the service obligation. Withdrawing from the program without a penalty is not an option.

If an applicant fails to commence service on the effective date of the contract, the applicant is in breach of the contract, may be placed in default, and may be permanently disqualified from receiving future awards under the Nurse Corps LRP and some other federal programs.

If a participant is selected for a Nurse Corps LRP award, the individual's signed contract submitted with the COI is countersigned by the Secretary of HHS or designee. The date the contract is countersigned becomes the effective date of the contract and the two-year service obligation commences on that date. The individual will begin to accrue service credit under the contract as soon as it becomes effective. Nurse Corps LRP will send participants a notice instructing them to access the following documents in the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#):

- 1) Award Letter
- 2) Welcome Packet
- 3) Participant Award Worksheet

Award payments are made monthly over 24 months through an electronic funds transfer to the participant's checking or savings account via the bank routing number identified on the banking information submitted by the participant. The first HRSA payment will be deposited approximately 60 days after the effective date of the contract. Participants must keep all banking information up to date to receive HRSA payments on schedule.

Participants must use all Nurse Corps LRP payments received to pay the lenders or holders of their qualifying educational loans. Nurse Corps LRP may contact the participant's lenders or holders to verify that award payments were applied to reduce qualifying loan balances.

If, for any reason, a participant does not receive a scheduled payment, they may 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. Participants must immediately notify the Nurse Corps LRP of any changes in their service site or employment status.

#### 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 (Social Security and Medicare) from a participant's award. Taxes are paid directly to the 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

Allowance 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 encourages the use of the [Withholding Calculator](#) 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.

## SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

### **General Requirements for All Nurse Corps LRP Participants:**

- 1) To receive service credit during the two-year service obligation under the Nurse Corps LRP 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;
- 2) 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 two-year contract to receive service credit under the Nurse Corps LRP contract;
- 3) Service credit will not be given for employment prior to the effective date of the Nurse Corps LRP contract. The effective date of the contract is the date it is countersigned by the Secretary of HHS or designee;
- 4) Service credit will not be given for postgraduate residency/training programs;
- 5) If an individual fails to commence full-time service on the effective date of the contract at the CSF or eligible school of nursing identified in the application, the individual may be placed in default;
- 6) Once an individual applies and is awarded a contract for a particular service option at a CSF or school of nursing, **the individual cannot switch to the other type of service option** during the two-year service period.



## **Service Obligation Life Cycle**

Participants must provide full-time service for a period of two years. 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 means 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 two-year service obligation through part-time service.

## **PROGRAM COMPLIANCE**

### **Worksite Absences**

No more than 7 weeks (35 workdays) 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 (35 workdays) in a service year will extend the contract end date. Participants who anticipate an absence from their site for more than 7 weeks may wish to seek a suspension of their service obligation date (see: [Suspension](#) section on page 19).

### **Service Verification**

The Nurse Corps LRP verifies every six months that participants are in compliance with the service obligation. By completing and signing the In-Service Verification<sup>8</sup> (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.

Participants and their service site POC 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. An overdue ISV for a reporting period under the initial two-year contract may also impact eligibility for a future Nurse Corps LRP Continuation contract.

### **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 eligible CSF where they are employed.

### **Leaving an Approved Service Site Prior to Completion of the 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 contract, and all payments

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<sup>8</sup> An ISV is different from an EVF. An EVF is submitted at the time of the application via the BHW Customer Service Portal and is used to verify that an applicant meets the service requirements at a CSF. The ISV is used to verify the participant’s compliance with the Nurse Corps LRP service obligation after award and throughout the two-year contract. The EVF and the ISV must be completed by the POC or an authorized official.

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

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

Nurse Corps LRP expects that participants will fulfill their service obligation at the initial CSF or eligible school of nursing. However, the Nurse Corps LRP understands that circumstances may arise resulting 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 should immediately contact the Nurse Corps LRP through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).

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 to the prospective site to determine whether it is an eligible CSF or eligible school of nursing. The prospective site must be a 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. All transfers require **prior approval**.

The participant is 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:**

- 1) Participants who sign a contract to serve as nurse faculty at an eligible school of nursing must transfer to another eligible school of nursing that is situated in the same or higher tier as initially awarded. For example, if a participant was awarded to serve in a Tier 1 school with 50 percent or more enrollments of students from a disadvantaged background, the participant must transfer to another Tier 1 school with 50 percent or more enrollments of students from a disadvantaged background.
- 2) 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, the 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 may be extended, and the loan repayments 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 experience 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

90 days in which to obtain an offer and accept a position at an approved CSF or school of nursing. An extension may be granted, with permission from 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 provided by the Nurse Corps LRP program will be recommended for default.

### **Breaching the Contract**

- 1) Participants are encouraged to immediately contact the Nurse Corps LRP if a situation arises in which they are potentially unable to fulfill the service obligation. A participant who enters into a two-year Nurse Corps LRP contract but fails to begin or complete the service obligation is liable to repay all the Nurse Corps LRP 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 contract. Breach of the contract may permanently disqualify an individual from receiving future awards under the Nurse Corps LRP and some other HRSA and federal programs.
- 2) Any indebtedness owed to the federal government under the Nurse Corps LRP is due within three (3) 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 (put on hold) or waive (excuse) the Nurse Corps LRP service or payment obligation. A written request for a suspension or waiver must be submitted through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). Additional supporting documentation demonstrating a compelling circumstance is required in order to process such a request.

- 1) **Suspension** – A mechanism that provides temporary relief to a Nurse Corps LRP participant who has a short-term (not permanent) circumstance that currently makes compliance with the obligation impossible or would involve an extreme personal hardship to the participant such that enforcement of the obligation would be unconscionable. Periods of approved suspension will extend a participant's Nurse Corps LRP service obligation end date. Listed below are some categories of service suspensions:
  - 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, including 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 leave 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 leave. 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.
    - i. 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.
    - ii. **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 participant’s period of active duty is extended. The period of active military duty service will not be credited towards the Nurse Corps LRP service obligation.
- 2) **Waiver** – A mechanism that permanently relieves the participant of all or part of the Nurse Corps LRP service obligation. A waiver may be granted when compliance with the NCLRP obligation (1) is impossible, or (2) would involve extreme hardship and enforcement would be unconscionable. Compliance would be impossible if you documented that you suffer from a physical or mental disability that results in your permanent inability to serve your obligation or to be gainfully employed in any capacity and pay your debt. 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. **Waivers are not routinely granted and require a demonstration of compelling circumstances as described above.**

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

A participant’s Nurse Corps LRP obligation is cancelled 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

A complete Nurse Corps LRP online application with all required supporting documentation must be uploaded and submitted by the application deadline, **February 25, 2021, 7:30 p.m. ET**. All decisions regarding FY 2021 Nurse Corps LRP applications will be made by September 30, 2021.

Multi-Page Documents: Applicants are strongly encouraged to upload all supporting documents in a 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 uploading.

### COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

#### **Application Information**

The Nurse Corps LRP application 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.

#### **Edited Applications, Missing and Incomplete Documents**

Applications will be considered incomplete and deemed ineligible if there are missing or illegible documents or incomplete application materials. Applicants may reopen and edit their applications after submission but before the deadline.

If an applicant reopened the application for editing, the applicant must resubmit the edited application prior to the deadline of **February 25, 2021, 7:30 p.m. ET**. Failure to resubmit the application will make the applicant ineligible. Once resubmitted, the applicant will receive a notification stating, "Overall application status is submitted – eligible or ineligible" and an "Application ID number" for their reference.

The Nurse Corps LRP will not accept requests to update or make any changes to a submitted application after the deadline. In addition, the Nurse Corps LRP staff will not contact applicants, make changes to the applicant's choice of school or discipline entered on the submitted application, or fill in any missing information. If a document cannot be viewed or accessed, that document will not be considered and may cause the entire application to be deemed ineligible.

If an applicant transfers to a different site after the submission of the application and prior to a signed Nurse Corps LRP contract, their application will be deemed ineligible for an award.

### 1) ONLINE APPLICATION

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

- a. Eligibility
- b. General Information
- c. Employment
- d. Employment Verification
- e. Education
- f. Loan Information
- g. Supporting Documents
- h. Self Certification
- i. Review and Submit

### 2) REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Each document submitted must include the applicant's First and Last Name.

- a. **Proof of U.S. Citizenship, U.S. National, or Lawful Permanent Resident** – Acceptable proof includes a copy of a U.S. Birth Certificate; Certificate of Citizenship or Naturalization; unexpired U.S. Passport; U.S. Passport Card, state Enhanced Driver's License, or Green Card.  
Note that a state Driver's License, Nursing License, Social Security Card, and Non-Driver's ID are not proof of U.S. Citizenship, or status as a U.S. National or Lawful Permanent Resident.
- b. **Authorization to Release Information** – Applicants must download the "Authorization to Release Information" form from the online application. Applicants must fill out, sign, and upload the form to the application. The signature may be handwritten or an electronic signature. Electronic signatures that contain a date stamp or require a PIN to place the signature on the form are acceptable. Also, signatures signed with a stylus are acceptable. Electronic signatures that are typed only are not acceptable.
- c. **Transcripts** – Applicants must submit all transcript(s) from each college, university, or school of nursing attended for all nursing education coursework directly related to the attainment of the nursing degree(s), if the applicant is seeking repayment for educational loans incurred while attending that institution. Disbursement dates of nursing loans

must correspond with dates of enrollment in nursing school. For example, if the applicant attended and graduated from an eligible school of nursing between the years of 2009 – 2014, the loan documentation must reflect a disbursement date within that time period. School transcripts must state the applicant’s name, the name of the institution, dates of attendance, and courses taken. If a degree was obtained, the transcript must include the type of degree and the date it was conferred or the applicant must provide another appropriate document with this information (e.g., a copy of a diploma). Unofficial and official transcripts are acceptable, but applicants must ensure that all required information is provided in the transcript.

- d. **Curriculum Vitae/Résumé** – Applicants must submit a current curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé, which documents all education, training, dates of all degrees conferred, and a complete employment history including an explanation for any gaps in employment since the applicant’s completion of the qualifying nursing education.
- e. **Documentation that Perkins Loans are not eligible for cancellation (if applicable)** – Documentation should be from the business or student loan office of the school that made the loan.
- f. **EVF** – 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 the 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 it is not completed by the appropriate official, the application is considered ineligible.
- g. **Loan Documents** – Review the types of loans that qualify and do not qualify for repayment under the Nurse Corps LRP (see Qualifying and Non-Qualifying Loans section). If an applicant has multiple loans with the same servicing lender, each loan must be separately listed, and must include the original amount of the loan, the disbursement date and the current balance. Supporting loan documentation must be provided for each loan. Nurse Corps LRP will check the applicant’s credit report to determine loan eligibility, loan balances, and repayment history status. All loan documents should include the applicant’s name and other identifiable information including account numbers.
  - i. Required Loan Documentation
    - 1. Federal Loans:
      - a. **Electronically**
        - i. The applicant is required to have a Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID that provides access to the [National Student Loan Data System \(NSLDS\)](#) website at My Student Data file.

If the applicant does not have an FSA account, the applicant should follow the instructions to access loan information.

**b. Manually**

- i. NSLDS My Student Data file from [FSA website](#);
- ii. The most recent Account Statement for each loan showing the current balance, lender's name, account number, and applicant's name (call or visit the lender's website).

**2. Individual Private (Commercial) Loans:**

- a. Disbursement Report(s) from the lender, showing the loan type, original loan amount, and original loan date must have the applicant's name and account numbers. Participants may need to submit more than one type of Disbursement Report per loan to meet these requirements;
- b. The most recent Account Statement for each loan showing the current balance, lender's name, account number, and applicant's name (call or visit the lender's website).

**3. Consolidated Private (Commercial) Loans:**

- a. Disbursement Report(s) clearly showing that all the loans that were consolidated had the applicant's name on the loan documentation.
  - i. A letter directly from the lender containing the required loan information is acceptable.
- b. Each loan must have its original loan amount and the original loan date indicated.
- c. The most recent Account Statement for the consolidation showing the current balance, lender's name, account number, and applicant's name (call or visit the lender's website).
- d. Original loan application document.

**ii. Perkins Loans:**

- a. Disbursement Report(s) from the lender must show the applicant's name, loan type, original loan amount, and original loan date. Participants may need to submit more than one type of disbursement report per loan to meet these requirements.
- b. The most recent Account Statement for the



consolidation showing the current balance, lender's name, account number, and applicant's name (call or visit the lender's website).

- c. Documentation from the school showing that the loans are not subject to cancellation under 34 CFR Part 674; OR, documentation from the current lender indicating that the Perkins Loans were consolidated and paid off.
- d. Perkins Loans that are subject to cancellation are not eligible.

- h. **DAB Document** (For Nurse Faculty applicants only) – In order to be eligible for a funding priority, Nurse Faculty applicants must submit documentation signed by the POC or an authorized school official certifying that at least 50 percent of students come from a disadvantaged background.

### **3) 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:

- a. Name changes require submission of:
  - i. Marriage license; or
  - ii. Divorce decree; or
  - iii. Official court document.
- b. Perkins Loans require submission of:
  - i. Official letter from school demonstrating the loan is not cancellable.

**CALL TO ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY OBLIGATION DOCUMENT** –This document will be required to verify an existing active duty service obligation for applicants who are members of reserve component of the armed forces including the National Guard.

## Additional Information

### RESOURCES FOR APPLICANTS

#### **Health Workforce Connector**

The [Health Workforce Connector](#) (HWC) (formerly NHSC Jobs Center) 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 participants must serve in a federally designated primary care or mental health HPSA. [HPSA Find](#) allows applicants to [locate shortage areas by address](#). You cannot use P.O. Box addresses.

#### **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 a.m. to 8 p.m. 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 participants and staff to make inquiries and requests (e.g., suspensions, transfers, waivers) and to access the 6-month ISV and EV Forms. Once an applicant is selected for an award, the individual is provided with instructions for establishing an account.

#### **Nurse Corps Social Media**

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

### DEFINITIONS

**Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN)** – A nurse with a master's degree, post-graduate degree or doctoral degree in a nursing specialty and can generally practice medicine with or without the supervision of a physician.

**Base Annual Salary** – The minimum annual compensation or the standard gross salary that an employee receives for doing a specific job, before taxes, health/dental insurance, retirement contributions, etc., are deducted (excludes overtime or shift differential pay).

**Certified Nurse Midwife (CNMs)** – Certified Nurse midwives are advanced-practice registered nurses who have completed a minimum of a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree, a post-

graduate degree, or a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) from a nurse-midwifery education program accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education. CNMs are primary care providers for women throughout the lifespan, with a special emphasis on pregnancy, childbirth, and gynecologic and reproductive health.

**Certified OB/GYN Registered Nurse (OB/GYN RN)** – Registered nurses who have acquired certification through the National Certification Corporation and/or the American Nurse Credentialing Center in areas such as obstetrics, gynecology, perinatal, and labor & delivery nursing.

**COI** – Confirmation of Interest email to confirm the applicant has continued interest in receiving an award, and that the loan and employment information provided on the Nurse Corps LRP Application remains valid. The COI is not a guarantee that the individual will receive an award, as funding depends on appropriations by Congress.

### **Community-Based Settings**

- a) **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.
- b) **American Indian Health Facilities** – 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. Visit: [Urban Indian Health Program](#)
- c) **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 provide that they 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:**
    - 4) diagnosis;
    - 5) therapeutic services (including psychiatric medication prescribing and management, chronic disease management, and substance use disorder treatment);
    - 6) crisis/emergency services (including 24-hour crisis call access);
    - 7) consultative services; and
    - 8) case management.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Certified Behavioral Health Clinics are included in this definition.

- d) **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.
- e) **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.
- f) **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 awards. Entities that otherwise meet the above definition, but charge a nominal/sliding fee to patients, may still be considered Free or Charitable Clinics provided essential services are delivered regardless of the patient's ability to pay. Free or 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.
- g) **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.
- h) **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.
- i) **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 nonprofit private 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.

- j) **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.
- k) **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.
- l) **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.
- m) **Small Rural Hospital** – 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.*
- n) **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.
- o) **School Based Clinic (SBC)** – A health clinic that: (1) is located in or near a school facility of a school district or board or of an Indian tribe or tribal organization; (2) is organized through school, community, and health provider relationships; (3) is administered by a sponsoring facility; (4) provides through health professionals primary health services to children in accordance with State and local law, including laws relating to licensure and certification; and (5) satisfies such other requirements as a State may establish for the operation of such a clinic. The term “sponsoring facility” includes any of the following: (a) a hospital, (b) a public health department, (c) a community health center, (d) a nonprofit health care agency, (e) a local educational agency or (g) a program administered by the Indian Health Service or the Bureau of Indian Affairs or operated by an Indian tribe or a tribal organization. (e.g., nutrition education, trauma support groups, asthma education, physical activity, substance abuse prevention education and health careers).
- p) **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.

**Continuation Contract** – An optional, one-year extension of an initial two-year Nurse Corps LRP contract.

**Critical Shortage Facility (CSF)** – A public or private health care facility located in, designated as, or serving a primary medical care or mental health HPSA.

**Default of payment obligation** – More than 120 days past due on the payment of a financial obligation.

**Default of service obligation** – Failure to begin or complete a contractual service commitment.

**Disadvantaged background (DAB)** – An individual from a disadvantaged background is defined as a student who:

- 1) Comes from an environment that has inhibited them from obtaining the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to enroll in and graduate from a health professions or nursing school (**environmentally disadvantaged**). The following are common examples that describe students that are “environmentally disadvantaged.” The characteristics are for guidance only and are not intended to be all-inclusive:

- Students who graduate from a high school with low average SAT/ACT scores or below the average state test results.
- Student from a school district where 50 percent or less of graduates go to college.
- Students who have a diagnosed physical or mental impairment that substantially limits participation in educational experiences.
- Students for whom English is not their primary language and for whom language is still a barrier to academic performance.
- Students from a high school where at least 30 percent of enrolled students are eligible for free or reduced price lunches.
- Students who come from a family that receives public assistance (e.g., Aid to Families with Dependent Children, food stamps, Medicaid, public housing).
- Students who are first generation in family to attend college.

– OR –

- 2) The following are characteristics that describe students who are considered “**economically disadvantaged**”:

- Students who come from a family with an annual income below a level based on low-income thresholds according to family size established by the U.S. Census Bureau, adjusted annually for changes in the Consumer Price Index and adjusted by the Secretary of HHS (**economically disadvantaged**).

The Secretary of HHS defines a “low income family” for various health professions and nursing programs included in Titles III, VII and VIII of the Public Health Service Act as having an annual income that does not exceed 200 percent of the Department’s poverty guidelines.

- A family is a group of two or more individuals related by birth, marriage, or adoption who live together or an individual who is not living with any relatives.
- Students who received a Pell grant.

**2020 Poverty Guidelines**

2020 Poverty Guidelines			
Persons in Family	48 Contiguous States and D.C.	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$12,760	\$15,950	\$14,680
2	\$17,240	\$21,550	\$19,830
3	\$21,720	\$27,150	\$24,980
4	\$26,200	\$32,750	\$30,130
5	\$30,680	\$38,350	\$35,280
6	\$35,160	\$43,950	\$40,430
7	\$39,640	\$49,550	\$45,580
8	\$44,120	\$55,150	\$50,730
For each additional person, add	\$4,480	\$5,600	\$5,150

SOURCE: Federal Register, Vol. 85, January 17, 2020, pp. 3060-3061.

**Employment Verification Form (EVF)** – This is a Nurse Corps LRP form required to be submitted at the time of the application via the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) and which is used to verify that an applicant’s employment meets the service requirements to be eligible for the Nurse Corps LRP.

**Existing Service Obligation** – Any service obligation owed under an agreement with a federal, state, local government, or other entity. Examples are the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment or Scholarship Programs, Nurse Corps Scholarship Program, State Loan Repayment Program, BHW Nurse Faculty Loan Program, Faculty Loan Repayment Program, any state-sponsored loan repayment/forgiveness program, any employer-sponsored scholarship or recruitment/retention incentive programs, or active duty military obligation. The Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program is not considered a service obligation.

**Family and Family Member** – For the purposes of the Nurse Corps LRP, “family member” includes spouses, as well as unmarried domestic partners (both same-sex and opposite-sex), including those in civil unions or similar formal relationships recognized under state law as something other than a marriage.

**Federal Direct Student Loans** – A student loan offered by the federal government that has a low interest rate for students and is used to pay for costs of education after high school. The lender of the federal Direct Student Loan is U.S. Department of Education, rather than an institution such as a bank.

**Federal Judgment Lien** – A lien that is placed against an individual’s home or property when a court ordered judgment is entered against the individual for an unpaid federal debt (e.g., a federal student loan or federally insured home mortgage). An IRS tax lien that is not created pursuant to a court ordered judgment is not a federal judgment lien.

**Fiscal Year (FY)** – The federal fiscal year (FY) is October 1 through September 30.

**Full-Time Service** – Working as an RN or APRN at a public or private CSF for a minimum of 32 hours per week, or working full-time (as defined by the employer) as a nurse faculty member for a minimum of 9 months per service year at an accredited public or private school of nursing for the time period specified in the participant’s contract and with no more than 35 workdays per service year spent away from the service site for vacation, holidays, continuing education, illness, maternity/paternity/adoption leave, or other reason.

**Government Loans** – Loans made by federal, state, county, or city agencies authorized by law to make such loans.

**Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)** – A HPSA is a geographic area, population group, public or nonprofit private medical facility, or other public facility determined by the Secretary of HHS to have a shortage of primary medical care or mental health professionals based on the criteria defined in regulation. Information considered in HPSA determinations includes health provider to population ratios, rates of poverty, and access to available primary health services, pursuant to Section 332 of the PHS Act (Title 42, U.S. Code, Section 254e) and implementing regulations (Title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 5).

**Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)** – An operating agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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

**Holder** – The commercial or Government institution that currently holds the promissory note for the qualifying education loan (e.g. Sallie Mae, Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency).

**Hospitals**



- a) **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.
- b) **Private Hospital** – A hospital 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.
- c) **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<sup>10</sup>—population and geographic HPSAs cannot be used.

**Initial two-year contract** – A written contract pursuant to Section 846(a) of the Public Health Service 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 Critical Shortage Facility 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 outstanding balance(s) on the participant's qualifying educational loans in accordance with the payment schedule provided in the contract.

**Lender** – The private commercial or government institution that made the qualifying educational loan (e.g., Department of Education). As used in this Guidance, the term “lender” also includes “holder,” which is the private commercial or Government institution that currently holds the promissory note for the qualifying educational loan (e.g., Sallie Mae, PHEAA, etc.).

**National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB)** – A confidential, electronic repository of information related to the professional conduct and competence of physicians, nurses, dentists, and other health care practitioners. The NPDB collects information about malpractice payments paid on behalf of a health care provider and adverse actions taken against a health care provider’s license, clinical privileges, or professional memberships.

**Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program (Nurse Corps LRP)** – The Nurse Corps LRP is authorized by Section 846 of the Public Health Service Act, as amended. Under the Nurse Corps LRP, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides financial assistance to qualified

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<sup>10</sup> Facility HPSAs are assigned to CSFs that manage an interned population, which includes State Psychiatric Hospital. Please find additional information at [\[Docket No. 99D-5047\]](#)

applicants to repay a portion of their qualifying educational loans, in exchange for their full-time service as an RN or APRN at an eligible Critical Shortage Facility or as nurse faculty in an accredited eligible school of nursing.

**Nurse Faculty** – A licensed registered nurse (RN or APRN) who is a full-time (as defined by the employer) academic staff member engaged in nursing instruction in an eligible school of nursing.

**Nurse Licensure Compact** – The mutual recognition model of nurse licensure that allows a RN or APRN to have a license in one state and to practice in other states subject to each state's law and regulation. Under mutual recognition, an RN or APRN may practice in several states unless otherwise restricted.

**Nurse Staffing Agency/Travel Nurse Agency** – An agency, entity, or organization independent of a healthcare provider through which RNs /APRNs are hired on a temporary or short-term basis.

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

**Point of Contact (POC)** – An official at a CSF or eligible school of nursing who is the applicant's immediate supervisor or an authorized agent of the human resources department at the service site. The site POC must verify (1) the participant's total work hours and (2) work status, every six months during the service obligation. The POC must be active and registered in the BHW Customer Service Portal.

**Private (Commercial) Loans** – Loans made by banks, credit unions, savings and loan associations, insurance companies, schools, and other financial or credit institutions, which are subject to examination and supervision in their capacity as lenders by an agency of the United States or of the state in which the lender has its principal place of business.

**Professional Group/Group Practice** – A group of two or more physicians and non-physician practitioners legally organized in a partnership, professional corporation, foundation, not-for-profit corporation, faculty practice plan, or similar association.

**Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner (Psych NP)** – Psych NPs must be licensed or have obtained a certificate or registration to practice as an APRN in a psychiatric-mental or behavioral health care capacity at an eligible CSF. Psych NPs must have a master's degree or higher degree in nursing from a program accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education with a specialization in psychiatric-mental health.

**Qualified Applicant** – A person who meets all of the Nurse Corps LRP eligibility requirements.

**Qualifying Educational Loans** – Government and private (commercial) loans for actual costs paid for tuition and reasonable educational and living expenses incurred (1) while attending a school of nursing where the applicant obtained the qualifying nursing education, and (2) while taking only nursing prerequisite courses at schools other than the school(s) of nursing where the applicant obtained the qualifying nursing education, provided that the applicant received academic credit for those courses from the school of nursing where the applicant obtained the qualifying nursing education. Participants will receive funds for repayment of qualifying educational loans that are still owed. If the applicant has consolidated qualifying educational loans with any other debt or consolidated the loans with loans of another individual, the consolidated loan is ineligible.

**Qualifying Nursing Education** – The completed undergraduate basic RN education and completed graduate nursing education (including post-master’s nursing certificate programs) resulting in a baccalaureate or associate degree in nursing (or an equivalent degree), a diploma in nursing or a graduate degree in nursing from an accredited school of nursing in a state.

**Reasonable Education Expenses** – The cost of education, exclusive of tuition, such as fees, books, supplies, clinical travel, educational equipment and materials, licensing exams, which do not exceed the school’s estimated standard budget for educational expenses for the applicant’s degree programs and the year(s) of enrollment.

**Registered Nurse (RN)** – A nurse who has graduated from an accredited school of nursing, passed the NCLEX- RN, and is licensed to practice as an RN or APRN in a state.

**School of Nursing (SON)** – An eligible school of nursing is an accredited, public or private, collegiate, associate degree or diploma school of nursing in a state where graduates are: 1) authorized to sit for the NCLEX-RN or 2) licensed RNs who will receive a graduate or equivalent degree or training to become an advanced education nurse. The educational programs in the school of nursing must be accredited by a national nursing accrediting agency or a state agency recognized by the Secretary of Education. See section 801 of the Public Health Service Act for a full and complete definition of all applicable terms.

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

**State** – Includes the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Territory of American Samoa, Territory of Guam, Republic of Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Federated States of Micronesia.

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

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

**Unencumbered License** – A license that is not revoked, suspended, or made probationary or conditional by a state licensing board or a registering authority as the result of any disciplinary action.

**Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP)** –An advanced-practice nurse who specializes in the comprehensive care of women throughout the lifespan. Must have a master’s degree or higher degree in nursing from a program accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education with a specialization in women’s health and obtain Women’s Health Care Nurse Practitioner certification from the National Certification Corporation.