

What You Need to Know About The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program (NHSC LRP) In Fiscal Year 2008



How does the NHSC determine which clinicians will receive loan repayment?

In fiscal year (FY) 2008, NHSC LRP contracts will be awarded to eligible applicants practicing in the neediest communities across the Nation. Applicants practicing in sites with the greatest need have the best chances for receiving a NHSC LRP award.

How is community need determined?

Need is determined by using the health professional shortage area (HPSA) designation score. These scores are indicated on the NHSC Opportunities List found on our Web site at <http://nhsc.bhpr.hrsa.gov>. The higher the HPSA score, the greater the need. Therefore, individuals interested in applying for the NHSC LRP can maximize their chances for receiving an award by choosing sites with the highest HPSA scores. The HPSA score on the date the NHSC LRP application is submitted (i.e., date received by the NHSC LRP) will be the HPSA score used for the FY 2008 NHSC LRP award process.

When will NHSC LRP awards be made?

NHSC LRP awards will be made on an ongoing basis for eligible applicants whose applications are complete and who are working at an approved NHSC LRP site with a HPSA score of 14 and above, subject to NHSC LRP funding and site vacancy limitations. Complete applications from eligible applicants working at a site with a HPSA score below 14 will be considered after April 2, 2008 if funding is still available.

What are the NHSC LRP site vacancy limitations?

In order to distribute the number of NHSC LRP clinicians across a larger array of NHSC community sites, a maximum of two, new NHSC LRP 2-year contract awards will be allowed per discipline category (i.e., primary health care, dental health care, mental health care) for each community site. Within each discipline category, the following additional limits apply:

- **Primary Health Care:** no more than 2 allopathic (MD) or osteopathic (DO) physicians, and no more than a combined total of 2 Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, or Certified Nurse Midwives (Mental health clinicians in these disciplines are not included).
- **Dental Care:** no more than 2 Dentists and 2 Dental Hygienists.
- **Behavioral and Mental Health:** no more than 2 Psychiatrists (MD or DO), and no more than a combined total of 2 Clinical or Counseling Psychologists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Licensed Professional Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, or Psychiatric Nurse Specialists.

If funding remains available after applying the above criteria, the NHSC LRP may allow up to four, new NHSC LRP 2-year contract awards per discipline category for each community site. Eligible applicants would be funded by decreasing HPSA score after April 2, 2008.

What if more than one employee at the site wants a NHSC LRP contract?

The number of vacancies on the NHSC Opportunities List may exceed the site vacancy limits above. If the vacancies at the community sites exceed the number of awards allowed per site, the loan repayment awards will be offered to clinicians in the order in which the clinicians were determined to be eligible based on their completed applications. In addition, sites must request a LRP "Vacancy" by calling 1-800-221-9393 for all individuals even though they may already be employed at the site or recently been hired.

What if an employee will work at multi-locations within the organization?

Each site where a NHSC clinician will work must submit an NHSC Recruitment & Retention (R&R) Assistance application and be approved for the program.

What impact does the new Health Care Safety Amendments (P. L. 107-251) of 2002, reauthorizing the NHSC, have on sites?

In October 2002, President Bush signed the "Health Care Safety Net Amendments" legislation, which reauthorizes and strengthens the NHSC. As a result of this legislation, all Section 330 funded community health centers (including migrant, homeless, and public housing), as well as non-funded but certified Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and rural health clinics (RHCs) that meet the NHSC charges for services requirements will be considered as HPSAs.

Since these sites are now deemed a HPSA, they would be eligible to submit a NHSC R&R Assistance application to the NHSC. If their R&R Assistance application is approved, these sites would be eligible to post vacancies on the NHSC Opportunities List to assist them in their recruiting efforts. Because of the automatic HPSAs, some sites may have 2 qualifying HPSAs. Sites should ensure that their vacancies are posted under the highest scoring HPSA.

How do clinicians learn of vacancies in underserved areas?

The NHSC Opportunities List posts information on sites and their recruitment needs. The NHSC Opportunities List can be found on our Web site at <http://nhsc.bhpr.hrsa.gov>. **A posting on the NHSC Opportunities List does not guarantee a NHSC LRP contract award.**

Do all clinicians that take employment at a site on the NHSC Opportunities List receive loan repayment if they submit an NHSC LRP application by the due date?

No. The NHSC LRP is a competitive program. Awards are made starting with high scoring HPSA's until funds are depleted. In FYs 2006 and 2007 all NHSC LRP applicants were not funded.

IMPORTANT DATES

October 1, 2007	FY 2008 NHSC LRP applications available. For information on applications call 1-800-638-0824.
November 1, 2007 thru March 28, 2008	Awards made to eligible applicants whose applications are complete and who are working at an Approved NHSC LRP site with a HPSA score of 14 and above.
March 28, 2008	Latest postmark date for sites to submit their NHSC Recruitment and Retention Assistance Application/vacancy request, in order to be considered a FY 2008 NHSC LRP Service Site.
April 2, 2008	Latest postmark due date for clinicians to submit FY 2008 NHSC LRP application for a new 2-year contract.
April 2, 2008 thru September 30, 2008	Remaining NHSC LRP awards made to eligible applicants whose applications are complete. Awards funded by decreasing HPSA score, subject to site vacancy limits, to the extent funds remain available.

National Health Service Corps

1-800-221-9393

<http://nhsc.bhpr.hrsa.gov>