

Federal Responsibilities Under Cooperative Agreements

Federal responsibilities under the cooperative agreement, in addition to the usual monitoring and technical assistance, will include: (1) Participation in the development and approval of an initial workplan, in accord with changing events in government policies and in the environmental/occupational health care environment, and modification thereof, as appropriate; (2) consultation and cooperation with the recipient regarding the recipient's preparation and dissemination of materials; (3) approval of specific studies and projects; and (4) participation in the design, planning, setting target task completion dates and final approval of work plans for activities under the cooperative agreement, including the selection of migrant health centers which will receive technical and non-financial assistance.

Other Award Information

These awards are not subject to the provision of Executive Order 12372 or the Public Health System Reporting Requirement.

Dated: March 24, 1997.

Claude Earl Fox,
Acting Administrator.

[FR Doc. 97-7839 Filed 3-27-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4160-15-P

Availability of Funds for the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program

AGENCY: Health Resources and Services Administration, PHS, HHS.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) announces that applications will be accepted for fiscal year (FY) 1997 for awards for educational loan repayment under the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Loan Repayment Program (LRP) (Section 338B of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act).

The HRSA, through this notice, invites health professionals to apply for participation in the NHSC LRP. The HRSA estimates that approximately 664 NHSC Loan Repayment awards (465 new awards and 199 extension awards) totaling \$37 million will be made to health professionals providing primary health services.

The PHS is committed to achieving the health promotion and disease prevention objectives of *Healthy People 2000*, a PHS-led national activity for

setting health priority areas. These programs will contribute to the *Healthy People 2000* objectives by improving access to primary health care services through coordinated systems of care for medically underserved populations in both rural and urban areas. Potential applicants may obtain a copy of *Healthy People 2000* (Full Report, Stock No. 017-001-00474-01) or *Healthy People 2000* (Summary Report; Stock No. 017-001-00473-1) through the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402-9325 (telephone 202-783-3238).

PHS strongly encourages all grant recipients to provide a smoke-free workplace and promote the non-use of all tobacco products. In addition, Public Law 103-227, the Pro-Children Act of 1994, prohibits smoking in certain facilities (or in some cases, any portion of a facility) in which regular or routine education, library, day care, health care or early childhood development services are provided to children.

ADDRESSES: Application materials may be obtained by calling or writing to: National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program, 2070 Chain Bridge Road, Suite 450, Vienna, Virginia 22182-2536, 1-800-221-9393 or (703) 821-8955. Completed applications must be returned to: Loan Repayment Programs Branch, Division of Scholarships and Loan Repayments, Bureau of Primary Health Care, HRSA, 4350 East-West Highway, 10th Floor, Bethesda, Maryland 20814, (301) 594-4400. The 24-hour toll-free phone number is 1-800-435-6464, and the FAX number is 301-594-4981. Applicants for the NHSC LRP will use HRSA Form 873 approved under Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Number 0915-0127.

DATES: The deadline for applications is June 30, 1997, or until all appropriated funds have been obligated, whichever occurs first. Due to limited funding, it is anticipated that all appropriated funds will be obligated prior to June 30, 1997. The volume of applications is historically three times greater than the number of contracts that can be awarded. Therefore, to receive consideration for funding, health professionals must submit an application and proof of a job offer at an approved NHSC LRP Service Site.

Applications will be considered to be on time if they are either: (1) Received on or before the deadline date; or (2) postmarked on or before the established deadline date and received in time for orderly processing. Applicants should request a legibly dated U.S. Postal

Service postmark or obtain a legibly dated receipt from a commercial carrier or U.S. Postal Service. Private metered postmarks are not acceptable as proof of timely mailing. Applications received after the announced closing date will not be considered for funding.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further program information and technical assistance, please contact Sharley L. Chen, Chief, Loan Repayment Programs Branch, HRSA/BPHC/DSLRL, at the above address, phone or FAX number.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 338B of the PHS Act (42 U.S.C. 2541-1) authorizes the Secretary to establish the NHSC LRP to help in assuring, with respect to the provision of primary health services, an adequate supply of trained primary care health professionals for the NHSC. The NHSC is used by the Secretary to provide primary health services in federally designated health professional shortage areas (HPSAs). Primary health services are services regarding family medicine, general internal medicine, general pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, dentistry, or mental health, that are provided by physicians or other health professionals.

Under the NHSC LRP, the Secretary will repay qualifying graduate and undergraduate educational loans incurred by primary care health professionals. For the first 2 years of full-time clinical practice at an approved site in a federally designated HPSA, the Secretary will repay up to \$25,000 per year of the educational loans of such individual. (There is a minimum 2-year service obligation.) For subsequent years of full-time clinical practice, if the NHSC LRP contract is extended, the Secretary will repay up to \$35,000 per year. Participants must use the loan repayment funds for payment of their qualifying educational loans. The Secretary shall, in addition to such payments, make payments to the individual in an amount equal to 39 percent of the total amount of loan repayments made for the taxable year involved. The 39% payment is authorized to reimburse participants for all or a part of the tax liability incurred as a result of their LRP funding. In addition to these amounts, NHSC LRP participants will receive a salary from the private or public entity which employs them while they are serving.

In an effort to assist loan repayment participants to reduce their educational debt with as little interest expense as is possible, the LRP will disburse payments to participants on an advanced basis. Three methods of

advanced payments are currently available to LRP participants:

- **Advanced Quarterly Payment**

Method—The participant will receive two payments in the first quarter of the service obligation. The first payment will be disbursed approximately 30 days after the beginning of service and the second payment will be disbursed at the end of the first quarter, thereby placing the payment schedule one quarter in advance for the remainder of the service commitment.

- **Advanced Annual Lump Sum**

Payment Method—The participant will be paid one advanced annual lump sum payment up to \$25,000 (plus 39% of that payment for tax assistance), approximately 90 days after the beginning of the first year of service, and another advanced annual lump sum payment up to \$25,000 (plus 39% of that payment for tax assistance), approximately 90 days after the beginning of the second year of service.

- **Advanced Biennial Lump Sum**

Payment Method—The participant will receive one advanced biennial lump sum payment up to \$50,000 (plus 39% of that payment for tax assistance) approximately 90 days after the beginning of the first year of service.

The Secretary will identify and make available annually a list of those HPSA sites which will be available for service repayment under the NHSC LRP. The Secretary will select applicants for consideration for participation in the NHSC LRP according to the following criteria:

(1) The extent to which an individual's training in a health profession or specialty is determined by the Secretary to be needed by the NHSC in providing primary health services. From time to time, the Secretary will publish a notice detailing the professions and specialties most needed by the NHSC. Current professional and specialty priorities are outlined at the end of this notice.

(2) The extent to which an individual is determined by the Secretary to be committed to serve in a HPSA.

(3) The extent of an individual's demonstrated interest in providing primary health services.

(4) The immediacy of an individual's availability for service. Individuals who have a degree, have completed all necessary postgraduate training in their profession and specialty (i.e., in the case of physicians, are certified or eligible to sit for the certifying examinations of a specialty board, and in the case of other health professions, are certified in their specialty), and have a current and unrestricted license to practice their profession in the State in which they

intend to serve, will receive highest consideration.

(5) The individual's academic standing, prior professional experience in a HPSA, board certification, residency achievements, peer recommendations, and other criteria related to professional competence or conduct will also be considered.

In providing contracts under the NHSC LRP, priority will be given to an applicant:

- Whose health profession or specialty is most needed by the NHSC;
- Who has and whose spouse, if any, has characteristics that increase the probability of continuing to serve in a HPSA upon completion of his or her service obligation;
- Who is from a disadvantaged background, subject to the preceding paragraph.

Eligible Participants

To be eligible to participate in the NHSC LRP, an individual must:

(1) (a) Have a degree in allopathic or osteopathic medicine, dentistry, or other health profession, or be certified, in accordance with State licensure requirements, as a nurse midwife, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant. Other health professions include clinical psychology, clinical social work, and dental hygiene;

(b) Be enrolled in an approved graduate training program in allopathic or osteopathic medicine, dentistry, or other health profession; or

(c) Be enrolled as a full-time student at an accredited school in a State and in the final year of a course of study or program leading to a degree in allopathic or osteopathic medicine, dentistry, or other health profession.

(2) Be eligible for, or hold an, appointment as a commissioned officer in the Regular or Reserve Corps of the PHS or be eligible for selection for civilian service in the NHSC (e.g., must be a citizen or national of the United States); and

(3) Submit an application for a contract to participate in the NHSC LRP which contract describes the repayment of educational loans in return for the individual serving for an obligated period.

Any individual who previously incurred an obligation for health professional service to the Federal Government, a State Government, or other entity is ineligible to participate in the NHSC LRP unless such obligation is completely satisfied prior to the beginning of service under this Program. Any individual who has breached an obligation to the Federal Government, a State Government, or other entity is

ineligible to participate in the NHSC LRP.

Any individual who has a judgment lien against his or her property for a debt to the United States is ineligible to participate in the NHSC LRP until the judgment is paid in full or otherwise satisfied.

No loan repayments will be made for any professional practice performed prior to the effective date of the NHSC LRP contract. All individuals must have a current and unrestricted license to practice their profession in the State of practice prior to beginning service under this Program.

Professions and Specialties Needed by the NHSC

At this time, the Secretary has determined, based on community demand, that priority will be given to: Physicians (M.D.s and D.O.s) who are certified or eligible to sit for the certifying examination in the specialty boards of family practice, obstetrics/gynecology, internal medicine, and pediatrics.

Other Award Information

This program is not subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, since Executive Order 12372 does not cover payments to individuals. In addition, this program is not subject to the Public Health System Reporting Requirements, since the requirements do not cover payment to individuals.

The OMB *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* number for this program is 93.162.

Dated: March 24, 1997.

Claude Earl Fox,

Acting Administrator.

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National Institutes of Health

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request; Special Volunteer and Guest Researcher Assignment

SUMMARY: Under the provisions of Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Office of the Director, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) a request to review and approve the information collection listed below. This proposed information collection was previously published in the **Federal Register** on January 10, 1997, (62 FR 1463) and allowed 60 days for public comment. No comments were received. The purpose of this notice is to allow an