

Transcript

Hello, Everyone. My name is Christina Myers and I am here with my colleague Kamu Aysola. Today we will be introducing you to the Nurse Corps loan repayment program and its application.

Now first off, we will go into the NURSE Corps 101, which will be information on the application and what we're looking for. Then we'll go into NURSE Corps Participation which is everything you'll need to know as a participant. Then we'll jump back to Things to Remember when applying. And finally we'll have a note on Questions and Answers.

Now, for the program overview. First off, the purpose of the program is to basically get nurses out to areas that really need them, to eliminate the critical shortage of nurses in the United States right now. This program offers financial assistance to pay up to 85% of the eligible nursing loans. The program caters to Registered Nurses as well as Nurse Faculty.

The basic eligibility. To be eligible you have to be a US citizen, US national or lawful permanent resident. You have to have a degree in nursing. That could be a BSN, a Masters, etc. You have to have a current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted RN license that is valid in the state in which you are employed or participate in the nurse licensing compact. And of course you must have outstanding, qualified nursing education loans.

There are two types of awards. The first one is the initial two year award and that is probably what most of you are here for. That is, in exchange for two years of service at a critical shortage facility, which I will go into later, or school of nursing, we will pay 60% of your current outstanding qualified loans to you to be put towards your nursing education loans.

The other type is a continuation award and that is an optional third year of service. In exchange for that year of service, we will pay an additional 25% of your original verified loan balance to go toward paying your eligible loans.

Keep in mind all awards are subject to federal taxes.

So the critical shortage facility is a healthcare facility located in, designated as, or serving in a primary care or mental health, health professional shortage area, otherwise known as HPSA. The HPSA is designated as having a shortage of primary medical care, dental or mental health providers and it is determined geographically, by population, or by institution. For our program, only primary care and mental health HPSAs are used. To find out more information on HPSAs, we have provided links at the end of the presentation.

To be eligible, your facility has to have a designation by January 1, 2013. It also has to be located in any of the 50 states or US territories. Keep in mind that any HPSA updated after January 1 may not be eligible for this application cycle but it may be eligible for future cycles.

Here is the list of the eligible CSF types. The most common that we currently have participants working at is the disproportionate share hospital.

The service requirements: For RNs, you have to be working full-time, and that is designated as at least 32 hours per week for a minimum of 45 weeks per year, at a critical shortage facility. You can take up to seven weeks off, which is 35 days per service year, for maternity leave, vacation, etc.

For Nurse Faculty, you need to be working at an accredited school of nursing and be working full-time. Full time is defined by your school. For us you have to be working a minimum of nine months per service year. You can also take up to 7 weeks off (35 days) and this time is only counted during the time you are actually working under contract. So if you are working for 9 months out of the year, we only count those 7 weeks out of those 9 months.

Some program highlights for this year. We currently have over 2500 nurses working with us. This year we will be putting aside 50% of our funding for Nurse Practitioners. We're also putting up to 20% of our funding aside for nurse faculty. Last year 86% of our awards were made to nurses working at a CSF of 14 or more.

Ok, now I will step aside and let Kamu walk you through the 5 steps to an award.

Thank you, Christina. Next I am going to discuss the 5 steps to an award. The applicants must read the application for the guided carefully. This document has

relevant and important information about the application process and your role as a participant. Step two is to gather required documents. . Applicants must submit proof of being a U.S Citizen, Transcripts, and a Vitae/Resume.

You may submit an official or unofficial transcript and they must state the name of the institution, dates of attendance, and the courses taken.

Step 2 continued. The loan documentation: Applicants must submit a qualifying education loan documentation and if it appliesthe consolidated loan documentation.

Please note that if you submit your consolidated loan documentation, it must only include qualifying nursing loans of the applicants. If not, the entire consolidation will not qualify.

Step two continues: If submitting a Perkins loan, additional documentation must be provided showing that the loan is not subject to cancellation. Other supporting documentation includes the Authorization to Release Information form, and the Authorization to Release Employment Information form. Please note, the required documents may need to be scanned and uploaded to the program portal for final submission. We recommend that you submit documents in a PDF format. Applicants will be able to view and upload documents and it is your responsibility to ensure that the information uploaded is accurate, viewable, and complete. ,

Step three is to complete the online application. All applications must be completed and s submitted online via the link below. The application deadline is February 28 of 2013 at 7:30 PM Eastern standard Time. Again, all required documents must be submitted via the program portal. .

Step three continued. Employment verification must be initiated by the applicant and sent electronically to the selected sites point of contact to be verified. The applicants will be notified by e-mail when the POC submits the employment verification. If during the application, your site is not listed as an option, a request to the NURSE Corps to add your site should be initiated. Applications can not be submitted until this verification has been completed by the POC.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the EV is submitted by the point of contact. Please note that it may take up to five business days or longer to have this verified by the sites POC. Also, please note that if you transferred during the application process, your application will be deemed ineligible.

Also, if you are using a work line, you must establish a POC to establish employment within your facility. Finally all of this information is in your guidance on pages 21 through 23. Step three continued.

Applicants should upload account statements reflecting the current outstanding balance and current interest rates. They may also submit disbursement reports reflecting type of loans, original loan amount, original loan dates and the consolidation dates if it applies. They will also upload the signed Authorization to Release Information form and the signed Authorization to Release Employment Information Form. Please note that if your loans are consolidated during the application process, those loans will be made ineligible.

Let's continue with application submission. The applicants must certify that all information submitted with the application is accurate and truthful. Applicants must review all information found in the uploading documents section and ensure that the information submitted in the online application matches the upload documents. If this information is inconsistent, your application may be deemed to be ineligible. All applicants will be informed of their awards status no later than September 30, 2013.

Withdrawing your application: An applicant may withdraw his or her application at any time prior to the secretary signing the contract and they will remain eligible to apply for future Nurse Corps LRP programs. If you do withdraw you cannot undo your withdrawal after the application deadline. Once the contract becomes effective, the applicant is obligated to provide two years of full-time service at the CSF or school of nursing identified in the application.

Step four is application review. Applications submitted for the program will not be reviewed by the Nurse Corps until after February 28, 2013.

Information from other sources will be used to determine eligibility. They include the applicant's credit report and information in the National Practitioner Data Bank and Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank.

Data collected in the online application will provide an initial ranking of applications for purposes of the funding preference tiers. The NURSE Corps applies funding preferences to determine the sequential order in which qualified applicants will be considered for an award. The funding preference given to applicants with greatest financial need, defined as the debt ratio of the applicant is 20% or greater. Applicants will then be grouped into funding preference tiers, starting with the first tier and awards will be made in the order of decreasing debt ratios until the funds are expended.

Application review: Here is a brief list of the funding preferences for nurses and nurse faculty. A more extensive list is on pages 11 through 12 of your program guidance. Step five is selection for awards. Once the application has been recommended for approval, you will receive a confirmation of interest. Please respond to the confirmation of interest as soon as possible. If not, you may run the risk of forfeiting your award. The confirmation of interest will require the applicants to confirm that the amounts are correct. They will sign a contract with their signature and there will also submit banking information of their designated financial institution. Applicants will be found ineligible if they are no longer working at the site that they stated when applied.

Step five continued: Contracts of the NURSE Corps LRPrecipients will be countersigned by the secretary. They will receive a award letter, a copy of the contract, a .payment authorization worksheet and a welcome packet.

Reasons for denials include applications having a judgement lien arising from Federal debt and applicants having an existing service obligation. A detailed list is on page 6 of the program guidance. Some ineligible sites include applicants working in a private practice office or assisted living facility . This list is also available on page 10 of your program guidance. Next Christina will talk about everything that you need to know as a Nurse Corps LRP participant.

Thank you Kamu. So you have gone through the five steps to award and you have been awarded. Congratulations. Now we will take you through some things that you need to know as a participant.

First off, the money. Our payments are made monthly and sent electronically directly into your bank account. The first deposit will be sent the month following the start date of your contract. So if you are awarded in September, your first payment will go out in October.

You will be required every six months to submit the in service verification in the portal. This form is just to make sure that you are in compliance with your contract. Keep in mind that it is both your responsibility as well as your facility's responsibility to get this in. Failure to complete the ISV may lead to a stop of payments and also a recommendation for default.

We understand that it may not be possible to stay at your initial site for the entire 2 year contract, therefore we do allow you to transfer if necessary. But please contact us first. We do have to approve your transfer.

Keep in mind also that you can only transfer after you have been awarded a contract. If you transfer during the application process, and that is before we countersign the contract, then that will make you ineligible.

Now during your contract, if you leave your approved service site without actually notifying us prior to leaving, you could end up in with a suspension of payments and possibly a recommendation for default, which I'll go into later.

You can only transfer to a facility that falls into your awarded funding tier. Keep in mind that nurse faculty cannot transfer to a CSF to work as an RN or vice versa. If you start as nurse faculty then you need to finish your contract as nurse faculty.

Next is the continuation awards: You finished your 2 year contract and you want to continue your service and get a little extra money from us. You can do that. We have an optional third year available to you. To be eligible, you have to be in compliance with your two-year contract as well as maintain all of the same information.

In exchange for the one year of service, we will give an additional 25% of your original verified loan balance to be put towards your nursing education loans. To be eligible you need to submit an application for the third year, no later than 30 days prior to the end of your second service year or no later than June 30, 2013, whichever is sooner. For example if your contract ends on May 20, then you should apply no later than April 20.

Breaching Contract is the failure to complete any service obligation, which may result in a recommendation for default, which basically means that you will have to pay back all of the money that we sent you, plus interest at a maximum legal prevailing rate. And it may disqualify you from any future awards from us as well as some other federal programs.

All money is due to the government within three years.

Suspensions: You can apply for a suspension to temporarily relieve yourself of any contract responsibilities. For example if you have maternity leave or paternity leave or a leave of absence for some reason. Also we do have waivers which permanently release the participant of all or part of the NURSE Corps loan repayment obligations, but these are not very common.

Things to remember during your application. Please start the application process early. Keep in mind the deadline is February 20, 2013 and the application can take some time, especially the employment verification if your facility doesn't realize that they should to respond quickly.

Read the application guidance. It is our manual for everything so if you know it, then you should be good.

Collect all of your required documents prior to starting the application. This includes the loan documents and transcripts and make sure that your facility point of contact knows about the Employment verification.

Make sure that all the data submitted on the online application matches the uploaded required documents.

Do not transfer during the application process. If you do, it will make you ineligible.

Also do not consolidate your loans during the application process, this will make those loans ineligible.

Finally please understand the deadline to withdraw.

On the next slide, I have a few things that could help you during your application. Of course if you have any questions, feel free to call the call center. They are open from 8 to 8 EST, Monday through Friday, except for holidays. You can also email them at GetHelp@hrsa.gov. The phone line is there.

Now on the next slide, you will see our website where you can find the application as well as more information. Here are the links for more information about HPSAs. If you need to find out if your site is eligible, you can look it up there as well.

As for questions we are going to be holding a question and answer session on February 13, 2013. Keep an eye out for more information on that. Thank you for joining us and good luck with your application.