



April, 2014
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Welcome to the Montana Primary Care Office (MT-PCO) News

NHSC Scholarship Application is Open Apply by May 15, 7:30pm ET

The National Health Services Corps (NHSC) scholarship application cycle is now open for submission. Service to the NHSC begins upon graduation. You can apply to the scholarship program if you are committed to primary care and accepted to or enrolled in a fully accredited training program for:

- Physicians (MD or DO)
- Dentists
- Nurse Practitioners
- Certified Nurse-Midwives
- Physician Assistants

The scholarship pays tuition, fees, other educational costs, and provides a living stipend. Upon graduation, scholars must commit to work at least 2 years at an approved outpatient facility in a medically underserved community.

The scholarship can be awarded for up to 4 years. With each year (or partial year) of support beyond the first year, the student agrees to provide one additional year of service, with a maximum of four years (and completion of primary care residency training for doctors and dentists). The NHSC helps scholars find a practice site that's right

for them among the hundreds of NHSC-approved sites in medically underserved urban, rural and frontier communities across the United States. When in service, scholars earn a market-rate salary, paid by the employing facility. Learn more about the service commitment: [What You Need to Know: Health Professional Shortage Areas and Your Practice Site.](#)

NHSC Site Applications Open for Submission April 15th, 2014

On April 15th 2014, the NHSC will open the site application portal for sites to apply to become a NHSC approved site. NHSC site applications can be completed at: <http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/sites/index.html>

Find Jobs at NHSC Sites

Search for primary care job openings and information on NHSC sites. The NHSC Jobs Center currently uses HPSA data as of January 1, 2014, which are the official data for NHSC programs. <http://nhscjobs.hrsa.gov/external/search/index.seam>

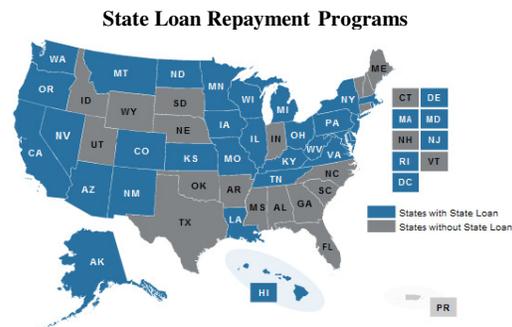
Montana State Loan Repayment Program

MT PCO is currently in the process of submitting a five year grant to the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) for the State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP) program. Currently, MT is one of thirty two states that have NHSC state loan repayment programs. Montana's program differs from the National Health Service Corps program in three ways:

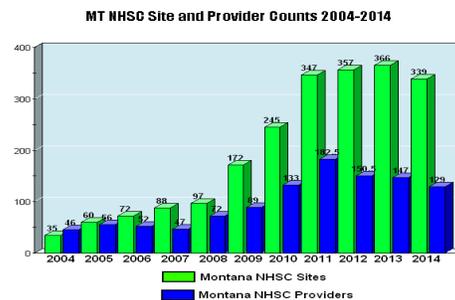
- 1. Focused health provider population** - Montana's program is designed to target providers unable to secure NHSC funding in rural and frontier areas that have HPSA scores that are too low to be funded with the NHSC loan repayment program annually. SLRP will be prioritized for primary care providers, mental health providers and dental providers.
- 2. Lower loan repayment levels** – Due to limited state match available, Montana's SLRP averages \$30,000 of loan repayment for two years with an optional third year. Lower support levels are intended to encourage those with larger loans to pursue the federal program first.
- 3. Practice allowed in NHSC approved sites regardless of HPSA score** – Montana's program requires that funded providers work in NHSC approved practice sites. The federal program makes awards based on the assigned HPSA scores. Montana's program will target providers practicing in underserved areas regardless of the score. Providers willing to practice in NHSC approved sites and accept the lower than federal reimbursement amount will benefit from the state program.

The MT PCO and Area Health Education Center (AHEC) continue to receive requests from facilities and providers seeking loan repayment or other support. The MT SLRP turned away 22 providers that it was unable to fund between 2011 and 2014.

The MT SLRP currently has 15 providers working in the program and anticipates increasing up to 30 starting in 2016 if funding is available.



Current NHSC Statistics for Montana



As of April 1, 2014 Montana had 339 approved NHSC sites across the state with 129 loan repayers and scholars working in Montana.

Shortage Designations

The MT PCO has started a new five year grant cycle with the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) on April 1, 2014. This new cycle brings many changes to the shortage designation process. As a result, the MT PCO will not be able to submit new designations until January 2015. Additional information regarding changes to the shortage designation process will be forthcoming in future issues.

Health Professional Shortage Areas-

All 56 counties in Montana have one or more federally designated Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). Eligibility for resources from at least 37 federal programs is dependent on shortage designations, including the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) 10% bonus payments for providers working in geographic HPSA's.

Current Number of Shortage Designations in MT April, 2014

Health Professional Shortage Areas by Discipline



Montana J-1 Visa Waiver Guidelines Update of Status

Montana has 26 of the 30 J-1 slots available for qualified applicants through September 30, 2014. J-1 slots are for eligible foreign medical school graduates. Information on how to apply can be found at:

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/primarycare/>

PCO Contact Information

As always, if you need additional information about the NHSC, shortage designations, or how to apply for a J-1 slot, contact the Primary Care Office staff at the address or telephone numbers listed below:



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This newsletter is intended to communicate information to CHCs, RHCs, NHSC sites and other partners regarding shortage designation activities, NHSC, and J-1 activities and other matters of interest to partners. We welcome your input and recommendations regarding content.

