NURSE Corps
Loan Repayment Program

Fiscal Year 2016
Continuation Contract
Application and Program Guidance

August 2015

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Health Resources and Services Administration
Bureau of Health Workforce
Division of Health Careers and Financial Support
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 9C-14
Rockville, Maryland 20857

For Questions, please call 1-800-221-9393 (TTY: 1-877-897-9910), Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays) 8:00 am to 8:00 pm EST, or email GetHelp@hrsa.gov.

Access to Program Portal: https://programportal.hrsa.gov

Authority: Section 846(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 United States Code 297(n)(a)), as amended. Future changes in the governing statute, implementing regulations and Program Guidances may also be applicable to your participation in the NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program.
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Privacy Act Notification

Statutory Authority
Section 846(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 United States Code 297(n)(a)), as amended.

Purposes and Uses
The purpose of the NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program (NURSE Corps LRP) is to assist in the recruitment and retention of professional Registered Nurses (RNs), including advanced practice RNs, dedicated to working at eligible health care facilities with a critical shortage of nurses or serving as nurse faculty (NF) in eligible schools of nursing. The aim of the NURSE Corps LRP is to decrease the economic barriers associated with pursuing careers at such critical shortage facilities (CSFs) or in academic nursing. The information applicants provide will be used to evaluate their eligibility to participate in the NURSE Corps LRP. Additional information from other sources will also be considered (e.g., credit bureau reports, National Practitioner Data Bank).

An individual’s NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract, application, supporting documents, correspondence and related data are maintained in a system of records to be used within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to monitor NURSE Corps LRP activities. The information may also be disclosed outside the Department, as permitted by the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act, to the Congress, the National Archives, the Government Accountability Office, and pursuant to court order and various routine uses (see http://www.hrsa.gov/about/privacyact/09150037.html).

Effects of Nondisclosure
Disclosure of the information sought is voluntary; however, if not submitted, an application will be considered incomplete, and therefore will not be considered for an award under this announcement.

Paperwork Reduction Act Public Burden Statement
An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a current OMB control number. The current OMB control number for information collected through this application process is 0915-0140 and expires on 4/30/2017. Public reporting burden for this collection is estimated to average 2.2 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, 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 Office, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 10C-03, Rockville, Maryland 20857.

Discrimination Prohibited
In accordance with applicable Federal laws and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 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.
Program Highlights

- The NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract offers participants, who have completed their initial two-year service obligation, an opportunity for a third optional year of service in exchange for an additional 25 percent of their original qualifying educational loan balance. The qualifying loans are listed on the Participant Award Worksheet (PAW) that participants received with their initial Award Notice. Participants cannot add any new loans when they apply for a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract.

- The NURSE Corps LRP payments received after federal tax withholding under the initial two-year contract must have been applied to reduce the original qualifying educational loan balances, as indicated on the PAW. Failure to apply all NURSE Corps LRP payments to reduce the original qualifying educational loan balances will deem an NCLRP Continuation Contract applicant ineligible.

- To apply for a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract award, a participant must be working full-time at a CSF or an eligible school of nursing (see definitions below, as approved by the NURSE Corp LRP under his or her initial 2-year contract. A pending transfer request may delay the processing of the application for an award.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Shortage Facility (CSF)</th>
<th>A health care facility located in, designated as, or serving a primary medical care or mental health, Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA). The facility must be a public or private nonprofit entity.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligible School of Nursing</td>
<td>An accredited public or private nonprofit collegiate, associate degree or diploma school of nursing in a State that provides educational training to become an RN or advanced practice RN. The educational programs in the school of nursing must be accredited by a national nursing accrediting agency or state approval agency recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. See section 801 of the Public Health Service Act for a full and complete definition of all applicable terms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- If you are eligible to apply for a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract, you will be notified by email via the Program Portal, and will be given access to the application link under the “I Need To…” section of the Program Portal.

- In-Service Verification – Every six months, the NURSE Corps LRP verifies that participants are in compliance with their service obligation. The In-Service Verification (ISV) must be completed by the Point of Contact (POC) at the approved CSF or school of nursing and submitted through the Program Portal. An overdue ISV for service under the initial 2-year contract may affect eligibility for a NURSE Corps Continuation Contract award.
A complete on-line application consists of:

- **Payment History** – Applicants must submit a payment history from their lender/holder for each loan listed on the PAW, which was provided with the initial 2-year NURSE Corps LRP Contract award. The payment history must include the lender’s/holder’s name, account holder’s name and account number and can be obtained on-line from your loan servicer or lender. This document must reflect all payments made since the service start date under the applicant’s initial 2-year contract.

- **Account Statements** – Applicants must submit an account statement that shows the principal and interest of their current loan balances. The account statement must include the applicant’s name, lender’s name, account number, and current balance (principal and interest).

- **Disbursement Report** – Applicant must submit a Disbursement Report to show all the loans that have been obtained. Each loan must have its original loan amount, the original loan date, type of loan, and consolidation dates, if applicable.

- **Employment Verification** – Applicants are required to review and verify their current service site’s name and address and initiate an electronic Employment Verification Form (EVF). The EVF must be completed by an appropriate official (the Point of Contact – “POC”) at the CSF or school of nursing (e.g., the applicant’s immediate supervisor or an authorized agent of the service site’s human resources department). If the POC does not submit a completed EVF, or the EVF is not completed by the appropriate official, the application is considered incomplete and the applicant will not be able to submit the application.

- For further information, please review the “Apply Now” section, Tips & Important Dates on page 17.
Program Overview

This Guidance applies to participants in the NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program who are requesting a 1-year extension of their current 2-year contract.

INTRODUCTION

**What is the NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program (LRP)?**
The United States continues to experience a nursing shortage that is expected to increase given the aging demographic of the U.S. population and a growing need for health care. Further compounding this problem, U.S. schools of nursing cannot adequately expand enrollment levels due to a shortage of nurse faculty. NURSE Corps LRP assists in addressing these issues.

The NURSE Corps LRP is administered by the Bureau of Health Workforce in the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The purpose of the NURSE Corps LRP is to assist in the recruitment and retention of professional registered nurses (RNs), including advanced practice RNs (i.e., nurse practitioners, certified registered nurse anesthetists, certified nurse midwives, clinical nurse specialists), dedicated to working at health care facilities with a critical shortage of nurses (i.e., a Critical Shortage Facility (CSF)), or working as nurse faculty in an eligible school of nursing, by decreasing the financial barriers associated with pursuing a nursing profession. The program offers these RNs substantial financial assistance to repay a portion of their qualifying educational loans in exchange for full-time service at either a CSF or at an eligible school of nursing in the case of nurse faculty.

**What is a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract?**
The NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract offers NURSE Corps LRP participants who have successfully completed service under their initial two-year contract an opportunity to provide a third optional year of service. In exchange for a third year of service, the Nurse Corps LRP will pay an additional 25 percent of the participant’s original qualifying educational loan balance. NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contracts are subject to the availability of funds. The eligible loans are listed on the Participant Award Worksheet (PAW). Participants cannot add new loans when applying for a Nurse Corps LRP Continuation Contract.

Under a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract, participants must continue to provide service in the same capacity as agreed upon in their initial two-year contract. Please note that participants applying for a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract cannot request to switch to the other service option. If a participant is serving under an initial two-year contract as an RN at a CSF, the individual cannot switch or request to serve as nurse faculty in an eligible school of nursing. Similarly, participants who are serving under their initial two-year contract as nurse faculty in an eligible school of nursing cannot seek a NURSE Corps Continuation Contract to serve as an RN or advanced practice RN at a CSF.

A participant who enters into a one-year NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract but fails to begin or complete the service obligation is liable to repay all the NURSE Corps LRP payments received for the third year of service (including the amounts withheld for Federal taxes), plus interest at the maximum legal prevailing rate from the date of the participant’s breach. Breach of contract will permanently disqualify the individual from receiving future awards under the NURSE Corps LRP and
some other Federal programs.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS and APPLICATION PROCESS

NURSE Corps LRP will notify participants via email no less than 45 days prior to the end of their second service year if they are eligible to apply for a one-year NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract. These participants will have access to the application link under the “I Need To...” section of the Program Portal to apply and submit an application.

What are the eligibility requirements for a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract?

To be eligible for a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract, all of the following conditions must be met:

(1) A participant must be serving in a full-time capacity at the CSF or eligible school of nursing, approved by the NCLRP under the initial 2-year contract.

If the participant’s site is no longer eligible (e.g., facility does not have a HPSA designation, facility changed to a for-profit status), a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract will not be awarded. If a participant wants to continue in the NURSE Corps LRP, the individual must request and receive prior approval to transfer to another eligible facility or eligible accredited school of nursing prior to applying for a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract. Please note that moving expenses will not be paid.

(2) All participants must have a current full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted license to practice as an RN in the State in which they are employed or be authorized to practice in the State pursuant to the Nurse Licensure Compact. All participants must retain such license during their one-year NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract service obligation period;

(3) The NURSE Corps LRP payments received after federal tax withholding under the NURSE Corps LRP two-year contract must have been applied to reduce the original qualifying educational loan balances. These loans are listed on the PAW received by participants with their initial award notice. All loan balances will be verified against the participant’s submitted payment history to ensure that funds received were used to pay qualifying educational loans. If a participant does not apply all NURSE Corps LRP payments to reduce the original qualifying nursing education loan balances, the request for a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract will be denied.

(4) A participant must not have an existing service obligation other than to the NURSE Corps LRP, including any obligations for state-sponsored loan repayment programs (there is an exception for members of a reserve component of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard);

(5) A participant must continue to meet all other program eligibility criteria, must be in full compliance with the existing NURSE Corps LRP service obligation, and must be planning to work for the duration of the NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract at the same approved CSF or eligible school of nursing; and

(6) A participant must not have defaulted on any Federal payment obligations (e.g., Health Education Assistance Loans, Nursing Student Loans, FHA Loans, Federal...
income tax liabilities, etc.) or non-Federal payment obligations (e.g., court-ordered child support payments, mortgage payments, etc.).

The NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract will not be effective until (1) it has been signed by the participant and countersigned by the Secretary’s designee, (2) the participant has completed service under the initial two-year contract, and (3) unless all NURSE Corps LRP payments received under the initial contract have been applied to reduce the qualifying educational loan balances, prior to the completion of service under that contract. The NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract service period must begin immediately following the completion of the initial service commitment. If, after submitting an application and signing the Continuation Contract, an applicant is unable to commence service under the Contract, the individual must submit a request to the NURSE Corps LRP via the Program Portal to withdraw the application for a continuation award. All requests to withdraw an application from consideration for an award must be made before the NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract is countersigned by the Secretary’s designee.

**Does my site qualify for the NURSE Corps LRP?**
An FY 2016 NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract participant is required to continue working at a CSF or at an eligible school of nursing in the same funding preference tier as that within which the participant was initially awarded, or higher. The facility or eligible school of nursing must be a public or private nonprofit entity.

Critical Shortage Facilities include:

a. **Critical Access Hospital (CAH).** A facility certified by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) under section 1820 of the Social Security Act. In general, a CAH must be located in a rural area in a state that has a Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program, maintain no more than 25 inpatient beds and an average annual length of stay of 96 hours or less, furnish 24-hour emergency care services 7 days a week, and be located either more than a 35-mile drive from the nearest hospital or CAH, or more than a 15-mile drive in areas with mountainous terrain or only secondary roads.” For more information, please visit: [http://www.hrsa.gov/healthit/toolbox/RuralHealthITtoolbox/Introduction/critical.html](http://www.hrsa.gov/healthit/toolbox/RuralHealthITtoolbox/Introduction/critical.html).

b. **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 services are included under this definition. For more information, please visit: [http://www.hrsa.gov/opa/eligibilityandregistration/hospitals/disproportionatessharehospitals/index.html](http://www.hrsa.gov/opa/eligibilityandregistration/hospitals/disproportionatessharehospitals/index.html).

c. **Public Hospital.** Any hospital that is owned by a government (Federal, State, or Local), receives government funding, and is 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 services are included under this definition.
d. **Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC).** FQHCs include: (1) nonprofit entities that receive a grant, or funding from a grant, under section 330 of the Public Health Service Act to provide primary health services and other related services to a population that is medically underserved; (2) FQHC “Look-Alikes” which are nonprofit entities that are certified by the Secretary of HHS as meeting the requirements for receiving a grant under section 330 of the Public Health Service Act but are not grantees; 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. For more information, please visit: [http://www.hrsa.gov/healthit/toolbox/RuralHealthITtoolbox/Introduction/qualified.html](http://www.hrsa.gov/healthit/toolbox/RuralHealthITtoolbox/Introduction/qualified.html)

e. **Indian Health Service (IHS) Health Center.** A health care facility (whether operated directly by the Indian Health Service or by a tribe or tribal organization, contractor or grantee under the Indian Self-Determination Act, as described in 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 136, Subparts C and H, or by an urban Indian organization receiving funds under Title V of the Indian Heath Care Improvement Act) that is physically separated from a hospital, and which provides clinical treatment services on an outpatient basis to persons of Indian or Alaskan Native descent as described in 42 CFR Section 136.12. For more information and to locate an IHS health center, please visit: [http://www.ihs.gov](http://www.ihs.gov).

f. **Native Hawaiian Health Center.** An entity as defined in 42 U.S.C. § 11711(4): (a) which is organized under the laws of the State of Hawaii; (b) which provides or arranges for health care services through practitioners licensed by the State of Hawaii, where licensure requirements are applicable; (c) which is a public or nonprofit private entity; and (d) in which Native Hawaiian health practitioners significantly participate in the planning, management, monitoring, and evaluation of health services. For more information, please see the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act of 1992, as amended, and [http://www.hrsa.gov/opa/eligibilityandregistration/healthcenters/nativehawaiian/index.html](http://www.hrsa.gov/opa/eligibilityandregistration/healthcenters/nativehawaiian/index.html)

g. **Rural Health Clinic (RHC).** An entity that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services 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. For more information, please visit: [http://www.hrsa.gov/healthit/toolbox/RuralHealthITtoolbox/Introduction/ruralclinics.html](http://www.hrsa.gov/healthit/toolbox/RuralHealthITtoolbox/Introduction/ruralclinics.html)

h. **Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF).** An institution (or a 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. For more information, please visit: [http://www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov).
Ineligible facilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Free-standing clinics that do not qualify as a facility above;
2. Renal dialysis centers;
3. Private practice offices;
4. Assisted living facilities;
5. Clinics in prisons and correctional facilities; and
6. Private for-profit facilities.

What should I expect if I am selected to receive a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract?
If the participant’s NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract application is approved, the participant will be notified by email via the Program Portal. Therefore, it is critical that participants maintain a current email address, check email for correspondence, disable SPAM blockers, and check SPAM folders.

If a participant is selected for a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract the individual’s signed continuation contract is countersigned by the Secretary of HHS or his/her designee. Please note that the service start date does not begin and service credit does not accrue until the participant has completed the initial two-year service commitment under the initial NURSE Corps LRP contract, including any additional time in excess of the allowable 7 weeks (35 workdays) of leave per service year. If a participant’s NURSE Corps-approved absences exceed the amount of allowable leave during the initial two-year service commitment the service end date under the initial contract will be extended, and scheduled payments may be adjusted accordingly. (See “May I be absent from my site and receive service credit?” on page 12.)

Award payments are made monthly, over 12 months, through an electronic funds transfer to the participant’s checking or savings account, as identified on the banking information submitted by the participant. Please check and update your banking information in the Program Portal. The first direct deposit is made within 60 days after the service start date.

Participants must use the NURSE Corps LRP payments to pay the lenders or holders of their qualifying educational loans, as indicated on the PAW that was provided with the initial Award Notice. The NURSE Corps LRP may contact a participant’s lenders or holders to verify that award payments have been applied to the NURSE Corps LRP approved loans.

Participants can update the following NURSE Corps LRP program information via the Program Portal: name, mailing address, email address, and financial institution (bank) information. Participants must also notify the NURSE Corps LRP of any changes in their service site or employment status. If a transfer is needed, a participant may submit a transfer request. In the case of a name change, participants must submit legal documentation, such as a copy of a marriage certificate.

If for any reason a participant does not receive a scheduled payment, please contact the NURSE Corps LRP as soon as possible through the Program Portal or Customer Service at 1-800-221-9393. If the NURSE Corps LRP has any questions concerning a participant’s eligibility for continuing payments, the NURSE Corps LRP will delay payments pending clarification of the participant’s eligibility status.

SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

What are the service requirements?

For nurse faculty serving at an eligible school of nursing: Nurse faculty must provide full-time service in the eligible school of nursing for a period of one year beginning on the day following completion of service under the initial NURSE Corps LRP Contract. Full-time service is working full-time (as defined by the employer) as a nurse faculty member for a minimum of 9 months per service year. No more than 7 weeks (35 workdays) of the participant’s scheduled work period (9 to 12 months) per
service year may be spent away from the eligible school of nursing for vacation, holidays, continuing education, illness, parental (maternity/paternity/adoption) leave, or for any other reason. Periods of approved suspension will extend a participant’s NURSE Corps LRP service obligation end date (see Suspension & Waiver, page 15).

Nurse faculty members are encouraged to promote health care careers in underserved areas. This can be done via presentations to students, student organizations or other community based organizations to provide information about nursing and other health care professions.

(2) For RNs, including advanced practice RNs such as NPs, serving at a CSF: RNs must provide full-time service at the CSF for a period of one year, beginning the day following completion of service at the initial NURSE Corps LRP Contract. Full-time service is defined as working as an RN for at least 32 hours per week during the service year. No more than 7 weeks (35 workdays) per service year may be spent away from the CSF for vacation, holidays, continuing education, illness, parental (maternity/paternity/adoption) leave, or for any other reason. Periods of approved suspension will extend a participant’s NURSE Corps LRP service obligation end date (see Suspension & Waiver, page 15).

For all NURSE Corps LRP participants, the following rules apply:

(1) Participants must retain a current full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted license to practice as an RN in the State in which you are employed or be authorized to practice in the State pursuant to the Nurse Licensure Compact and retain it during the one-year service obligation. Retention of licensure is required for participants to continue to receive service credit under the NURSE Corps LRP. Please refer to the Nurse Licensure Compact state listing at http://www.ncsbn.org/nlc.htm.

(2) If a participant 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.

Will I earn a salary during my service obligation?
NURSE Corps LRP participants will receive salary and benefits from the employing entity (i.e., CSF, school of nursing, professional group). Employment compensation packages may be negotiated between the nurse and the employer. The employing entity cannot guarantee a NURSE Corps LRP award. Therefore, the NURSE Corps LRP loan repayments should not be a part of the salary negotiations between the nurse and the employer.

May I be absent from my site and receive service credit?
No more than 7 weeks (35 workdays) per service year may be spent away from the facility or eligible school of nursing for vacation, holidays, continuing education, illness, parental (maternity/paternity/adoption) leave, or any other reason. NURSE Corps LRP-approved absences totaling greater than 7 weeks (35 workdays) in a service year require an extension of the contract end date.
**In-Service Verification (ISV)**

The NURSE Corps LRP verifies every six months that participants are meeting program requirements and fulfilling their service obligation. The In-Service Verification (ISV) is completed by both the participant and the appropriate official (the Point of Contact—“POC”) at the CSF or school of nursing through the Program Portal. By completing and signing the verification, the participant and the POC are certifying the participant’s compliance or noncompliance with the full-time service requirements during the identified period. 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. Please be aware that an ISV is different from an Employment Verification Form (EVF), and they both must be completed by an authorized official and submitted via the Program Portal.

Participants and their service site must complete the ISV within 30 days of notification that the service verification is due and submit it through the Program Portal. An overdue ISV may jeopardize receiving service credit, having payments stopped, and being recommended for default. An overdue ISV may also impact eligibility for a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract.

Please note: Advanced practice RNs (NPs, CRNAs, CNMs, CNSs) employed by a professional group must have the ISV completed by the POC at the CSF, not by the professional group.

**CHANGING JOBS**

**What steps do I need to take if I want to transfer to a different Critical Shortage Facility or eligible school of nursing prior to completing my service obligation?**

NURSE Corps LRP expects that participants will fulfill their service obligation at the initial CSF or eligible school of nursing. The NURSE Corps LRP understands that due to unforeseen circumstances, a participant may 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 CSF or eligible school of nursing, the participant should contact the NURSE Corps LRP immediately through the Program Portal or Customer Service at (1-800-221-9393). If a participant leaves the service site without prior approval of the NURSE Corps LRP, the individual may be placed in default.

**How do I request a transfer to another facility or eligible school of nursing?**

If a participant needs to transfer to another site, the participant must request a transfer through the Program Portal. The request must include: (a) the reason for the transfer; and (b) documentation from the prospective site verifying that it is an eligible CSF or eligible school of nursing. If the CSF or school of nursing is private for-profit, the transfer request will not be approved. Please note that a pending transfer request may delay the processing of a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract application.

Participants will receive an official decision from the NURSE Corps LRP through the Program Portal regarding the approval or denial of a transfer request. Leaving the approved service site without prior NURSE Corps LRP approval will result in immediate suspension of payments until the NURSE
Corps LRP: (a) receives a request to transfer from the participant through the Program Portal and (b) approves the participant’s transfer request.

Additional Transfer Requirements:

1. Participants who sign a Contract to serve as an RN at a CSF must transfer to another CSF that falls in the same funding preference tier that they were initially awarded in, or higher. For example, if a participant was awarded while working at a Critical Access Hospital with a Primary Care HPSA Score of 14 (Tier 1), the participant must transfer to a facility in Tier 1 with a HPSA score of 14 or above.

2. 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 falls in the same funding preference tier that the participant was initially awarded in, or higher. For example, if a participant was awarded in Tier 1 while employed at a school with at least 50% of the students from a disadvantaged background, the participant must transfer to another school with at least 50% of the students from a disadvantaged background. The Employment Verification from the new site must indicate the percentage of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

3. If there is a less than a 30-day break in service between the initial/former site and 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 prior CSF or eligible 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 service end date will be extended accordingly and loan repayments will resume.

4. If a participant has a pending transfer request, ceased full-time employment at the initial site, and failed to resume service at an approved CSF or school of nursing within 60 days, the participant will be considered in breach of their contract and may be recommended for default.

BREACHING THE CONTRACT

What if I breach my NURSE Corps LRP Contract?
The NURSE Corps LRP encourages participants to immediately contact the NURSE Corps LRP if a situation arises in which a participant is potentially unable to fulfill the service obligation. A participant who enters into a one-year NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract but fails to begin or complete the service obligation is liable to repay all the NURSE Corps LRP payments received for the third year of service (including the amounts withheld for Federal taxes), plus interest at the maximum legal prevailing rate, from the date of the participant’s breach of the NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract. Breach of the Contract will permanently disqualify the individual from receiving future awards under the NURSE Corps LRP and some other Federal programs.

Any indebtedness owed to the Federal government is due within three years of the participant’s breach of the contract. The debt amount will be 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.
SUSPENSION & WAIVER

What should I do if I feel I cannot continue my service or payment obligation?

The Secretary of Health and Human Services may, under certain circumstances, suspend (put on “hold”) or waive (excuse) the NURSE Corps LRP service or payment obligation. A request for a suspension or waiver must be submitted through the Program Portal. Additional supporting documentation will be required following submission of the request.

1. Suspension. A suspension 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 hardship 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. If the total time away from the site, including the period of suspension, exceeds 7 weeks (35 workdays) per service year (see Service Requirements on page 11), the service obligation end date will be extended accordingly.

   a. Medical or Personal Reasons – A suspension may be granted for up to one year. The participant must provide independent medical documentation of a physical or mental health disability or personal circumstances, including a terminal illness of an immediate family member, that results in the participant’s temporary inability to perform the NURSE Corps LRP obligation. Upon receipt of the suspension request, the NURSE Corps LRP will notify the participant of the instructions for submitting supporting documentation.

   b. Parental (Maternity/Paternity/Adoption) Leave – Participants must notify the NURSE Corps LRP of pending parental leave and provide appropriate documentation. Parental leave of 12 weeks or less will be automatically approved, if properly documented. If the participant’s parental leave will exceed 12 weeks during the service year, a suspension may be granted by the NURSE Corps LRP based on the documented medical need or if additional parental leave time is permitted under State law.

   c. Call to Active Duty in the Armed Forces – Participants who are also military reservists and are called to active duty will be granted a suspension, for up to one year, 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. The suspension will be extended, if the applicable Armed Forces entity continues the period of active duty. The period of active military duty will not be credited towards the NURSE Corps LRP service obligation.

2. Waiver. A waiver permanently relieves the participant of all or part of the NURSE Corps LRP obligation. A waiver will be granted only if the participant demonstrates that compliance with the obligation (a) is permanently impossible, or (b) would involve an extreme hardship such that enforcement of the obligation would be unconscionable. A 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. Please note that waivers are not routinely granted and require a demonstration of compelling circumstances.

**When would my service obligation be cancelled?**
A participant’s obligation will be cancelled only in the unfortunate event of death. No liability will be transferred to the participant’s heirs.
TIPS & IMPORTANT DATES

What should I do before I apply?
Please read the *Application and Program Guidance* in its entirety before proceeding with an application. It explains the contractual obligations of the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the NURSE Corps LRP participants. Please understand that a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract award is an obligation to serve full-time for 1 year at a CSF or eligible school of nursing; and that there are financial consequences for defaulting on the service obligation. Applicants are strongly encouraged to print and retain a copy of this *Application and Program Guidance* for future reference.

When is the application deadline?
The application must be completed with all required documents uploaded to the Program Portal at https://programportal.hrsa.gov by 7:30 pm ET on April 28, 2016.

What materials will I need when I apply?
You will need a complete on-line application that consists of:

1. **NURSE Corps LRP FY 2016 Continuation Contract.** The NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract is not effective until (1) it has been countersigned by the Secretary’s designee, (2) the participant’s initial NURSE Corps LRP 2-year service obligation is fulfilled, and (3) unless the participant has applied all loan repayments received under the initial contract to his or her qualifying educational loan balances prior to completion of service under that contract. Please note: Prior to submission, the participant must certify and electronically sign the continuation application.

2. **Payment History.** Applicants must submit a payment history from their lender(s)/holder(s) for each loan listed on the PAW. The document may be obtained on-line from the loan servicer or lender and must include the applicant’s name, lender’s/holder’s name, and account number. It is critical that the payment history shows all payments made to the lender from the date the participant began service under the initial two-year contract to the date of submission of the application for the NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract. Please note that the NURSE Corps LRP calculates all payments disbursed to verify that funds received under the NURSE Corps LRP are applied to the qualifying educational loans. Receipt of payment documents from the lender may take 30 days or more. Please remember to request payment histories early and ahead of time. Bank statements will not be accepted as a substitute for payment histories.

3. **Account Statements.** Applicants must submit an account statement to show the principal and interest of their current loan balance. The account statement must include the applicant’s name, lender’s name, account number, and current loan balance (principal and interest).

4. **Disbursement Report.** Applicants must submit a disbursement report that shows the approved educational loans listed on the PAW. Each loan must have its original loan amount, the original loan date, type of loan, and consolidation dates, if applicable. For Federal loans, the Aid Summary Report on the National Student
Loan Data System (NSLDS) website, http://www.nslds.ed.gov is considered a disbursement report.

(5) **Employment Verification.** Applicants are required to review and verify their current service site’s name and address and initiate an electronic Employment Verification Form (EVF). The EVF must be completed by an appropriate official (the POC) at the CSF or school of nursing (e.g., the applicant’s immediate supervisor or an authorized agent in the human resources department). If the POC does not submit a completed EVF, or the EVF is not completed by the appropriate official, the application is considered incomplete and the applicant will not be able to submit the application.

**NOTE:** Applicants are strongly encouraged to upload all supporting documents in 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 all documents prior to submission. When uploading documents to your online application, please ensure that each document does not exceed 5MB. Multi-page documents can be uploaded; however, documents with more than one page should be consolidated by scanning, saving into one document, and then uploading. Also, when inputting numbers and dates in the file name, please do not use any special characters such as commas (,), dollar signs ($), spaces ( ), or dashes (-) as this will cause an error in the system.

All decisions regarding FY 2016 NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract applications will be made no later than September 30th, 2016. Please note that if you receive a NURSE Corps LRP Continuation Contract that has been countersigned by the Secretary’s designee, it will not be effective until you have completed the 2-year service commitment under your initial NURSE Corps LRP contract, and unless you have applied all NURSE Corps LRP payments received under your initial two-year contract to reduce your original qualifying educational loan balances, prior to the completion of service under your initial Contract.