



Indian Health Service Press Release

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IHS Scholarship, Loan Repayment Programs Aim to Recruit More Health Care Providers

The Indian Health Service (IHS) today announced the opening of the application period for its 2017 scholarship and loan repayment programs with several important improvements that will maximize the long-term workforce development impact of these valuable recruitment tools at eligible Indian health programs.

An estimated \$13.7 million will be available for scholarships and \$30 million will be available for loan repayments this application round. [New scholarship applications](#) are due on March 28, 2017. [Current scholarship recipients interested in extending their awards](#) must apply by February 28, 2017. [Loan repayment applicants](#) must apply by August 15, 2017 and applications are evaluated monthly beginning in January or as soon as funds become available.

IHS is refocusing both programs on the most-needed disciplines in Indian health programs units such as physicians, physician assistants/nurse practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, behavioral health providers and optometrists, and eliminating disciplines that do not address key vacancies at these facilities. As a result, an increase of 60 additional awards in the most needed disciplines is anticipated for a total of 200 new scholarships awarded. IHS is also increasing the number of graduate scholarships that require service in Indian health programs and reducing the number of preparatory scholarships that do not require any service.

“The IHS Scholarship and Loan Repayment programs are two of our best recruitment and retention tools to increase the number of healthcare providers serving Indian Health Programs. We’re re-aligning the program based on current needs to best serve our patients and to address key vacancies in Indian health programs,” said IHS Principal Deputy Director Mary L. Smith. “Rural areas are faced with a shortage of doctors and nurses. These programs help make IHS more competitive in attracting talented and qualified health care providers to work in Indian health facilities.”

The [IHS Scholarship Program](#) provides qualified American Indian and Alaska Native health professions students the opportunity to establish an educational foundation for a career in health care and serve medically underserved Indian health programs throughout the country.

Since IHS began providing scholarships in 1978, nearly 7,000 students have received awards. [The Loan Repayment Program](#) awards repayment of up to \$40,000 for qualified health profession education loans to clinicians. Opportunities are based on Indian Health Program facilities with the greatest staffing needs in specific health profession disciplines.

In the past year, IHS has used new recruitment incentives, expanded pay scales, and increased the availability of relocation incentives to recruit qualified staff. IHS also [increased the number of facilities that are eligible placement sites for National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment and Scholarship Program participants](#).

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The IHS, an agency in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 2.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives. For more information, visit <http://www.ihs.gov>. Follow IHS on [Facebook](#).