

SERVICE COMMITMENT HANDBOOK



2018 - 2019



Your Health Career Starts Here





OUR MISSION

To raise the physical, mental, social and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.

OUR GOAL

To ensure that comprehensive, culturally acceptable personal and public health services are available and accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native people.

OUR FOUNDATION

To uphold the federal government's obligation to promote healthy American Indian and Alaska Native people, communities and cultures and to honor and protect the inherent sovereign rights of Tribes.

Discrimination Prohibited

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states: "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination, under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations (45 Code of Federal Regulations, part 86) provide that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, provides that no otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Privacy Act Notice

General

This information is provided pursuant to the Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law [P.L.] 93-579), December 31, 1974, for individuals supplying information for inclusion in a system of records.

Authority

Sections 751–757 of the Public Health Service Act and Sections 103 and 104 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA; P.L. 94-437), as amended by the Indian Health Care Amendments of 1988, 1992, 1996 and 2010 (P.L. 100-713, P.L. 102-573, P.L. 704-313 and P.L. 111-148).

Purposes and Uses

In September of 1976, the Congress and the President of the United States enacted the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA; [P.L. 94-437]), which declared that "it is the policy of this Nation, in fulfillment of its special responsibilities and legal obligation to the American Indian people, to meet the national goal of providing the highest possible health status to Indians and to provide existing Indian health services with all resources necessary to effect that policy."

In 1978, the Indian Health Service awarded its first scholarship, laying the educational foundation for American Indian and Alaska Native students to train as health professionals serving within Indian health communities. Today, the IHS Scholarship Program has grown to support, educate and place health care professionals within medically underserved Indian health programs throughout the continental United States and Alaska.

You are on the verge of an important stepping-stone in your career as a health professional. You've completed your educational requirements and the next crucial step is to fulfill your service commitment. This next phase of your career plan will afford you an opportunity to practice alongside a team of dedicated clinicians like yourself, serve a medically underserved patient population and learn firsthand how you can make a difference as a health care professional.

The task ahead is not as daunting as you may believe. We've developed this handbook to guide you through the process of completing your post-graduate training and fulfilling your service commitment. Use it to help your commitment go as smoothly as possible.

Within these pages, you will find information about your final year of academic training, post-graduate clinical training and your responsibilities in fulfilling your service commitment. In addition, we've included information about the cultural and geographic aspects of an Indian health career to assist you in determining your eventual destination.

Your future as an Indian health leader is fast approaching. Take this time to identify the right path for your health care career while becoming a vital part of an appreciative community and connecting with a vibrant culture.

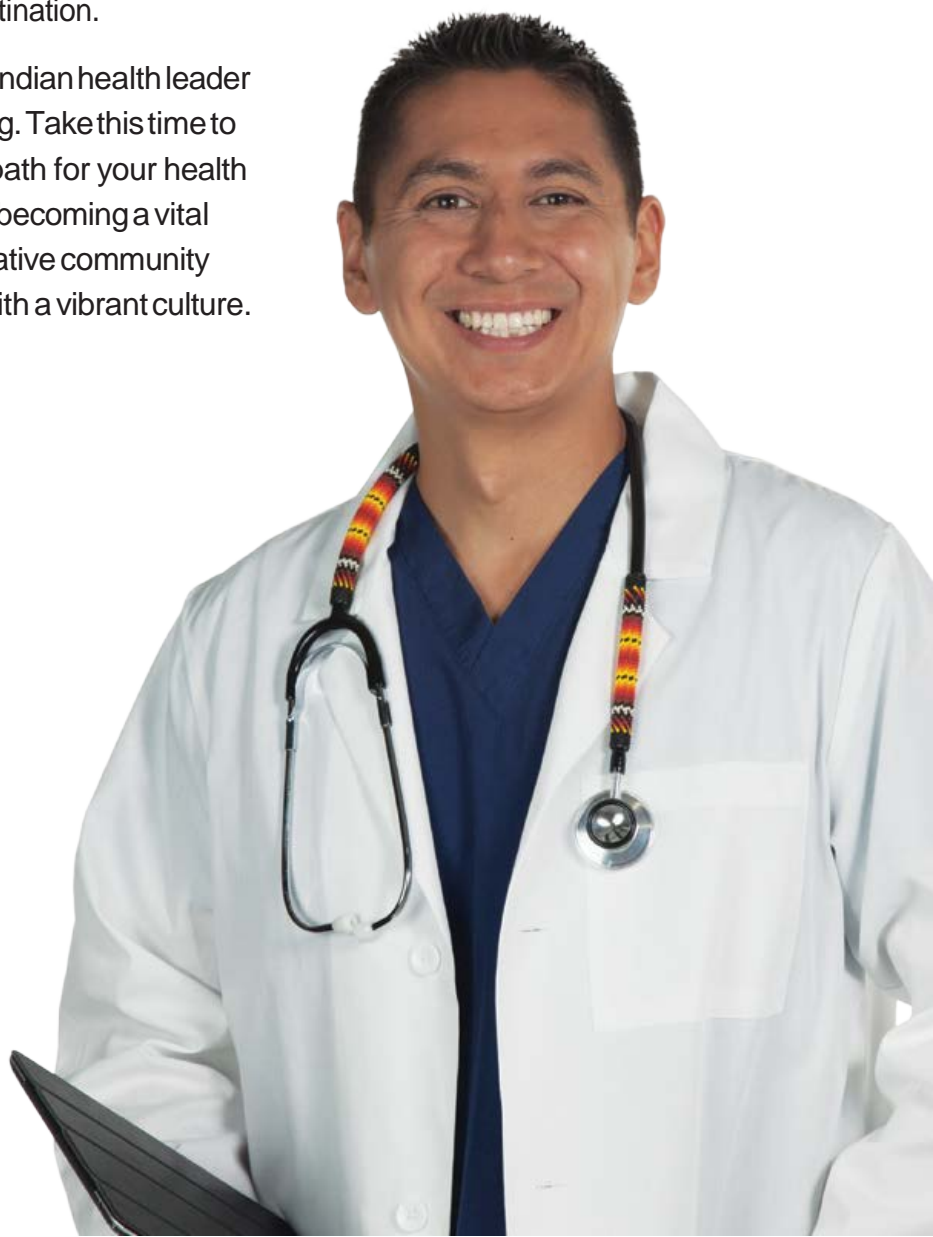


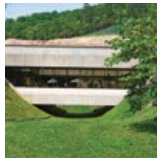
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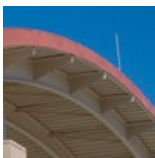
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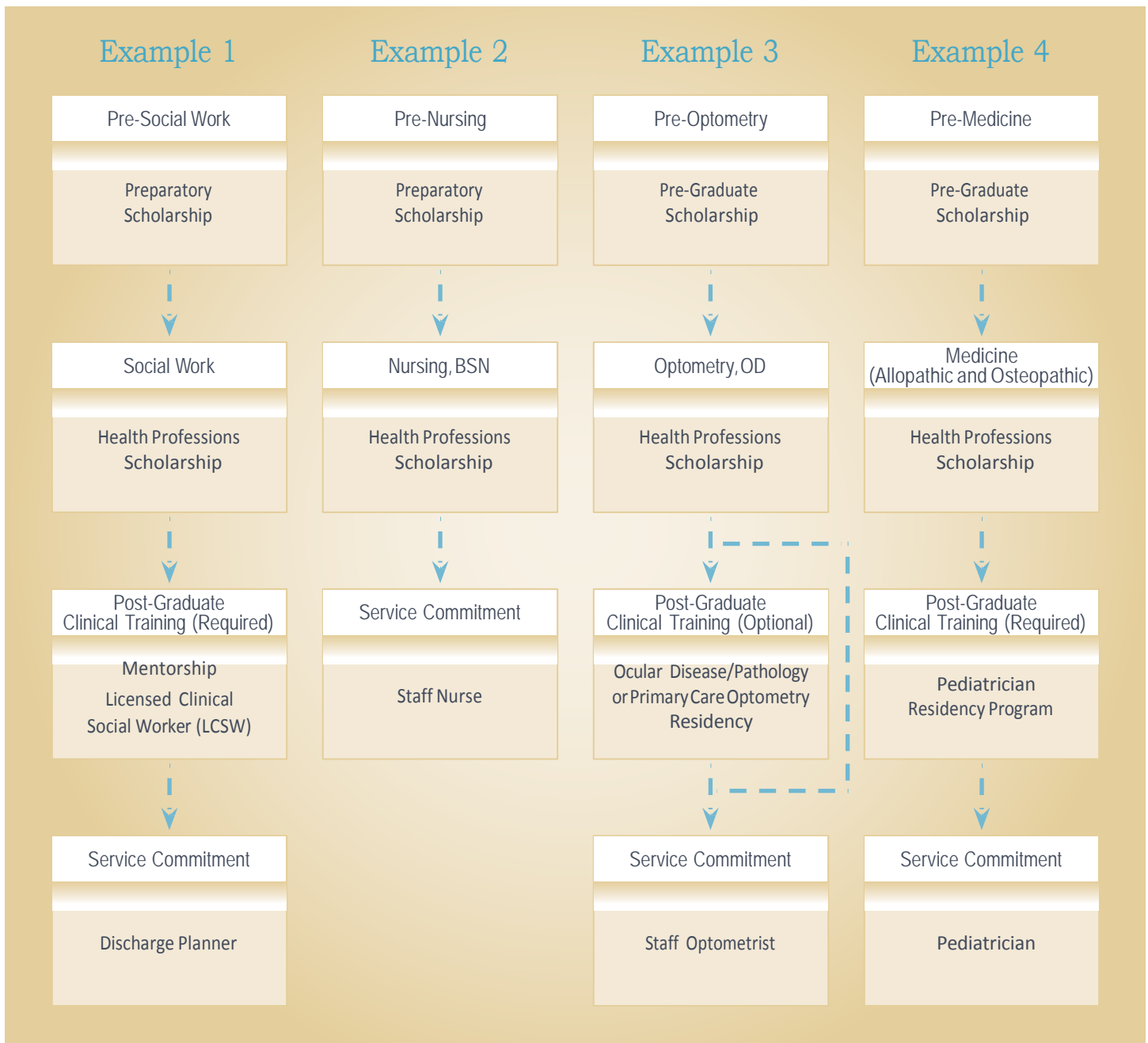
Introduction





Determine Your Ideal Career Path

You have the opportunity to choose the scholarship that best matches your academic pursuits. Whether you're an undergraduate just beginning your academic career or a graduate student preparing to enter the workforce, the IHS Scholarship Program offers a number of options where you can begin your journey to a career in Indian health. The chart below shows four examples detailing how to advance from "scholarship recipient" to a licensed or certified health professional at an Indian health facility.





Find Your Preferred Location

The Indian Health Service is divided into 12 physical Areas of the United States. Although some of the 12 Areas include urban facilities, most sites are in rural or remote locations. You can take steps to learn about the communities in order to ensure a proper fit as far as housing, conveniences and cost-of-living considerations.

Alaska

This Area provides comprehensive health services to Alaska Native people, Eskimos, Aleuts, Indians and non-Natives living in remote locales. Health professionals working in Alaska experience firsthand the various cultures and traditions of Native Alaskans. Members of several Tribes have historically lived in well-defined regions with little mixing of ethnic groups. As a result, each group retains many of its original customs and beliefs. Alaska offers a full range of outdoor activities.

Albuquerque (New Mexico, Colorado)

The Albuquerque Area offers in-patient and out-patient services through hospitals, health care centers, field clinics and health stations to numerous Tribal groups on reservations in New Mexico and Colorado. In addition, IHS facilities serve Indians who live, work or attend school in the urban centers of the Albuquerque Area. Culturally, it's no wonder that travelers from around the globe seek out the famous high-desert community of Santa Fe. The Area offers a full range of outdoor activities from desert trekking to mountain skiing.

Bemidji (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin)

Bemidji administers health care to 34 federally recognized Tribal and Urban/Indian groups. Many Tribal members are geographically isolated from the urban facilities and community health centers and must rely on a team approach of IHS, Tribal and contract providers for their health care needs. The Great Lakes offers some of the best boating, fishing and water sports in the nation, while the unspoiled forests of this Area make for great hiking, camping and hunting.



Billings (Montana and Wyoming)

The Billings Area serves members of the Plains Tribes on reservations and in surrounding communities, providing comprehensive health care services through service units (hospitals and clinics, preventive health and outreach services, alcohol treatment centers, dental and eye care facilities and air and ground emergency transportation). This Area embodies the scenic open space and “Big Sky” country of Montana and Wyoming. It would be hard to find better skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling and other winter sports, and there is just as much to do in warmer weather within this beautiful, natural environment.

California

Many of the California Area facilities are operated by Tribal consortiums, which provide comprehensive health care services to members and are supported by state and federal funding, as well as through private and public grants. All California Indian health facilities are managed by Tribal entities; thus, the Tribes provide staffing to support the California clinics, serving the largest population of Native Americans of all the reservation states. The Area is as varied as the state of California, from deep redwood forests to panoramic desert landscapes, and offers some of the most sought-after tourist locations and outdoor activities of every kind involving sun, sand, sea, mountain and desert.

Great Plains [formerly Aberdeen] (North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa)

The Great Plains Area provides health care services to reservations throughout this region via hospitals, health centers, health stations and satellite clinics. The Great Plains’ awe-inspiring natural attractions and landmarks include Badlands National Park, the Black Hills and Mount Rushmore National Memorial. Indian health professionals here have access to world-class parkland and wilderness famous for fishing, hunting, hiking, rock climbing, horseback riding, ice skating and skiing.

Nashville (Eastern United States)

Although the Nashville Area is the largest of the IHS Areas geographically, it does not serve the largest population of Native people. Most of the beneficiaries receive health care from Tribally run clinics. Diverse Tribes are represented within this broad sweep of territory from the Canadian border in Maine to the tip of Florida and westward to Texas. Health professionals in their off-hours enjoy boating and fishing on the Great Lakes, skiing in New England, camping and rock climbing in the Great Smoky Mountains or off-road exploring in Louisiana.

Navajo (NE Arizona, NW New Mexico, Southern Utah and Colorado)

Comprehensive health care is provided to the Navajo Nation, the largest Indian Tribe in the United States, through in-patient, out-patient, contract and community health programs. These programs are centered around the Navajo Area’s hospitals, health centers, health stations, school clinics and Navajo Tribal health programs. The geography of this spectacular region is mostly high desert; it encompasses the world-famous landmarks of Monument Valley, Canyon De Chelly and the Grand Canyon. Clinicians serving the Navajo don’t have to travel far to enjoy all the outdoor pursuits this scenic area has to offer, including camping, hiking, hunting, skiing and kayaking.

Oklahoma City (Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas)

Service units of the Oklahoma City Area provide care to the largest IHS service population (some 300,000) in the United States, with the majority of patients residing in urban settings. Hospitals, health centers and clinics provide in-patient and out-patient care. Many of the facilities offer state-of-the-art equipment. This diverse Area offers good school systems, cultural facilities and a vast array of outdoor recreational opportunities for hunting and fishing, boating and water sports, hiking, golf and horseback riding.



Phoenix (Arizona, Nevada and Utah)

The Phoenix Area's service units include IHS hospitals, clinics, health centers and health stations. Medical center facilities provide multi-service and specialty care to patients, as well as conduct research under the auspices of the National Institutes of Health. This Area's terrain varies from desert and mesa to alpine meadows and rugged national parkland. Indian health clinicians working here have access to the glories of the Colorado River, Grand Canyon and Salt River Canyon, not to mention the bright lights of Las Vegas and Reno. Outdoor activities run the gamut from white-water rafting and fi to camping, backpacking and top-notch skiing.

Portland (Oregon, Washington, Idaho)

More than 40 Tribes receive comprehensive health care through Tribal health facilities, Urban Indian organizations and IHS facilities. Local practitioners enjoy a great deal of autonomy in their practices, whether in the clinic, lab or pharmacy. From rugged seacoasts to snow-capped mountains, the region is famous for its abundant recreational opportunities; most Indian reservations are located among these prime spots. Indian health professionals can enjoy their free time camping, hiking and hunting in unspoiled forests, skiing some of the best slopes in the country or just relaxing beside a pristine mountain lake or coastal shore.

Tucson (Southern Arizona)

The smallest Area within IHS, Tucson serves the Tohono O'odham Nation and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe through one hospital and three health centers. Health service for the Tohono O'odham is centered in Sells, capital of the Tohono O'odham Reservation and hub of reservation life. Health care in the Sells service unit is a joint effort between IHS and the Tohono O'odham Health Department. The Yaqui service unit is jointly managed by IHS and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. Dramatic scenery characterizes the Tucson Area, where elevations range from 1,400 feet in the Santa Rosa Valley to nearly 8,000 feet on Baboquivari Peak. Popular recreational activities include camping and backpacking in the awe-inspiring deserts and national forests and skiing on the famous slopes of Mount Lemmon. The city of Tucson is noted for its cultural amenities, as well as recreational opportunities, including golf, tennis, riding and much more.

Visit the [Locations](#) page of the [IHS](#) website to learn more about the geography, cultural aspects and facilities of each IHS Area.

Final Year of School



GOOD TO KNOW

All reporting documentation must be mailed to the IHS Scholarship Program office for processing. Indian Health Service Scholarship Program 5600 Fishers Lane Mail Stop: OHR (11E53A) Rockville, MD 20857

Identifying the Next Step of Your Journey

Congratulations! You're nearing the completion of your schooling. As you finish your academic programs, you must begin preparing for the next step of your health professions journey, which includes submitting all program-required forms and documentation related to graduation and your advancement to a residency, post-graduate clinical training program or position as a health professional.

The most important initial steps are:

1. Determine if you are required to pursue post-graduate clinical training or if you are eligible to request participation in an optional program. If you are eligible, read the Post-Graduate Clinical Training Program section to familiarize yourself with program policies and requirements.
2. If you are not enrolled in a residency/training-eligible degree program or are not planning on attending an optional training program approved for your degree program, you should read the Service Commitment section to familiarize yourself with the job search process and program policies and requirements.
3. Complete licensure or board certification requirements, if necessary, to find an approved position within 90 days of graduation.

Required Documentation for Graduation

All graduating recipients are required to submit the following documentation during or after their final term of school:

Notice of Impending Graduation (IHS-856-13)

You must submit a [Notice of Impending Graduation \(IHS-856-13\)](#) form at the beginning of your final academic term.

Confirmation of Degree

You must submit the following documentation after graduation:

- » A copy of your diploma.
- » An official transcript documenting the degree awarded.
- » A copy of your license or board certification, if applicable.

Pre-Training/Pre-Employment Documentation

You are also required to submit documentation in preparation for and confirming your selection of a residency, position in a post-graduate clinical training program or employment as a health professional. Be sure you adhere to the Pre-Training or Pre-Employment documentation requirements based on which path you'll follow after graduation.

Post-Graduate Clinical Training



Required Documentation

Request for Approval of Deferment (IHS-856-11)

You are required to submit a [Request for Approval of Deferment \(IHS-856-11\)](#) form at the beginning of your final year of academic training documenting the post-graduate clinical training programs that you are considering after graduation. Your Analyst will review your request and provide written approval of all programs that meet IHS Scholarship Program policies.

GOOD TO KNOW

All reporting documentation must be mailed to the IHS Scholarship Program office for processing.

Notification of Deferment Program (IHS-856-14)

You are required to submit a [Notification of Deferment Program \(IHS-856-14\)](#) form by the beginning of the last month of your final year of school, notifying the program of the post-graduate clinical training program you will attend.

The program and specialty, if applicable, that you identify on the [Notification of Deferment Program \(IHS-856-14\)](#) must be the same program for which you were approved when you submitted your [Request for Approval of Deferment \(IHS-856-11\)](#). If you do not submit this form, you may be found in breach of contract and placed in default.

Once you begin an IHS-approved post-graduate clinical training program, you cannot transfer to another program without prior approval from the IHS Scholarship Program Branch Chief.

Indian Health Service
Scholarship Program
5600 Fishers Lane
Mail Stop: OHR (11E53A)
Rockville, MD 20857





The IHS Scholarship Program allows certain health profession students an opportunity to request the deferment of their service commitment in order to complete an IHS-approved post-graduate clinical training program that fulfill Is board certification or licensure requirements and has been approved by the appropriate certifying boards, as determined by the Secretary of HHS.

Physicians, social workers, clinical psychologists, dietitians and podiatrists are required to complete additional post-graduate training and licensure before they can begin their service commitment. Pharmacists, optometrists, nurses and dentists can elect to complete one year of post-graduate training upon receiving IHS Scholarship Program Branch Chief or DHPS Director approval.

The following information provides guidance on IHS-approved residency/training programs for each eligible health profession.

Required Training

Physicians

IHS has the greatest need for primary care providers. This is reflected in the accredited residencies eligible for the deferment of your service commitment listed below. IHS will not approve Chief Resident positions, residencies or fellowships for subspecialties.

Residency

Three Years:

- » Emergency Medicine
- » Family Practice
- » General Internal Medicine
- » General Pediatrics

Four Years:

- » Anesthesiology
- » Emergency Medicine
- » General Psychiatry
- » Internal Medicine/Family Practice
- » Internal Medicine/Pediatrics
- » Obstetrics/Gynecology

Five Years:

- » Family Practice/Psychiatry
- » General Surgery
- » Internal Medicine/Psychiatry

This list of residencies is subject to changes. Please reference the [IHS Scholarship Program website](#) for the most up-to-date list of eligible residencies.

Clinical Psychologists

Clinical psychology students are required to complete the training needed to practice as independent, licensed clinical psychologists. State licensing boards require that graduate psychologists practice under the supervision of a licensed clinical psychologist for a specific number of hours (usually 2,000) before they are eligible to take the state exam. Contact your state psychology board or visit the [Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards](#) for details.

You are required to complete a PhD or PsyD program and become an independent, licensed clinical psychologist before any service will count toward fulfillment of your service commitment. You must complete all supervised work and licensure requirements within two years of graduation.

Social Workers

Social work students are required to complete the training needed to practice as independent, licensed clinical social workers (title varies by state). State licensing boards require graduate social workers to practice under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker for a specific number of hours (2,000–3,000) before they are eligible to take the state exam. Contact your state social work board or visit the [Association of Social Work Boards](#) for details.

You are required to complete a master's degree program and become an independent, licensed clinical social worker before any service will count toward fulfillment of your service commitment. You must complete all supervised work and licensure requirements within three years of graduation.

Podiatrists

Podiatry students are required to complete the training needed to practice as a certified podiatrists. Your podiatric medicine and surgery residency must be a resource-based, competency-driven, assessment-validated program that consists of training in inpatient and outpatient medical and surgical management and approved by the [Council on Podiatric Medical Education \(CPME\)](#), designated by the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) as the accrediting agency for podiatric medicine.

You are required to complete your podiatric residency with certification from the American Board of Podiatric Medicine (ABPM) and the American Board of Podiatric Surgery (ABPS) before any service will count toward fulfillment of your service commitment. You must complete your residency and certification requirements within three years of graduation.

Optional Training

Dentists

Dental students have the option to complete a one-year Advanced Education Program in General Dentistry or General Practice Residency. Only programs that are fully operational with the [American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation \(ADA CODA\)](#) status are permitted.

Nurses

Nursing students have the option to complete a one-year training program with an emphasis on clinical outpatient (OPD), inpatient (IPD) and/or emergency (ERD) nursing skills.

Optometrists

Optometry students have the option to complete a one-year Ocular Disease/Pathology or Primary Care Optometry residency program. Information for residency programs is available at [Optometric Residency Matching Services Inc.](#) or the [Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry](#). You should consult the [IHS Discipline Chief for Optometry](#) prior to applying to a residency program.

Pharmacists

Pharmacy students have the option to complete a one-year [IHS pharmacy residency](#), [American Society of Health-System Pharmacists \(ASHP\)](#) residency or [American Pharmacists Association \(APhA\)](#) accredited Post-Graduate Year One (PGY 1) pharmacy residency (Hospital, Community or Managed Care only).

Deferment requests to complete Post-Graduate Year Two (PGY 2) residencies or fellowships will not be approved.

Required Forms and Documentation

You must comply with the following requirements to continue your participation in your post-graduate clinical training program:

- » Remain in good standing with your residency or training program.
- » Submit an [Annual Status Report \(IHS-856-16\)](#) and letter of good standing from your program director or coordinator at the end of each year of post-graduate clinical training.
- » Make no changes in the period, place of training or type of training without prior approval from the IHS Scholarship Program Branch Chief.

Service Commitment Policy

You must begin your Indian health career within 90 days of completion of your post-graduate training, engaging in full-time clinical practice in the health profession for which you were awarded a Health Professions scholarship. Failure to secure a position could result in a [breach of contract](#).

See [Fulfilling Your Service Commitment](#) for information on program policies and the job search process.





Unsuccessful Match

You must notify your Program Analyst immediately and discuss further options if you are unsuccessful in securing a training program.

Incomplete Residency

If you will not complete your residency, you must contact your Program Analyst immediately to explore other options, including employment as a General Practitioner.

Physicians who do not complete their residency program and choose to apply as a General Practitioner might encounter difficulty in finding employment based on the hiring standards for physicians.

Physicians are significantly less likely to obtain positions in target IHS Areas if they are not board-eligible or certified. This can result in a breach of contract based on the inability to fulfill a service commitment.

Failure to Advance in Training

You are required to notify your Program Analyst and provide a letter from your program director if you do not pass your PGY 1 level of training and/or do not advance to the PGY 2 level.

Suspension of Deferment

You are required to contact your Program Analyst immediately if you require a suspension of your deferment due to medical or family issues. IHS will approve suspensions on a case-by-case basis and may require additional documentation.

Fulfilling Your Service Commitment



Opportunity. Adventure. Purpose.

The fulfillment of your service commitment is more than just a means to an Indian health career. You will provide needed health care services to American Indians and Alaska Natives at hospitals, health centers and health stations around the continental United States and Alaska. You will connect with an appreciative, deserving patient population, working side by side with professionals who share your desire to make a difference. You will practice within an environment where non-clinical paperwork is minimized at all levels and where you will have access to system-wide electronic medical data and full-spectrum personal health summaries for patients. This allows you to provide needed care instead of spending valuable patient time completing forms.

GOOD TO KNOW

You will connect with an appreciative, deserving patient population, working side by side with professionals who share your desire to make a difference.

What's more, you will receive excellent compensation, including competitive pay, bonuses, comprehensive health care coverage, opportunities for advancement and much more. In short, you will receive the kind of personal/professional experience that will shape your life moving forward.

IHS is committed to assisting scholarship recipients in finding the ideal work and community environment to ensure their success and happiness. It is our goal that you find the facility, community and location that meet your professional and personal needs. While we cannot guarantee that you will find employment at your preferred facility, we will assist you in finding a good match for your personal and professional preferences.

As you near the end of your schooling, we strongly recommend that you begin your job search at least a year in advance to give yourself the greatest opportunity to explore the Areas and facilities that will lead to your successful transition as a health professional and community member. Our recruiters, program and facility staff are available to answer your questions and provide guidance on the job search and application process.

Required Documentation

Preferred Placement (IHS-856-12)

You must submit a Preferred Placement (IHS-856-12) form at the beginning of your final year of academic/post-graduate clinical training (for example, August/September for spring graduates) indicating your preferred IHS Areas and Indian health facilities to fulfill your service commitment.

Placement Update (IHS-856-15)

You must send a Placement Update (IHS-856-15) form if you are unable to secure employment prior to completion of your academic or post-graduate clinical training. You also must attach documentation outlining your attempts to secure employment (for example, your letter of application receipt, interview dates, denial letters, etc.).

This form and accompanying documentation are due every 30 days from the time you graduate or complete your training until you accept a position or reach the 90-day limit. If you have not secured employment following 90 days, you will be subject to involuntary placement according to the needs and priorities of IHS and all Tribes. You can also use the form to express any dissatisfaction or note any problems encountered while seeking a position.

GOOD TO KNOW

All reporting documentation must be mailed to the IHS Scholarship Program office for processing.

Indian Health Service
Scholarship Program
5600 Fishers Lane
Mail Stop: OHR (11E53A)
Rockville, MD 20857





Position Start Date

You must begin your Indian health career within 90 days of graduation or completion of post-graduate training, engaging in full-time clinical practice in the health profession for which you were awarded a Health Professions scholarship, regardless of your facility's policies.

If you have not secured an assignment within 90 days, you will be subject to involuntary placement. The IHS Director, acting on behalf of the Secretary of HHS, can exercise direct placement authority to fill unmet health care provider needs identified by IHS, Tribal and/or Urban Indian Program health care facilities across the United States. If you are unable or unwilling to secure a position, you will be in breach of contract and placed in default.

Full-time Clinical Practice

The IHS Scholarship Program defines full-time clinical practice as working a minimum of 40 hours per week. The 40 hours cannot be worked in less than four days, and no more than 12 hours of work can be performed in any 24-hour period. Time spent in on-call status will not count toward the 40 hours. Overtime cannot be applied to another workweek.

You must spend at least 32 hours providing direct in-patient or out-patient care. These services must be conducted during normally scheduled hospital or clinic hours. The remaining eight hours may be spent providing additional patient care and/or performing practice-related administrative activities, with administrative activities not to exceed eight hours per week.

Teaching, attending staff meetings, supervising other health care professionals, making court appearances and other non-treatment related activities pertaining to the health professional's approved position are considered practice-related administrative activities. Supervision of other health professionals is defined as an administrative activity if the health professional being supervised is treating or providing health care services to a patient and billing or documenting such treatment in his name. If the supervising health professional is treating the patient and billing or documenting such treatment under his name, this activity would be counted as direct clinical services for the supervising health professional.

No more than seven weeks (or 35 workdays) per service year can be spent away from the practice for vacation, holidays, continuing professional education, illness or any other reason. Absences greater than seven weeks in a service year or any absent without leave period will not count toward the service commitment. You are required to notify the IHS Scholarship Program immediately if you anticipate absences greater than seven weeks so that your service end-date may be recalculated.

These requirements for full-time work supersede any Tribal employment policies that may be in effect at your place of work. If you have any questions, please contact your Program Analyst.

Steps to Finding Your Ideal Position

The IHS Scholarship Program recommends that you begin researching career opportunities at the beginning of your final year of academic/post-graduate clinical training (for example, July/August for spring/summer graduates or February/March for fall/winter graduates). This research should include familiarizing yourself with the Indian Health Service and a career in Indian health; contacting an IHS recruiter or Tribal Human Resources (HR) department to assist in identifying openings in your preferred IHS Area(s); gaining an understanding of the different career paths available at Indian health facilities; and, finally, determining if your preferred position meets the program requirements to fulfill your service commitment.

Completing these steps will assist you in securing a position that fits your preferred location and career needs.

Step One — Familiarize Yourself with IHS and an Indian Health Career

As you enter your final year of academic or post-graduate clinical training, it's important that you familiarize yourself with the [Indian Health Service](#), what a [career in Indian health](#) entails and the [IHS Areas](#) and [facilities](#) where you would like to begin your career.

STEPS TO ENSURE SUCCESS

Making the correct choice on where to fulfill your service commitment can be a difficult one. In addition to the *Service Commitment Workbook* (distributed to graduating scholarship recipients), here's some helpful advice to aid in your decision.

- Professional considerations: Find out everything you can about your potential health facility, including the potential for growth opportunities. The more informed you are, the better decision you will make.
 - Do your research: Discover what is available in terms of housing, banking, shopping and conveniences before you make your move.
 - Family considerations: If you have a family, make sure you research local schools for your children and employment options for your spouse.
 - Get familiar with customs: Learn about the local Tribal customs and familiarize yourself with the traditions and ceremonial events of the community.
 - See it for yourself: If possible, visit your destination before accepting a position. You'll get a chance to experience everyday life there and speak with people who can assist you.
-

GOOD TO KNOW

Whether you're looking to work at a federal facility as a civil servant, as a direct Tribal or Urban Indian Program hire or as a USPHS Commissioned Corps officer, we recommend that you research the location, facility and position for each opportunity that interests you to ensure it is the right fit for your personal and professional needs.

Step Two — Contact an IHS Recruiter or Indian Health Facility

[IHS Recruiters](#) are available to assist you with your search and identify facilities with openings available in your discipline. You are also encouraged to search [IHS Jobs](#) and [USAJOBS](#) to find federal or [Tribal facilities](#) with openings in specific [IHS Areas](#).

Step Three — Research Career Paths

A career in Indian health offers three exciting options to begin your journey as an Indian health professional. Each career path offers competitive salaries and benefit for health professionals who practice as part of an interdisciplinary team and share similar values concerning health care and life.

Whether you're looking to work at a federal facility as a civil servant, as a direct Tribal or Urban Indian Program hire or as a USPHS Commissioned Corps officer, we recommend that you research the location, facility and position for each opportunity that interests you to ensure it is the right fit for your personal and professional needs.

Civil Service

Health professionals who enter IHS as federal civil service employees can expect a comprehensive package of compensation and benefit that includes:

- » Competitive starting salary and benefit
- » 13–26 days paid vacation, depending on experience.
- » 10 paid federal holidays.
- » Up to 13 days sick leave per year.
- » Comprehensive health insurance.
- » No-cost malpractice coverage.
- » Comprehensive retirement program.
- » Thrift savings (contributory) retirement plan with government match.
- » Annual continuing education where available.

Tribal or Urban Indian Programs

An alternative to a federal employment career path is to accept employment directly from one of the more than 560 federally recognized Tribes in 35 states. Employment benefit for those who choose to work directly for a Tribe vary depending on the Tribe and position, but benefit are comparable to those offered by federal personnel systems.

GOOD TO KNOW

You cannot provide contract or locum tenens services to an IHS, Tribe or Tribal organization, Urban Indian Program or through private practice as a means of fulfilling your IHS Scholarship Program service commitment.

USPHS Commissioned Corps

Health professionals who enter IHS through the US Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps may receive:

- » An accession bonus (sign-up bonus) — varies by specialty and requirements.
- » 30 days paid vacation.
- » 10 paid federal holidays.
- » Sick leave as needed.
- » Comprehensive health care.
- » Tax-free subsistence and housing allowance.
- » No-cost malpractice coverage.
- » Non-contributory retirement.
- » Thrift savings (contributory) retirement.
- » Annual continuing education where available.
- » Space-available flights on military aircraft.

Employment as a commissioned officer requires a dual application process that includes applying to the Commissioned Corps in addition to applying for a specific position. These tasks should be undertaken at the same time so that when you are offered a position, your Commissioned Corps paperwork is complete and you are eligible to be commissioned into your new position. Visit the [USPHS](#) for a complete list of commissionable health professions and application information.

Step Four — Determine Eligibility of Facility and Position

Once you've selected the facility(s) and position(s) that best fits your needs, it is your responsibility to ensure that your choice meets the eligibility requirements to fulfil your service commitment.

Your service commitment can be fulfilled at a/an:

1. IHS facility.
2. Tribal facility (contracted under the Indian Self-Determination Act [P.L. 93-638]).
3. Urban Indian Program (assisted under Title V, Health Services for Urban Indians, of the IHCI A [P.L. 94-437]).
4. Private practice: For physicians, dentists and clinical psychologists only. Joining or opening a private practice is an employment option available only when there are no identified openings in your chosen health profession. Program policy states that when pursuing private practice, the facility you select must be located in a designated [Health Profession Shortage Area \(HPSA\)](#) and serve a patient base of which at least 75 percent of the patients are documented members or descendants of federally or state-recognized Tribes. Final approval of this option is at the discretion of the IHS Director.

You cannot provide contract or locum tenens services to an IHS, Tribe or Tribal organization, Urban Indian Program or through private practice as a means of fulfilling your IHS Scholarship Program service commitment.

You must submit the position description or vacancy announcement (a brief description of the position, the site and duties) for verification that the facility and position meet program requirements.

SPECIAL CASES

Research

The purpose of the IHS Scholarship Program is to train health professionals to provide clinical health care services to Indian people. While research — especially research related to American Indians and Alaska Natives — is benefit to Indian people, it does not meet the requirements of the IHCA. IHS will not approve requests for service in research positions or clinical positions containing a substantial research component to fulfill a scholarship recipient's service commitment.

Step Five — Apply for Openings

You must submit all applications for federal positions through [USAJOBS](#). You can get started by:

- » Creating an account.
- » Creating a searchable resume. Uploaded resumes are not searchable.
- » Researching the [definition](#) (open continuous, full-time permanent, etc.) of each job posting.
- » Uploading up to 10 documents (license, diploma, transcripts, etc.).
- » Searching for jobs by discipline. This will save your search and you'll be alerted to new jobs posted.

You must submit applications for Tribal or Urban Indian Program positions to the local Human Resources department serving that facility. Reference the [Find Health Care](#) page of the [IHS](#) website to locate Tribal and Urban Indian Program facility contact information.

Note: Hiring priority is given to IHS scholarship recipients. Please indicate when you apply that you are to receive this priority.

Follow up with your [IHS recruiter](#) or [Program Analyst](#) monthly regarding available openings.



Step Six — Submit Verification of Employment

When you have accepted an IHS-approved position, you must send Verification of Employment documentation that includes your anticipated or actual start date. The following documentation will satisfy this requirement:

- » Federal civil service — Notification of Personnel Action (SF-50) form. The program will also accept a hire letter from the facility indicating your start date, position title and position description.
- » Tribal or Urban Indian Program — A hire letter from the facility indicating your start date, position title and position description.
- » USPHS Commissioned Corps — Call-To-Active-Duty (CAD) notice.
- » Private practice — A contract, work agreement or hire letter from the facility indicating your start date, position title, position description and terms of employment and benefits.

Deadline: The appropriate documentation, including your diploma, final transcript and licensure/board certification, is required 90 days from the completion of your academic or post-graduate clinical training. Failure to submit the verification of employment document will result in breach of contract and placement in default.

Service Commitment Documentation

Your reporting responsibilities do not end once you have begun your career as a health professional. You are required to submit the following documentation while fulfilling your service commitment.

Annual Status Report

You must submit an [Annual Status Report \(IHS-856-16\)](#) form annually along with a leave report summary, provided by your local human resources department, until your service commitment is complete. This is required to monitor your employment activity and document that you have worked in an approved full-time clinical position in the health profession for which you received funding while not exceeding the maximum seven weeks or 35 days of leave.

You must also notify the IHS Scholarship Program if there are any interruptions in employment, such as maternity leave; extended sick, disability or family-friendly leave; outside training exceeding 10 days per each 12-month period; breaks in service related to a change of work site; or any other extended time away from work so the program can recalculate your service end-date.

Private Practice Reporting

If you pursue the private practice option, you must also provide quarterly reports documenting:

- » The total number of patients seen.
- » The total number of American Indian or Alaska Native patients seen.

Completion of Your Service Commitment

We hope that you will continue your health professions career at the conclusion of your service commitment, either at your current location or another Indian health facility. Your experience and familiarity with the communities IHS serves are a valuable asset. No matter which path you choose to continue, be sure to contact your Program Advisor at least three to six months in advance of the end of your service to ensure all proper documentation is on file to receive your Completion of Service letter.

This letter serves as official notice that your service contract has been fulfilled, allowing you to apply for and accept other financial support from federal programs in exchange for a service commitment, including the [IHS Loan Repayment Program](#).

Suspension of Your Service Commitment

You must request a suspension of your service commitment if you anticipate an absence from full-time clinical practice longer than 35 workdays. The program reviews suspensions for medical reasons (including maternity leave), military deployment and urgent personal matters only.

You must submit requests and documentation detailing the reason for a suspension to the [IHS Scholarship Program Branch Chief](#) as soon as you become aware of a possible extended absence.

Transfer Requests

Your approved service commitment is site- and position-specific — you will not be able to transfer to another site or position without prior approval from the IHS Scholarship Program Branch Chief. Failure to obtain approval before transferring to another site may result in breach of contract and placement in default.

If you want to transfer to a different facility, you must notify the IHS Scholarship Program in writing, providing a position description and vacancy announcement detailing the facility and position where you would like to relocate. The program also requires three letters with your transfer request (listed below). An appropriate facility representative must sign, on official letterhead, any letters from your current facility and your prospective transfer site. These are:

- » A letter from you stating why you are requesting a transfer.
- » A letter from your facility administration (HR, CEO, etc.) stating the impact of your transfer on the facility's day-to-day operations.
- » A letter from the prospective site documenting the position vacancy, your hire date, a position description and the impact of your transfer on the facility's day-to-day operations.

If IHS approves your transfer, you must provide verification of employment documentation indicating when you will begin employment at your new facility and the position.



Breach of Contract and Default



IHS Scholarship Program Contract

When you accepted your Health Professions scholarship, you entered into a [contractual agreement](#) to fulfill a service commitment at an approved Indian health facility upon graduation or completion of a residency or post-graduate clinical training program in exchange for financial support of your education. The IHS commits itself to providing the financial and administrative support necessary for its scholarship recipients to succeed academically and professionally. The expectation is that our recipients will acknowledge this support and their contractual agreement by fulfilling the agency's mission and provide the health care needed to raise the physical, mental, social and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.

If you are unable to fulfill this agreement — whether it's due to academic, employment or personal reasons — IHS will find you in breach of your contract and place you in default. This section outlines what constitutes a breach of contract and the financial liabilities if you're placed in default.

Failure to Complete Academic Training

You will be liable to the US government for repayment of all Health Professions scholarship financial aid, plus interest, paid to you and to your school on your behalf if you are dismissed from school for academic or disciplinary reasons or voluntarily withdraw from the program before graduating. Payment must be made within three years from the date of the breach of contract or such longer period as specified by the HHS Secretary.

Failure to Begin or Complete Your Service Commitment

You will be liable to the US government for repayment of all Health Professions scholarship financial aid, plus interest, paid to you and to your school on your behalf if you fail to begin or complete your service commitment. Payment must be made within one year from the date of the breach of contract or such longer period as specific by the HHS Secretary. Penalties and interest are calculated based on the default formula below.

Default Formula

You are liable to repay three times the amount of all scholarship funding and benefit paid to you and to your school on your behalf, plus interest, as determined by the formula:

$$A = 3Z[(t-s)/t]$$

in which:

A is the amount the United States is entitled to recover.

Z is the sum of the amounts paid to or on behalf of the applicant and the interest on such amounts that would be payable, if at the time the amounts were paid, they were loans bearing interest at the maximum legal prevailing rate as determined by the Treasurer of the United States.

t is the total number of months in the applicant's service commitment period.

s is the number of months of the service commitment period the participant served.

The amount the United States is entitled to recover must be paid within one year of the date on which the applicant failed to begin or complete his or her service commitment or failed to meet the terms and conditions of deferment or a longer period beginning on a date specified by the HHS Secretary.

Liability — Sample Calculation

A scholarship recipient received four years of support with tuition, fees and books at \$30,000 per year and a stipend of \$18,000 per year. The recipient completed his education but failed to begin fulfilling his service commitment.

$$A = 3Z[(t-s)/t]$$

$$Z = (4 \times 48,000); [t = 48; s = 0]$$

$$A = 3(4 \times 48,000)([48-0]/48)$$

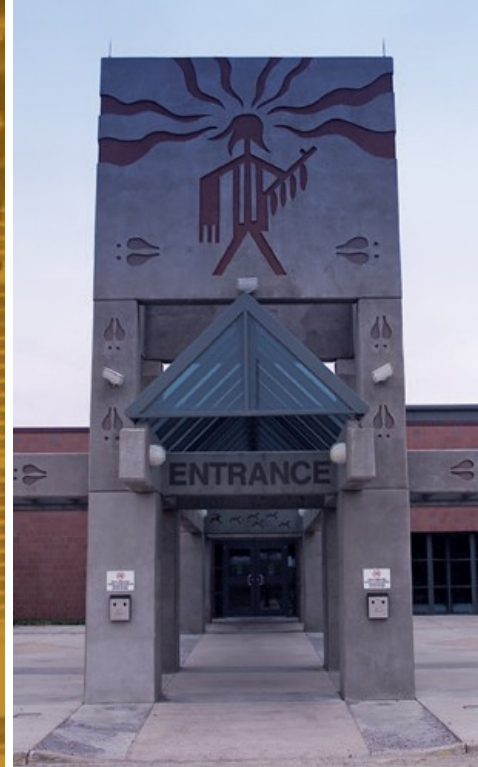
$$A = 3(192,000)(1)$$

Amount Owed = \$576,000 (plus 10 percent interest per year*)

* Interest rate used is maximum prevailing interest rate as determined by the US Treasurer. This example uses 10 percent. Interest is compounded based on federal regulations.



Contact Information



This section describes key personnel involved with your scholarship award. The IHS Scholarship Program staff has an interest in your success and is ready to help.





Branch Chief

The [IHS Scholarship Program Branch Chief](#) is responsible for the coordination of the programmatic aspects for the scholarship sections of P.L. 94-437, Title I and for the activities of the [Program Analysts](#). Additionally, the IHS Scholarship Program Branch Chief serves as the authority on programmatic issues and decisions.

Program Analysts

[IHS Scholarship Program Analysts](#) are responsible for the coordination of the various scholarship program functions and processes. As part of this responsibility, they work with you to ensure compliance with your obligations and/or liabilities. The Program Analysts monitor the deferment and completion of your service commitment. In addition to these duties, they work with the Division of Grants Management on matters dealing with payments, applications/awards and related processing. Program Analysts track and record data pertaining to you and monitor your academic progress to ensure compliance while you are in school. They also maintain ongoing communications with the [Area Scholarship Coordinators](#), as well as with other IHS components, governmental agencies and Tribal organizations.

Area Scholarship Coordinators

The Indian Health Service is composed of 12 Area offices, each with a designated [Area Scholarship Coordinator \(ASC\)](#). An ASC serves as a scholarship applicant and recipient resource for technical and programmatic questions, monitoring your academic performance and assisting you in a position upon completion of your academic or post-graduate clinical training.

Discipline Chiefs

[Discipline Chiefs](#) serve as a program resource for scholarship recipients and assist with extern and service commitment placements.

Chief Grants Management Officer

The [Chief Grants Management Officer](#) is responsible for the administration of the scholarship program in accordance with grant policies and procedures. In addition, all management of appropriate business functions of the scholarship program is the Officer's responsibility.

Grants Scholarship Coordinator/Management Specialist

The [Grants Scholarship Coordinator](#) is responsible for the coordination of all business functions of the scholarship program. These functions include the processing of tuition payments, monthly stipend payments and financial documentation.

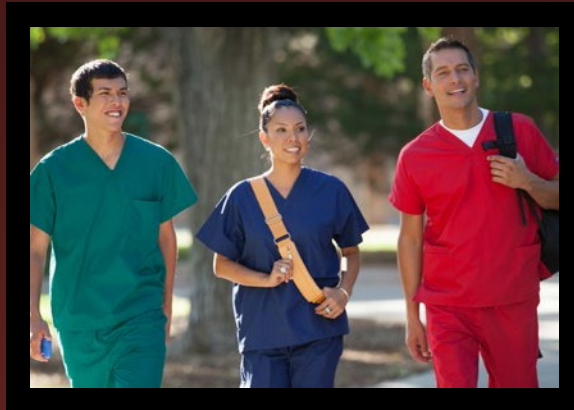
Extern Program Coordinator

The [Extern Program Coordinator](#) is responsible for the following activities:

- » Verifying and reconciling data on all externs.
- » Establishing and maintaining cooperative and ongoing communications with Area Scholarship Coordinators, as well as other IHS components, government agencies and Tribal organizations to ensure that externs are in compliance with IHS Scholarship Program requirements.

Default Waiver Coordinator

The [Default Waiver Coordinator](#) monitors the default/waiver functions of the IHS Scholarship Program.



Indian Health Service
Scholarship Program
5600 Fishers Lane
Mail Stop: OHR (11E53A)
Rockville, MD 20857

IHS Scholarship Program: (301) 443-6197
Division of Grants Management: (301) 443-0243

www.ihs.gov/scholarship



Service Commitment Handbook 2018-2019

