

Wyoming State Loan Repayment Program
Summer 2020 Program Application Guidance

Application Deadline: September 8, 2020



Wyoming
Department
of Health

Office of Rural Health
Public Health Division
Wyoming Department of Health
122 West 25th Street, Suite 102E
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Summer 2020 Wyoming State Loan Repayment Program

The Wyoming Department of Health, Public Health Division, Office of Rural Health (ORH) received funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Health Workforce, Division of National Health Service Corps to create the Wyoming State Loan Repayment Program (WY-SLRP). The WY-SLRP is funded in combination by the State Loan Repayment Program Grant, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 93.165 (50%) and State of Wyoming general funds assigned to ORH (50%).

The purpose of WY-SLRP is to increase the recruitment and retention of primary care and mental health providers in federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs).

WY-SLRP has \$176,000 in funding available for awards during this application cycle. Physicians practicing in eligible disciplines may receive an award up to \$40,000; physician assistants and nurse practitioners practicing in eligible specialties, certified nurse midwives, and eligible mental health clinicians may receive an award up to \$20,000. All awards require two (2) years of full-time service at an approved National Health Service Corps (NHSC) site.

Program Contact

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Participant Eligibility

A. The WY-SLRP will accept applications from the following disciplines:

1. Physicians (MD and DO) practicing the following specialties: family practice (including osteopathic general practice), internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, geriatrics, and psychiatry.
 - a. General practitioners (physicians who have not completed residency training programs) are not eligible.
2. Physician Assistants (PAs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs) practicing the following specialties: adult, family, pediatrics, geriatrics, women's health, and mental health/psychiatry.
3. Certified Nurse Midwives (CNM)
4. Mental health clinicians licensed and practicing as the following:
 - a. Health Service Psychologist (HSP); both clinical and counseling
 - b. Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
 - c. Psychiatric Nurse Specialist (PNS)
 - d. Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)
 - e. Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT)
 - f. Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselors (must be licensed/credentialed/certified in Wyoming that they meet educational requirements and master's degree requirements).
5. All other health professions not listed above are NOT eligible to participate in WY-SLRP at this time. Additional loan repayment options are:
 - a. National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment and Scholarship Programs; please visit <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/loansscholarships/nhsc> for additional information.
 - b. NURSE Corps Scholarship and Loan Repayment Programs; please visit <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/loansscholarships/nursecorps> for additional information.

B. In order to be eligible to participate in WY-SLRP, all applicants:

- 1.** Must possess an active, permanent, and valid license to practice an eligible healthcare profession in the State of Wyoming. Provisional and temporary licensed healthcare professionals are not eligible to participate in WY-SLRP.
- 2.** Must NOT have an outstanding contractual obligation for health professional service to the Federal Government, to a state, or another entity unless the service obligation will be completely satisfied before the WY-SLRP contract is finalized. This includes those whose employment contracts contain provisions creating a service obligation such as a recruitment bonus in return for agreement to practice at the facility for a specified period of time or return the bonus.
 - a.** Those in the Reserve Component of the U.S. Armed Forces or National Guard are eligible to participate in WY-SLRP. In the event the participant's military training and/or service, in combination with other absences from the service site, exceed thirty-five (35) work days per service year, the WY-SLRP contract and service obligation will be extended to compensate for the break in service.
 - b.** Those with Primary Care Loans through the Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Health Professions are NOT eligible to participate in WY-SLRP.
- 3.** Must NOT have any federal judgment liens.
- 4.** Must NOT have:
 - a.** A current default on any federal payment obligations (e.g., Health Education Assistance Loans, Nursing Student Loans, federal income tax liabilities, Federal Housing Authority loans, etc.) even if the creditor now considers them to be in good standing;
 - b.** Breached a prior service obligation to the federal/state/local government or other entity, even if the obligation was subsequently satisfied. This includes a prior award and obligation under the Wyoming Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program;
 - c.** Had any federal or non-federal debt written off as uncollectible or received a waiver of any federal service or payment obligation.
- 5.** Must practice full-time providing primary care, psychiatry, or mental health services at an eligible site.

- a. Full-time practice at the eligible site must begin prior to or within ninety (90) days of application to WY-SLRP.
 - b. Full-time service is defined as a minimum of forty (40) hours per week, for a minimum of forty-five (45) weeks per year.
6. Must agree to apply one hundred percent (100%) of WY-SLRP funds to qualifying educational loans.
- a. Qualifying educational loans are government and commercial loans for actual costs paid for tuition and reasonable educational and living expenses related to the participant's education.
 - b. Commercial or consolidated loans which contain non-educational debt or debt belonging to others will NOT be eligible for repayment under WY-SLRP.
 - c. Proof of payment to qualified educational loans will be a requirement under the WY-SLRP contract.
7. Must complete and submit the approved WY-SLRP application and all required supporting documentation during the application timeframe.
- a. All required application forms must be completed fully and correctly.
 - b. All required supporting documentation must be submitted and include the required information.
 - c. Incomplete applications, applications completed incorrectly, applications missing required documents and/or the required information on the required documents, and applications received after the application submission deadline will NOT be considered for a WY-SLRP award.

Practice Site Eligibility

- A. Healthcare professionals participating in WY-SLRP must fulfill the service obligation at an eligible practice site. In order to be an eligible site, a site must:
- 1. Provide primary care, psychiatry, or mental health services on an *outpatient* basis.

2. Complete the process and be approved as a National Health Service Corps approved site prior to a healthcare professional's application submission to WY-SLRP.
 3. Be located in a federally designated geographic, population, or facility Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) for primary care and/or mental health.
 - a. Areas designated as a Medically Underserved Area (MUA), Medically Underserved Population (MUP), Dental HPSA, or a Governor's Certified Shortage Area for Rural Health Clinics will NOT be eligible for participation in WY-SLRP.
 - b. Applications from providers practicing at a facility located in a HPSA (including facility-specific HPSA) scoring fourteen (14) or above will be accepted with proof of application to and denial of award from the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program which is less than two (2) years old.
 - c. The HPSA designation must be appropriate for the applicant's discipline: primary care HPSA for primary care physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and certified nurse midwives; mental health HPSA for psychiatrists, physician assistants and nurse practitioners practicing in mental health/psychiatry, and all other eligible mental health clinicians.
- B.** All sites must complete the approved WY-SLRP site application forms and provide the necessary required supporting documentation. All site forms and documentation are to be submitted in conjunction with the healthcare professional's WY-SLRP application. The site must certify that:
1. The site is an approved National Health Service Corps site in a federally designated primary care and/or mental health HPSA;
 - a. Status will be verified by WY-SLRP staff.
 2. There are no agreements between the site and the healthcare professional for bonus payments which create a service obligation (e.g., must maintain employment at the site for a specific period of time or return the bonus);
 3. The site will not reduce the healthcare professional's compensation as a result of participation in WY-SLRP; and

4. The healthcare professional will provide primary care medical or mental health services at the site on a full-time basis for a minimum of forty (40) hours per week, for a minimum of forty-five (45) weeks per year.
 - a. Primary medical care or mental health services provided by the healthcare professional must be completed in accordance with the Full-Time Clinical Practice Requirements in order to meet the WY-SLRP service obligation.

Participant Awards

- A. Award determinations will be made by November 30th
- B. Applicants will be prioritized into award tiers based upon the following:
 1. Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Score:
 - a. HPSA scores between 10 and 13 will be Tier 1. The higher the score within the tier, the higher the priority (e.g., a score of 13 is higher priority than 10).
 - b. HPSA scores below 10 will be Tier 2. The higher the score within the tier, the higher the priority (e.g., a score of 9 is higher priority than 6).
 - c. HPSA scores 14 and over will be Tier 3.
 - d. If available funds are not exhausted by eligible applicants in Tier 1, awards will be issued to applicants in Tier 2.
 - e. If funds are not exhausted by eligible applicants in Tier 2, awards will be issued to applicants in Tier 3.
 2. Applicants will be further prioritized within Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 by length of time practicing in Wyoming, with the least amount of time having highest priority.
 3. Applicants who graduated from the University of Wyoming or a Wyoming Community College will be given additional priority within tiers.
 4. Applications will be further prioritized within Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 based upon information and responses supplied in the application for WY-SLRP.

- C.** Awards will be issued to eligible applicants beginning with the highest priority tier, followed in descending order by the next highest priority tier until all funds are exhausted.
- D.** Award terms will be:
- 1.** A physician may receive up to \$40,000, and physician assistants, nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, and mental health clinicians may receive up to \$20,000 in exchange for two (2) years of full-time service.
 - 2.** Award amounts will not exceed participant's outstanding qualified educational loan balances.
 - a.** Upon notification of award, participants will be required to submit updated statements for qualified education loans. Statements received must be for the same loans submitted with the WY-SLRP application.
 - 3.** The two (2) year service obligation will begin on the date the WY-SLRP award contract is finalized or the first day of full-time service at the approved site, whichever is later.
 - 4.** Payments will be disbursed directly to the participant as follows:
 - a.** Once the WY-SLRP award contract is finalized and signed by all parties; and
 - b.** Once the WY-SLRP participant has begun full-time practice at the approved site.
 - c.** Both conditions must be met prior to the award payment being disbursed.
 - d.** Participant will be required to submit proof a lump-sum payment equal to the amount received from WY-SLRP was made to qualified educational loans. Proof of payment must be submitted within thirty (30) days of receipt of the WY-SLRP payment.
- E.** Statements from the approved service site confirming participant's full-time service will be required at six (6), twelve (12), eighteen (18), and twenty-four (24) months of service.
- F.** Awards will NOT be issued to applicants with an outstanding contractual obligation for health professional service to the Federal Government, a state, or another entity. The obligations include but are not limited to active duty military, National Health Service Corps Scholarship or Loan Repayment Program, NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program, and the Wyoming Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program.

- G.** Awards under WY-SLRP will NOT be extended to provide additional loan repayment in exchange for a longer service obligation. WY-SLRP participants may apply competitively for a new WY-SLRP award once their current WY-SLRP contract and service obligation have expired.
- H.** Individuals in a Reserve component of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard, are eligible to participate in WY-SLRP with the following additional terms:

 - 1.** Placement opportunities may be limited by WY-SLRP to minimize the impact of a deployment on the area served by the reservist.
 - 2.** Military training or service performed by a reservist will NOT satisfy the WY-SLRP service obligation.

 - a.** If the WY-SLRP participant's military training and/or service combined with other absences from the service site exceed seven (7) weeks per service year, the participant's WY-SLRP service obligation will be suspended and the WY-SLRP service contract extended to compensate for the break in service to WY-SLRP.
 - 3.** If the approved service site where the reservist is serving at the time of deployment is unable to reemploy the participant upon completion of the deployment, WY-SLRP will reassign the participant to another WY-SLRP approved site to complete the remaining service obligation.

 - a.** Participants may be asked to sign an employment contract that extends beyond the WY-SLRP service obligation if a short-term assignment is not available.
 - 4.** If the reservist is called to active duty, which does not count towards WY-SLRP service, the participant's WY-SLRP service contract will be extended to add the length of time the participant will be on active duty to the original WY-SLRP service obligation.
- I.** In the event the approved site where the participant is fulfilling their two (2) year service obligation loses its National Health Service Corps approved site status for any reason other than loss of HPSA designation, the participant may be required to finish the remainder of the service obligation at another approved site within Wyoming.

Full-Time Clinical Practice Requirements

- A.** For providers of primary medical care services, excluding obstetrics/gynecology and geriatrics, the full-time practice requirements are:

- 1.** Working a minimum of forty (40) hours per week for a minimum of forty-five (45) weeks per year;
 - a.** At least thirty-two (32) hours per week must be spent providing direct patient care on an outpatient basis at the approved site(s);
 - i.** Of the minimum thirty-two (32) hours per week spent providing patient care, no more than eight (8) hours per week may be spent in a teaching capacity.
 - ii.** The remaining eight (8) hours must be spent providing clinical services for patients at the approved site(s), providing clinical services in alternative settings (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, shelters) as directed by the approved site(s), or performing practice-related administrative activities. Practice-related administrative time is limited to eight (8) hours per week.
 - b.** If working in a HRSA-funded Teaching Health Center, teaching activities shall not exceed twenty (20) hours per week.
 - i.** The remaining twenty (20) hours per week must be spent providing direct patient care at the approved site(s), eight (8) hours of which may be spent providing patient care in alternative settings (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, shelters) as directed by the approved site(s), or performing practice-related administrative activities. Practice-related administrative time is limited to eight (8) hours per week.
 - c.** If working in a CMS-approved Critical Access Hospital (CAH) or Indian Health Service (IHS) Hospital, at least sixteen (16) hours per week must be spent providing direct patient care in the hospital-affiliated outpatient clinic.
 - i.** Of the minimum sixteen (16) hours per week spent providing patient care, no more than eight (8) hours per week may be spent in a teaching capacity.
 - ii.** The remaining twenty-four (24) hours per week must be spent providing clinical services for patients at the CAH/IHS Hospital or the hospital-affiliated outpatient clinic, providing patient care at the hospital-affiliated skilled nursing facility or swing bed unit, or performing practice-related administrative activities. Practice-related administrative time is limited to eight (8) hours per week.
- 2.** No more than thirty-five (35) full-time work days per service year may be spent away from the approved site(s) for vacation, holidays, continuing professional education, illness, or any other reason.

- i. Of the minimum sixteen (16) hours per week providing patient care, no more than eight (8) hours may be spent in a teaching capacity.
 - ii. The remaining twenty-four (24) hours per week must be spent providing clinical services for patients at the CAH/IHS Hospital or the hospital-affiliated outpatient clinic, providing patient care at the hospital-affiliated skilled nursing facility or swing bed unit, or performing practice-related administrative activities. Practice-related administrative time is limited to eight (8) hours per week.
- 2. No more than thirty-five (35) full-time work days per service year may be spent away from the approved site(s) for vacation, holidays, continuing professional education, illness, or any other reason.
 - a. If the participant works more than forty (40) hours per week, only time spent away from the site(s) which causes the participant's work hours to fall below the required minimum forty (40) hours must be reported and deducted from the allowable number of absences. For example, if the participant's work schedule is forty-eight (48) hours per week, eight (8) hours of sick leave need not be reported as the participant still met the requirement of a minimum of forty (40) hours per week.

C. For behavioral and mental health providers, the full-time practice requirements are:

- 1. Working a minimum of forty (40) hours per week for a minimum of forty-five (45) weeks per year;
 - a. At least thirty-two (32) hours per week must be spent providing direct patient care on an outpatient basis at the approved site(s).
 - i. Of the minimum thirty-two (32) hours per week spent providing patient care, no more than eight (8) hours per week may be spent in a teaching capacity.
 - ii. The remaining eight (8) hours per week must be spent providing clinical services for patients at the approved site(s), providing clinical services in alternative settings (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, shelters) as directed by the approved site(s), or performing practice-related administrative activities. Practice related administrative time is limited to eight (8) hours per week.
 - b. If working in a HRSA-funded Teaching Health Center, teaching activities shall not exceed twenty (20) hours per week.

- i. The remaining twenty (20) hours per week must be spent providing patient care at the approved site(s), eight (8) hours of which may be spent providing patient care in alternative settings (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, shelters) as directed by the approved site(s), or performing practice-related administrative activities. Practice-related administrative time is limited to eight (8) hours per week.
 - c. If working in a CMS-approved Critical Access Hospital (CAH) or Indian Health Service (IHS) Hospital (**only applies to psychiatrists or physician assistants and nurse practitioners with specialized training in mental health**), at least sixteen (16) hours per week must be spent providing direct patient care in the hospital-affiliated outpatient clinic.
 - i. Of the minimum sixteen (16) hours per week providing patient care, no more than eight (8) hours may be spent in a teaching capacity.
 - ii. The remaining twenty-four (24) hours per week may be spent providing clinical services for patients at the CAH/IHS Hospital or the hospital-affiliated outpatient clinic, providing patient care at the hospital-affiliated skilled nursing facility or swing bed unit, or performing practice-related administrative activities. Practice-related administrative time is limited to eight (8) hours per week.
- 2. No more than thirty-five (35) full-time work days per service year may be spent away from the approved site(s) for vacation, holidays, continuing professional education, illness, or any other reason.
 - a. If the participant works more than forty (40) hours per week, only time spent away from the site(s) which causes the participant's work hours to fall below the required minimum forty (40) hours must be reported and deducted from the allowable number of absences. For example, if the participant's work schedule is forty-eight (48) hours per week, eight (8) hours of sick leave need not be reported as the participant still met the requirement of a minimum of forty (40) hours per week.

Telehealth and Home Health Policies

A. Telehealth.

- 1. WY-SLRP will consider telehealth as patient care when both the originating site (location of the patient) and the distant site (location of the WY-SLRP clinician) are located in an appropriate health professional shortage area (HPSA) for primary care and/or mental health and are NHSC-approved sites.

- a. All originating sites and distant sites must be identified in the WY-SLRP application and must have a HPSA score that is equivalent to or higher than the primary practice location's HPSA score.
- b. WY-SLRP service credit will not be given for telehealth services provided from a distant site or to an originating site that was not included on the WY-SLRP application.
- c. WY-SLRP clinicians must be available, at the discretion of the NHSC-approved site, to provide in-person care at the direction of each telehealth site on the WY-SLRP application regardless of whether the sites are distant or originating.
- d. Self-employed clinicians are not eligible for WY-SLRP service credit for telehealth services.
- e. If telehealth services are provided to patients in another state, the WY-SLRP clinician must be licensed to practice (including compacts) in both the state where the clinician is located (distant site) and the state where the patient is physically located (originating site).
- f. Telehealth services must be furnished using an interactive telecommunications system, defined as multimedia communications equipment that includes, at a minimum, audio and video equipment permitting two-way, real time interactive communication between the patient at the originating site and the WY-SLRP clinician at the distant site. Telephones, facsimile machines, and electronic mail systems do not meet the definition of an interactive telecommunication system.

2. Home Health.

1. WY-SLRP and NHSC do not recognize the homes of patients as NHSC-approved sites; therefore, home visits may only be conducted at the direction of the NHSC-approved site and may only be counted in the "alternative setting" allotment for patient care (see "Full-Time Clinical Practice Requirements" section).

Breach of Service Obligation

- A. In the event a participant fails to complete the required service obligation, or fails to comply with any or all requirements of their WY-SLRP contract, the participant will be determined to be in default and required to repay the TOTAL of the following:
 1. The amount paid by WY-SLRP to the participant for any period not served;

2. The number of months not served, multiplied by \$7,500.00; and
3. Interest on (1) and (2) at the maximum legal prevailing rate as determined by the Treasurer of the United States.
 - a. In the event the resulting amount is less than \$31,000.00, the participant will owe \$31,000.00.

B. Upon determination of default, WY-SLRP will notify the participant via certified mail. This notification will include:

1. Date of default and reason for determination;
2. Total amount to be repaid broken out by the formula;
3. Options for repayment (e.g., lump-sum payment and date; or monthly, quarterly, or semi-annual payments and dates to be paid);
4. A request for acknowledgement of default and indication of repayment method within thirty (30) days; and
5. The result of inaction by the participant.
 - a. In the event participant does not respond, does not notify WY-SLRP of the selected repayment option, does not comply with selected repayment option, or fails to repay all monies due within twelve (12) months, the case will be forwarded to the Wyoming Attorney General's office to begin legal collection proceedings.

C. Waiver of Repayment:

1. In accordance with the WY-SLRP contract and 42 U.S.C. § 254(o)(d)(2), a full or partial waiver of the service obligation and/or repayment may be granted if the participant cannot complete the obligation due to serious illness or other compelling personal circumstance where enforcement would be impossible, or unconscionable, or would create an extreme hardship.
 - a. WY-SLRP staff will review all written requests for waiver and approve or deny the request for waiver, in full or in part, based upon the information and supporting documentation provided.

- b.** WY-SLRP may instead suspend a participant's obligation for a period of up to one (1) year if the participant's compliance is temporarily, rather than permanently, impossible or an extreme hardship.
 - i.** A temporary suspension will result in an extension of the term of the service obligation and contract for the amount of time the suspension is granted.

D. Transfer of Service Site:

- 1.** In the event a participant is unable to fulfill the service obligation at the approved site, the participant may request to transfer to another approved site to complete their obligation.
 - a.** All requests for transfer must be submitted in writing with a detailed description of the circumstances.
 - b.** All transfers must be to an approved site within the same HPSA designation or within another suitable HPSA designation in Wyoming.
 - c.** If a lapse in service will occur due to the transfer, the participant's service obligation and contract may be extended to accommodate the lapse in service.
 - i.** Any lapse in service may not exceed sixty (60) days.
 - ii.** Any lapse which exceeds sixty (60) days will result in a default determination.
 - iii.** The service obligation and contract will be extended if the participant's full-time service for the year falls below forty (40) hours per week for forty-five (45) weeks during the service year the transfer occurs.

Wyoming State Loan Repayment Program Application

Application Deadline: September 8, 2020

Application Checklist

Below is a list of all required documentation. The below documents must be uploaded into the WY-SLRP Application and Award Monitoring System during the application process. In the event an application is submitted which is missing any of the below required documentation or forms and/or any of the documentation or forms are incomplete, the application will be considered ineligible for an award under the WY-SLRP.

Statement from the current loan holder/servicer for each loan indicating the borrower's name, original amount borrowed, date of original disbursement, and type of loan

Current account statement for each loan showing outstanding loan balance; official statements or e-statements are acceptable; online account printouts are not acceptable; all statements must show the borrower's name

Documentation for each consolidation loan showing all loans included in the consolidation as well as documentation for each loan included as required above

Documentation for each commercial loan which shows the funds were used only for the applicant's actual costs paid for healthcare professional education tuition and reasonable educational and living expenses

Copy of current practice site discounted sliding fee schedule

Copy of the healthcare provider's job description

Copy of employment contract and/or agreement showing start date (must be a copy of the signed and completed document)

Copy of the healthcare provider's permanent Wyoming professional license

Proof of healthcare provider's U.S. Citizenship or U.S. National status (certified birth certificate or passport) including legal documentation of any name changes from birth certificate or passport

Submission and Deadline

All WY-SLRP applications, required supporting documents, and practice site employment verifications *must be submitted through the WY-SLRP Application and Award Monitoring System no later than 11:59 P.M., September 8, 2020.*

To access the WY-SLRP Application and Award Monitoring System, please visit <https://wyslrp.health.wyo.gov/#/>. Please reference the WY-SLRP Application and Award Monitoring System Instructions for a step-by-step guide to registering for an account and completing an application. For further assistance, please contact Keri Wagner at keri.wagner@wyo.gov.

It is the applicant's responsibility to verify receipt of all required application documents by the Office of Rural Health by the deadline stated above.