

NATIONAL HEALTH  
**SERVICE**  
CORPS 

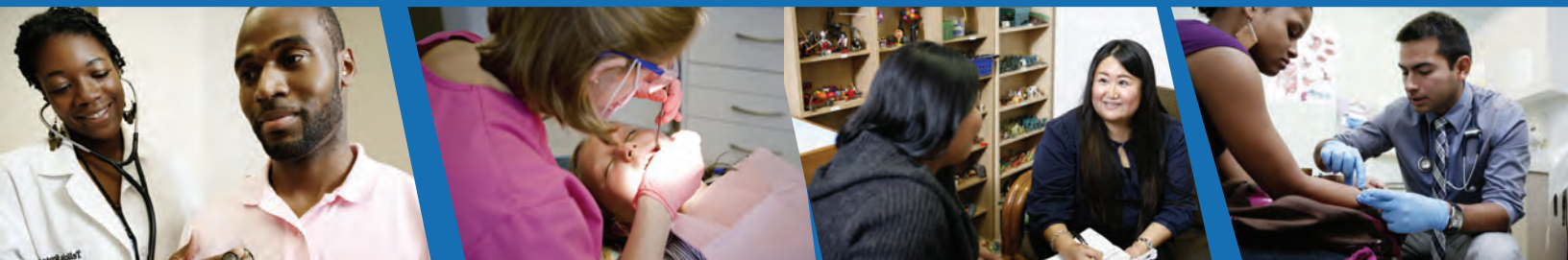
**AMBASSADOR  
TOOLKIT**

[NHSC.hrsa.gov](http://NHSC.hrsa.gov)



U.S. Department of Health  
and Human Services

Health Resources and  
Services Administration





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## About this Toolkit

The Ambassador Toolkit provides tips, resources, and materials designed to help you educate and inform students and providers about the opportunities available through NHSC programs. We have provided sample activities throughout this kit, but we encourage you to also come up with your own activities. All we ask is that you tell us what you are doing via the [Ambassador Database](#) so that we can better tailor future resources to meet your needs, and share your success stories with others who may want to replicate your efforts. We hope you find these materials helpful as you share information about the incredible opportunities available through the Corps.

## Ambassador Program Overview

National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Ambassadors help educate and inform prospective students and providers about the opportunities and benefits available through the NHSC. Ambassadors inspire, prepare, and mentor students and early-career providers to pursue their careers at NHSC-approved sites across the country.

### Ambassadors help the NHSC:

- **Generate awareness of NHSC programs** and career opportunities available to students and providers.

- **Recruit students and providers** to fill the more than 9,000 primary care jobs at NHSC-approved sites nationwide through the NHSC Loan Repayment and Scholarship Programs.
- **Train and mentor students and providers** who serve at NHSC-approved sites in diverse communities across the United States.

Ambassadors are **mentors, practicing providers, public health professionals**, and others who share a commitment to building a strong primary care workforce. More than 1,500 Ambassadors at universities, health professions schools, public health organizations, and clinics volunteer their time and talents to promote opportunities with the Corps and careers in primary care.

### Where the NHSC Fits In

The NHSC is a Federal government program that is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Specifically, the Corps is administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Bureau of Clinician Recruitment and Service (BCRS).

BCRS supports dedicated providers and increases access to care through a number of loan repayment and scholarship programs. *For additional information on BCRS programs visit [BCRS At-a-Glance fact sheet](#).*

### BCRS Loan Repayment and Scholarship Programs

LOAN REPAYMENT	SCHOLARSHIP
National Health Service Corps (NHSC LRP)	National Health Service Corps (NHSC SP)
Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program (NELRP)	Nursing Scholarship Program (NSP)
Faculty Loan Repayment Program (FLRP)	Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program (NHHSP)
State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP)	



## Generating Awareness of the NHSC

Generating awareness is an essential first step in the recruitment process. It can be as simple as displaying a poster in your office or as involved as engaging the media. Either way, the goal is the same: Make students and providers aware of the NHSC so they can become familiar with our programs and the opportunities available to them.

In this section:

### ACTIVITIES

- » Inform Others of Your Role
- » Share Information About the NHSC
- » Work with the Media

### TOOLS

- » NHSC 101 PowerPoint Presentation
- » Sample Introductory Email
- » Sample Letter to the Editor
- » Media Advisory Template
- » Sample Drop-In Article
- » Print Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
- » Social Media Primer



*(Top)*  
Cailin Duram,  
Nurse Practitioner,  
Worcester, MA

*(Bottom)*  
Kelli-Ann Voloch,  
Physician,  
Waianae, HI



## ACTIVITIES

There are endless ways you can generate awareness about the NHSC—from simply mentioning your role as an Ambassador to alerting the media about our programs. Regardless of how you choose to spread the word, your message informs others about the NHSC and helps them understand our work.

### Inform Others of Your Role

#### Let People Know You Are an Ambassador

Increase awareness of the NHSC by simply making sure people know you are an NHSC Ambassador. Tell your colleagues, supervisor, students, and other contacts. Send them an email about your role, including a link to the NHSC Web site. Ask them to forward the link to anybody who may be interested in primary care job opportunities or the loan repayment and scholarship programs.

#### Network with Local Ambassadors

Introduce yourself to other Ambassadors in your region. This will help build a local/regional network and facilitate collaboration in the future. For a list of Ambassadors near you, consult the [Ambassador Directory](#).

#### Identify Yourself as an Ambassador in Your Correspondence

Add "Ambassador, National Health Service Corps" to your email signature and/or business cards, and include the address for the NHSC Web site if appropriate: [NHSC.hrsa.gov](http://NHSC.hrsa.gov).

#### Leverage Social Media

If you use online social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn, announce your role as an Ambassador through your status messages and include a link to the NHSC Web site: [NHSC.hrsa.gov](http://NHSC.hrsa.gov). In addition, show your connection to the NHSC by becoming a fan of the NHSC Facebook page. You can also post information about application deadlines, the number of providers serving in the Corps, and more. Read the [Social Media Primer](#) for more information about using online networks to generate awareness of the NHSC.

#### Use Web Sites

Post a link to the NHSC on your organization's or school's Web site and include details about how to contact you for additional information.

#### Make It Easy for People to Find You

Display NHSC posters and flyers around your office or in an appropriate location at your workplace where people will see them. Also, consider hanging posters with contact information in high-traffic areas of clinics, hospitals, and community health centers.

#### Get Out the Facts

Use fact sheets to raise awareness about the NHSC and spark conversation. Keep several in your office and have them on hand to share with potential scholarship or loan repayment program applicants. To order materials, visit the [Ambassador Database](#).



## Share Information About the NHSC

As people identify you as part of the NHSC, you'll be asked to talk about the Corps. You can also create platforms for discussing the Corps on your own.

### Be a Resource for Information

Mention the NHSC in conversations with students and providers. If they seem interested, send a follow-up email providing introductory information including a brief description of the NHSC, an overview of programs of interest, and the link to the NHSC Web site for more information.

[Email for Potential Loan Repayment Candidates](#)

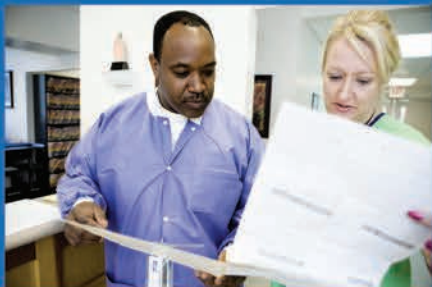
[Email for Potential Scholarship Candidates](#)

### Get 10 Minutes on the Agenda

Identify organizations that provide an audience likely to be interested in the NHSC and ask to make a short presentation at one of their meetings. For example, you can participate in orientation sessions for first-year medical students or you can consider contacting your alma mater to see if it might be interested in having you give a presentation to their students. Use the NHSC 101 PowerPoint Presentation to provide a brief overview of the Corps and encourage interested parties to follow up with you. Click [here](#) to download the NHSC 101 PowerPoint Presentation.

### Pass It On by Word of Mouth

Educate supervisors, boards of directors, and colleagues about the NHSC. Arrange to present at a board meeting, host a brown bag lunch, or schedule one-on-one time to provide an overview of the NHSC and explain our programs.



(Top)

Pedro Perez,  
Dentist,  
Rossville, GA



(Bottom)

Caillin Duram,  
Nurse Practitioner,  
Worcester, MA

### Work with the Media

Access to health care is always a hot topic in the news. With growing shortages of primary care providers across the country, stories about health care represent an opportunity to introduce the NHSC.

#### Letter to the Editor

Send a letter to the editor of your local newspaper describing the NHSC and our programs, when appropriate, and discuss how the mission of the NHSC has an impact on the people in your community. Click [here](#) to download a sample letter to the editor.

#### Media Advisory

Send a media advisory to local media outlets when you are hosting large awareness or recruitment events. Publicize your event by using a media advisory template. Click [here](#) to download a template.

#### Drop-In Newsletter Article

Use the news article provided as a tool to let people know about the NHSC, our programs, and our role in the community. Submit the article to community newspapers and relevant organization newsletters. Click [here](#) to download the article.

#### Print Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Share print public service announcements with your local newspaper or any groups or associations you belong to that publish newsletters. Click [here](#) to download PSAs.



## TOOLS

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### NHSC 101 PowerPoint Presentation

Use the NHSC 101 PowerPoint Presentation when speaking to groups of health professions students, providers, and colleagues about the NHSC's mission and programs. The PowerPoint presentation can be used in whole or part during speaking engagements ranging from brown bag lunches to larger group gatherings, and anything in between. The presentation describes the benefits

and opportunities that NHSC programs offer and provides Web addresses and additional information on eligibility requirements and application processes for students and providers. Click [here](#) to download the NHSC 101 PowerPoint Presentation.

### Sample Introductory Email

Use this email as a quick way to give people background information on the NHSC and your role as an Ambassador.

*Click to get a copy*

Dear [Name]:

Thank you for your interest in the National Health Service Corps (NHSC). I'm happy to share information about the NHSC with you. The mission of the NHSC is to build healthy communities by supporting qualified health care providers who are dedicated to working in areas of the United States with limited access to care.

The NHSC provides loan repayment assistance and scholarship awards to qualified students and providers who want to provide primary care to people in communities with limited access to care. As an Ambassador, I serve as a guide—educating, inspiring, and training these students and providers.

If you would like more information or want to discuss specific NHSC programs and opportunities, please feel free to contact me at [insert preferred contact information]. Also, please visit the NHSC Web site: [NHSC.hrsa.gov](http://NHSC.hrsa.gov).

Sincerely,

[Name]

Ambassador, National Health Service Corps

[Phone Number]

[Facebook page](#)

[Twitter](#)

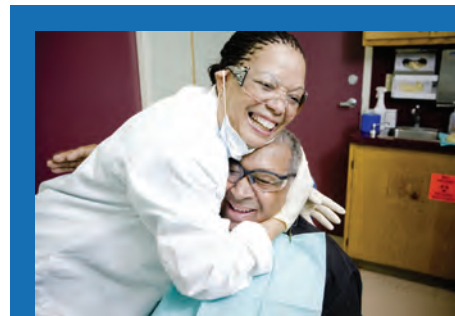




### Sample Letter to the Editor

Discuss the NHSC in relation to a recent article or issue in the community by writing a letter to the editor. Keeping the information relevant and interesting to readers will increase the chances of publication.

Most media outlets that accept letters have guidelines, so check the editorial page or the outlet's Web site to determine if the length of the letter is limited or if there are any other restrictions. That is also where you can find information on how to submit your letter.



Zuzana Mendez,  
Dentist,  
Dorchester, MA

[Click to get a copy](#)

[Date]

To the Editor, [name of publication]

Re: [Current event/issue having to do with health care]

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) makes it easier for communities, such as those described in [insert article name and author], to attract and retain primary care medical, dental, and mental and behavioral health providers.

As a volunteer Ambassador for the NHSC, I encourage students and providers interested in working in our community or other communities in need, to look into the Corps. The Corps offers providers financial support in the form of educational loan repayment and scholarships, in addition to the competitive salary of their employer, making it possible for providers to work in communities with a shortage of health professionals without the burden of student debt. And, the communities benefit for the long term: More than 75 percent of Corps providers plan to continue to serve in communities with limited access to health care beyond their service commitment. While the NHSC cannot fill every primary health care job, it does mean many patients in [insert community name] will still have access to quality health services.

*For more information about NHSC programs, please visit: [NHSC.hrsa.gov](https://www.nhsc.hrsa.gov).*

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

Ambassador, National Health Service Corps

[Phone Number]

[Email Address]



### Media Advisory Template

Alerting the media to a major NHSC event is a great way to generate awareness of the Corps. Fill out this template with the appropriate information and then submit it to local media outlets. Visit the newspapers' or radio or television stations' Web sites for information on how to properly submit your media advisory.

*Click to get a copy*



(Left to right)  
Telicia Scott,  
Physician Assistant,  
Atlanta, GA,  
Nicole Ash-Mapp,  
Physician,  
Atlanta, GA,  
Patrick Antoine,  
Physician,  
Atlanta, GA

#### For Immediate Release

[Date]

Contacts:

[Name]

[Organization]

[Phone Number]

[Email Address]

#### Media Advisory

[Announcement of event/Event name]

**What:** [Description of event]

**Who:** [Field, organization, and/or discipline of guest speakers and/or attendees]

**When:** [Date]

[Time]

**Where:** [Location]

[Street Address]

[City, State, Zip]

#### About the NHSC

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) builds healthy communities by supporting qualified medical, dental, and mental and behavioral health providers working in areas of the United States with limited access to care. It is a network of more than 8,000 primary health care professionals providing culturally competent primary care at more than 10,000 health care sites in urban, rural, and frontier areas. *For more information, visit: [NHSC.hrsa.gov](http://NHSC.hrsa.gov).*



### Sample Drop-In Article

Use this article to inform and inspire potential candidates about NHSC programs. Share this article with the editors of your community newspaper or organization's newsletters. Let them know that you are an Ambassador for the NHSC and ask them to publish the article in an upcoming edition.

[Click to get a copy](#)



Jennifer Markey,  
Nurse Practitioner,  
Worcester, MA

#### NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS HELPS ADDRESS SHORTAGE OF PROVIDERS IN COMMUNITIES IN NEED.

About one in five Americans (21 percent), or 37 million people, live in a community with a shortage of health professionals. Since 1972, the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) has been on the frontlines in these communities, providing quality health care to patients who otherwise might not receive primary care services. More than 8,000 NHSC primary care medical, dental, and mental and behavioral health providers are treating and educating millions of Americans—regardless of their ability to pay.

The work of NHSC providers is made possible, in part, because the NHSC provides scholarships and student loan repayment. For those interested in a career in primary care, these incentives ensure that debt from school loans is not an obstacle. The NHSC offers up to \$60,000 to pay off qualifying educational loans in exchange for a two-year, full-time service commitment or a four-year, part-time commitment. Providers can receive up to \$170,000 for a five-year commitment and have the opportunity to pay off all educational loans for longer service. In addition, providers earn a competitive salary and gain access to educational, networking, and training resources to support them in their work.

Since 1972, the NHSC has connected more than 37,000 primary health care practitioners to communities with limited access to primary care. And, the impact of Corps providers in the communities they serve is lasting. More than 75 percent of NHSC providers plan on staying at their NHSC-approved sites after their commitment to the Corps is complete.

*For more information about NHSC programs, visit: [NHSC.hrsa.gov](https://www.nhsc.hrsa.gov).*

*To hear the stories of NHSC providers, visit: [NHSC.hrsa.gov/video.htm](https://www.nhsc.hrsa.gov/video.htm).*



### Print Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Print public service announcements are a great way to build awareness by providing a visually engaging story about the NHSC's mission and programs. Share these PSAs with local and campus newspapers, organization newsletters, and other community publications. Offer the outlet a full-, half-, or quarter-page PSA for publication in black and white or full color so they can choose the option that best meets their needs. After you use one of the PSAs, let us know which one you used and where you used it by reporting it on your activity list.

### DOWNLOAD PSAS

- » [Full-Page \(black and white\)](#)
- » [Half-Page \(color\)](#)
- » [Half-Page \(black and white\)](#)
- » [Quarter-Page \(color\)](#)
- » [Quarter-Page \(black and white\)](#)

### Social Media Primer

Many current and prospective members of the NHSC are using social media to gain access to information on demand. Social media sites give you the ability to reach those beyond your immediate circle of colleagues or students, providing a valuable tool for generating awareness. These sites are easily accessible by anyone and may lead to more questions and one-on-one meetings about NHSC programs.

The sites discussed below are varied; some are better suited for specific purposes or audiences than others. By using more than one, you will be able to expand your outreach even further. All of these sites provide opportunities to recruit fellow professionals, students, young providers, and their contacts to the NHSC.

Here are some ways you can use social media to increase awareness of NHSC programs:

- Add "Ambassador, National Health Service Corps" to your social media profiles. This will let people know that you're involved with the NHSC, possibly prompting your colleagues to ask about it.
- Share links to NHSC programs on your social media profiles.
- Use status updates to let people know about NHSC programs, developments, and your role as an Ambassador.
- Use status updates to let people know about any NHSC events or presentations you are holding.

Major social media sites and their audiences include:

#### LinkedIn

- Connects you with professionals and fosters career-focused networking.
- Displays your credentials and career history on your profile.
- Offers an ideal network for collaborating with other health professionals who share your interests.
- Provides access to fellow health professionals and their networks, which can help you pass your message along to providers who may be interested in NHSC programs.

#### Facebook

- Keeps you up-to-date with friends and colleagues and focuses on personal or extracurricular interests.
- Displays on your profile your personal interests along with where you went to school and where you work.
- Offers a less formal, more personal atmosphere, conducive for exchanging updates in your personal and professional life.

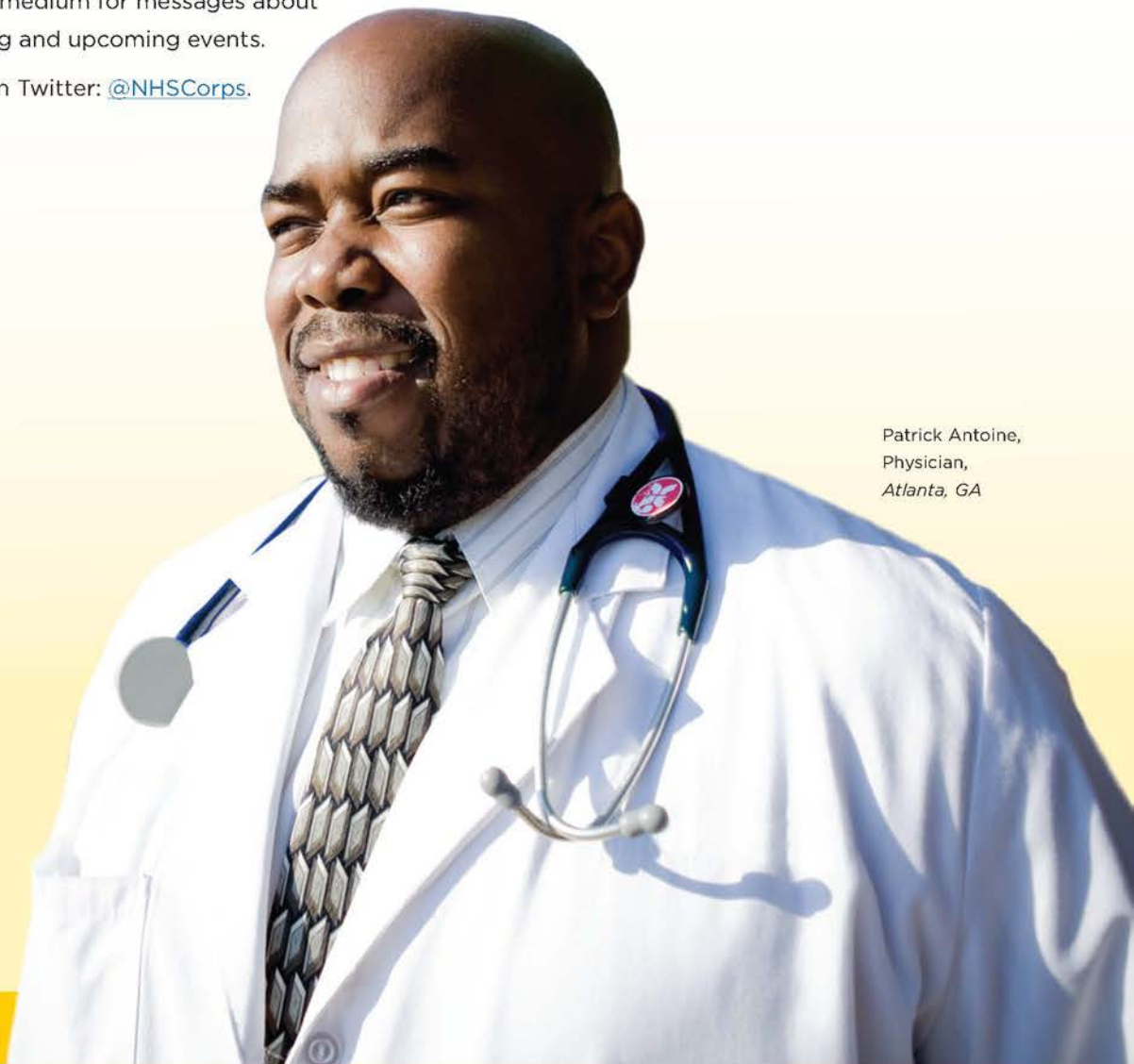


- Provides access to students, younger providers, and professionals.
- Visit the [NHSC Facebook Fan Page](#).

#### Twitter

- Offers a way to broadcast quick, up to 140-character announcements and comments—simple and to the point.
- Offers much less personal information-sharing features than Facebook but is more public and accessible.
- Allows you to follow comments/thoughts of people of interest and have people follow your comments—they could be students, professionals, or young providers.
- Provides a great medium for messages about what you're doing and upcoming events.
- Visit the NHSC on Twitter: [@NHSCorps](#).

The amount of information you choose to share on these sites will vary depending on your comfort level. Because Facebook is more personal, you may not want to add your colleagues or students as “friends,” but you may refer them to the NHSC Facebook Fan Page. Regardless of how much information you provide, do let friends and followers know that you are also available to speak about NHSC programs over the phone, via email, or in person.



Patrick Antoine,  
Physician,  
Atlanta, GA



## Recruiting for NHSC Programs

Once providers and students are aware of and have expressed interest in the NHSC, as an Ambassador you will likely need to engage them more actively in the recruiting process by:

- Guiding them deeper into the details of the programs.
- Helping them through the application process.
- Pointing them on the path to pursuing a career with the support of NHSC's programs.

In this section:

### TIPS

- » Know the Programs
- » Identify a Support Network
- » Recognize Recruitment is a Continuous Process

### ACTIVITIES

- » Serve as a Resource for Applicants
- » Support the Application Process
- » Connect to Potential Jobs

### TOOLS

- » NHSC 101 PowerPoint Presentation
- » Email for Potential Loan Repayment Candidates
- » Email for Potential Scholarship Candidates
- » Event Planning Guide
- » Evaluation Form
- » Information Follow-Up Form
- » NHSC Fact Sheets



(Top)  
Michelle Kang,  
Psychologist,  
Waianae, HI



(Bottom)  
Amelia Granberry,  
Dentist,  
Trenton, GA



## TIPS

Before you begin any recruitment activity, keep these tips in mind.

### Know the Programs

Familiarize yourself with NHSC (and other HRSA) programs. Understand the latest eligibility requirements, award amounts and conditions, and application procedures, as there may be changes with each application cycle. Up-to-date information for each program can be found at:

- [NHSC Loan Repayment Program](#)
- [NHSC Scholarship Program](#)
- [Other BCRS Programs of Interest](#)

### Identify a Support Network

Prospective Corps members may have questions you don't know how to answer, or they may want to speak to others about the NHSC. If you are not a Corps Alumnus, identify NHSC-approved sites or Corps members in your area that can provide a different perspective. There are also a variety of state and regional points of contact that can provide information to prospective providers. Identify the BCRS regional office that serves your area or reach out to your State Primary Care Office (PCO), State Primary Care Association (PCA), State Office of Rural Health (SORH), or Area Health Education Center (AHEC).

- [BCRS Regional Office Directory](#)
- [State Primary Care Office Directory](#)
- [State Primary Care Association Directory](#)
- [State Office of Rural Health Directory](#)
- [Area Health Education Center Directory](#)

### Recognize Recruitment is a Continuous Process

Some prospective providers will need to hear from you multiple times. Follow up with the students and providers you come into contact with through your recruitment activities and provide training and mentorship to prepare them to launch their career in primary care. *For specific examples of what you can do when interacting one-on-one with students, visit [Training and Mentoring](#).*

Kelli-Ann Voloch,  
Physician,  
Waianae, HI





## ACTIVITIES

There are a variety of activities you can implement to assist prospective Corps members moving from interest to application. This section provides some suggestions in three common areas: providing more detailed information, supporting the application process, and making the connection with potential job opportunities and communities.

### Serve as a Resource for Applicants

You've given the overview presentation, and prospects have seen the NHSC Web site, watched our videos on YouTube, and talked with you. They're

very interested and are seriously considering applying. Now is the time to dive deeper and provide the details.



Roberto Beltran,  
Nurse Practitioner,  
Dorchester, MA

#### Host an Event or Informational Session

Host a brown bag lunch or an information session for prospective NHSC applicants. Invite a Corps Alumnus or provider currently serving in your area to be on hand to discuss their experience and answer questions.

- NHSC job listings will provide you with contact information for individuals in a specific region and practice:

[NHSC Recruitment Site](#)

#### Provide Regular Updates on the Basics

Make sure candidates understand the eligibility requirements, award amounts and conditions, and application procedures. You can leave them a message, send them a text, or send an e-blast. Refer them to these Web sites:

- [NHSC Loan Repayment Program](#)
- [NHSC Scholarship Program](#)
- [NHSC Recruitment Site](#)

#### Send Leads to the NHSC

The Corps regularly sends out information about the scholarship and loan repayment programs. At information sessions or one-on-one meetings, collect names of interested prospects using the [Information Follow-Up Form](#) and send them via email to [nhscambassador@hrsa.gov](mailto:nhscambassador@hrsa.gov) or mail them to: Diane E. Culkin, MPA, Manager, Ambassador Program, BCRS/DEA/ORB, Health Resources and Services Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, 13-92, Rockville, MD 20857.

#### Involve Prospective Applicants in Local NHSC Events

Check the NHSC Web site for NHSC-sponsored events in your area and bring prospective applicants to a networking session, opening plenary, or career planning part of a local meeting.



**Facilitate Visits to NHSC-approved Sites**

Contact an NHSC-approved site and ask if you can bring one or two prospective applicants to the site. Ask if an NHSC provider might have time to talk about his or her experiences and answer any questions.

If someone is unsure primary care is for them, encourage them to participate in a learning-based program designed to provide exposure to careers in primary health care.

**Link Potential Applicants to Primary Care Training Experiences**

- **Introduce Students and Residents to SEARCH.** Student/Resident Experiences and Rotations in Community Health (SEARCH) is a state-based program that enables students and residents to serve clinical rotations on multidisciplinary health care teams in communities with limited access to health care across the United States and its territories. SEARCH rotations typically include a clinical practice module as well as a community service project. SEARCH programs are available in 28 states. *Find out more information about SEARCH:* <http://NHSC.hrsa.gov/search/>.
- **Promote CHSC Experiences.** Collegiate Health Service Corps (CHSC) is a state-based program where undergraduates learn firsthand what it is like to work in a primary health care setting through service learning experiences in communities in need. CHSC programs include classroom training as well as a clinical practice module. CHSC programs are available in five states—Louisiana, Tennessee, New York, Utah, and Florida. *For more information about CHSC, please contact* [RTrachtenberg@nationalahec.org](mailto:RTrachtenberg@nationalahec.org).
- **Identify AHEC Opportunities.** Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Programs help recruit, train, and retain a health professions workforce committed to communities with a shortage of health professionals. AHECs understand where the need for health care professionals in the state and communities exists, link to community and academic educational partnerships, and connect NHSC members to educational opportunities, continuing education, and rotations for residents. There are 55 AHEC Programs/Centers in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and the territories of Guam, Palau, and Puerto Rico. *The list of AHEC Programs can be found at* <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/grants/area.htm>.



### Support the Application Process

NHSC programs are competitive, and not all qualified applicants will receive an award. Therefore, it is important for candidates to submit a complete

application on time. Once prospects decide they're ready to apply, offer to assist them through the application process.

<b>Connect Applicants with Appropriate Resources</b>	<p>If you are not able to assist with the application process, refer them to local NHSC contacts such as regional offices or State Primary Care Offices or suggest they contact the Corps directly:</p> <p><i>Support Center: 1-800-221-9393; Email: <a href="mailto:GetHelp@hrsa.gov">GetHelp@hrsa.gov</a></i></p>
<b>Provide Reminders (e.g., Flyers, Email Updates) for Each Application Cycle</b>	<p>Potential candidates will be interested to know about application opening and closing dates. As an Ambassador, you will receive email alerts with important information about application deadlines; you can mark these dates on your calendar as a personal reminder to send updates.</p>
<b>Make a Checklist for Applicants</b>	<p>Include application procedures for a handy reference. Included should be a reminder for your students and providers to send in their application materials on time.</p>

### Connect to Potential Jobs

Those interested in the NHSC Loan Repayment Program generally don't understand they must secure employment at an NHSC-approved site before applying to the program. If they are not currently working at an NHSC-approved site, this may cause

some concern. Ambassadors are "boots on the ground" for the Corps in communities around the country. You know the area, the needs, the clinics, and the opportunities best. Help applicants identify potential opportunities in your community.

<b>Uncover Job Opportunities</b>	<p>You can work with local NHSC-approved sites to identify job opportunities for students or providers. There may be jobs already open or some that will become available in the near future. Keep in contact with the administrators at local NHSC-approved sites and ask them to alert you to job openings.</p>
<b>Grow the NHSC Network</b>	<p>Local clinics in your area may meet the requirements to be an NHSC member site and receive an NHSC-sponsored provider. <i>You can introduce them to the NHSC by directing them to the NHSC Web site: <a href="http://NHSC.hrsa.gov">NHSC.hrsa.gov</a>.</i></p>
<b>Attend a Career Fair</b>	<p>Participate in a career or job fair and be on hand to highlight some of the great opportunities available in your own backyard.</p>



## TOOLS

### Email for Potential Loan Repayment Candidates

Send this email to individuals who have expressed an interest in the NHSC and are potential candidates for the loan repayment program. This will provide them with information about the NHSC and your contact information.

[Click to get a copy](#)



Patrick Antoine,  
Physician,  
Atlanta, GA

To: [Email Address]

From: [Your Name], NHSC Ambassador

Subject: More Information on the National Health Service Corps

Dear [Name]:

Thank you for your interest in the National Health Service Corps (NHSC). I am an Ambassador for the NHSC at [Organization], and I'm happy to provide you with additional information.

As you may know, the NHSC is a network of more than 8,000 primary health care professionals and 10,000 sites that serve communities in regions of the country that have limited access to health care. To support their service, the NHSC offers providers financial support in the form of loan repayment and scholarships.

The NHSC awards up to \$60,000 in initial loan repayment for two years of service and up to \$170,000 for completing a five-year service commitment at NHSC-approved sites. There is also the option to pay off all your student loans with service beyond five years. When you launch your career at an NHSC-approved site, you not only gain valuable loan repayment assistance, but you also earn a competitive salary and benefits from the site where you practice. In addition to financial support, the NHSC offers ongoing training, networking, and educational resources for all Corps members.

Feel free to reach out to me with any questions you have as you explore these opportunities. I'm happy to discuss the benefits and rewards of working in communities with a shortage of health professionals and talk more about the programs and resources the NHSC can offer. If you'd like to talk further, please email or call me at \_\_\_\_\_ to schedule a time for us to meet.

Sincerely,

[Name]

Ambassador, National Health Service Corps

[Phone Number]

[Facebook page](#)

[Twitter](#)



### Email for Potential Scholarship Candidates

Send this email to students who have expressed an interest in the NHSC and are potential candidates for the scholarship program. This will provide them with information about the NHSC and your contact information.

[Click to get a copy](#)



Telicia Scott,  
Physician Assistant,  
Atlanta, GA

To: [Student's Email Address]

From: [Your Name], NHSC Ambassador

Subject: More Information on the National Health Service Corps

Dear [Student's Name]:

Thank you for your interest in the National Health Service Corps (NHSC). I am an Ambassador for the NHSC at [Organization], and I'm happy to provide you with additional information.

As you may know, the NHSC is a network of more than 8,000 primary health care professionals and 10,000 sites that serve communities in regions of the country that have limited access to health care. To support their service, the NHSC offers providers financial support in the form of loan repayment and scholarships.

NHSC Scholarship recipients receive payment of tuition, required fees, and some other education costs, tax free, for as many as four years. Students also receive a monthly living stipend. In exchange, NHSC Scholars serve one year for each year of support (minimum of two years of service) at an NHSC-approved site in a high-need Health Professional Shortage Area.

In addition to financial support, the NHSC offers ongoing training, networking, and educational resources for all Corps members.

Feel free to reach out to me with any questions you have as you explore these opportunities. I'm happy to discuss the benefits and rewards of working in communities with a shortage of health professionals and talk more about the programs and resources the NHSC can offer. If you'd like to talk further, please email or call me at \_\_\_\_\_ to schedule a time for us to meet.

Sincerely,

[Name]

Ambassador, National Health Service Corps

[Phone Number]

[Facebook page](#)

[Twitter](#)



## Event Planning Guide

Events are often successful ways of sharing information about the NHSC's mission and programs with health professions students, providers, and colleagues. An event may include everything from a brown bag lunch or coffee to an appearance at a health or recruiting fair, professional shadow days, meetings with local professional or health care associations, and anything in between. For those individuals in rural areas, you may want to consider planning a "virtual" event such as a webinar or conference call to ensure that potential applicants can participate.

Regardless of the event, some planning steps should be considered to ensure the successful development and execution of your activity.

### Step One: Determine the Goal of the Event

The first step in planning a successful event is determining the goal: knowing exactly what you are trying to achieve. This will help you determine:

- » Type of people to invite (e.g., students, providers, residents, or financial aid counselors)
- » Appropriate size of the event
- » Type of venue

### Step Two: Identify Key Participants

Determining who will be speaking at or participating in your event is an important early step. Find out their availability so you can begin considering a date for the event. People you may want to consider participating in your event include:

- NHSC Alumni
- Community leaders
- Current NHSC-approved sites or providers

### Step Three: Finalize the Date

There are several things to consider when selecting the date of your event:

- If it is an outdoor event, what will the weather be like?

- Will your audience be able to attend? In general, avoid planning events during busy times of the day in your clinic, grading periods (for faculty), or examination periods (for students), and avoid scheduling your event in conflict with any major community events such as an athletic event, dance, or festival.
- Do you have enough time to publicize the event, plan the agenda, and obtain an event permit (if necessary)?
- Is the venue available? Finding a free and appropriate venue can take a little time.

### Step Four: Secure the Venue

You need a location where you reach the right folks in the right way. If you are hoping to have a highly interactive event with a lot of movement and noise, you should plan on a large room with plenty of space. However, if you are planning to host a quiet discussion forum, a smaller room in a private setting is appropriate.

- Check the local chamber of commerce's Web site for a list of clinics, libraries, community centers, or entertainment venues. Contact information or a link to their Web site is usually provided. Call and ask about what they can do for you!
- Select a venue that is easily accessible to your audience. Make sure the venue is large enough to hold everyone, and consult with the venue administrator to ensure that it is equipped with everything you need.
- Some events, especially large ones, need to be registered with relevant authorities in your community such as campus police, clinic security, health center security, parking enforcement, and the events staff for the venue.



### Step Five: Plan and Publicize the Event

Once you have determined the goal of your event and identified your audience, it becomes easier to spread your message effectively. Keep the interests and schedules of your audience in mind as you plan and promote your event.

- Take your time and plan a focused, interactive agenda. A time period of 30 to 90 minutes is usually right to hold your audience's attention. The NHSC has tools that may be useful during your event, such as the [NHSC 101 PowerPoint Presentation](#), [YouTube videos](#), and [fact sheets](#).
- Be sure to confirm times and locations with speakers and review the agenda with them in advance.
- Focus your publicity efforts in the places where your audience spends a lot of time:
  - If you are hosting an event for your colleagues, make an announcement in your department newsletter and post additional flyers in staff or faculty lounges.
  - If you are hosting an event for providers, post flyers in teaching hospitals, community health centers, and your clinic's or organization's bulletin board.
  - If you are hosting an event for students, publish an event announcement in the campus newspaper, post flyers in the dining hall and student union, and mention the event over campus radio and TV stations.
- Visit your local community center or the human resources director at your facility and ask what resources are available. These people may also be able to help you publicize your event or reserve an event venue.
- If you are located on a college campus, visit the student activities office. It may have a variety of resources such as student directories, information on clubs and

organizations of interest, or even articles on similar events that will help you plan.

- The NHSC has promotional tools to spark people's interests about the Corps. If you are planning a major event, consider distributing a media advisory about the event and send an email to your speakers or key individuals whom you would like to attend. Make sure you hang a poster in your department or post flyers on bulletin boards. Even materials that are not specific to your event will get people talking about NHSC programs.

#### » [Media Advisory](#)

### Step Six: Event Follow-Up

The key ingredient to establishing sustainable momentum for your efforts is **strong follow-through**.

- Distribute the event evaluation form to measure the success of your event; this can be a good source of feedback.
- Provide a sign-in sheet at the event where attendees can list their names and contact information. This is necessary to send follow-up information and thank-you notes.
- Follow up with attendees by sending them a thank-you email or postcard and keep them updated by forwarding important e-blasts from the NHSC. Send a follow-up note a couple of months after the event to touch base and let them know about future events.
- Submit a brief report about the event to the NHSC! We'd like to know about your work supporting NHSC programs. *You can use the reporting form at: <http://blsweb.net/nhscAmbassadors/login.cfm>.*



Jennifer Markey,  
Nurse Practitioner,  
Worcester, MA



## Event Evaluation Form

How useful did you find today's event and presentation?

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful

Which NHSC and BCRS programs and resources would you like to learn more about? *(Select all that apply)*

- NHSC Loan Repayment Program
- NHSC Scholarship Program
- Nursing Loan Repayment Program
- Nursing Scholarship Program
- Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program
- Faculty Loan Repayment Program
- State Loan Repayment Program
- Student/Resident Experiences and Rotations in Community Health (SEARCH)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about this event?

- Word of mouth
- Poster/flyer
- Direct invitation
- Academic advisor or other faculty
- Health center/clinic administrator
- Peer
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



# Information Follow-up Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address(es) \_\_\_\_\_

Clinical Discipline \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_

FOR STUDENTS  
University/College \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation Year \_\_\_\_\_

1. Would you like to receive emails regarding updates to NHSC Programs? For which programs?

- Loan Repayment Program
- Scholarship Program
- Ambassador Program
- Becoming an NHSC-Approved Clinical Site
- Other please specify

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What questions do you have about NHSC?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. When and how did you first hear about NHSC?

\_\_\_\_\_



# Information Follow-up Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address(es) \_\_\_\_\_

Clinical Discipline \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_

FOR STUDENTS  
University/College \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation Year \_\_\_\_\_

1. Would you like to receive emails regarding updates to NHSC Programs? For which programs?

- Loan Repayment Program
- Scholarship Program
- Ambassador Program
- Becoming an NHSC-Approved Clinical Site
- Other please specify

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What questions do you have about NHSC?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. When and how did you first hear about NHSC?

\_\_\_\_\_





## Training and Mentoring

Training, educating, and mentoring is perhaps closest to your everyday work, and the activities you undertake in this role can be the most significant in making a long-term difference in the impact of the NHSC and the work of NHSC providers.

As an educator and mentor, you will:

- Expose students and providers to experiences working with the communities in need.
- Increase their awareness of cultural competence through activities and practical experiences.
- Guide students and young providers, who demonstrate promise and interest, to a primary care career focused on communities in need.

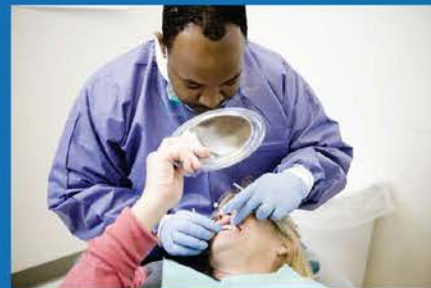
**In this section:**

### ACTIVITIES

- » Enhance Classroom Training
- » Create Hands-On Learning Experiences
- » Serve as a Mentor

### TOOLS

- » Information Session Flyer
- » Mentoring Guides
  - Mentoring NHSC Providers: Ambassador's Guide
  - Mentoring NHSC Providers: Provider's Guide
  - Mentoring NHSC Health Professions Students: Ambassador's Guide
  - Mentoring NHSC Health Professions Students: Scholar's Guide



(Top)  
Pedro Perez,  
Dentist,  
Rossville, GA

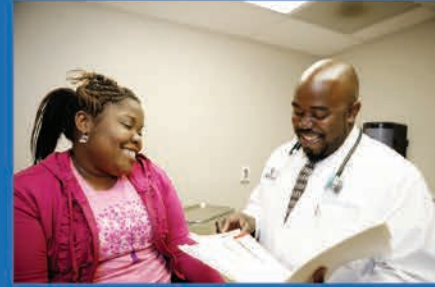
(Bottom)  
Jennifer Markey,  
Nurse Practitioner,  
Worcester, MA



## ACTIVITIES

### Enhance Classroom Training

Corps members experience many benefits of working in communities in need, but also face common challenges. These challenges can include isolation and limited access to resources. Your guidance and teaching can help them anticipate and overcome issues and ultimately have successful experiences in the communities they serve.



Patrick Antoine,  
Physician,  
Atlanta, GA

#### Hold an Educational Seminar on Common Challenges

Host an information session on the realities, challenges, and rewards of working with communities with limited access to health care. Introducing Corps members to the unique challenges of working in communities in need can help them better understand the needs of communities with a shortage of health professionals. Invite an NHSC provider or Alumnus in your area to talk about their experiences.

#### Raise Awareness of NHSC-Provided Training

The NHSC has partnered with Morehouse School of Medicine to develop a Web site intended to increase support of primary care providers working in communities with limited access to health care through on-demand training, networking, and informational resources. Corps members can access CME/CEU-approved presentations, webinars, and enhanced training modules as well as connect with other primary care professionals and share information. [Primary Care For All](#)

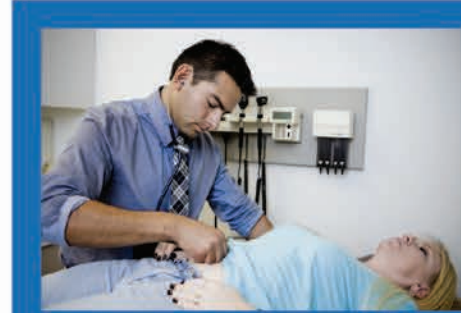
#### Develop a Cultural Training Program

Beyond clinical skills and knowledge, providers who succeed in the NHSC have a strong grasp of culturally competent care. They have respect for the dimensions that cultural or religious beliefs bring to a patient's overall health. Work with your institution to establish a cultural competence curriculum and training plan. Offer your expertise to help shape the program. For inspiration, consult HRSA's [primary care learning modules](#).



## Create Hands-On Learning Experiences

NHSC members and Ambassadors report that exposing students and providers to work experiences greatly enhances their understanding of the needs and opportunities that come with providing care in communities with limited access to health care. Introducing them to such environments can fuel their interest in exploring a career in these areas.



Roberto Beltran,  
Nurse Practitioner,  
Dorchester, MA

### Introduce Students and Residents to SEARCH

If you are mentoring a student or resident who is eager to gain hands-on learning opportunities in a multidisciplinary setting, the Student/Resident Experiences and Rotations in Community Health (SEARCH) program may be a great option. SEARCH rotations typically include a clinical practice module as well as a community service project to give participants a real-world sense of working in a community with a shortage of health professionals. SEARCH programs are available in 28 states. Find out more about SEARCH: <http://NHSC.hrsa.gov/search/>.

### Cultivate New Rotation and Shadowing Opportunities

If you are on campus, reach out to local clinics, the nearest Area Health Education Center (AHEC), or your State Primary Care Association or Office (PCA/PCO) to create opportunities for students and providers to experience working in an community in need. If you work in any of these off-campus settings, reach out to faculty on campus to find interested students. Consult the [Ambassador Directory](#) to see if you can partner with a fellow Ambassador.

- **Look for Rural Opportunities.** Develop rural rotation and shadowing opportunities through your State PCA/PCO or other campus or community-based programs that focus on rural health issues in your region.
- **Trade Places.** Consider exchanges with campuses in another part of the state or region where the health care needs or infrastructure may be different from your own. Create rural-urban partnerships or cross-cultural partnerships that can enable students to have experiences with different populations.
- **Involve Students in Your Activities.** NHSC Ambassadors often create their own practice experiences, from mobile clinics that serve migrant farm workers, to a dental check-up fair that packs a stadium with patients from up to 200 miles away. Ambassadors can take the initiative to bring care where they see it is needed most—and bring students along for the adventure and learning experience.



### Serve as a Mentor

Any one-on-one advisory relationship you form with the students and providers with whom you work creates the opportunity to establish a strong mentoring relationship. Effective mentoring can be formal or informal, but for students and early-career providers seeking guidance and advice, it can be invaluable in helping them succeed. Ambassadors serve as go-to guides, asking and answering questions, listening to the concerns of students and providers, and guiding them toward a rewarding career.

Use the NHSC Mentoring Guides as a reference to structure a mentoring relationship effectively and get the most out of the exchange.



Pedro Perez,  
Dentist,  
Rossville, GA

#### Be Alert to Promising Candidates

Identify students interested in primary care and meet with them at least once per quarter. Offer to help them navigate the decisions they face during training and provide advice as they consider the direction of their careers.

#### Think Beyond the Campus

Contact local NHSC-approved sites and offer to serve as a mentor to a young provider. Some NHSC providers benefit from additional support on the job—especially providers who have different backgrounds than their patients, or who come from a different part of the country. A strong local support network can make a big difference in their success and satisfaction.

#### Speak Up

Share your experience, knowledge, and inspiration with peers, providers, and students. Speak at NHSC-sponsored conferences about your work with the program and your experience as an educator, an Ambassador, and a mentor. Contact the NHSC if you are interested in being considered for speaking opportunities.



## TOOLS

### Mentoring Guides

Serving as a leader and mentor to future generations of primary care professionals can be a rewarding opportunity for an NHSC Ambassador. A mentoring relationship is defined by its participants, and there is no set process that applies to all situations. However, this curriculum is designed to help you create a strong foundation on which to build your mentoring relationships. It includes discussion topics for your first three encounters and a program evaluation.

### Things You Should Know About Mentoring

Mentoring is a one-on-one relationship—a mutually beneficial partnership between an experienced individual and a student or novice professional. Mentors use their experience to serve as a friend, advisor, and confidant.

The most powerful mentoring relationships have the following characteristics:

- **Apprentice-driven.** When students or providers recognize the value of a mentoring relationship, they take the initiative to develop the relationship and set the tone, pace, and expectations based on what they are seeking to gain from a mentor.
- **Strong personal connections.** There is an element of personal and professional chemistry in the most successful mentoring programs. Individuals must feel comfortable enough to confide in their mentors, ask difficult questions, and value their advice.
- **Open communication.** Successful partnerships are transparent from the very first meeting. The expectations of both parties should be clearly defined and updated throughout the course of the relationship.

As a mentor, you will make a difference in the lives of those you are guiding and, in turn, they will make a difference in the lives of their patients. If you're new to mentoring, these guides suggest discussion topics and speaking points that will help you build a structured mentoring relationship. If you're more comfortable with an informal approach, these guides can offer suggestions for getting started and directing conversations.



(Top)

Jenny Ebesutani,  
Psychologist,  
Waianae, HI

(Bottom)

Zuzana Mendez,  
Dentist,  
Dorchester, MA

### Mentoring Providers in the Field

- » [Ambassador's Guide](#)
- » [Provider's Guide](#)

### Mentoring Health Professions Students

- » [Ambassador's Guide](#)
- » [Scholar's Guide](#)



## MENTORING NHSC PROVIDERS: AMBASSADOR'S GUIDE

[\[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THE GUIDE AS A SEPARATE PDF\]](#)

Use this guide to foster the mentoring process and provide structure to the relationship you form with the provider you are guiding. This guide will provide numerous suggestions on topics to cover and will give you a place to start.

### At the Outset

At your first meeting, you can get started by collecting some basic information. You may already have information about the provider; write the information you already have on this sheet and fill in the missing information. Keep in mind that all of the information will not apply to every provider. Keep the sheet with your notes from each session.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline/Specialty: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate/Health Professional School: \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Residency/Training: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Year in School: \_\_\_\_\_

Year in Residency/Training: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Spent in Clinical Arena: \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Affiliations: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies/Outside Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

### Session One: Core Questions

At the beginning of your relationship, work together to identify your expectations for the exchange.

Topics you may discuss include:

- Your vision of a mentoring relationship
- The areas in which the provider might need particular support

You should also be prepared to answer questions about your own background. Your provider will want to learn what you bring to the relationship.

Listen to your provider's needs and expectations. The most successful mentoring relationships are

piloted by the person seeking guidance. Use these discussion questions to learn about the provider's experiences, anxieties, and needs, and be prepared to respond to any questions.

- What experiences impacted your decision to go into health care?
- When did you first become aware of disparities in health care, and what motivated you to direct your career toward helping to address these issues?
- What do you hope to gain from working in a community with limited access to health care?
- What do you hope you can achieve personally and professionally through this work?



You may be asked many different questions, ranging from the geography of the area where you both work to career goals and the nuts-and-bolts of being an NHSC provider. In your first meeting, be prepared to answer questions such as:

- Is there any NHSC-related paperwork that I need to file with Human Resources?
- What tax forms do I need for deducting my NHSC Scholarship award?
- How does the NHSC keep track of my progress?
- What are the basic clinic procedures?
- Is there a review process at this site?
- What are the unspoken rules of the organization?
- What are the challenges and benefits of working in this particular clinic or community?
- How should I make the most of this opportunity so that it benefits my career?
- How can I best contribute to the team of health practitioners that work here at this facility? How can I be a valued resource?

At the end of the session, determine the communication method that works best for you both for planning future meetings and for informal Q&A.

### Session Two: Prepare to Work in a Culturally Diverse Community

One of the most significant barriers to health care is the cultural divide between patients and their health care providers. Providers sometimes find jobs in communities very different from those they have experienced, and one part of your role as a mentor is preparing them to meet the challenges they might face as a result. In this session, you should learn about the provider's background in community service and discuss the relevance of cultural competency.

The following questions will help you to identify the provider's strengths and weaknesses in areas important for cultural competence:

- What multicultural experiences have you had in the past? How will they be useful at your NHSC-approved site?
- What do you know about this community and the general culture of the population?
- What languages do you speak?
- Do you know of any approaches to patient communication, diagnosis, or treatment that may be pertinent to this community? What are your thoughts about these trends? How might they enhance the services you provide?
- What excites you most about working here? What are you most apprehensive about?

You may be asked questions about the culture and community. You can help the provider become familiar with the region by discussing your experiences. Be prepared to answer questions such as:

- What can I expect when I start working at this site?
- In your experience, how do patients expect us to interact with them?
- What are the most common challenges you find in working with patients at this clinic?
- What are the most common health issues?
- What is the best way to communicate with patients here to deliver health messages and see results in their response to health issues?
- How can I best support my colleagues?
- Did you face any cultural challenges when you first started working in this community? How can I learn from your experiences?



### Session Three: Career Goals

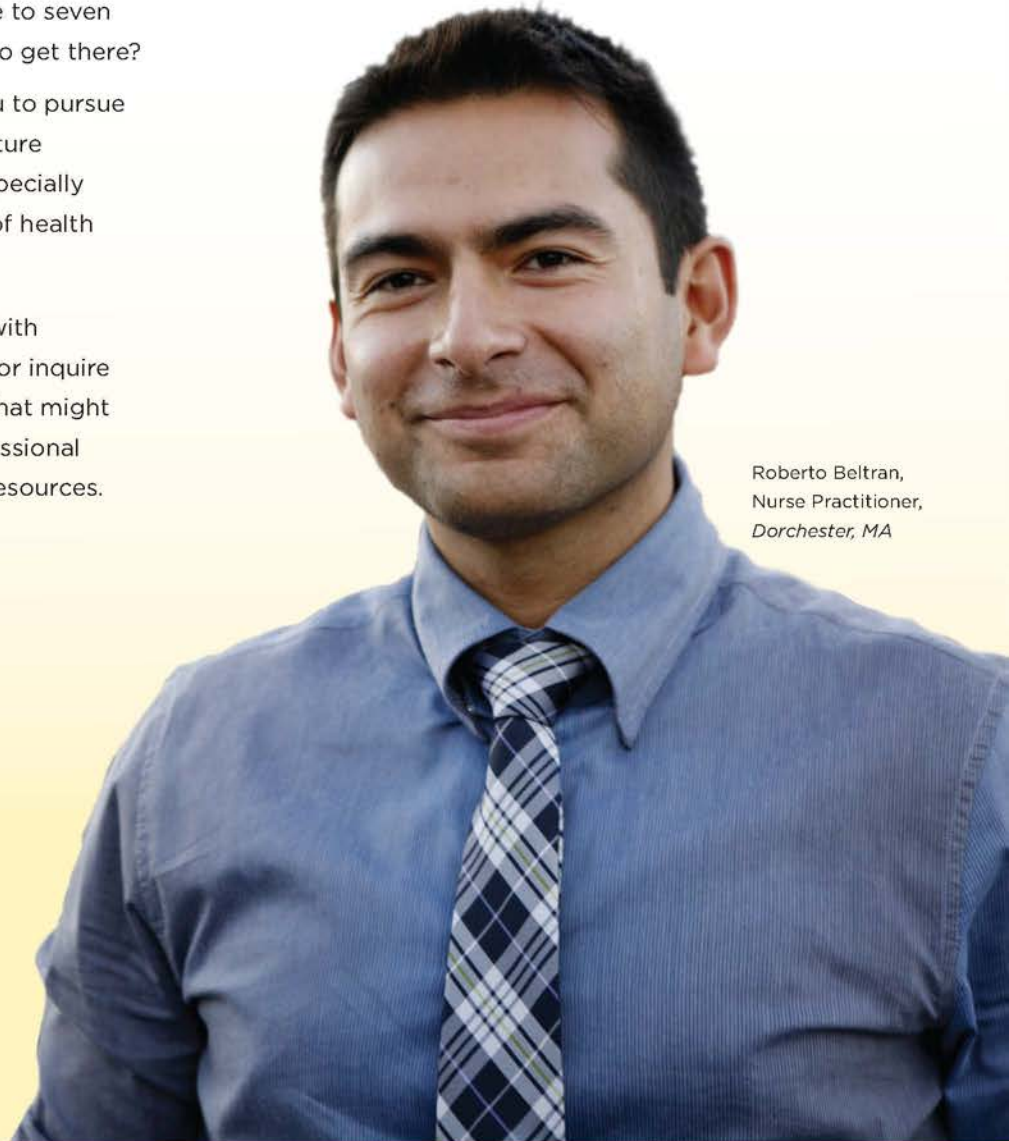
Although NHSC providers are allowed to leave their NHSC-approved site after a minimum of two years, we hope their service experience will prepare them for a challenging and meaningful career as a health care practitioner, and they will continue to offer primary care to communities in need.

Use these questions to discuss the provider's career goals:

- What do you hope to learn from your experience with the NHSC?
- How do you plan to use this experience?
- Where do you see yourself in five to seven years? What steps will you take to get there?
- How will this experience help you to pursue your career goals and identify future opportunities in primary care, especially in communities with a shortage of health professionals?

The provider may ask you to link them with professional contacts in your networks, or inquire about health professional associations that might provide networking opportunities, professional development opportunities, and other resources.

Encourage the provider to learn about the experiences of other providers who have worked in Health Professional Shortage Areas. Providers should also talk to State Primary Care Offices and Primary Care Associations for a different perspective of working with the communities in need. The success stories posted on the NHSC Web site feature the experiences of providers who have pursued careers in communities unfamiliar to them and experienced great personal and professional rewards as a result.



Roberto Beltran,  
Nurse Practitioner,  
Dorchester, MA





## MENTORING NHSC PROVIDERS: PROVIDER'S GUIDE

[\[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THE GUIDE AS A SEPARATE PDF\]](#)

Use this guide to help you engage in the mentoring process and provide structure to the relationship you form with your mentor. This guide will provide numerous suggestions on topics to cover and will give you a place to start.

### At the Outset

When you first meet your mentor, you can get started by collecting some basic information. You may already have information about your mentor, but at a minimum, it may be helpful to be aware of the following information as you begin your mentoring relationship.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline/Specialty: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate/Health Professional School: \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Residency/Training: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Affiliations: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies/Outside Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

### Session One: Core Questions

At the beginning of your relationship, work with your mentor to identify your expectations for the exchange. Topics you may discuss include:

- Your vision of a mentoring relationship
- The areas in which you feel you might need particular support

You have the power to pilot the most successful mentoring relationship. Learn about your mentor's background and history and be prepared to share your background and your interest in serving as a primary care practitioner in a community in need.

Your mentor will also want to know about you and what motivated you to join the NHSC. Be prepared to talk about:

- What experiences impacted your decision to pursue a career in primary care?
- When did you first become aware of health disparities in America, and why did you choose to devote your career to addressing them?
- What do you hope to gain from working in a community with limited access to health care?
- What do you hope to achieve personally and professionally through your NHSC experience?



Once you've learned a bit about your mentor, use this opportunity to discuss your new position. You might want to ask about routine things such as the geography of the area, clinic procedures, human resources, and maintaining contact with the NHSC.

- Is there any NHSC-related paperwork that I need to file with Human Resources?
- What tax forms do I need for deducting my NHSC Scholarship award?
- How does the NHSC keep track of my progress?
- What are the basic clinic procedures?
- Is there a review process at this site?
- What are the unspoken rules of the organization?

You should also plan to discuss more substantive topics such as:

- What are the challenges associated with working in a Health Professional Shortage Area?
- How can I make the most of this opportunity so that it benefits my career?
- How can I best contribute to the team of health practitioners that work in this facility?

### Session Two: Prepare to Work in a Culturally Diverse Community

Your job may be in a community that is very different from anything you have experienced. Your mentor will help prepare you to meet the challenges of working in a community with limited access to health care and recognize the opportunities it affords. Use this session to learn about the many facets of your new community and explore ways in which your community service history can be useful to you now.

This is an opportunity for you to learn from your mentor's experience. Here are some questions you can ask your mentor to get the conversation going:

- What can I expect when I start working at this site?
- In your experience, how do patients expect us to interact with them?
- How can I best support my colleagues?
- Did you face any cultural challenges when you first started working in this community? How can I learn from your experiences?

Your mentor will also want to know about the experiences you bring to the NHSC and to your current assignment. Be prepared to answer questions such as:

- What multicultural experiences have you had? How will they be useful at your NHSC-approved site?
- What do you know about this community and the general culture of the population?
- Do you know of any primary care trends that may be pertinent to this community? What are your thoughts about these trends? How will your thoughts affect the service you provide?
- Do you have any apprehension about your job?



Staff Members  
at Waiane Coast  
Comprehensive  
Health Center,  
Waiane, HI



### Session Three: Career Goals

Although your service commitment with the NHSC may be as short as two years, we hope your experience with the NHSC will launch you into a challenging and meaningful career as a health care practitioner—and you will continue to offer primary care to communities in need.

Let your mentor's experience help to guide your career with the NHSC and beyond. In this session you may wish to discuss your career goals with your mentor. Ask yourself these questions before the session; they will help you to think about your goals and ambitions and prepare you for a rich discussion with your mentor.

- What do you hope to learn from your experience with the NHSC?
- How do you plan to use this experience?
- Where do you see yourself in five to seven years? What steps will you take to get there?
- How will this experience help you to pursue your career goals and identify future opportunities in primary care, especially in communities with a shortage of health professionals?

By the end of the session you should have a sense of the steps you need to take and relationships you need to build to reach your career goals. You should also have an idea of various ways in which your mentor can help you to achieve these goals. Ask your mentor how you can leverage professional networks to support your learning experiences. Inquire about health professional associations that might provide you with networking opportunities, professional development opportunities, and other resources.



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## MENTORING HEALTH PROFESSIONS STUDENTS: AMBASSADOR'S GUIDE

[\[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THE GUIDE AS A SEPARATE PDF\]](#)

Use this guide to foster the mentoring process and provide structure to the relationship you form with the student you are guiding. This guide will provide numerous suggestions on topics to cover and will give you a place to start.

### At the Outset

At your first meeting, you can get started by collecting some basic information. You may already have information about the student; write the information you already have onto this sheet and fill in the missing information. Keep in mind that all of the information will not apply to every student. Keep this sheet with your notes from each session.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline/Specialty: \_\_\_\_\_

Education: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Year in School: \_\_\_\_\_

Year in Residency/Training: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Spent in Clinical Arena: \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Affiliations: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies/Outside Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

### Session One: Core Questions

At the beginning of your relationship, work together to identify expectations for the exchange. Topics you may discuss include:

- Your vision of a mentoring relationship
- The areas in which the student may need particular support

You should also be prepared to answer questions about your own background. Your student will want to learn about what you bring to the relationship.

Listen to your student's needs and expectations. The most successful mentoring relationships are piloted by the person seeking guidance. Use these discussion questions to learn about the student's

experiences, anxieties, and needs, and be prepared to respond to any questions such as:

- What experiences impacted your decision to go into health care?
- When did you first become aware of disparities in health care, and what motivated you to direct your career toward helping to address these issues?
- What do you hope to gain from working in a community with limited access to health care?
- What do you hope you can achieve personally and professionally through this work?



You may be asked many different questions, ranging from the geography of the area where you both work, to career goals and the nuts-and-bolts of being an NHSC provider. In your first meeting, be prepared to answer questions such as:

- Is there any NHSC-related paperwork that I need to file with the Financial Aid Department?
- What tax forms do I need for deducting my NHSC Scholarship award?
- How does the NHSC keep track of my progress?
- Where can I be assigned? Do I have a role in choosing my assignment?
- What can I expect when I go into a clinical rotation?
- What is the academic review process like?
- What are the unspoken rules of the campus?
- What are the challenges and benefits of working in this particular clinic or community?
- How should I make the most of this opportunity so that it benefits my career?
- When I go into the field, how can I best contribute to the team of health practitioners working in my facility? How can I be a valued resource?

At the end of the session, determine the communication method that works best for both of you for planning future meetings and for informal Q&A.

### Session Two: Prepare to Work in a Culturally Diverse Community

One of the most significant barriers to health care is the cultural divide between patients and their health care providers. Students sometimes find jobs in communities very different from those they have experienced, and one part of your role as a mentor is preparing them to meet the challenges they

might face as a result. In this session, you should learn about the student's background in community service and discuss the relevance of cultural competency.

The following questions will help you to identify the student's strengths and weaknesses in areas important for cultural competency:

- What multicultural experiences have you had? What did you learn from these experiences that will be useful when you begin your job?
- What do you know about this community and the general culture of the population?
- What languages do you speak?
- Do you know of any approaches to patient communication, diagnosis, or treatment that may be pertinent to this community? What are your thoughts about these trends?
- How might they enhance the services you provide?
- What excites you most about working here? What are you most apprehensive about?

You may be asked questions about the culture and community. You can help the student become familiar with the region by discussing your experiences. Be prepared to answer questions such as:

- What can I expect when I start working in an NHSC-approved site?
- In your experience, how do patients expect us to interact with them?
- What are the most common challenges you find in working with patients at this clinic?
- What are the most common health issues?
- What is the best way to communicate with patients here in order to deliver health messages and see results in their response to health issues?
- Have you faced any cultural challenges in your career? How can I learn from your experiences?



### Session Three: Career Goals

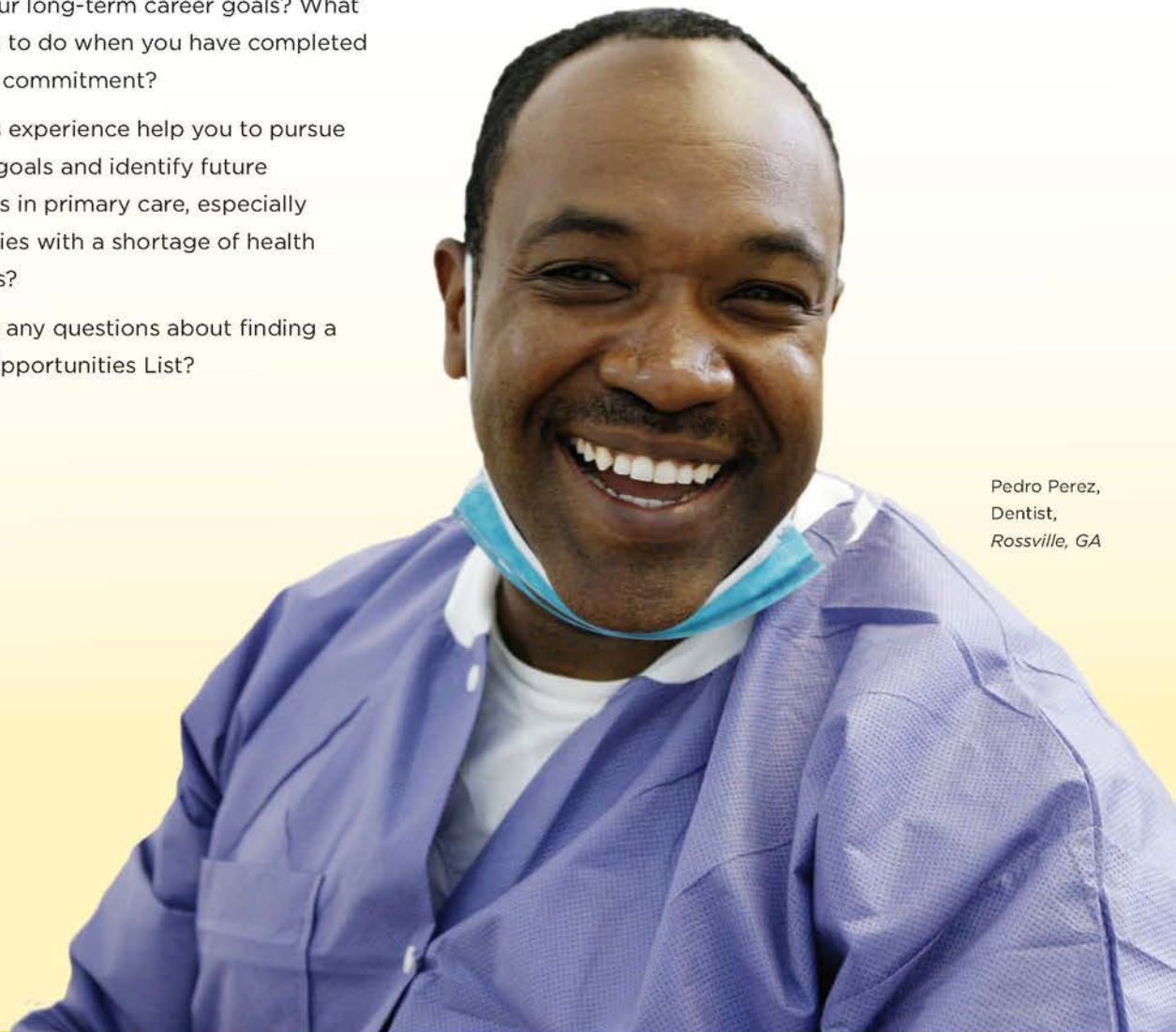
Although NHSC providers can leave their NHSC-approved site after a minimum of two years, we hope their service experience will prepare them for a challenging and meaningful career as a health care practitioner, and they will continue to offer primary care to communities in need.

Use these questions to discuss the student's career goals:

- What do you hope to learn from your experience with the NHSC?
- How do you plan to prepare yourself for this experience over the next few years?
- What are your long-term career goals? What do you hope to do when you have completed your service commitment?
- How will this experience help you to pursue your career goals and identify future opportunities in primary care, especially in communities with a shortage of health professionals?
- Do you have any questions about finding a job or Job Opportunities List?

The student may ask you to link them with professional contacts in your networks or inquire about clinical rotation opportunities, health professional associations that might provide networking opportunities, professional development opportunities, and other resources.

Encourage your student to learn about the experiences of other providers who have worked in Health Professional Shortage Areas. The success stories posted on the NHSC Web site feature the experiences of providers who have pursued careers in communities unfamiliar to them and experienced great personal and professional rewards as a result.



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## MENTORING HEALTH PROFESSIONS STUDENTS: SCHOLAR'S GUIDE

[\[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THE GUIDE AS A SEPARATE PDF\]](#)

Use this guide to help you engage in the mentoring process and provide structure to the relationship you form with your mentor. This guide will provide numerous suggestions on topics to cover and will give you a place to start.

### At the Outset

When you first meet your mentor, you can get started by collecting some basic information. You may already have information about your mentor, but at a minimum, it may be helpful to be aware of the following information as you begin your mentoring relationship.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline/Specialty: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate/Health Professional School: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Affiliations: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies/Outside Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

### Session One: Core Questions

At the beginning of your relationship, work with your mentor to identify your expectations for the exchange. Topics you may discuss include:

- Your vision of a mentoring relationship
- The areas in which you feel you might need particular support

You have the power to pilot the most successful mentoring relationship. Learn about your mentor's background and history and be prepared to share your background and interest in serving as a primary care practitioner in a community in need.

Your mentor will also want to know about you and what motivated you to join the NHSC. Be prepared to talk about:

- What experiences impacted your decision to pursue a career in primary care?
- When did you first become aware of health disparities in America, and why did you choose to devote your career to addressing them?
- What do you hope to gain from working in a community with limited access to health care?
- What do you hope to achieve personally and professionally through your NHSC experience?



Once you've learned a bit about your mentor, use this opportunity to discuss your new surroundings and goals for your education. You might want to ask questions about routine things such as the geography of the area and departmental procedures, such as:

- Is there any NHSC-related paperwork that I need to file with the Financial Aid Department?
- What tax forms do I need for deducting my NHSC Scholarship award?
- How does the NHSC keep track of my progress?
- Where can I be assigned? Do I have a role in choosing my assignment?
- What can I expect when I go into a clinical rotation?
- What is the academic review process like?
- What are the unspoken rules of the campus?

You might also want to discuss more substantive topics such as:

- What are the challenges associated with working in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)?
- How can I make the most of this opportunity so that it benefits my career?
- How can I best contribute to the team of health practitioners working in a HPSA?

### Session Two: Prepare to Work in a Culturally Diverse Community

Your job may be in a community that is very different from anything you have experienced, and your mentor will help prepare you to meet the challenges you face as a result. Use this session to learn about the many facets of your new community and explore how your community service history will influence you when you begin your job.

This is an opportunity for you to learn from your mentor's experience. Here are some questions you can ask your mentor to get the conversation going:

- What can I expect when I start working in an NHSC-approved site?
- In your experience, how do patients expect us to interact with them?
- Have you faced any cultural challenges in your career? How can I learn from your experiences?

Your mentor will also want to know about the experiences you bring to the NHSC and your current assignment. Be prepared to answer questions such as:

- What multicultural experiences have you had in the past? What did you learn from these experiences that will be useful when you begin your job?
- What kind of community do you hope to work in and why?
- Do you know of any primary care trends that may be pertinent to this kind of community? What are your thoughts about these trends? How will your thoughts affect the service you provide?
- Do you have any apprehension about your job?

### Session Three: Career Goals

Although your service commitment with the NHSC may be as short as two years, we hope this experience will launch you into a meaningful career as a health care practitioner, and you will continue to offer primary care to communities in need.

Let your mentor's experience help to guide your career with the NHSC and beyond. In this session you may wish to discuss your career goals with your mentor. Ask yourself these questions before the session—they will help you to think about your goals and ambitions and prepare you for a rich discussion with your mentor.





- What do you hope to learn from your experience with the NHSC?
- How do you plan to prepare yourself for this experience over the next few years?
- What are your long-term career goals? What do you hope to do when you have completed your service commitment?
- How will this experience help you to pursue your career goals and identify future opportunities in primary care, especially in communities with a shortage of health professionals?
- Do you have any apprehension about the job search process?

By the end of the session you should have a sense of the steps you need to take to apply for a job at an NHSC-approved site. You should also have an idea of various ways in which your mentor can guide you through the application process and help you achieve your career goals.

Ask your mentor how you can leverage professional networks to support your learning experiences. Inquire about opportunities to shadow a provider, participate in clinical rotations, and join health professional associations that might provide you with networking opportunities, professional development opportunities, and other resources.



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