

Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management

Funding Opportunity (FO) # 17465

Primary Care Service Corps (PCSC) Round 3

Modifications to the Funding Opportunity and Questions & Answers

Modifications

For the following modifications : strikethroughs indicate deletions, and **red** text indicates additions.

Cover Page

KEY DATES:

Release Date:	September 18, 2017
Questions Due by:	September 28, 2017 by 4:00 PM EST
Questions, Answers and Updates Posted on or about:	October 11, 2017 November 7, 2017
Latest Application Submission Due By:	November 1, 2017 November 27, 2017 by 4:00 PM EST
DOH Contact Name & Address:	Jonathan Wettergreen New York State Department of Health Room 1695, Corning Tower Albany, NY 12237 sch_loan@health.ny.gov

Section II.A.9 (Licensed Mental Health Counselors)

Requirements: A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted license and registration (pursuant to Education Law § 8402) to **practice** as a licensed mental health counselor in the State of New York. Applicants who have license applications pending with the New York State Education Department may apply, but proof of licensure must be provided prior to entering into a contract for an award with the New York State Department of Health.

Section II.E. (Employment Status) Paragraphs 1-3

An applicant must possess a fully executed employment contract and be currently employed, or scheduled to be employed, at an eligible facility on the date of application or begin work at an eligible facility before May 1, 2018. **In lieu of a fully executed employment contract, an applicant may submit an Employment Letter, on the employer's letterhead, with following statement, signed by the clinician and an employee with the authority to represent the employer with respect to human resources matters, including Human Resources Director, the Chief Executive Officer or the Chief Operating Officer:**

For Full-Time Applicants:

"It is mutually understood that (clinician name) intends to fulfill a NYS Primary Care Service Corps service obligation with (name of employer) during the period May 1, 2018 through April 30, 2020.

During that time, (clinician name) will be assigned to (name and address of work site), for ___ % of his/her time. S/he will work as a (clinical title and specialty) for approximately ___ clinical hours per week for ___ weeks per year during that time and will earn an annual base salary of \$_____. The applicant has not worked at the aforementioned site in the aforementioned clinical title prior to October 1, 2016.”

For Part-Time Applicants:

“It is mutually understood that (clinician name) intends to fulfill a NYS Primary Care Service Corps service obligation with (name of employer) during the period May 1, 2018 through April 30, 2022. During that time, (clinician name) will be assigned to (name and address of work site), for ___ % of his/her time. S/he will work as a (clinical title and specialty) for approximately ___ clinical hours per week for ___ weeks per year during that time and will earn an annual base salary of \$_____. The applicant has not worked at the aforementioned site in the aforementioned clinical title prior to October 1, 2016.”

Any new PCSC program applicant requesting an award for an obligation at the current position at the proposed site AND who was working at that same site prior to October 1, 2016 is not eligible to apply for this program.

The following table summarizes Employment Status eligibility (it assumes all other eligibility requirements are met):

Start Date of employment at Proposed Worksite where PCSC Contract Period (which begins on May 1, 2018) will be served	Eligibility
Before October 1, 2016	Not Eligible
October 1, 2016-May 1, 2018	Eligible
May 2, 2018 or later	Not Eligible

A Worksite is clinical space operated by a specific operator at a specific building, where buildings are distinguished by a street address (such as 1 Main Street). If a single operator has multiple clinical spaces on different floors, wings or suites of a single building, the building is still only considered to be one Worksite. For hospitals and diagnostic & treatment centers every Worksite holds a unique four-digit Facility ID number (formerly known as a PFI number).

The employment contract or Employment Letter must reflect that the applicant will work in either a full-time or part-time clinical practice position.

Section II.F.a. (HPSA Designation)

PCSC participants must provide primary care services (i.e., health services related to family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, dentistry or mental health) at a health care delivery site located in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) or in a facility designated as a HPSA facility. Any region or site designated as a HPSA on ~~November 2, 2017~~ **November 28, 2017**, shall be eligible. Applicants can check if an address is in a HPSA as follows:

First, check if the address is a Site HPSA:

1. Go to this website: <https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/>
2. Enter the street address (or town) of the proposed site.

3. If the site is marked on the map and the exact address is listed in the search results, then the site is a HPSA Site.

Next, if the address is not a Site HPSA, check if it is in a region designated as a HPSA:

1. Go to this website:
<https://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/GeoAdvisor/shortagedesignationadvisor.aspx>
2. Enter the street address (or town) of the proposed site.
3. Examine the search results.
 - a. If the search results show “Yes” for: In a Dental Health HPSA, In a Mental Health HPSA, or In a Primary Care HPSA – then the site may be eligible for the indicated specialty.
 - b. If the search results show “Yes” for In a MUA/P but “No” for all the HPSA categories, then the site is not an eligible HPSA.

HPSA scores are subject to change. For application scoring, the HPSA score of the proposed work site on ~~November 2, 2017~~ **November 28, 2017**, shall be used.

Section IV.B. (Questions and Answer Phase)

Substantive questions must be submitted in writing or via email by September 28, 2017, as specified on the cover of this document, provided they are submitted in writing to:

Jonathan Wettergreen
Division of Workforce Transformation
Center for Health Care Policy and Resource Development
Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower, Room 1695, Albany, New York 12237
email:sch_loan@health.ny.gov

To the degree possible, each inquiry should cite the Funding Opportunity section and paragraph to which it refers. Written questions will be accepted until the date posted on the cover of this Funding Opportunity.

Questions, Answers and Updates will be posted on the Department’s website on or about ~~October 11, 2017~~ **November 7, 2017**.

Questions of a technical nature can be addressed in writing or by emailing: sch_loan@health.ny.gov.

Section IV.E.1. (Application Content)

A complete application consists of the following FULLY COMPLETED forms and supporting documentation:

- a) Attachment 2: Application (5 pages)

- b) A copy of the fully-executed employment contract between the eligible facility and the clinician. All employment contracts must be signed by the clinician and the employer and reflect a two-year service obligation period;¹ **OR submission of an Employment Letter as described in Section II.E.**
- c) A copy of the applicant's current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted license and registration and/or certification (as applicable) to practice in the relevant discipline in the State of New York OR proof of pending license, registration and/or certification
- d) Attachment 6: Consent to Disclosure²
- e) Attachment 7: PCSC Diversity Attestation Form, if applicable

Failure to submit the required forms and supporting documentation may result in disqualification. Incomplete or illegible applications may not be reviewed, may be disqualified, and the applicant will be notified of the disqualification by email or phone.

Section IV.E.2. (Submitting an Application)

The NYSDOH Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management will accept applications between the dates shown on the cover page of this document. Applications will be accepted by mail (hard copy) at any time during the application period. A maximum of two applications will be accepted per program site, with one application per clinician. Program sites will be defined by geographic address or NYS operating certificate number.

Applications will be time- and date-stamped as they are received, based on the time and date received via the delivery method. Next, applications will be reviewed for eligibility for an award based on the date they are received, i.e., applications received by 4:00 p.m. on the first day on which applications are due (as listed on cover page) will be reviewed first in the order of the time of day in which they were received; those received by 4:00 p.m. on the second day will be reviewed second in the order of the time of day in which they were received, etc. **NYSDOH may contact applicants with questions after receipt of the application.**

In the event more than one application is submitted referencing a work site with the same facility address and operator, **only the first two applications, based on highest score, shall be eligible for review received will be reviewed. In the event of tie scores, the time and date postmarked will be considered.**

Applications will be reviewed by the Department based on the specified eligibility criteria and scored competitively beginning at the end of the application period shown on the cover page of this document. Applications must be received at the following address to be considered:

New York State Department of Health
Primary Care Service Corps

¹ The employment contract must follow the standard protocols within the applicant organization, be fully executed by the clinician and the site and explicitly state, at a minimum, the specialty, work hours and duration of the contract. For new PCSC awards where the start date at the facility is prior to May 1, 2018, the end date of the employment contract must be no sooner than April 30, 2020 (April 30, 2022 for four-year part-time awards); for new awards where the start date at the facility is after May 1, 2018 the end date of the employment contract must be no sooner than two years after the start date of the PCSC contract (four years for four-year, part-time awards). As the start date of the PCSC contract may not be known at the time of submission of the application, which includes the employment contract, it may be necessary for the site to submit an amendment to the employment contract upon receiving a PCSC award. NOTE: the clinician's stated salary CANNOT be reduced by the amount of the PCSC award, if any.

² Applicant must consent to disclosure of information for verification of qualifying student loan debt by the NYS Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC).

Corning Tower, Room 1695
Albany, NY 12237-0001 OR
Email: ~~Seh_loan@health.ny.gov~~

Applicants mailing applications shall submit one (1) original, signed application and two (2) copies. Application packages should be clearly labeled with "PCSC3 FO #17465." Applications will not be accepted via fax **or e-mail**.

It is the applicant's responsibility to see that applications are delivered to the address above prior to the date and time specified. Late applications due to a documentable delay by the carrier may be considered at the Department of Health's discretion.

Section IV.G. (Term of Contract)

Any contract resulting from this Funding Opportunity will be effective only upon approval by the New York State Office of the Comptroller.

It is expected that contracts resulting from this Funding Opportunity will have the following contract period:

May 1, 2018 through April 30, 2020 ~~unless the applicant's first date of employment is after that date.~~

Newly awarded PCSC contracts will be for two years initially (four years for part-time awards), with the option for each clinician to renew for up to three additional years on a year to year basis, after successful completion of the first two-year obligation. Awardees must submit an amendment request to the Department for additional obligation periods.

Any contract resulting from this funding opportunity for newly awarded PCSC contracts will be effective only upon approval by the New York State Department of Health.

Clinicians with current PCSC contracts (most of which will end on or about June 30, 2017) may not seek an extension of their contracts by submitting applications under this Funding Opportunity. Those clinicians who choose to extend their current contracts will be contacted individually by the Department and must request an amendment in writing from the Department. Applications under this Funding Opportunity may be submitted only by applicants who have not previously received an award under the PCSC.

Continued funding throughout this two year period is contingent upon availability of funding and state budget appropriations. DOH also reserves the right to revise the award amount as necessary due to changes in the availability of funding.

A sample New York State Master Contract for Grants can be found in the Forms Menu once an application to this funding opportunity is started.

Section V.A.1. (Application Components)

A complete application consists of the following forms and supporting documentation:

- a) Attachment 2: Application (5 pages)
- b) A copy of the fully-executed employment contract between the eligible facility and the clinician (~~employment letters are not acceptable~~) **OR an Employment Letter as described in Section II.E.** All employment contracts must be signed by the clinician and the employer and reflect a two-year service obligation period (note: the contract must include a start date and an end date);³ AND
- c) A copy of the applicant's current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted license and registration and/or certification (as applicable) to practice in the relevant discipline in the State of New York OR proof of pending license, registration and/or certification
- d) Attachment 6: Consent to Disclosure⁴
- e) Attachment 7: Primary Care Service Corps Diversity Attestation Form, if applicable.

Section V.A.2.C. (Employment Requirements)

- 1. Applicant possesses a fully-executed employment contract **or Employment Letter.**
- 2. Applicant is employed or will be employed at an eligible facility on the date of the application or will begin work at an eligible facility on or before May 1, 2018.
- 3. Applicant was not working at the site proposed in the application prior to October 1, 2016.
- 4. Section II. E. above specifies the required hours for each discipline for full-time applicants and part-time applicants.

Section V.D.3.a. (Employment Requirements (pass/fail))

- a. Applicant possesses a fully-executed employment contract **or Employment Letter.**

Attachment 1: Application Checklist

Please refer to the revised document.

³ The employment contract must follow the standard protocols within the applicant organization, be fully executed by the clinician and the site and explicitly state, at a minimum, the specialty, work hours and duration of the contract. For new PCSC awards where the start date at the facility is prior to May 1, 2018, the end date of the employment contract must be no sooner than December 31, 2020 ; for new awards where the start date at the facility is after May 1, 2018 the end date of the employment contract must be no sooner than two years after the start date of the PCSC contract . As the start date of the PCSC contract may not be known at the time of submission of the application, which includes the employment contract, it may be necessary for the site to submit an amendment to the employment contract upon receiving a PCSC award. NOTE: the clinician's stated salary CANNOT be reduced by the amount of the PCSC award, if any.

⁴ Applicant must consent to disclosure of information for verification of qualifying student loan debt by the NYS Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC).

Attachment 2: Application

Please refer to the revised document.

Answers to Questions:

A. Application Submission

1. **Q:** Is the PCSC program still available?

A: Yes, the Primary Care Service Corps is currently accepting applications through November 27, 2017. Information and application materials can be found at:

<https://www.health.ny.gov/funding/rfa/17465/index.htm>

2. **Q:** Is this loan application expected to be submitted via mail on paper or electronically?

A: Please disregard the email address in section IV.E.2. for the purpose of submitting an application. Applications must be submitted by mail (hard copy) to the following address:

**New York State Department of Health
Primary Care Service Corps
Corning Tower, Room 1695
Albany, NY 12237-0001**

Applications will not be accepted via fax or e-mail.

3. **Q:** To clarify, as of today, September 18th, do you accept applications until November 1st, 2017? Or should the applications be submitted starting October 11 after the question, answers and update posted?

A: Applications are accepted if received between September 18, 2017 and November 27, 2017 at 4:00pm EST.

4. **Q:** I am a clinical psychologist and I work at an FQHC in NYC. I owe less than \$12,000 for my education. Am I eligible to apply for your program, and if so, how do I proceed?

A: You would be eligible if you meet all other requirements. Instructions on how to apply can be found at: <https://www.health.ny.gov/funding/rfa/17465/index.htm>.

5. **Q:** My application from last year was completed, but I had to decline my award and participation because between January and June my status changed from full time clinical to part time clinical/part time community health worker. Do I need to fill out the application all over again or is there a way I can change just the half time status and resubmit last year's application with employer verification?

A: You would need to complete and submit a new application, provided you meet all other eligibility requirements, including having an employment start date with the proposed employer on or after October 1, 2016.

6. **Q:** Aside from the Application, Master Grant Contract, Reporting Form, and Consent Form, do any other documents need to be submitted? I do see sample Master Grant Contract and Reporting forms on the website, but is there any way to get blank forms of those documents?

A: The Master Grant Contract attachment and the Sample Reporting forms are provided only for informational purposes as an example of documentation that would be used if the applicant received an award. Please submit only those items listed in Section V.A.1. of the Funding Opportunity.

7. **Q:** Who, exactly, is supposed to sign the Diversity Form? Can it be the Office Manager? Must it be the Human Resources office?

A: The Diversity Form must be signed by an employee with the authority to represent the employer with respect to human resources matters, such as the Human Resources Director, the Chief Executive Officer or the Chief Operating Officer.

B. License/Certification/Registration Requirements

8. **Q:** Does the loan repayment apply also to physical therapists? If my current loans are with Direct Loans and I am under the loan forgiveness program through the income based repayment plan [after making 120 payments the remainder of the balance of the loan is forgiven], would this program then be able to pay for my upcoming payments for the next couple of years for a commitment of continuing to work with underserved area as I currently do for Family Health Centers at NYU Langone Brooklyn?

A: Physical therapists are not eligible for PCSC.

9. **Q:** I am inquiring if this program includes Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW). The application only states "LCSW" may apply.

A: Licensed Master Social Workers are not eligible for PCSC.

10. **Q:** Regarding eligibility, does this include LMSW as well?

A: See answer to question #9.

11. **Q:** My agency is in a MH HPSA area. There is need for clinicians to serve in this area. I don't have an end date because I plan on continuing my career at my agency. With that said I want to ask several questions which need clarification.

- a. At the time of my hiring I was an LMSW. I was hired on 9/6/16. That is 3 weeks before the application's date of hire that is needed for inclusion. If they are looking at recruitment 10/1 would imply retention. Would I still be considered for this as it would retain me for the agency?
- b. In addition, on the topic of hiring date, my title has changed from LMSW to LCSW as of 4/29/17. Would I be eligible as my title has changed and I am now an LCSW?
- c. If my hospital transfers me from one department to another, would they accept the "transfer date" as the date of hire?
- d. As a union employee I have a union contract. These contracts have start and end dates, would I be able to use that along with an employee letter giving my start date?
- e. If I am ineligible based on the 9/6/16 start date, would my last day of probation qualify me because I was a probationary employee beforehand?

A: In response to your questions:

a. Licensed Master Social Workers are not eligible for PCSC.

b. Licensed Clinical Social Workers are eligible for PCSC. Assuming you meet all other eligibility requirements, you would be eligible for PCSC because you have only been under contract with your employer *in an eligible profession (LCSW)* on or after October 1, 2016.

c. Being transferred from one department to another within a corporate entity (such as a hospital) would not constitute a new hiring date.

d. If you do not have an employment contract, you should submit a letter as described in the revised Attachment 1: Application Checklist Cover Page.

e. Probationary status is not relevant to employment start date.

12. **Q:** I've worked at my current work location since January of 2015. At the time of hire I was only licensed as an LMSW. This past December of 2016 I took a licensure exam and was awarded my LCSW license, which is the credentials needed to be considered for the loan repayment. Would I qualify to apply to the program because I only became eligible last year at the licensure level needed to apply?

A: You would be eligible to apply if you have an employment contract to work as an LCSW and you meet all other requirements.

13. **Q:** Are individuals who hold limited permits able to apply for this? I am currently studying for my licensing exam and will be licensed by March 2018.

A: Applicants who have license applications pending with the New York State Education Department may apply, but proof of licensure must be provided prior to entering into a contract for an award with the New York State Department of Health." (Note: In order for an license application to be considered *pending* with

the State Education Department (SED) the license application must have been submitted to SED prior to the date the PCSC application is submitted to the NYS DOH.)

14. Q: Am I eligible to apply if I only have a limited permit in the state of NY? I am not yet licensed, but I am currently employed as a Psychologist at Rikers Island Correctional Facility, working towards my 3000 hours needed for licensure. I plan to be licensed by summer 2018. Am I able to apply now, or do I have to wait until I have obtained my NYS license?

A: Per Section II.A.6. of the Funding Opportunity, the requirements for Licensed Psychologists are: “A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted license and registration (pursuant to Education Law §7603) to practice as a Licensed Psychologist in the State of New York. Applicants who have license applications pending with the New York State Education Department may apply, but proof of licensure must be provided prior to entering into a contract for an award with the New York State Department of Health.” Since licensure will not occur until the summer of 2018 – which is after the award contracts for PCSC will be executed, -- you would not be eligible to apply. In addition, Rikers Island Correctional Facility is not an eligible site because it is not a State Correctional Facility.

15. Q: I am a Hospitalist physician employed by University of Buffalo. I was reading about the primary care service Corps opportunity but, since I am a physician I am not eligible. Do you know of any loan assistance programs in NY state that physicians are eligible for at this time?

A: The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) is aware of three programs for physician loan repayment.

(1) National Health Service Corps: <https://nhsc.hrsa.gov/loanrepayment>

(2) Doctors Across New York Loan Repayment Program:

https://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/doctors/graduate_medical_education/doctors_across_ny

(3) Regents Loan Forgiveness Award Program:

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/scholarships/rplfap.htm>

16. Q: I am an addiction counselor at a community health center. I am sending this email to inquire about my eligibility as a Limited Permit Licensed Mental Health Counselor.

A: Per Section II.A.9. of the Funding Opportunity, the requirements for Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHCs) are: A current, full, permanent, unencumbered, unrestricted license and registration (pursuant to Education Law § 8402) to as a licensed mental health counselors in the State of New York. Applicants who have license applications *pending* with the New York State Education Department may apply, but proof of licensure must be provided prior to entering into a contract for an award with the New York State Department of Health. (Note: In order for an license application to be considered *pending* with the State Education Department (SED) the license application must have been submitted to SED prior to the date the PCSC application is submitted to the NYS DOH.) Therefore, if you are licensed as an LMHC before you sign the PCSC award contract with the New York State Department of Health, and the submitted

employment contract specifies that you are to be employed as an LMHC starting on or before May 1, 2018, then you would be eligible, provided you meet other requirements.

C. Citizenship Status

17. **Q:** Does this apply also to a dentist employed in HPSA area under H1B visa?

A: No. Per section II. B. (Citizenship Status): “Applicants must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States to be eligible for PCSC. A United States permanent resident is one who carries a ‘green card’ (USCIS Form I-551), an identification card attesting to the permanent resident status of an alien in the United States.”

18. **Q:** One of our member hospitals inquired as to whether someone who is on a H1B visa would be eligible for an award under the Primary Care Service Corps? Can I impose on you to forward my question to the correct staff person and perhaps provide me with their contact information.

A: See answer to question #17.

D. Participation in other Government Loan Repayment Programs

19. **Q:** In the *Who May Apply* section, I read that participation in other government loan repayment programs precludes someone from participating in the PCSC program. The policy makes obvious sense: a borrower should not be able to “double dip” to reduce their obligations, as it could unfairly take prospective funds away from another would-be participant. However, I’m wondering if my situation is different. I am an NHSC Scholar and am currently fulfilling my service obligation for the funds the NHSC provided directly to my school and myself. However, I also borrowed money (via Federal student loans) to pay for additional expenses. I am not receiving any assistance from the NHSC for those loans; I am paying them back myself. Under these circumstances, is it possible to participate in the PCSC program? From my perspective, the PCSC loan repayment would not impact my NHSC obligation, but would provide help toward non-NHSC funds (i.e. my student loans).

A: You would not be eligible for PCSC. Per section II.C. (Participation in Other Government Loan Repayment Programs) of the Funding Opportunity: “An applicant must not have any outstanding service obligation for health professional or other service to the federal government (e.g., an active military obligation, an NHSC Scholarship Program obligation, or a Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program obligation) or a state or other entity (e.g., a recruitment bonus to remain employed at a certain site), unless the obligation would be completed prior to commencement of the PCSC obligation.” Simultaneous participation in both NHSC and PCSC is not permitted.

20. **Q:** Is PCSC completely different than the NHSC Loan Repayment Program?

A: The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) is administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the Primary Care Service

Corps (PCSC) is administered by the New York State Department of Health. They are separate programs.

E. Employment Status: The October 1, 2016 Employment Start Date

21. **Q:** After reading the application, it appears that we are not eligible if we were at our current position prior to October 1, 2016. Is this correct?

A: This is correct.

22. **Q:** I am a dentist currently under contract with NHSC loan repayment until September 8, 2018. I just recently heard about PCSC and am very interested in applying after my service is completed next year with NHSC. However, I am a bit confused about one clause in the information guide stating: Any new PCSC program applicant requesting an award for an obligation at the current position at the proposed site AND who was working at that same site prior to October 1, 2016 is not eligible to apply for this program. I started at my work site on August 31, 2015 for NHSC. Am I ineligible to apply for PCSC if I choose to remain at this same site next year?

A: You would be ineligible for this funding opportunity because your NHSC obligation will not be completed before May 1, 2018. In addition you were employed at this site prior to October 1, 2016.

23. **Q:** Does the School Loan Forgiveness Program apply to those who have served in an HPSA area in the past? If not, are you aware of another state or federal program that offers loan forgiveness?

A: PCSC Round 3 awardees will be paid for work performed from May 1, 2018 to the end of their contract period (April 30, 2020 for full-time awardees, April 30, 2022 for part-time awardees). PCSC Round 3 will not pay for service in HPSAs prior to May 1, 2018. Service in a HPSA in the past, by itself, does not disqualify an applicant. However, applicants that have served at a specific site (in a HPSA) before October 1, 2016, and who wish to continue working at that same site for the PCSC contract period (starting on April 1, 2018) would NOT be eligible. Other state and federal programs that offer loan forgiveness are listed in the response to question #15.

24. **Q:** My question pertains to Section E Employment Status. It states (in bold): any new PCSC program applicant requesting an award for an obligation at the current position at the proposed site AND who was working at that same site prior to October 1 2016 is not eligible to apply for this program. Round 2 of the PCSC Program stated that any new PCSC program applicant requesting an award for an obligation at the current position at the proposed site AND who was working at that same site prior to April 1, 2014 is not eligible to apply for this program. Applicants for the Round 2 program must have begun employment at an eligible facility before October 1, 2015. There is a one year gap between October 1, 2015, and October 1, 2016. This gap prevents those clinicians hired during the year from eligibility to apply under Round 3. Promotion of the PCSC Program is used as a recruitment tool in our rural locations and the hope is that those clinicians who accept positions to provide necessary patient care will be able to apply to the program. Why impose a gap in the eligibility? Please explain.

A: The date was chosen to achieve a balance between recruitment and retention given the limited funding available.

25. **Q:** I'm not sure I understand this statement: "An applicant must possess a fully executed employment contract and be currently employed, or scheduled to be employed, at an eligible facility on the date of application or begin work at an eligible facility before May 1, 2018. Any new PCSC program applicant requesting an award for an obligation at the current position at the proposed site AND who was working at that same site prior to October 1, 2016 is not eligible to apply for this program."

A: Individuals are not eligible if they worked in a qualifying title at the worksite where the PCSC service is to be performed prior to October 1, 2016.

26. **Q:** I am interested in applying for the PCSC loan repayment program. My contract started 5 weeks before the eligibility cutoff. Contract signed 6/29/2016 and the cut-off is 10/1/2016. Is there any waiver of this eligibility requirement?

A: You are not eligible. The eligibility requirement cannot be waived.

27. **Q:** I have been working for 24 ½ years at this site. Can I still apply? My loan is less than \$15,000.

A: You are not eligible. Please see answers to questions #21 and #22.

28. **Q:** I have been working in a FQHC for 8 years and I am a Licensed Mental Health Counselor. Unfortunately, I noticed that part of the application states, "if you were working in the site listed above prior to October 1, 2016, STOP, you are not eligible for PCSC." What is the reasoning for this condition in the application? I would like to advocate for people like myself that have already been doing this very important work in underserved areas with underserved populations in their native language. It is unfair that only new applicants would qualify and it is almost encouraging already established employees to seek work elsewhere only to be able to have the opportunity to remove the burden that is having student loan debt. This would then leave the original employers at a deficit which is already at critical levels, especially when it comes to mental health services. Is there a possibility that this clause be changed and be made more inclusive of established employees?

A: The October 1, 2016, date was set to achieve a balance between recruitment and retention given the limited funding available.

29. **Q:** I have worked for over 20 years in my community clinic. I requested loans for a degree I did not finish but I have been licensed as a Mental Health Counselor for several years. Do I qualify for loan forgiveness?

A: You are not eligible because your employment started before October 1, 2016.

F. Employment Status: Employment Contracts

30. **Q:** Is there a formatted contract that I can use to submit my contract with my employer?

A: There is no formatted contract, however, we will accept the employment letter described in revised Attachment 1: Application Checklist.

31. **Q:** I am a clinical psychologist at an OMH facility. I began work on March 2, 2017. As a state employee, I do not have a contract, and therefore do not have a contract start or end date. How do I demonstrate that I have the equivalent of a “fully executed employment contract”

A: Please submit the employment letter described in the Amendment to Attachment 1: Application Checklist.

32. **Q:** I am not sure what to put for Employment contract end date on the application. I am employed as full time Physician Assistant. I do not have a contract with an end date. What would I need to provide to meet this requirement?

A: Please submit the employment letter described in the Amendment to Attachment 1: Application Checklist.

33. **Q:** Regarding Section IV-E-1-b (Application Content, page 16): My employment contract period is written as only one year, but this is for the purpose of adjusting subsequent years’ salary based on performance evaluations. Is this sufficient for eligibility purposes? The contract is set to automatically renew each year unless otherwise stated by either party.

A: No, the employment contract must reflect that you started your employment no earlier than October 1, 2016 in your current eligible title, and that the obligation will start no later than May 1, 2018, and end no earlier than April 30, 2020. Regardless of the start date stated in the contract, you are not eligible if you started your employment with that employer, at that site, in your current eligible title, prior to October 1, 2016.

34. **Q:** I am a permanent employee of my organization and they do not execute contracts with individual employees. What other documentation can I submit to meet the requirement of providing a copy of the fully-executed employment contract that is outlined on page 23 section 1b?

A: Please submit the employment letter described in revised Attachment 1: Application Checklist.

35. **Q:** If an organization does not complete contracts with employees, are there other forms of verification that can be submitted? If so, what would those entail? If an organization has several primary care clinics, some of which are located in the same building (different floors, suites, etc), are up to two clinicians able to be approved for the loan repayment program per clinic? Or is it up to two clinicians for the organization as a whole?

A: Regarding the contract portion of the question, please submit the employment letter described in revised Attachment 1: Application Checklist. Regarding the “awardees per site rule”, please see the modification to Funding Opportunity Section II.E. above.

36. **Q:** If I do not have a two-year contract, and – despite my employer’s submitted statement – my contract is not renewed for a second year, am I still responsible for default provisions?

A: If, for any reason, the contract was not renewed and the awardee did not secure a contract with another employer in a HPSA (either the same HPSA, or another HPSA) that is deemed acceptable by the NYS DOH, the awardee would be considered in Default, and subject to the fines for default set forth in Section III.5 Default of Obligation of the Funding Opportunity.

37. Q: Is the PCSC contract between the State and the individual clinician or the state and the facility that employees them? Has there been any consideration given to moving the date of qualification back to before October 1, 2016?

A: The PCSC contract is between the NYS Department of Health and the individual clinician -- not the facility that employs the clinician. On the question of changing the date of qualification, please see the answer to question #24.

38. Q: Some of our centers do not give their providers formal contracts. We want to know what document is acceptable in these cases. Would an employment letter suffice? It was also stated that providing an end date in writing is a violation for some union employees – what would be acceptable in these cases?

A: Please submit the employment letter described in revised Attachment 1: Application Checklist.

G. Employment Status: Full-Time and Part-Time

39. Q: I have a question regarding full time status. As I saw on the requirement full time is 40 hrs/week for min of 45 weeks per year. I saw that at the reporting sample attachment there is a section about time period employee work less than a full time including “educational leave with pay”, with my contract I have 22 days of vacation time and 3 CE days which add up to 25 days which is 5 weeks. If I were to use my days off, will that affect the requirement of full time? Second is there more information that can be given about the possibly state tax on the loan repayment? I asked my accountant, but they are not so sure themselves.

A: The 45 weeks per year allows for 7 weeks per year of leave. The NYS Department of Health recommends that applicants should discuss potential awards with their tax professional.

H. Site Eligibility

40. Q: Where can I see what positions are available to apply?

A: NYS DOH is aware of the following three websites (other websites may be available):

The HRSA Health Workforce Connector: <https://connector.hrsa.gov>

The Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS) Job Bank: <http://www.chcanys.org>

3RNet Search Job Opportunities: <https://www.3rnet.org>

Not all jobs found on these sites will qualify, so be sure to verify that the site meets all other PCSC eligibility requirements.

41. **Q:** I just started employment as a psychologist working full time at Rikers Island Correctional facility. Can I apply?

A: Riker’s Island is not an eligible site. Per Section II.F. (Site Eligibility) of the Funding Opportunity, the only type of correctional facilities that are eligible are those that are operated by the New York State Department of Corrections and designated as a HPSA.

42. **Q:** I am a PA at a Health Center. My family and I paid out of pocket for most of my schooling so I have just a small (few thousand dollar) student loan. Is there a program that offers an award to repay what was paid towards tuition? Also, my grace period comes up for my loan late this year, so I will have to start paying on it then. When does the loan repayment pay out to the loans? Also, will the repayment pay for the payments that I have made?

A: The repayment is available only for current, existing, educational debt. Past loan payments and/or tuition are not reimbursable. Per Section IV.H.2. (Payment & Reporting Requirements of Grant Awardees) of the Funding Opportunity: “Payments will be made in six-month increments, with the first payment of half the annual award amount paid at the start of the contract, with the second payment due no less than six months after the contract start date.”

43. **Q:** I am a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner and have worked at Sagamore Children’s Psychiatric Day Treatment Program in Bellport, NY and Holtsville, NY since January 7, 2016 and was transferred outpatient to a school based program in March 2017.

A: The indicated sites are not located in HPSAs, and therefore you would not be eligible for PCSC.

44. **Q:** I’m a Family Nurse Practitioner currently working at Community Health Center of Richmond on Staten Island, NY. I was wondering if I would be eligible for this program, since I’m currently back in College for my Doctor of Nursing Practice program, to be done by 12/2019.

A: Since you indicate that you are currently working at an FQHC, if you began work at this site on or after October 1, 2016, and meet other eligibility requirements, you would be eligible for PCSC.

45. **Q:** I am currently practicing in 2 clinics operated by a single operator. I spend 3 days a week in one clinic and 1 day a week in another, each with similar HPSA scores. How should I proceed with the application in this case, i.e. full time or part time? How does the split time influence consideration for assistance?

A: For applicants who work at multiple sites, the addresses and number of hours worked at each site must be indicated in the application. If the combined work hours at all sites total enough hours for full time, then the applicant should apply for full time status. Otherwise, the applicant should apply for part-time status. If the sites are located in different HPSAs, the HPSA score will be calculated as a weighted average of the HPSA scores of the various sites, using hours worked at the sites as the weight factor.

46. **Q:** Can you send me a list of the sites which are designated as Health Professional Shortage areas for Suffolk County?

A: Applicants can find all the HPSAs in a county by going to this webpage:
<http://hpsafind.hrsa.gov/HPSASearch.aspx>
Choose New York in the Select a State box.
Choose the County desired in the County or Counties Box.
Check one or more of the Disciplines check boxes.
Click the Search Button.

47. **Q:** I currently work as a dentist with disabled veterans at the VA in Syracuse NY. I also checked the HRSA area by address and it seems the area is eligible. Given that the VA is a federal facility, would that make me ineligible to apply?

A: Sites operated by the Veterans Administration are not eligible for PCSC. Only site types listed in section II.F.c. (Type of Setting) are eligible.

48. **Q:** I reviewed Section II-F paragraphs A-C, under the Funding Opportunity section. I currently work for a Federal Facility in an approved HPSA region. I work for the Veteran's health Administration as an outpatient dentist and I work with disabled veterans. Would I qualify for a PCSC award? The VA Hospital and its adjacent Outpatient clinics does not seem to appear on the list of Site Settings but it is an HPSA region.

A: See answer to question #47.

49. **Q:** I work in Franklin County, which has a score of 16. Four other agencies in Malone have been scored, yet nothing for Upstate Correctional Facility. I need for a HPSA score at my work site, so I can apply for the loan forgiveness program for mental health. As of this writing, there is still no score. I have been calling and emailing your department since I began working here in 2014, to no avail. Please let me know what your office can do to rectify this apparent oversight.

A: If you have worked at the proposed work site in your current eligible title since 2014, you would not be eligible for PCSC. That issue aside, mental health services at Upstate Correctional Facility are provided by the Office of Mental Health (OMH). OMH must submit an application to certify the facility as a facility HPSA. The NYS DOH has relayed your request to certify this site as a HPSA to OMH staff.

50. **Q:** I wanted to inquire about the application for student loan repayment. I currently work at Mid-State Correctional Facility in Marcy, NY for OMH as a PMHNP and have outstanding student loan debt.

A: Presently, Mid-State Correctional Facility is designated as a Mental Health facility HPSA. This site is currently eligible for PCSC. HPSA eligibility will be re-verified for all applicants on November 28, 2017.

51. **Q:** I am currently working at a hospital full time as a Physician Assistant in Oneonta. Since I am not working at outpatient setting, I do not think I can apply for the loan repayment program.

I believe my work site hospital is in underserved area. Is there any NY state loan repayment program I can apply for?

A: A candidate who is not working in an outpatient setting is not eligible for PCSC. The New York State Department of Health is not aware of any programs that would fit your criteria.

52. **Q:** Page 17 of the application under Submitting the Application states that there is a maximum of 2 applications per program site. Does that mean individual site, Hudson Headwaters has 17, or 2 per program with Hudson headwaters as one program?

A: See answer to question #35

53. **Q:** On page 17 of the guidance, 2 Submitting an Application which state “A maximum of two applications will be accepted per program site, with one application per clinician. Program sites will be defined by geographic address or NYS operating certificate number.” We are an FQHC with over 25 distinct service sites. Our organization has one operating certificate. Are we permitted to submit a TOTAL of two applications, or can we submit two applications per service site? Note that we are not considering submitting 50 applications, but are asking the question above to understand if as an organization with multiple site, we can submit MORE than two.

A: See answer to question #35.

54. **Q:** I’m currently employed at a psychiatric center. I recently transferred to a new position in one of the outpatient programs after October 1, 2016. Am I eligible for PCSC?

A: If your worksite (as defined in the Amendment to Funding Opportunity Section II.E. above) prior to October 1, 2016 was is the same as your current worksite for the outpatient programs, then you would not be eligible.

55. **Q:** Please advise:

- a. Section F Site Eligibility, Table 2, page 11 – If an outpatient site (community outpatient facility, community mental health facility) is a part of an Article 28 health system/hospital, is the site eligible?
- b. Section E-2 Submitting an Application, page 17 states that: “In the event more than one application is submitted referencing a work site with the same facility address and operator, only the first two applications received will be reviewed.”
Will a health system/hospital operating more than one work site be limited to having only the first two received applications received from the health system/hospital or is it two applications per work site operated by the health system/hospital?
- c. Also, two of our work sites are separates outpatient clinics but have the same address, will each site be considered separately?
- d. Section 2 – I and J – Given that the applicants and grant awardees are individuals, do the requirements on page 21 for Limits on Administrative Expenses and Executive Compensation (I) and Vendor ID Number (J) apply? Or will they apply to the work site owner?
- e. Section II, E – Employment Status, page 6 - If full-time health professional works for a health care organization, that defines full-time as 37.5 hours per week, is the health professional still eligible to apply?

A: The answers to the individual questions are as follows:

- a. **Yes, if an outpatient site is part of an Article 28 health system/hospital, it is eligible.**
- b. **As explained in the answer to question #35, there is a limit on the number of awardees per site, not on the number of awardees per operator.**
- c. **If two outpatient clinics operated by the same operator are located at the same street address, then they are considered a single site (they share a single site-specific operating certificate).**
- d. **There are no administrative expenses or executive compensation issues related to loan repayment.**
- e. **PCSC permits meal breaks, so if the 37.5 hours per week is derived from five 8-hour days minus five 30-minute meal breaks, then the health professional would be eligible. (This is because meal breaks are considered a practice-related administrative activity).**

56. **Q:** Your NYS site indicates that my site, NYU Langone 7th Ave Family Health Center (Formerly Sunset Park, or Lutheran Family Health Center - Brooklyn Chinese) - is not eligible this year for Dental. However, the NHSC site stated that this year this site is eligible for dental. Is it possible this was an error? Our address is 5008 7th Ave Brooklyn NY.

A: This site is an FQHC. It is currently an eligible site for dental.

I. Default of Obligation

57. **Q:** Please advise:

- a. Regarding the two-year commitment to working in NYS at a PCSC applicable agency: If there is a possibility that my family will have to relocate to a different state during my commitment time (2 years), what should I do? (For example, if my spouse gets a job that they cannot refuse in a different state before my two-year commitment has expired.) I am assuming that given this is a NYS program, I will not be able to defer my commitment to an employer that is not located in NYS. In that event, what am I responsible for repaying NYS?
- b. Regarding paying off my current loans: Does NYS pay off \$30,000 off my loans right away each year?
- c. I am asking because if my obligation to the program would need to be defaulted due to the above circumstances, I am wondering if I will then not only own NYS that \$31,000, but also what I still owe on my loans. If NYS, however, is paying off the loans outright, I'm assuming I would owe just NYS, as opposed to NYS and my loan provider.

A: Regarding your specific questions:

- a. **Out-of-state relocation prior to the completion of the two-year contract period would constitute Default, and would make the awardee subject to Section III.5. (Default of Obligation).**
- b. **The payments are issued directly to the awardee (not the creditors). The awardee is required to apply the monetary award to his or her qualified educational debt.**

- c. **Full-time awardees receive up to \$30,000 per year. In case of default, the awardee must pay back all monies received from NYSDOH, plus additional penalties specified in Funding Opportunity Section III.5. (Default of Obligation).**